

58. Educational sciences

1. Introduction
2. Language contact and education
3. Language policy, educational science, and multilingualism
4. Modernist assumptions in language contact and educational science
5. An alternative to traditional language contact study and education
6. Conclusion
7. References

1. Introduction

Scholars have long known and deplored the fact that schools tend to validate only standardized features of dominant languages and to interpret language differences as errors. Less attention has been paid to linguistic behaviors stemming from contact between languages. Here too, and even more strongly, schooling stigmatizes the behavior as flaws that need to be remedied. Students whose language practices are evaluated as being the result of language contact tend to receive lower grades on exams that time and again, and almost everywhere, validate only monolingual linguistic features that neatly fit as ‘belonging’ to the named language in which the evaluative instruments are written (Baker and Wright 2017; García 2009).

The stigmatization of practices that reveal what is seen as contact between languages occurs not only in monolingual education, but also in bilingual or multilingual education. In educational settings where more than one language is used as a medium of instruction, practices that fail to maintain separation between the languages are also regularly stigmatized. No less than monolingual programs, bilingual ones bracket one language from the other, devaluing the language practices of many bilingual and multilingual students and insisting that they behave in each language as their respective monolingual counterparts do (Grosjean 1982; Heller 1999). The effect of these imposed, artificial language practices in bilingual education is the same as in monolingual education: the ‘other language’ feature in bilingual education is treated in parallel to the substandard feature in monolingual education, with parallel negative effects. For language minoritized communities the effect is even more pernicious: bilingual schools most often construct the bilingual and multilingual practices of these communities as invalid.

The ways in which linguistic features and practices resulting from language contact have been constructed as harmful in schools assures dominant groups of a superior education, as it excludes those who use languages differently than do members of the elite majority. To change the educational reality of children whose language practices are the result of bilingualism, we would need to question the concept of language contact as it has been handed down to us by Weinreich ([1953] 1974), Haugen (1953), and the scholars who followed them (e.g. Matras 2009; Muysken 1985; Sankoff 2001; Thomason and Kaufman 1988), and we would have to shift our focus of attention from the language(s) to the speaker(s).

This paper traces the history of how educational science has used the concept of language contact to promote the bilingualism of the elite and/or to minoritize bilingual students whose language practices are different from those of monolinguals. We explore

how education for elite white students has interpreted language contact differently than for black/brown minoritized students. Finally, we propose an alternative conceptualization of language contact that may transform the ways in which we evaluate the linguistic performances of bilingual minoritized students, and thus, their education.

2. Language contact and education

It was the publication of Uriel Weinreich's *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems* (1974) and Einar Haugen's *The Norwegian Language in America: A Study of Bilingual Behavior* (1953) that consolidated understanding of what we now know as studies of language contact. Among the most important contributions that Weinreich and Haugen made was to point out that the study of language contact could not focus narrowly on descriptions of language structures, but rather had to include social and psychological aspects. Weinreich (1974: 4) stated: “[p]urely linguistic studies of languages in contact must be coordinated with extralinguistic studies on bilingualism and related phenomena”. The description of the structural linguistic phenomena of bilinguals was linked to speakers’ social condition(s), including, according to Weinreich, geography, indigenesness, ethnicity, religion, race, sex, age, social states, occupation, and rural or urban context.

The sociolinguistic emphasis of studies of languages in contact was an important improvement over earlier accounts of what was simply described as ‘language mixing’. Yet perhaps it was the overreach of language contact study into social issues that eventually had the most pernicious effect. Scholars studying education, and especially those specializing in the education of bilingual minoritized students, took up language contact as a most important factor in their educational outcome. In educational science, only one concept in Weinreich’s influential book took root. That was the concept of *interference*. Although Weinreich credits the Prague school in Europe for having first examined interference from a structural standpoint, it is Weinreich’s conceptualization, now linked to sociocultural factors, which has been most influential in educational science.

Weinreich (1974: 1) defines interference as “deviations from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals”. Weinreich continues by saying that interference “implies the rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured domain of language”. Interference for Weinreich referred to applying knowledge from one language to another, a rearrangement that could be either positive or negative. There were two types of interference: (1) the positive one, in which speakers know the language to which the utterance belongs, and therefore, those that do not belong can be identified as borrowed or transferred; and (2) the negative one, in which there is no transfer in the structural sense because speakers have ‘interlingual identifications’ and cannot identify the language to which the utterance belongs. Educational science did not call the first type of contact interference, but rather termed it ‘transfer’ and applied it mostly to the education of the elite for bilingualism. In contrast, the term ‘interference’ was reserved for the second type of contact, which was identified mostly in the utterances of colonized and racialized powerless bilinguals. In Second Language Acquisition Studies, interference also led to the concept of ‘interlanguage’, referring to the presence of features of a first language when learning a second language (Selinker 1972). As a result, the education of bilingual students became focused

precisely on eradicating this interference, and not necessarily on educating them for success (see also Chapter 34).

3. Language policy, educational science, and multilingualism

As more and more former colonies in Africa and Asia became independent, the study of language policy was given priority. Sociolinguists were concerned with the ‘language problems’ of these newly emerging nations, and with their ‘modernization’ (Fishman 1972; Rubin et al. 1977). Language heterogeneity was seen as a problem to their advancement. In those early days of language policy studies, its three prongs – corpus planning, status planning, and acquisition planning – had much to do with purging contact between languages, that is, with ensuring that the chosen official languages – whether former colonial languages or indigenous languages – be used without any interference from the many other voices within the languages.

Although scholars involved in language policy activities saw themselves as working on behalf of multilingual populations, the emphasis on avoiding language contact and preventing interference meant that only a monoglossic concept of language was accepted. Language was to avoid the heteroglossia that the Russian Bakhtin Circle, including Mikhail Bakhtin himself (1981), as well as Vološinov (1995), described. Language was *langue* in the Saussurean sense, a *langue* free of *parole*, a static sedimentation “deposited at the bottom of a lake”, to use Weinreich’s (1974: 11) metaphor. The speech of bilinguals was like “sand carried by a stream” (Weinreich 1974: 11). The task of the sociolinguist and of the educator was to pull the sand in the stream downwards so that it was deposited at the bottom, making it disappear. Eradicating interference became a mechanism of control of minoritized speakers, a means of governmentality (Foucault 2008) to use language to silence their voices and keep them oppressed. Language in schools became a technique for what Foucault (1990: 140) calls ‘biopower’, i.e.: “ways of achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations”. It was the education system that was called upon to stop the linguistic flows in the multilingual stream of communication and to control the bodies of those who were considered inferior.

4. Modernist assumptions in language contact and educational science

1953 was not only a big year for language contact studies, as the year of the publication of both Weinreich and Haugen’s work. This was also the year in which UNESCO published its expert report titled *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. The UNESCO report (1953: 6) stated:

We take it as axiomatic that every child of school age should attend school and that every illiterate should be made literate. We take it as axiomatic too, that the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil. But with any hundreds of languages lacking a *written form* [emphasis added], or when they have one, any literature for the use of pupils, it is difficult at present for both these aims to be pursued.

Three issues are prominent in the report: (1) schooling should be available for all children, (2) children should be educated in their mother tongue, and (3) given the fact that many languages are unwritten, it is difficult to teach every child to read or to offer mother tongue instruction. Besides establishing as axiomatic that an appropriate education for children should be in their home language, the 1953 UNESCO report served as the excuse for the failure to school millions of children – their languages were unwritten and thus it was impossible to educate them. Language was the culprit, the mechanism to blame for the failure to educate all children equally and justly.

The main flaw of the UNESCO 1953 report had to do with equating language and the language of schooling with western European epistemologies. Language in education was associated only with the named language of an imagined monolingual country, and not with the actual language practices of people. Language in education was also related only to the written form, an instrument of literacy.

Around this time, other educational science and language contact studies were mired in modernist assumptions about the mechanisms of human and social development. Rooted in structural-functionalist theory, they called for citizens' transformation from a traditional to a modern disposition (Peet 1999) that used standardized languages which were not 'primitive'. Languages were only perceived as valuable when they were standardized and codified in ways which reflected a single national identity that schools could then use as a medium of education. For speakers, this meant that only those who spoke a standardized language which had been assigned to a western nation-state were said to have a 'modern disposition'. The colonized and indigenous peoples of Asia, Africa, the Pacific, and the Americas were then said to have only a 'traditional' disposition that was expressed in what was considered a 'primitive' language. It is with these structural-functionalist and modernization understandings of speakers and their languages that education scholars took up the cause of language minoritized children around the same time.

As some started to experiment with bilingual education for language minoritized children in the newly independent and constructed nations of Africa and Asia, the paradigms of traditional monolingual education did not change. Bilingual education was now expected to take place in two standardized languages instead of one. This reduced bilingual education to simply the pluralization of monolingual education, and educational achievement continued to be measured according to the pupils' performance in a standardized language, usually only the dominant one. Minoritized bilingual students whose language performances were seen as instances of 'interference' and language contact were then reduced to 'semilinguals', a term used by some applied linguists around this time.

4.1. Semilingualism

The concept of semilingualism gained traction in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in Sweden. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981: 250) attributes the term to a book by Hansegård. Semilingualism was used to refer to the poor competence of Finnish students in Sweden in both Finnish and Swedish, a product of language contact produced by social factors.

The concept of semilingualism was derived from the idea of negative interference in situations of language contact. As a scholarly pursuit, work on 'semilingualism' had a short life, as scholars opposed its deficit view of children's language (Edelsky et al.

1983; Martin-Jones and Romaine 1986). And yet, as ways to educate bilingually were developed in the following decades, the specter of semilingualism led to language regimentation that ensured there would be no language contact.

4.2. Education for bilingualism: early efforts

Education for bilingualism is not new (Mackey 1978). From its beginning, however, it was the teaching of an additional written language to the elite as an enrichment activity that encouraged its growth. In Roman aristocratic circles, for example, Greek-Latin bilingual education was a way to learn the written language of the admired Hellenic civilization. The early focus of bilingual instruction was not on teaching students to speak the language, but rather merely on reading it because of its classical or sacred value. There was no conflict (or contact) between the language practices of the home and community, and those of the classical and sacred texts studied in schools. There was no question about which language an utterance belonged to. Nonbelonging, when it did occur, could “be separated as borrowed or transferred” (Weinreich 1974: 7).

It was precisely that tradition of teaching a new additional language that was the basis for foreign language teaching. For example, when the Modern Language Association was established in the United States in 1883, it established as its goal the study of “literacy culture, philological scholarship and linguistic discipline” (as cited in García [1993: 75]). And in 1929, the US Modern Foreign Language Study recommended reading as the primary aim of foreign language study. The two languages were clearly demarcated – one spoken, the other in the printed text; one spoken by all, the other written by the cultured class and the object of linguistic study. Language contact phenomena were then not frequently attested, and when they did occur, it was easy to determine which utterances did not belong and to identify them as borrowed or transferred.

Yet as education took on its modernization role, the goal of language education, as well as its pedagogical strategies, started to shift, as more and more learners became involved in schooling for bilingualism and as more and more bilingual minoritized students clamored for social justice and an equal education.

4.3. Bilingual teaching: teaching an additional language or teaching bilingual children

There is an important difference between teaching language majority youth an additional language (education for bilingualism), and teaching bilingual minoritized youth (educating with bilingualism). We expand below on the types of education programs that have been developed for both purposes, while considering the ways in which scholarship on language contact has impacted education programs.

4.3.1. Teaching an additional language to language majorities: education for bilingualism

Teaching language majority children an additional language usually occurs *sequentially* (that is, after the first language is acquired) and for enrichment purposes. The type of

bilingualism that is produced is considered a resource no matter its characteristics, and is referred in the literature as *elite bilingualism* (Fishman 1977).

Foreign language education programs have traditionally been the most popular way of teaching students an additional language. These programs are prevalent in middle and secondary schools, and usually start after the children have developed literacy in what is considered their first language. There are limited expectations that the students will become bilingual, and language contact is seen as simply transfer of features that can be easily identified as belonging to the other language.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programs have been developed to address the failure of foreign language programs to develop bilingualism. As in bilingual education programs, CLIL programs use the target language as a medium of instruction.

Immersion bilingual education programs have also been developed for language majority families anxious to ensure that their children become bilingual. In these programs, the target language is used as medium of instruction almost exclusively at the beginning of the program (total immersion) or at least 50 % (partial immersion), and they can start at the beginning of formal education or later. In immersion bilingual education, the languages are used as media of instruction and are also clearly separated.

Foreign language, CLIL, and immersion bilingual education programs display what we might call a conflicted ideology: on the one hand, they defend a strict monoglossic understanding of bilingualism, but on the other hand, they accept language contact phenomena as natural borrowings or transfers. The goal is to be protective of the first dominant language and tolerant of language contact phenomena, which are considered positive transfers from the first language to the second language. Language contact for these majority students is always considered positive, and all of their bilingual performances are considered resources (Ruiz 1984) for learning, despite the monoglossic arrangements of the education programs.

4.3.2. Teaching bilingual minoritized youth: educating with bilingualism

In contrast, the bilingualism of indigenous, conquered, colonized, refugee, and/or immigrant youth in schools (what Fishman [1977] called *folk bilingualism*) is often perceived as a problem. The designation of this bilingualism as ‘folk’ tells a story of being stigmatized as informal, as well as traditional or primitive, and not in any way modern. Folk bilingualism is connected to Weinreich’s perception that these bilingual speakers have ‘interlingual identifications’ which increase the overlap between the two languages to the point that one cannot speak about transfer from one language to another. Instead, these speakers and their listeners are said to often not know to which language the utterance belongs. It is this type of interference that is always evaluated negatively.

It is no surprise then that education programs to educate language minoritized speakers, whether monolingually or bilingually, have always operated in ways that minimize what Weinreich (1974: 7) calls “interference that does not involve transfer”. In other words, educational programs for language minoritized bilinguals often focus on differentiating between the two languages. To do so, education programs to educate bilingual youth of all types tend to strictly separate languages, that is, they follow a diglossic approach (Fishman 1965) in which the two languages are strictly compartmentalized through different teachers, subjects, times of day, physical spaces, etc.

We consider here the four most prevalent types of educational programs for minoritized bilingual students: (1) monolingual instruction in a second/additional/new language; (2) transitional bilingual education; (3) developmental bilingual education; and (4) immersion revitalization bilingual education. As we will see, regardless of the type of educational program these bilingual minoritized children receive, the goal of education is clearly to eradicate language contact phenomena considered to be negative interference. The expectation is that the language performances of minoritized bilingual youth be eradicated of their fluidity, of the ‘sand in the stream’. The goal is for these bilingual youth to become either monolingual or be able to perform ‘dually’ as two monolinguals in one. As we will see, in both cases, these minoritized bilingual youth will not be able to perform as monolinguals in either one language or two. The normalization of this evaluative scheme in schools results in what we have been taught to call ‘the achievement gap’, locating the failure in the students and their communities rather than facing our failure to understand the dynamic bilingualism (García 2009) at play.

Monolingual second language programs limit the language use of the bilingual learner to the target second/additional/new language. Language contact is avoided. *Transitional bilingual education programs* gradually erase the language of the learner, substituting it with the dominant language of the society. The goal of second language programs as well as transitional bilingual education programs is to ensure that all types of dynamic bilingual performances are eradicated.

Developmental bilingual education programs (labeled *dual language education programs* in the United States) aim to develop the dominant language of the society and an additional language (usually a minoritized language of bilingual communities that reside locally). *Immersion revitalization bilingual education programs* have as their goal the reversal of the language shift of indigenous and colonized groups whose language practices had been mostly eradicated by a monolingual school system. And yet, the goal of both developmental bilingual education and immersion revitalization bilingual education is to ensure that the bilingual performances of youth are ‘dual’, that is, that language contact of all types is avoided. The thinking is that education must counteract what is seen as the negative interference that occurs when minoritized speakers use their language. The goal of education must be to make these bilingual speakers strictly separate their language practices so that there is no contamination between one language and the other. The downside of this ‘dual’ approach is that the emphasis of education becomes the avoidance of language contact, rather than the bilingual education of the child.

5. An alternative to traditional language contact study and education

The concept of language contact has been based on the natural – as opposed to the socially invented – existence of two or more named languages. It assumes that bilingual/multilingual speakers have two or more language systems, and that when features from system A come into those of system B (or vice versa), the languages are contaminated. In the case of elite bilinguals and the education programs that have been developed for them, that ‘interference’ is sometimes considered ‘transfer’, and viewed as a resource. In the case of minoritized bilinguals and the education programs that have been devel-

oped for them, that ‘interference’ is mostly seen as a problem, as negative, and as something that has to be avoided. Relying on this last (mis)conception, bilingual schools for minoritized bilinguals maintain the social and linguistic order by demanding that bilingual students always separate their languages. To do so, schools demand that only one language be used at one time, and that it be used without any trace of the other one. Under this guiding principle, bilingual students from language minoritized communities can never be equal to those from language majority communities who can use the dominant language without any trace of language contact.

An alternative language contact conceptualization relies on the understanding of the bilingual speakers’ language practices from the point of view of the speakers themselves, and not from the perspective of the two named languages. From the perspective of bilingual speakers, their linguistic repertoire does not consist of two named languages, but of a unitary system of linguistic features that they use dynamically and simultaneously to make meaning. We, along with other scholars, have used the term ‘translanguaging’ to name this theoretical position (García and Li Wei 2014; Li Wei 2018; Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015, 2018).

In many ways, translanguaging theory expands what Weinreich, writing about language contact from the external perspective of named languages and dialects, termed ‘interlingual identifications’. For us, however, the identifications are *intralingual*, that is, occurring within the internal unitary language system of the bilingual speaker, and not across two socially constructed named languages. Although we do not in any way dismiss the sociopolitical reality of named languages, and its consequences on the lives of minoritized bilinguals, we wish to dispose of the concept of interference in the ways described by Weinreich, whether in positive or negative ways.

Jim Cummins (1979) has been one of the most influential scholars in studies of bilingualism and bilingual education. His theories of linguistic interdependence and of linguistic transfer from L1 to L2 have been helpful in legitimizing bilingual education. Translanguaging theory goes *beyond* Cummins’ notion of transfer because it goes *beyond* language. Instead, translanguaging posits that named languages have social reality, but no linguistic reality (Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015, 2018). One’s own language, as Bakhtin (1981: 66) has said, “is never a single language; in it there are always survivals of the past and a potential for other-linguedness”. Named languages have been inventions (Makoni and Pennycook 2007: 14) that were “administratively assigned to colonized populations as mother tongues”. And education for minoritized populations that simply uses these inventions, while excluding all other practices that do not fall neatly within the norms and conventions of what has been constructed as the school language(s), is a mechanism to further oppress colonized and racialized groups. Their own bilingual language practices at home and communities are made invalid; meanwhile, the only way to acquire the invented named language, now designated as the group’s mother tongue or vernacular, is through the formal education that in turn excludes the group.

Language contact theorists rightly engage with the social factors that create the contact. Yet their understandings of language have been shaped by structural-functional and modernist concerns about human and social development that have left out the micro-physics of power (Foucault 1990). An understanding of how linguistic normalization and language invention have been a mechanism of power is most important in shifting

our understanding of language contact and clarifying the concept of translanguaging (García and Li Wei 2014; Otheguy, García, and Reid 2015).

If the language practices of bilinguals are seen through the lens of negative interference, governable subject positions or ‘docile bodies’ can be produced (Foucault 1979). The alternative view that we present here in taking up translanguaging opens up spaces for the legitimization of new subjectivities, speaking and listening subjects whose fluid language practices are not evaluated as negative interference. As such, bilingual youth translanguaging can be leveraged in their education (e.g. Creese and Blackledge 2010; García, Johnson, and Seltzer 2017; García and Kleyn 2016; Gort 2015; Hornberger and Link 2012; Palmer et al. 2014) in both instruction and assessment. Our conceptions of language cannot be separated from the sociohistorical, political, and economic conditions that produce them.

Unlike the structural-functionalist beginnings of language contact theory and its modernist applications in education, translanguaging resides in a space that Mignolo (2000: xxv) describes as going beyond “the colonial difference”. In this translanguaging space (Li Wei 2011), Mignolo (2000: xxv) explains that “the restitution of subaltern knowledge is taking place [and] border thinking is emerging”. This translanguaging space constitutes a transformation of the modern/colonial world system and a decolonization of Western epistemologies. The rigidity of epistemic frontiers, explains Mignolo (2000: 12), were “established and controlled by the coloniality of power in the process of building the modern/colonial world system”. Named languages are legacies of European colonialism, and of the practices and forms of knowledge of European colonialism. As such, they function in education as instruments of what Aníbal Quijano (2000) calls ‘coloniality of power’. Named languages are linked to the racial, political, and social hierarchical orders imposed by European colonialism that privilege some, while marginalizing others.

Translanguaging in the education of bilingual minoritized speakers acknowledges that all the features of their repertoire are always present. It is not that there is contact across languages, it is that language is, as Bakhtin (1981: 291) has said, “heteroglot from top to bottom”. The task of educators must be to leverage bilinguals’ entire language repertoire in order to meaningfully and equitably educate students whose language features will always differ from those of dominant monolingual speakers.

Because named languages are important in schools and society, the planning of language use is important for instruction. However, equally as important is to acknowledge translanguaging as a resource, and not to see it as simply language contact, or as a deviation from monolingual elite norms. To truly educate all students, educators need to use their entire linguistic system, not temporarily as a simple scaffold, but as a way to transform how we educate.

6. Conclusion

If educators would conceptualize the bilingual student not in terms of language contact and interference, which puts languages in different, separate spaces, but instead in terms of a continuum of language practices that bilinguals and others have, bilingual youth linguistic practices would be evaluated differently. Educators would then not simply evaluate the use of the conventional language features of each language. They would

instead focus on how students use their language repertoire to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to engage with complex texts, and to write to persuade, explain, and convey experiences. Only when educational science frees itself from improbable conceptualizations of language contact and traditional bilingual behavior will we be able to educate all our citizens meaningfully.

It is in schools where translanguaging meets with more resistance. In homes and communities, translanguaging is a useful resource to communicate with many. The focus of educational science cannot be the eradication of the effects of what is seen as language contact. Education must engage students, and especially minoritized bilingual youth, with their own *translanguaging power* to make meaning, learn, and overturn the bio-power of schools that subjugates their bodies and tongues.

Studies of translanguaging in the education of bilinguals are growing, although the practice cannot be said to be mainstream. Its study has the potential to transform schools and classrooms, as well as the future of language minoritized children. In addition, however, the close study of translanguaging in classrooms has the potential to bring the classical scholarship on language contact up to date with critical poststructuralist understandings of language in society.

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