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# Pedagogies and Practices in Multilingual Classrooms: Singularities in Pluralities

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Bilingual classrooms most often have strict language arrangements about when and who should speak what language to whom. This practice responds to diglossic arrangements and models of bilingualism developed in the 20th century. However, in the 21st century, heteroglossic bilingual conceptualizations are needed in which the complex discursive practices of multilingual students, their translanguagings, are used in sense-making and in tending to the singularities in the pluralities that make up multilingual classrooms today. Examining the case of a network of U.S. secondary schools for newcomer immigrants, the International High Schools, this article looks at how students' plurilingual abilities are built through seven principles that support dynamic plurilingual practices in instruction—heterogeneity, collaboration, learner-centeredness, language and content integration, language use from students up, experiential learning, and local autonomy and responsibility. As a result, students become not only more knowledgeable and academically successful but also more confident users of academic English, better at translanguaging, and more plurilingual-proficient. The article presents translanguaging in education as the constant adaptation of linguistic resources in the service of meaning-making and in tending to the singularities in the pluralities that make up multilingual classrooms today.

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THE LITERATURE ON BILINGUALISM IN education—whether the education of language majorities or language minorities—has most often treated language groups as if they were static, homogeneous, and monolithic. Thus, models and pedagogies of second-language education and bilingual education developed in the 20th century generally treat groups as if they were monolingual and acquiring an additional language in a stepwise fashion. These programs group stu-

dents homogeneously by language level, using established pedagogies and instructional materials that are leveled and that use one language at a time.

However, in the 21st century, a monolithic view of ethnolinguistic groups has been increasingly questioned, with scholars pointing to differences created by class, gender, and power (see, e.g., Brubaker, 2009). Furthermore, with globalization and technological innovation, ethnolinguistic communities that had been previously isolated have started to come into contact with different people. Thus, the idea that an additional language could be taught to a monolithic group that starts out as monolingual is no longer viable (see, e.g., García, 2009a).

We argue in this article that the multilingual/multicultural classrooms of today are characterized by an increased plurality of practices. Rather than constructing educational models for a particular type of student who uses one language or the other, we must learn to focus on teaching individuals within multilingual classrooms in which the plurality is created by paying attention to the singularity of the individual student. We speak of teaching for *singularities in pluralities*, extending arguments proposed by Makoni, Makoni, Abdelhay, and Mashiri (in press) in studying language policies in Africa. To the *pluralization of singularity* that has accompanied the “invention” of many African “languages” as different and singular units (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007), Makoni et al. offer the concept of *singularization of plurality*—that is, a focus on the individual differences in the discursive regimes that we call “languages.” The result, then, is the facilitation of communication to improve the lives of speakers of language, instead of promoting a specific language or languages.

In the same way, teaching in today’s multilingual/multicultural classrooms should focus on communicating with all students and negotiating challenging academic content with all of them by building on their different language practices, rather than simply promoting and teaching one or more standard languages. In this article, we use *singularities in pluralities* to refer to the increased plurality of practices—linguistic, educational, cultural—that characterize students in the multilingual/multicultural classrooms of today. Additionally, we use the concept of singularities in pluralities to discuss how teachers’ pedagogies and practices that facilitate learning in these complex contexts must build on students’ singular language practices as part of the classrooms’ pluralities.

This article starts out by reviewing programmatic and theoretical constructs that have been used in the past, as well as those that support our position. It then focuses on one type of education for students who are linguistically diverse—the Internationals Network for Public Schools (INPS)—a group of schools that serve newcomer adolescent immigrants in the United States. We specifically look at the dynamic structures, pedagogies, and language practices in these schools as examples of how to invert schooling structures and subvert traditional language education so as to pay attention to the singularities of students within multilingual classrooms.

## FROM MONOLINGUALISM TO LINEAR BILINGUALISM TO DYNAMIC BILINGUALISM IN SCHOOLS

### *A First Turn: From Monolingualism to Linear Bilingualism*

During the second half of the 20th century, schools started to pay more attention to developing the bilingual proficiency of monolingual children, both language majorities and language minorities. This first turn from strictly monolingual schools to more bilingualism in schools coincided with the ethnic revival that took place around the world in the 1960s (Fishman, 1985).

In Canada, Wallace Lambert and his associates showed that bilingualism resulted in positive cognitive advantages (Peal & Lambert, 1962). At the request of Anglophone parents in Québec who wanted their children to become bilingual in order to participate in a Francophone Québec that was gaining political power, Lambert and his associates developed an *early immersion bilingual education* program in St. Lambert, a suburb of Montréal, in 1965 (Lambert & Tucker, 1972).

In the United States, the era of Civil Rights turned the attention of educators to the failure in school of language minorities—in particular, of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans. As a result, bilingual education programs were established, some funded through Congress’s authorization of the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act). In the beginning, some of these programs had a philosophy of maintaining the home language of the children while developing English (*maintenance bilingual education* programs), but very soon, in the 1974 reauthorization of the Bilingual Education Act, programs were defined as transitional, with home languages used only until the children were proficient in English (*transitional bilingual education* programs).

This ethnic revival movement of the second half of the 20th century was also fueled by the independence of many African and Asian countries. As new countries were forged, decisions had to be made about how to teach a multilingual population that was to be schooled in a language that was often “foreign” to them. In many cases, and with the urging and support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a transitional bilingual education model was often adopted.

These bilingual education programs—an improvement over the monolingual programs of

FIGURE 1  
Additive Versus Subtractive Bilingualism

Additive Bilingualism	Subtractive Bilingualism
$L1 + L2 = L1 + L2$	$L1 + L2 - L1 \rightarrow L2$

the past and which continue today—are shaped by the two models of bilingualism that Lambert (1974) developed—*additive bilingualism* and *subtractive bilingualism*. Additive bilingualism refers to the type of bilingualism Lambert hoped to develop as a result of immersion bilingual education programs in Québec. A child enters school with a first language (L1), a second language (L2) is added, and, as a result, the child becomes a speaker of both languages. The thinking is that the child’s bilingualism needs to move toward “ultimate attainment,” an endpoint in which the process is complete. Subtractive bilingualism, however, is often what language-minority students get. Students enter school with an L1, and while the L2 is added, the first language is subtracted. The child’s bilingualism is moving away from the “ultimate attainment” of bilingualism. Instead, it is moving backward toward the “ultimate attainment” of monolingualism. Both models can be rendered as in Figure 1.

In these conceptualizations of bilingualism, the two languages are seen as having a linear relationship, with the L2 moving forward (additive) or the L1 moving backward (subtractive). In addition, there is a conception of two autonomous languages—an L1 and an L2—and of bilinguals as two monolinguals within one individual.

At the same time, other theories of bilingualism were being developed. No other scholar has contributed more to advancing theoretical frameworks surrounding the changing shape of bilingualism in education than Jim Cummins. Early in 1979, Cummins developed his theory of *linguistic interdependence*, positing that both languages bolster each other in the students’ acquisition of language and knowledge. At the same time, Cummins proposed his theory of the *common underlying proficiency*, positing that knowledge and abilities acquired in one language are potentially available for the development of another.

#### *A Second Turn: From Linear Bilingualism to Dynamic Bilingualism*

Toward the end of the 20th century, the greater movement of people, goods, and information brought about by globalization, innovations in technology, and changes connected to corporate globalization further impacted our understand-

ings and enactments of bilingualism in education. In some countries of Europe, maintenance bilingual education had been used to educate autochthonous minorities. However, the collapse of totalitarian regimes meant that more national minorities started to claim greater autonomy. Bilingual education became a way of educating children who, after suffering political repression and monolingual schooling, had a broad range of linguistic competence in their own home languages. Thus, bilingual education programs started to change, capturing this greater linguistic heterogeneity. *Developmental bilingual education* programs, more aware of this greater range of language abilities, started to come into being, not only in Europe but also in the United States and other places.

The Deaf, who had been exposed to oralism as a schooling practice throughout the world, with signacy not recognized as valid, started experimenting with developmental bilingual education programs. Deaf educators were mindful of the broad oracy ability ranges in the Deaf community, with some being profoundly deaf and others hard of hearing, and with cochlear implants increasing the diversity of oracy abilities. They were also aware of the broad signing ability in the Deaf community, with most children born to hearing parents and thus arriving at school with little signacy, but others arriving with developmentally appropriate signacy. The signacy and oracy heterogeneity also produced diverse literacy practices. Thus, for the Deaf community, the diversity of signacy, literacy, and oracy meant that only a developmental bilingual education program in which students’ different abilities were addressed was adequate (Baker, 2010; Marschark, 2009).

In places in which Indigenous peoples continued to be mostly disempowered (e.g., Latin America), the only way of including the students’ home languages was through transitional bilingual education (López, 2006, 2008). However, in countries where Indigenous peoples had gained some measure of political power, while having lost much of their home language proficiency, such as in the case of the Māoris in Aotearoa/New Zealand, *immersion revitalization bilingual education* programs were developed (Berryman, Glynn, Woller, & Reweti, 2010; May, 2004, 2010). In these programs, there was also a great range of linguistic diversity, with Māori bilingual ability being highly heterogeneous. Thus, there was recognition that the students could not be treated as monolingual English speakers, for they could all reach back to bits and pieces of their ancestral language practices in order to develop them further. There was

also recognition that Māori children were not two monolinguals in one—a prevalent view of bilingualism in the past that has been challenged by many (see, e.g., Grosjean, 1982, 2010).

Meanwhile, in many countries where bilingualism was becoming the norm, parents started clamoring for bilingual education programs that would make all children bilingual to whichever extent they needed to be competent in different language practices. In the United States, *two-way bilingual education* programs—sometimes called “dual language” programs for political expediency because of the silencing of bilingualism in the United States (see García, 2009a; García & Kleifgen, 2010)—started to be implemented. Two-way bilingual education programs educate together language-majority and language-minority children in two languages, separating languages by teacher, subject, or part of the day or week. These programs grew out of the political desirability of educating language minorities together with language majorities, as well as of keeping bilingualism as a possibility to educate language minorities at a time of increased attacks against transitional bilingual education programs. In Europe and other places, *content and language integrated learning (CLIL)* bilingual education programs came into being around the same time. CLIL programs teach at least one subject to all students through the medium of an additional language. (For an excellent treatment of CLIL, see Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010.)

The differences between conceptualizations of bilingualism in these programs of what we are calling the second turn and those that we considered in the previous section of what we are calling the first turn are telling. The programs of the first turn claim an L1 and an L2 for the group of children and have a linear additive or

subtractive bilingualism with monolingual norms as the goal. The programs of the second turn, however, conceptualize bilingualism as dynamic (García, 2009a). This dynamic conceptualization of bilingualism goes beyond the notion of two autonomous languages, of an L1 and an L2, and of additive or subtractive bilingualism. Instead, dynamic bilingualism suggests that the language practices of all bilinguals are complex and inter-related; they do not emerge in a linear way. As García (2009a) has said, they do not result in either the balanced two wheels of a bicycle (as in additive bilingualism) or in a unicycle (as in subtractive bilingualism), but instead bilingualism is like an all-terrain vehicle with individuals using it to adapt to both the ridges and craters of communication in uneven terrains (see Figure 2; see also García & Kleifgen, 2010). Dynamic bilingualism sees the complex bilingual language practices as both the center of how language practices occur and the goal for communication in an increasingly multilingual world.

García (2009a) proposed two types of dynamic bilingualism for the 21st century—recursive dynamic and dynamic. *Recursive dynamic bilingualism* characterizes the bilingual development of those individuals who have undergone a high degree of language loss and thus need to recover bits and pieces of their ancestral language practices as they reach back to move forward. *Dynamic bilingualism* refers to the development of different language practices to varying degrees in order to interact with increasingly multilingual communities in a global world.

This second turn in which bilingualism started to be recognized as more dynamic was then characterized by moving away from conceptualizations of language as a monolithic construct made up of discrete sets of skills to a conceptualization of

FIGURE 2  
Types of Bilingualism

Subtractive  
Bilingualism



Additive  
Bilingualism



Dynamic  
Bilingualism



Note. This figure is adapted from García and Kleifgen (2010). We gratefully acknowledge permission from Teachers College Press to reproduce this figure.

language as a series of social practices that are embedded in a web of social relations that maintain asymmetries of power (Pennycook, 2010; Street, 1984). Pennycook (2010) explained:

A focus on language practices moves the focus from language as an autonomous system that preexists its use, and competence as an internal capacity that accounts for language production, towards an understanding of language as a product of the *embodied social practices* that bring it about. (p. 9, our emphasis)

In speaking about language as an activity, some scholars refer to *linguaging* (Becker, 1995; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Maturana & Varela, 1987; Shohamy, 2006). Linguaging is different from language conceived simply as a system of rules or structures; linguaging is a product of social action and refers to discursive practices of people. Linguaging, as Becker (1995) explained, “is shaping old texts into new contexts. It is done at the level of particularity” (p. 9).

Within a dynamic conceptualization of bilingualism, bilinguals are valued for their differing multicompetence (Cook, 2002) because their lives, minds, and actions are different from those of monolinguals. As Herdina and Jessner (2002) have pointed out, the interactions of bilinguals’ interdependent language systems create new structures that are not found in monolingual systems. Learning is then not just the “taking in” of linguistic forms by learners, but as Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) have said, “the constant adaptation of their linguistic resources in the service of meaning-making in response to the affordances that emerge in the communicative situation, which is, in turn, affected by learners’ adaptability” (p. 135). This view is based on van Lier’s (2000, 2004) concept of “affordance,” which he defined as a relationship between a learner and the environment “that signals an opportunity for or inhibition of action” (2004, p. 4).

Cummins himself moved away from discussing an L1/L2 dichotomy, characterizing the way in which languages had been conceptualized in bilingual classrooms as “two solitudes” (Cummins, 2007) and calling for bilingual instructional strategies in the classroom as a way of promoting “identities of competence among language learners from socially marginalized groups, thereby enabling them to engage more confidently with literacy and other academic work in both languages” (p. 238).

García (2009a), extending Williams (cited in Baker, 2006), talks about *translanguaging* as the process by which bilingual students and teachers

engage in complex discursive practices in order to “make sense” of, and communicate in, multilingual classrooms. According to García (2009a), translanguaging refers to multiple discursive practices as seen from the perspective of speakers themselves. It is the communicative norm of multilingual communities.

Translanguaging builds on the concept of linguaging as social practices explained earlier. However, translanguaging also relates to the concept of *transculturación* introduced by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1940/1995). For Ortiz, transculturation refers to the complex and multidirectional process in cultural transformation, as well as to the questioning of the epistemological purity of disciplines and of the knowing subject. The concept of transculturation thus involves what Mignolo (2000) called “border thinking.” Mignolo saw border thinking as “knowledge conceived from the exterior borders of the modern/colonial world system”—that is, “subaltern knowledge” (p. 11). In blending transculturation and linguaging, the term *translanguaging* responds to the complex and multidirectional processes in the language practices of people and challenges the view of languages as autonomous and pure, as constructed in Western thought. Translanguaging, then, is a product of border thinking, of knowledge that is autochthonous and conceived from a bilingual, not monolingual, position.

Translanguaging includes codeswitching—defined as the shift between two languages in context—and it also includes translation, but it differs from both of these simple practices in that it refers to the process in which bilingual students make sense and perform bilingually in the myriad ways of classrooms—reading, writing, taking notes, discussing, signing, and so on. However, translanguaging is not only a way to scaffold instruction and to make sense of learning and language; it is part of the discursive regimes that students in the 21st century must perform, part of a broad linguistic repertoire that includes, at times, the ability to function in the standardized academic languages required in schools. It is thus important to view translanguaging as complex discursive practices that enable bilingual students to also develop and enact standard academic ways of linguaging.

#### SINGULAR PLURALITIES AND DYNAMIC PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION

Education for bilingualism (i.e., to teach an additional language) includes types of programs that are bilingual but also some that are

monolingual. For example, in the United States, transitional bilingual education programs use two languages to develop English, whereas English-as-a-second-language programs are monolingual programs in which instruction is supposed to be in English. Both, however, are conceived as education for bilingualism because their objective is to teach an additional language. Whether educational programs are monolingual or bilingual and whether they view bilingualism linearly or dynamically, they are often structured as if groups of students need the same language “treatment,” as if language and life (or the content they need to learn) were separate. Thus, schools often have language policies and practices that are organized as top-down and are applied to the group or groups as if everyone needed the same. However, all educators need to pay attention to the individual experience of students in their classrooms. John Dewey (1938), the American educational reformer, has said:

Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into. . . . It is then the business of the educator to see in what direction an experience is heading. . . . Failure to take the moving force into account so as to judge and direct it on the ground of what it is moving into means disloyalty to the principle of experience itself. (p. 38)

Recently, one of us (García) was in a fifth-grade two-way bilingual classroom that, although attentive to dynamic bilingualism, demonstrated how organizing classrooms for homogeneous groups of students is often not enough in our complex world. The teacher described the class as being half Latino, half Anglo. However, of course, the individual experiences of the children were far more complex than simply those of two ethnic or linguistic groups. Among the so-called “Latinos,” there were monolingual Spanish speakers, monolingual English speakers, and bilingual and trilingual speakers. Not all of the Latinos who were learning English were speakers of Spanish, for in the group there was a recently arrived Mexican indigenous child who spoke Mixteco at home as well as a Paraguayan child who was bilingual in Spanish/Guaraní. Those Latinos who were born in the United States were not necessarily the ones who were English speakers, for some had been born in the United States and had then moved back to Latin America or had moved back and forth over the course of their lifetime. Some who were born in Latin America had been in the United States for a long time and were fluent English speakers, but there were also those who

had recently arrived. Latino immigrants to the United States often follow a migration pattern referred to as *step migration*, in which one family member initiates the migration, with children, spouses, and siblings left behind, until the lengthy process of obtaining permanent visas is resolved (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991). For this reason, the child’s language characteristics often have little to do with the language of the home. In this fifth-grade two-way bilingual classroom, often the mother had been in the United States for a long time and spoke English. She sometimes had a new husband and young children whose linguistic repertoires did not coincide with that of the child. There had been divorces, marriages, and re-composition of families, each bringing with them a new set of language practices. There had also been moves to different communities, also accentuating different language practices.

Among the “Latinos” there were class differences, national differences, and racial differences. Among the so-called “Anglos,” there were students who spoke English at home, but there were also speakers of Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Urdu, Gujarati, and Romanian. Although the teacher had been educated as a bilingual teacher and was well versed in theoretical frameworks and pedagogy, she was ignorant of the linguistic complexity of her classroom. In fact, on the first day, when García walked in, the children told her that the Romanian girl was a “Roman.” When García inquired further, it became obvious that neither the teacher nor the children had any idea of either the country of Romania nor the Romanian language (nor, incidentally, of whether the child was a Roma from Romania). The teacher had also never heard of Guaraní and had no idea that one of her students was a Guaraní speaker. For her, the job simply was to teach the children in two languages—English and Spanish. Clearly, the individual linguistic, cultural, and schooling experiences of the children were being ignored. This school only structures a language group experience, denying the many individual variations that exist.

Schools that are truly organized to respect the singular pluralities in multilingual classrooms have to let go, then, of some principles that even bilingual education has long held dear. No longer is it possible to isolate languages or to limit instruction to two or even three languages; it is important to create a context in which educators pay close attention to how a student and his or her language practices are in motion—that is, to focus on how the students are engaged in meaningful activities. It is only then that, as Carini (2000) said, “it is

possible for the teacher to gain the insights needed to *adjust* her or his own approaches to the child accordingly” (p. 9, our emphasis).

Bilingual education programs often have language allocation policies that dictate when, how, and for how long each language should be used; that is, language allocation policies most often focus on the *macroalternation* of languages. Rarely do these policies include thinking about the *microalternation* of languages, the translanguaging that allows educators to adjust language practices and content to the child. Educators must negotiate sense-making instructional decisions, moment by moment (for educators as language policy makers, see Menken & García, 2010). Bilingualism in education must emerge from the meaningful interaction of students with different linguistic backgrounds and their educators, instead of solely being handed down to educators as language policy.

This pedagogical philosophy of singular pluralities rooted in progressive education, alongside understandings of dynamic bilingualism and its complexities, is what schools must own today. However, at the same time, and especially in the education of language minorities, attention has to be paid to *social justice*. Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) defined social justice as:

the exercise of altering these arrangements [difference in terms of power, economic distributions, access to knowledge, and generation of knowledge] by actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions, among other forms of relationships. (p. 162)

Teacher–student relationships and interactions have to be simultaneously rooted in the singularity of the child’s experience and the plurality of experiences and languages that make up the bilingual or multilingual classroom. Recognizing the different language practices of students and focusing on the singularity of the individual experience and the oppression of groups of minority people would enable language minority students to become engaged in their own struggle for liberation and education (Freire, 1970), as well as to invest in the development of their additional language (Norton, 2000).

How schools organize themselves to deliver this instruction depends on the local communities and the characteristics of the students. For example, in the United States, there are schools in residentially segregated neighborhoods where more traditional bilingual education structures are still

very much relevant. (See Bartlett & García, 2011 and García & Bartlett, 2007 for an example of one such program for Dominican immigrants in the United States.) But there is also space for more flexible bilingualism in education, emerging not from top–down policies, but from educators’ and students’ negotiation of bilingual practices (see García, Flores, & Chu, 2011). García and Kleifgen (2010) have called this type of program *dynamic plurilingual education*.

We follow the use of the Council of Europe in reserving the term “plurilingual” for the complex language practices of individuals, whereas using “multilingual” to signal the language practices of classrooms, geographic or political areas, or groups. In the Council of Europe’s (2001) view, plurilingualism is:

The ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where *a person*, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw. (p. 168, our emphasis)

In schools with a dynamic plurilingual approach, the locus of control for language is the students’ own active use—their language/content understandings in motion and in dynamic interrelationship. Regardless of whether classrooms are monolingual (with students of one language group), or bilingual (with students of two language groups), or multilingual (with students of many language groups), instruction is plurilingual, in the sense that each students’ languaging is recognized and the pedagogy is dynamically centered on the singularity of the individual experiences that make up a plurality. As such, this pedagogy enables students, as Freire (1970) has said, to learn from each other as well as from teachers, at the same time that teachers learn from the students. In addition, this pedagogy is centered in the dialogical action that promotes understanding. Said another way, in these dynamic plurilingual programs, the direction between the educator and the educated goes both ways. Both are learners and teachers. The pedagogical practices negotiate the dynamic bilingualism of students’ individual experiences while actively working against existing forms of domination and exploitation of groups of people. It is then to an example of such schools and how they enact this dynamic plurilingual education that we now turn.

TABLE 1  
Internationals Network's Schools in New York City  
and California and Founding Year

1. The International High School at LaGuardia Community College	1985
2. The Manhattan International High School	1993
3. The Brooklyn International High School	1994
4. Bronx International High School	2000
5. The International High School at Prospect Heights	2004
6. The Flushing International High School	2004
7. International High School at Lafayette	2005
8. International Community High School	2006
9. Pan American International High School, Queens	2007
10. Oakland International High School	2007
11. Pan American International High School at Monroe	2008
12. San Francisco International High School	2009
13. International High School at Union Square	2010

#### INTERNATIONALS HIGH SCHOOLS

The INPS is a U.S. nonprofit organization that supports the work of 13 public (government-supported) high schools for newcomer immigrant adolescents who are new to English with what is called the “Internationals approach” (Sylvan & Romero, 2002), which we will describe later. As of September 2010, 11 of these Internationals High Schools (IHSs from now on) are located in New York City and 2 in the California Bay Area. Table 1 displays a list of the IHSs in 2010.

In response to the growing immigrant community in New York City and challenges of preparing late-entry immigrant adolescents for the rigors of college study, the first IHS opened in the borough of Queens in 1985. The success of the educational model led to the opening of Manhattan and Brooklyn IHSs in 1993 and 1994 and Bronx International in 2001, as well as the establishment of an Internationals Schools Partnership among the schools to coordinate interschool collaborative projects. With grants from both a federally financed program aimed at disseminating exemplary programs for immigrant students who were new to English and the Annenberg Foundation's “Networks for School Renewal” project in New York City, the Partnership supported new schools as well as provided continuous learning and growth opportunities for all schools and their faculties. In 2004, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the INPS incorporated and supported the opening of nine

more IHSs—seven in New York City and two in California.

Although originally IHSs were linguistically diverse, serving newcomer immigrant adolescents of many language backgrounds who were learning English, two new IHSs have recently opened specifically to serve the large number of Latino immigrants in New York City. Thus, there are two models of IHSs. There is a *multilingual plurilingual model* serving immigrant students with many different home languages and supporting the use of students' many languages in sense-making and learning. There is also a *bilingual plurilingual model* serving immigrant students with Spanish as their home language and using English and Spanish to make instructional meaning in the two schools called Pan American International High Schools (PAIHSs). The important point, however, is that regardless of whether the classrooms are multilingual (with students who speak many languages other than English) or bilingual (with students who speak only Spanish), the pedagogy is a plurilingual one, dynamically centered on the individual students' language practices—that is, on the singularity of the plurality in the classroom (for more on pedagogy at the IHSs, see De Fazio, 1999; see also Walqui & van Lier, 2010).

The Internationals approach was developed based on the understanding that individuals are incredibly diverse and that immigrant adolescents, who are *emergent bilinguals* and arriving with limited knowledge of English, still have a large array of abilities, knowledge, and experiences—linguistic, cognitive, artistic, social, in many other spheres. In the United States, emergent bilinguals are most often referred to as English language learners or limited English proficient. We follow García (2009b) in referring to students who are new to English as emergent bilinguals, thus recognizing their complex abilities and strengths and focusing on their social, emotional, and academic development beyond that of just learning English. Building on the immigrant adolescents' existing strengths and understanding the centrality of language to human culture and individual beings, the Internationals approach focuses on preparing adolescent immigrants to succeed in college and careers in the United States and especially on supporting the development of complex language practices that include academic English language and literacy.

In addition to being newcomer immigrants who are new to English, the IHSs' student population is also poor. In 2009, 92% of students at IHSs were on free or reduced lunch—a measure of poverty—compared to 71% in all New



York City high schools. Yet, despite their poverty, their limited English, and their recent immigration, adolescents at IHSs are doing better, as we will see, than other immigrant emergent bilingual students in New York City.

Traditionally, high school study in the United States consists of 4 years. For newcomer immigrant students, it is difficult to develop the level of academic English required for high school graduation in 4 years. Yet, the graduation rate of emergent bilingual students in the IHSs is 57%. This is 13 percentage points higher than the 44% graduation rate of emergent bilingual adolescents in all high schools in New York City. It takes immigrant adolescents who are learning English sometimes longer than 4 years to pass all of the high school graduation exams. Whereas the high school graduation rate of these emergent bilinguals citywide is 49% after 5 years and 42% after 6 years, the high school completion rate of students in IHSs is 72% after 5 years and 74% after 6 years—that is, 23 percentage points higher after 5 years and 32 percentage points higher after 6 years. Clearly, the IHSs are more successful in graduating immigrant students who are learning English than many other high schools in the city. Likewise, if we compare the rate of success of IHS students in the English Language Arts and Math exams required for graduation with other emergent bilinguals in New York City, 70% of IHS students passed the English Language Arts exam compared with 47% of all emergent bilinguals in New York City high schools. Whereas 82% of IHS students passed the Math exam, 61% of emergent bilingual students in all New York City high schools passed the same exam. (Data from 2009.)

What, then, accounts for the success of these IHSs? Eight principles lie at the core of the IHS instructional design:<sup>1</sup>

1. heterogeneity and singularities in plurality;
2. collaboration among students;
3. collaboration among faculty;
4. learner-centered classrooms;
5. language and content integration;
6. plurilingualism from the students up;
7. experiential learning; and
8. localized autonomy and responsibility.

Before we describe each of these principles of the Internationals approach, we illustrate what classrooms in IHSs might look like.

#### A SNAPSHOT: IHS CLASSROOMS

The IHS classrooms are noisy, active, and interactive places. Students are generally sitting in

groups of three to four, usually at hexagonal or trapezoidal tables so as to promote interaction. They are talking, arguing, trying to make their points, and collaborating on a project together. In so doing, they are using different language practices, including those they bring from home. In a multilingual–plurilingual model classroom, an observer will hear several languages at once and may see materials in many languages. In the bilingual–plurilingual model of the two PAIHSs, an observer will see students alternating between Spanish and English and using materials in both.

In a well-functioning IHS classroom, you find students talking in small groups, using bilingual dictionaries (both electronic and paper), and switching between English and home languages as needed to complete complex cognitive tasks and put together a collaborative project, often an oral presentation in English to their peers or a written product. Students are asked to do oral presentations from their earliest days in the schools and are supported in taking risks to use their new language practices publicly. The length and complexity of the presentations will vary based on students' linguistic proficiency in English.

Students walk around periodically to get materials they need to complete their project. The teacher is not in the front of the room talking or sitting at the desk, but rather sitting with the students listening, redirecting conversation at times, asking and answering questions, or just being part of the small group discussions as he or she moves from table to table.

The teacher will almost always be using English with students and asking other students to translate for him or her when a student is using a language other than English. Despite the many languages that may be involved in the process of creating a project, students use English on a daily basis because the project (with the exception of home language projects and work in Spanish in a PAIHSs model) will generally (although not always) be in English. Students will be asked to present orally often and generally in English; so, many times they are practicing their English presentations or preparing for their presentations using their home languages.

Most of the texts and documents in the classroom will be in English, although the student tables also have dictionaries in many languages and print and Internet material in languages other than English. Although students may be asking for translation from other students or having some discussion in the home language around the text or document, they go back to English to interact with peers on their project.

Students are usually working with an activity guide provided by the teacher that walks them through each step of the project. The activity guides are in English, so they require constant negotiation in English. The guides contain many graphic organizers that ask students to summarize and categorize the information and then to use it to make conclusions, ask questions, synthesize different ideas, or compare perspectives. They also include different media (written word, poetry, visuals, primary documents, etc.) that students of different levels can use to make sense of their learning. Some guides may contain almost no English text and instead have pictures and graphics so that students who are not literate or those who are completely new to English can have access to the information.

There are resources on the walls that provide students with sentence starters, key vocabulary, and phrases that they can use to add ideas or politely disagree—all in English. However, as we said earlier, tables always have dictionaries in various languages and students consult them frequently. Documents in different languages and Internet access to home language materials are often available. Multiple conversations are happening at multiple times in many languages with occasional breaks in the “chaos” for the teacher to explain a concept or practice a skill collectively that students immediately apply in the work they are doing.

There is often a student discussion leader/facilitator at each table, with every other student playing a key role or assuming responsibility for a meaningful piece of the culminating project. Groups of students pool their knowledge. Students have considerable choice in how they arrive at the final project, including the language practices with which they negotiate, and the eventual form that the project takes on, but activity guides and rubrics (often collectively designed between teachers and students) establish parameters in which students operate.

A student who knows little English will often be sitting next to a more proficient student who shares a home language so that he or she can get support and better access the information. Students depend on one another to share their experiences, knowledge, perspectives, and understandings of the text; they teach each other. The teacher is not the only “expert” in the room, and considerable control is handed over to the students. Content is made accessible because students work on figuring out the content, language, and implications together. Students are constantly asked to “re-present” the information

they are reading and studying and to discuss it collectively.

Authentic experiences are woven into different parts of the class—a unit is often introduced through a field trip, movie clip, pictures, hands-on activity, or small group discussion about a familiar concept/experience that relates to the more academic concepts central to that project or unit of study. These shared oral experiences that are designed to be accessible to all students anchor the major concepts for students, provide an accessible avenue to return to when the concepts and language get to a higher level, generate key vocabulary and ideas that students can relate to the broader topic, and often provide a hook or motivation that gets students interested in the topic, understanding how it relates to their own life or the world around them. Students are constantly asked to reflect on their work—to look at where they are as learners and where they need to go. Students are also asked to think about the broader implications and the “so what?” aspect of what they are studying.

The work of the teachers at the IHSs is heavily focused on designing the activity guides (not lesson plans) to direct students through active learning of academic content. Rather than talk about “lesson plans” that describe what teachers are doing, the Internationals approach encourages teachers to plan curricula and projects to involve students in active learning, in which students and teachers rely on each other and in which students utilize English and their home languages to complete projects by building on their existing knowledge (both content and linguistic).

In short, teachers in IHS classrooms use dynamic plurilingual pedagogy and build on translanguaging in the classroom. By allowing individual students to use their home language practices to make sense of the learning moment, these IHSs go beyond traditional second-language programs (such as English as a second language [ESL], English structured immersion, or Sheltered English in the United States) or traditional bilingual education programs. Instead of the top-down traditional approach that often dictates language policy in schools and that in the United States results in classrooms being English-only or bilingual, the IHSs have designed a dynamic plurilingual system of education. At these IHSs, emergent bilingual immigrant adolescents are developing English language and literacy so that they can graduate from U.S. high schools. However, they are doing so by being empowered as individuals to use their home language practices in singular agentive ways to make meaning

of their learning of rigorous content and new language practices.

Now that we have described what IHS classrooms might look like and we have identified the subtle translanguaging practices that characterize the dynamic plurilingual education of the IHSs, we turn to explaining each of the core principles of their sociolinguistic and socioeducational philosophy.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

### *Heterogeneity and Singularities in Plurality*

*Optimizing heterogeneity builds on the strengths of every single individual member of the school community.* The IHSs have a different approach to heterogeneity than that found in most programs or schools that work with language-minority students. Because IHSs believe that inevitably all groups are by nature heterogeneous, instructional programs are designed to leverage diversity.

The students at the IHSs are highly diverse, coming from over 90 countries, speaking about 55 languages, and ranging in prior academic experience from never having attended school to being at or above grade level in their home language. They have vastly different experiences, with some commonalities. All students are new learners of English and have been in the United States 4 years or fewer at the time of admission. About 70% of students have been separated from one or both parents in the course of immigrating to the United States. They may have seen parents and relatives killed in violent upheavals and wars, or have lived in refugee camps, or have been victims of narco-terrorists. The IHSs are designed to promote respect for different language and cultural practices and to leverage them in all aspects.

In looking at heterogeneous/homogeneous grouping models, educators at IHSs understand that even if students have the same scores on language proficiency tests, they may not have gotten the same items correct and thus their language proficiency differs. Even if, amazingly and without cheating, two students have answered all of the questions in the same way, educators at IHSs understand that the thinking that led students to choose their answers is inevitably divergent. Further, IHS teachers and administrators know that students differ on numerous other characteristics and proficiencies and that language proficiency is impacted by the content of study (e.g., studying astrophysics in any language would be beyond these authors' proficiency level). Thus, educators

at IHSs recognize that every individual student's language characteristics and use differ from those of others in the class, even when supposedly the students speak the "same language"; that is, everyone at IHSs recognize the singularities of the pluralities in language practices that make up the classrooms.

### *Collaboration Among Students*

*Collaborative structures that build on the strengths of every individual member of the school community optimize learning.* Because the Internationals understand the individuality of the emergent bilingual experience, students with varied levels of English proficiency as well as literacy levels and home language proficiency are in the same class by design.<sup>2</sup> They study complex and sophisticated topics, through working collaboratively.

Collaboration leverages the benefits of a heterogeneous class and addresses its challenges. Students are able to share their different perspectives, experiences, and talents. While building community in the classroom and in the school, different students are challenged in multiple and divergent ways through these heterogeneous classes. While supporting struggling students, collaborative grouping also challenges more advanced students who must understand the material fully in order to explain it to others. Collaboration also allows students to form friendships across cultural and linguistic lines because they have a reason to talk to one another and are not silently filling out worksheets or listening to a teacher.

Collaboration enables all students to engage in challenging and creative projects because students of different levels work together to accomplish a final product they would not be able to do on their own. This instructional approach relies on the advantages of small group collaborative learning and peer-mediated instruction while recognizing the linguistic heterogeneity of all groups of students and their singularities.

### *Collaboration Among Teachers*

*The collaborative structures in which students work and learn mirror those in which faculty work and learn, capitalizing on everyone's diverse strengths and maximizing their ability to support one another.* Just as students work in groups, IHS teachers work in groups. Teachers, like students, are assumed to be diverse and have various strengths. They work in teams with teachers from different disciplines (at a minimum, an English language arts, social studies/history, science and math teacher)

and share responsibility for a cluster of 75–100 students, who are subdivided into three or four classes that are, by design, heterogeneous in all respects (language proficiency, home language, literacy level, prior academic experience and/or success, etc.).

These teams are responsible for students' progress collectively and holistically—linguistic, academic, sociocultural, affective, and so on. Time is built into the day (and often added to it, with compensation) to allow teachers to meet for anywhere from 2 to 6 hours a week so that they can learn from each other. These small groups of teachers focus on the design of their curricula and their pedagogies, their challenges and successes, and their students' progress.

Teachers' collaboration prepares them to replicate for students their own learning environments. Teachers learn not from lectures in professional development sessions and faculty meetings, but from each other. The Internationals approach expects that the adult learning model and the model for student learning will mirror each other. The IHSs build on the diversity of the teachers so that the staff can then construct learning experiences based on the linguistic and cultural differences of the students with whom they work.

#### *Learner-Centered Classrooms*

*Constructing learner-centered classrooms for meaningful student linguistic and content output is important.* The collaborative pedagogy followed in the IHSs takes teachers away from the front of the room and enables them to help individual students or groups that are struggling as well as to leverage their home language practices in order to learn. Thus, classrooms are learner centered.

Many L2 programs and bilingual education programs around the world provide teacher-centered instruction, insisting that the language input that students hear from the teacher is the main element in language acquisition (Krashen, 1985). Yet, teacher-centered instruction limits linguistic opportunities for all students. In a traditional language classroom, the teacher lectures in what is called a "target language" and the students follow a common textbook in the same language. Bilingual education programs also tend to separate languages strictly, with teachers speaking one language or the other and students working on worksheets in one language or the other or following a textbook also written in one language or the other. In both traditional foreign and L2 classrooms and bilingual classrooms, all students are expected to be at the same proficiency level

and to achieve the same result. This is not possible when you have students with English language proficiency ranging from very little knowledge in English to grade-level use of English. This is also not possible if students have different literacy levels in their home languages and diverse schooling experiences, academic and literacy traditions, and classroom scripts.

As Swain (1996, 2000) has posited, collaborative dialogue is very important in the development of an additional language. Educators at the IHSs believe that students are best served when teachers use their professional expertise, not principally as providers of knowledge but as facilitators of a process that enables students and faculty to learn while making language choices to accomplish meaningful activities.

Students' active use of language is critical to the academic program of the IHSs. No one learns to ride a bicycle by watching someone else ride it. Thus, the Internationals model is designed to have students actively use the additional language practices for as much of each class period as possible. Students use English as well as their home languages to understand the material they are studying and to prepare oral presentations and written work in English.

#### *Language and Content Integration*

*Language emerges most naturally in purposeful, language-rich, interdisciplinary study.* The IHS "mantra" is that "every teacher is a teacher of language and content." Language means both the additional language they are acquiring (English, as all students are emergent bilinguals who are learning English), as well as their home language (which students use to support learning of both academic content as well as English).

The Internationals approach promotes the language practices of all students, especially those that include academic English, as students simultaneously explore interdisciplinary academic content. Language does not exist apart from the content of life and the world, and language is more readily remembered when it has meaning and when it is in context. *Content-based language development* suggests that language use is an outgrowth of content; that is, by experiencing and learning new concepts, students extend their language base. Language and content integration means that "content is the driver." Teachers pay attention to the language load and provide systematic support for students who are developing an additional language, but the content is *not* driven by the aim of teaching a particular linguistic

structure, nor is the language simplified and sacrificed to content. Instead, content is rigorous and expressed in authentic and rich language that is scaffolded by collaborative structures that allow for peer mediation and teacher support, as described later.

For teachers, language and content integration means that when designing a project and creating an activity guide, they promote students' progress toward key standards in all content areas. They consider, in their project design, questions of language load. They provide materials with different levels of linguistic complexity but also support students' work with complex materials through a variety of scaffolds. These scaffolds include reviewing key words, designing graphic organizers, supporting students' use of home languages, having students write double-entry journals in which teachers raise questions and they respond, annotating (or having students annotate) as students read, and analyzing common linguistic structures of a discipline or in a particular reading. From time to time, teachers might make brief explanations about the grammar of the new language, but this is for the purpose of helping students understand how to use the additional language rather than using grammar to teach the language.

#### *Plurilingualism from the Students Up*

*Rather than having a structure where language practices are controlled by a rigid external language education policy, the students use diverse language practices for purposes of learning, and teachers use inclusive language practices for purposes of teaching.* In the IHSs, the locus of control for language practices lies with the students. Teachers, who may or may not speak the home language(s) of any particular student or group of students, encourage individual students to use their home languages to make sense of their learning. The students' language practices are flexible and dynamic, responding to their need for sense-making in order to learn.

However, teachers also encourage groups to practice language in nonexclusionary ways and will do so themselves whenever possible. In working with one particular student or group of students with whom the teacher shares language practices, the teacher may use those practices. Sometimes, the teacher may ask students to explain using their home language. However, mindful of not excluding anyone, teachers use English when speaking to a whole class with diverse home languages. The teachers are alert to language use that is not conducive to group progress—for instance, when a group is consistently leaving out

a member by using a different home language. At that point, teachers intervene in that group process, as they would in any issue of group dynamics.

#### *Experiential Learning*

*Expansion of the schools beyond the four walls of the school building motivates immigrant adolescents and enhances their capacity to negotiate their new bilingualism and successfully participate in society.* As we have said, the instruction of language, content, and skills is embedded in experiential projects that are carefully structured to incorporate student experience and build necessary background knowledge. For example, many projects engage students with people outside of the school (e.g., surveying community members, letter writing advocacy campaigns, service learning, building something in the community of the school). In most cases, projects begin with a shared oral experience to build background knowledge and provide students with a foundation to then access higher level content (i.e., to build schema). These experiential projects also allow for reinforcement of necessary content and skills.

Experiential learning also refers to the belief that education has to happen beyond the four walls of the school. All IHSs place a strong emphasis on field trips, inviting outside speakers, and getting students involved in projects that take them outside of the school. IHSs also send all students to an internship outside the school that lasts a minimum of 12 weeks. During these internships, usually two to four afternoons a week (during the school day), students work usually in an office, hospital, school, or community center. Projects that guide the internship experience help students gather important information and reflect on what they are learning. The resources for language development in experiential learning go beyond faculty and other students to include community members and families.

An experience-based curriculum, which enables the students to understand the concepts they are dealing with, firmly supports their English language acquisition. In the process of engaging in experiences and project development, students practice language structures that teachers and other students have modeled. In these interactions, students formulate and investigate hypotheses about how their new language functions.

#### *Localized Autonomy and Responsibility*

*Linking autonomy and responsibility at every level within a learning community allows all members to contribute to their fullest potential.* The

underlying assumption of having students and teachers work within collaborative structures is that individuals achieve to their highest capacity when they feel ownership of, and support for, their efforts and outcomes. Thus, students are responsible for their learning, and teachers are responsible for their teaching. However, beyond this, administrators at IHSs support teachers in whatever ways they can to be successful with their students. At IHSs, team meetings are a key professional development opportunity for teachers, and these are supplemented by discipline meetings, full-staff professional development, and a wide range of Internationals Network professional development opportunities across schools that include, but are not limited to, intervisitations, network planning committees, and network conferences and workshops.

## CONCLUSION

In the 21st century, as classrooms become more and more linguistically diverse, the greatest challenge will be how to educate all students equitably and meaningfully. Imposing one school standardized language without any flexibility of norms and practices will always mean that those students whose home language practices show the greatest distance from the school norm will always be disadvantaged. Clearly, monolingual education is no longer relevant in our globalized world.

However, models of bilingual or multilingual education that impose norms of language use in one or the other language without any flexibility will also privilege those whose language practices follow monolingual norms in two or more languages. This may have been appropriate in the 20th century without the speed and simultaneity of movement of people, goods, and services that technology has made possible today. However, the 21st century is characterized by the concurrent means of communication in many media and languages and, thus, conceptions of bilingualism and multilingualism must also become more flexible, more dynamic.

Schools that respond to this more dynamic model of bilingualism/multilingualism adopt a dynamic plurilingual approach with translanguaging as an important strategy so that students and teachers can make sense of learning moment by moment. Rather than languages being strictly “assigned” a space, time, place, or person in the curriculum, these dynamic plurilingual programs use the individual student’s languages to act on learning. We have just begun to understand the

potential (and the possible limitations) of these educational programs.

This article has focused on describing a model practiced by a group of such dynamic plurilingual programs in the United States—those of the INPS. We have described the principles that have supported their success—heterogeneity, collaboration, learner-centeredness, language and content integration, language use from students up, experiential learning, and local autonomy and responsibility. All of these principles support a dynamic plurilingual use of languages of instruction that, in turn, develop students’ plurilingual and pluriliterate abilities. As a result, students become not only more knowledgeable and academically successful but also more confident users of academic English, better at translanguaging, and more plurilingual proficient. These are all important linguistic practices in the 21st century.

However, it is important to point out that in the hands of ignorant or misguided educators, dynamic plurilingual programs could have disastrous results. On the one hand, dynamic plurilingual programs could undermine all bilingual education efforts. They could have the semblance of a plurilingual education, when in fact they are simply another form of submersion education in English only. On the other hand, without teachers who truly understand how to use students’ home language practices to make sense of new language practices and academic content, translanguaging could become random, not sense-making.

For dynamic plurilingual education to succeed in the 21st century, teachers would have to be educated to pay close attention to the singularities that make up our plurality—to clearly notice the individual linguistic experience that is the “moving force” in learning an additional language and all learning. In so doing, teachers would learn the value of having students use their home language practices to support learning. Rather than being told what language to use when and where, educators must practice noticing the learner as he or she is engaged in meaningful instructional activities. In this way, educators can learn to adjust their language and instructional practices to support students’ linguistic and cognitive growth. The goal is for students to be aware of their own language practices as well as those of their peers as they are engaged in learning activities. Ultimately, this empowers students themselves so that they are able to adjust their own language practices to take into account their singularities in the pluralities of a multilingual classroom and society. At the same time, a dynamic plurilingual approach helps

immigrant newcomer adolescents gain high levels of translanguaging competence that they can carry forth into the world of work and democratic life, increasingly impacted by global as well as local forces that are multilingual.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The Internationals Network defines its work around five core principles (heterogeneity and collaboration, experiential learning, language and content integration, localized autonomy and responsibility, and one learning model for all). For this article, we have more specifically defined the Internationals approach utilizing eight distinct principles to allow a more granular description of specific aspects and to more closely align our description with the theoretical constructs discussed.

<sup>2</sup> Even in “leveled” classes designed to be homogeneous, students will inevitably vary in their English proficiency and literacy levels.

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