

intervening, and if we consistently respected the same principle on other matters in the organization of the education system in Africa.

Mazrui's analysis shows that the World Bank merely pays lip-service to the claim that mother tongue instruction in Africa would be the preferable choice. In contrast to UNESCO, which holds that the use of the mother tongue ought to be extended to as late a stage in education as possible, the World Bank seems to see the use of African languages in the early grades of primary school as just a strategy for a smoother transition to the European languages as languages of instruction. The World Bank continues to place great emphasis on the reduction of government subsidies in education, though such subsidies are indispensable to the promotion of instruction in local languages.

It is easy to agree with Mazrui when he exclaims: 'In effect, the vaunted freedom of choice over education allowed to African nations by the democrats of the World Bank is no freedom at all!' (Mazrui, 1997, 40). He cites the example of a World Bank loan to the Central African Republic, supposedly intended to improve the quality and accessibility of elementary education, but which came with a package of conditions that required the nation to import textbooks (and even French language charts) directly from France and Canada. It has been estimated that due to similar World Bank projects and linkages, over 80% of schoolbooks in 'francophone' Africa are now produced in France.

The World Bank's policies not only position the West so that it retains control over the intellectual destiny of African children. They also continue to weaken and destroy infrastructural facilities, primarily publishing houses, for the technical production of knowledge locally. Textbooks are of crucial importance for the publishing and printing industry in Africa, as they represent 90 percent or more of the total book market in Africa. In terms of sheer cost effectiveness, western publishers would find it far more difficult to participate in this World Bank agenda if the languages of instruction in African countries were African rather than European languages. Mazrui claims that because of the Euro-linguistic policy of Western donors (and, I would like to add, much of the African elite), the intellectual self-determination of Africa has become more difficult. To quote Mazrui (1997, 46):

For the time being, the prospects of a genuine intellectual revolution in Africa may depend in no small measure on a genuine educational revolution that involves, at the same time, a widespread use of African languages as media of instruction.

## Language: A Diversity Category Beyond All Others

*Ofelia García*

The last four decades of the 20th century brought the world closer to recognizing and valuing its differences both globally and locally. In the United States, the ethnic boom of the 1960s resulted in executive actions and legislation guaranteeing civil rights and equal educational opportunity to groups who had been excluded previously, including people of color, women, those with different gender preferences and religious persuasions, the disabled, speakers of languages other than English (LOTEs) or of varieties of English that show non-standard features. Groups that had previously been oppressed demanded equal protection, and societal institutions, including schools, were forced to make accommodations to respect their individual rights.

But although all schools have found it comfortable to at least pay lip-service to teaching for diversity, it is the category of language that has remained, as we will see, most problematic. There are four reasons, discussed below, for the resistance to the inclusion of languages other than English (LOTEs) and varieties of English with non-standard features in U.S. schools:

- The teachers' conceptualization of language as simply an instrument for communication
- The schools' standard English identity
- The teachers' need for control of learning
- The schools' reluctance to reallocate resources.

Teachers learn early that language is simply an instrument for communication that can be used to help students develop knowledge or to control the class. But besides a utilitarian function, language links us to our identity because it connects us to our mother or initial caregiver. And although one develops a different identity from one's mother through schooling and socialization, the mother or caregiver's identity, outwardly manifested in the child's mother tongue or way of using language, remains a part of one's life, giving sense to oneself. Teachers who do not affirm the students' multiple language identities regardless of how well they speak, read, and/or write standard English, plunge them into self-oblivion and disconnect them from their relationship with parents, relatives, a community of speakers, and often a rich body of literature. Insisting that students of language minority background

function as English monolingual speakers locks them into minority status. It robs them of their ability to connect to another place and time in which their other language identity was valued and worthy of majority status, was spoken by the rich and powerful, and was even used in schools.

U.S. public schools have taken a role in Americanizing and teaching English to the many immigrants who have come to our shores. But not all schools, all the time, have had an English-only language identity. There is also a historical tradition of languages other than English being used in the nation's schools. And in the last four decades, as immigration has increased dramatically especially from non-European and developing countries, at a time of globalization and increased need for a sophisticated technologically-enriched education, U.S. schools have used languages other than English for three distinct purposes. One, LOTEs have been used to accelerate familiarization with U.S. culture and English language acquisition. Two, using LOTEs enables the large number of U.S. English language learners to continue to be educated. Finally, developing U.S. citizens' literate uses of LOTEs will be an invaluable societal resource in the globalized market of the 21st century.

Another reason for the resistance of teachers to using LOTEs is that they have often been prepared to be in complete control of the classroom and of the students' learning. They have been educated to believe that their use of standard English, as measured by a test, should be the goal for an educated person. Thus, they set about eradicating all linguistic features that do not conform to their own and to those of the test. Allowing students to use their LOTEs and features of English with which teachers are not familiarized not only violates their sense of language correctness, but robs them of their presumed entitlement to be in total control of the classroom. Teachers who allow the use of the students' language in classrooms must suspend their authoritative role, must trust their students' ability to use language to make sense of their own world.

Finally, the teaching of a language other than English in schools or even the true understanding of some varieties of English requires bilingual or bidialectal personnel, people who can extend the children's world by making sense of their use of the other language. For example, without a bilingual teacher only static maintenance of a LOTE will result, with the development of biliteracy not possible. The same is true in many bidialectal situations where only someone deeply familiar with the ways of speaking and using language in a particular community will be able to extend the students' ways of using language.

It is clear then, that respecting language diversity and affirming the multiple language identities of U.S. students requires a difficult shift for teachers and schools alike. We turn now to what has been done in the recent past, before we consider what must be done to prepare for the new millennium.

### Language diversity in U.S. classrooms: Where we've been

After the 1960s both special education and bilingual education were hailed as solutions to serve the disabled and the language minority population. In both cases, the educational approach was eventually mandated by judicial action, as the disabled and English language learners demanded equal educational opportunity. But for the most part, the educational programs that resulted took a deficit approach in educating these two groups, looking only at what the students did not have with regards to regular students. These students were seen as special, limited, and teachers were prepared only to notice their deficiencies, rather than their strengths. The categories for educational service and treatment became more and more medical in nature, an attempt to remedy the students' deficiencies.

Little by little the initial bilingual classrooms of the early 1970s where students who spoke languages other than English at home had been taught in English and Spanish in recognition of their multiple language identities started to disappear. This change was spurred by two societal changes. On the one hand, the pendulum had started to swing back in what Fishman has identified internationally as the rise and fall of the ethnic revival. The affirmation of the Spanish language identity of U.S. Latinos, and in particular, of those of Mexican American and Puerto Rican descent, was short-lived. 'Black is beautiful' or 'Brown is beautiful' became an outdated slogan of the 1960s, with whiteness and an English language identity slowly recovering its pre-1960 eminence. On the other hand, the U.S. bilingual and bidialectal landscape had become more complex, as the Immigration Act was amended in 1965, and immigration from other Spanish speaking countries increased, countries without the colonial or historical relationship to the United States of Puerto Rico and Mexico, as well as from countries where other languages or other varieties of English were spoken.

As language and ethnic diversity increased throughout the 1980s, bilingual classrooms became more remedial and transitional in nature, with the other language being used on a limited basis, for a short period of time, and only in educating those who were not proficient in English in an effort to remedy the situation. Bilingual teachers, who for the most part held monolingual and bilingual certification, were used only to teach in these remedial segregated settings. And although bilingual teachers were able to impart content knowledge to students in those classrooms, the goal of many bilingual education programs became solely to teach English, using professionals who spoke the child's language. From an educational program that started out respecting and affirming the language identities of the student, bilingual education often became the conduit to suppress the minority language identity, while maintaining the separateness of the group in question and excluding them from meaningful communicative interaction with students of language majority background.

In an effort to move beyond the remedial transitional model, two-way dual language programs of bilingual instruction made a very limited comeback in the

late 1980s and 1990s, with English speaking and English language learners taught together and with bilingualism a goal.

However, as the new millennium approaches, the education of U.S. language minorities has become even more conflicted. In the last five years, we have seen the passage of Proposition 227 in California, effectively ending all kinds of bilingual instruction in that state. And an attempt to claim Ebonics as a variety of African-American English has met with strong opposition. As the country has increased in language diversity, the movement toward Standards has taken afoot, effectively denying language differences and expecting the same level of standard English language proficiency of all. For example, in New York State, passing the English Language Arts Regents which requires a commencement level of standard written English will now be a requirement for graduation.

Research on bilingual and bidialectal populations effectively concludes that these populations cannot be compared to monolingual populations who use the school's language at home. Those who use a different language at home or use the English language differently from the way it is used in school are doubly-taxed in school, and thus the development of their standard majority language takes time (usually five to seven years) and can only be achieved through a rigorous educational plan. In the case of adolescent or adult speakers of other languages, those who have been well educated in the other language will acquire English faster than those who have had limited schooling in their native language.

In moving toward Standards, the nation talks about high standards in English and minimum competence in LOTE, promoting English as the only language identity of successful U.S. citizens. Standards has come to be identified with Standard English only. Although we must work harder to get language minority students to perform academically in standard English, not to affirm the multiple language identities of the students we teach is to effectively disenfranchise a large part of the population, and to rob U.S. society of an improved opportunity to communicate with the world at large.

### **Language diversity in the classrooms of the new millennium: Affirming multiple language identities**

The classrooms of the new millennium must have teachers who have been trained to understand the role that language plays in identity and the importance that languages other than English and different varieties of English hold for the language minority child's development. Teachers must understand that bilingualism and bidialectism are not absolutes, but are continua, and that all of us, regardless of language background, can move a little bit in these continua. And all teachers must be responsible for moving students along the two axes of the bilingualism/bidialectism continuum, not only acting responsibly to ensure that all students acquire standard English and accommodating their instruction to meet the

needs of those students, but also promoting the use of the students' other languages and other ways of speaking in the curriculum, regardless of their ability in standard English.

In the classrooms of the new millennium all teachers would be responsible for teaching all children, adapting instruction and assessment to meet their needs. Thus, the classroom teacher would be responsible for the growth in English of the English language learner, while the student would interact with other English speakers within the classroom. Of course, there would always be a need for an English as a Second Language or a Bilingual teacher, but that teacher would work mostly with the classroom teacher (except, of course, in cases where the bilingual teacher is the classroom teacher), recommending activities to further the students' development, adapting instruction, documenting their growth, and negotiating instruction. And although specialized pull-out ESL services would be needed, these services would not interfere with the student's participation in the inclusive classroom. Assessment in English language ability, however, would always be different for these students, allowing for the differences created by the different language circumstances at home.

In the classrooms of the new millennium all teachers would also feel comfortable encouraging children to speak, read, and write in languages other than English or in varieties of English other than the Standard. They would have significant collections of children's literature in the many languages of the children. And teachers would encourage children to read out loud in other languages, not only affirming the child's multiple identities, but also opening up a multilingual/multidialectal world for the other children. As in the case above, there would be a need for bilingual teachers, sometimes of different language backgrounds, who would work with the classroom teacher, suggesting books and developing material in the students' native languages, and assessing the students' bilingual and biliteracy development. But there would also be a need for a bilingual teacher who would provide instruction in the school's most numerous language other than English. Although literacy in this language would be taught separately to those who speak that LOTE at home and those who do not, there would also be project-oriented sessions for all children where the language other than English would be used as a medium of instruction. Again, assessment for the two groups would be different.

All teachers must take responsibility to affirm the many different language identities of students in the United States, including the standard English one, as well as the LOTE or non-standard one. Leaving the acquisition and development of standard English only to traditional English as a Second Language, English language specialists, or bilingual teachers minimizes opportunities for interaction with native English speakers and for development and growth. Only if all teachers take responsibility for all students, and do so consistently throughout the curriculum, will the standard English literacy crisis in which we find ourselves as a nation be solved. Likewise, leaving the maintenance and development of the language other than English only to the bilingual teacher may affirm the fortunate few who may be in these specialized classes, but it leaves most bilingual speakers without any societal recognition. It also stigmatizes the use of the language other

than English as a mark of minority membership and often just of non-English speakers, instead of promoting it as a societal resource from which both minorities and majorities would benefit.

We must insist then that affirming the multiple language identities of U.S. students becomes one of the Standards in the new millennium. In doing so, Standards becomes differentiated from standardization, recognizing differences which must be taken into account in the increased performance of different groups. While it may be impossible for an English language learner to meet the same standard in English as a native English speaker, it would be likewise impossible for a LOTE learner to achieve the same standard in a LOTE as a native speaker of that language. Differentiating language standards for majority and minority populations, while demanding that all teachers be responsible for helping both groups achieve higher standards, is the only way of affirming the multiple language identities of U.S. citizens and at the same time ensure the equity in education that Tove Skutnabb-Kangas has defended in her work.

## **‘This Place Nurtures my Spirit’: Creating Contexts of Empowerment in Linguistically-diverse Schools**

*Jim Cummins*

The ‘quotation’ in the title is wishful thinking. It expresses what I and every other contributor to this volume would hope that schools might at least aspire to achieve. Instead, as Tove Skutnabb-Kangas’ writing and presentations have powerfully articulated, schools frequently inculcate shame among culturally diverse students, constrict their identities and their minds, and leave them spiritually numb rather than vibrant. This reality emerges clearly from the study carried out by Mary Poplin and Joseph Weeres in four multicultural urban schools in southern California, termed *Voices from the Inside: A Report on Schooling from Inside the Classroom* (1992). Among the 24,000 pages of interview transcriptions, essays, drawings, journal entries, and notes that formed the data for this study was a poignant observation by one of the students: ‘*This place hurts my spirit.*’ Poplin and Weeres reported that the schools exhibited ‘a pervasive sense of despair’ largely as a result of the problematic relationships that were the norm in these schools:

Relationships dominated all participant discussions about issues of schooling in the U.S. No group inside the schools felt adequately respected, connected or affirmed. Students, over and over again, raised the issue of care. What they liked best about school was when people, particularly teachers, cared about them or did special things for them. Dominating their complaints were being ignored, not being cared for and receiving negative treatment. (Poplin & Weeres, 1992, 19)

Clearly, schools do not have to be like this. Yet, these kinds of relationships, however well-intentioned on the part of educators, tend to be the norm rather than the exception when the language or language variety that students bring to school is constructed as a problem to be resolved or fixed. We see too few examples, at least in North America, of schools that have taken as their starting point the conviction that linguistically diverse students have the *right* to maintain and develop their mother tongue within the context of the school and that their cultural identities are worthy of respect and nurturing. We also see too few schools that take as their starting point the conviction that the languages and cultures that students bring to school are *resources* for other students, teachers, and the society as a whole (Ruiz,