

*Third National Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues:
Focus on Middle and High School Issues*

Critical Research Issues in Bilingual Secondary Education

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Introduction

Researchers continue to be interested in those subjects generally regarded as fundamental to bilingual education: second language acquisition, biliteracy, curriculum development, dual language pedagogy, the relation of first and second language development, assessment of language development in bilinguals, and others. Studies in these areas should and no doubt will continue. My task in this presentation is to go beyond these important fundamental issues by addressing the question, How can bilingual education be fitted into a general conception of education, and, by extension, how does research in bilingual education relate to the critical issues being addressed in education in general by researchers not particularly interested in bilingual education? My response entails the presentation of a series of topics, perhaps even a research agenda, for bilingual education in the immediate future, with an emphasis on the secondary level. I have chosen four general topics in which I will suggest a role for bilingual education research. Each of them will be discussed below: school restructuring, systemic school reform, de-tracking, and home-school isomorphism.

This paper is guided by two assumptions about the nature of bilingual education, at least as it has developed in the United States. First, *bilingual education is a special curriculum*: it is useful in the education of students called "limited English proficient" (LEP) in that it allows them access to conceptual learning as they are developing their language proficiency. In most instances, bilingual education exists as a separate class or program within a school; students take all or a major part of their classes as a cohort group, and staff members have special certifications and appointments, quite apart from the "regular" school staff. The curriculum targets identified weaknesses or problems in the preparation of the students, emphasizing the need to improve English proficiency in them. Second, *bilingual education can be a dimension of curriculum in general*: it is not so much a program or method as an approach to the development of the curriculum. It can be an organizing principle for the academic program of a whole school. This second perspective on bilingual education has the potential to obviate the first: if it were the model for general education in our schools, would we still have the need for it as a special program for special populations? Would there still be "special populations"? If, indeed, it has this potential, why is it not mentioned in the literature on school restructuring or curriculum reform? I hope the following pages draw us closer to an answer to that question.

School Restructuring

The basic assumption in proposals to restructure schools is that their improvement will require a variety of changes to conventional practices. Some of these proposals include calls for site-based management, interdisciplinary teaching teams, change in the school calendar (for example, year-round schools), and heterogeneous rather than ability grouping of students. Most important, however, is a change in the nature

of the roles and relationships traditional in schools. Although it would still be important for principals and other administrators to have strong leadership and communication skills, the conception of "leadership" would now acknowledge the knowledge and abilities of teachers in classroom organization and delivery of instruction. The staff of the school would become a working team of colleagues, with the principal serving to coordinate and implement the various ideas and programs developed in the process. School restructuring thus entails changes in the fundamental organization of schools (Newmann and Clune, 1992; Hess, 1992; Murphy, 1991).

A number of recent case studies give a sense of the nature of such reorganization as it affects the "at-risk" student population (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Smith, 1989; Wehlage et al., 1989). Most of these studies have as their central theme the reorganization of the school into a learning community with mechanisms of mutual support. This is seen as important in itself for the promotion of scholarship, but also as a way to compensate for the lack of social integration in the lives of most of these students. The assumption is that education failure, especially at the secondary level, is largely a result of social disintegration; the school-as-community provides a context for reviving and reinforcing common values that serve as motivation for school achievement (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987). Articulating a similar theme, Wehlage and his colleagues (1989) report on a study of 14 promising programs for at-risk high school students. One of the programs, the Media Academy in Oakland, California, goes beyond the school-as-community idea and promotes the importance of school-community linkage. Its principal goal is to demonstrate to the students the tight coupling between their education and future job prospects; its students are required to do much of their academic work in the context of the local community. Finally, Smith (1989) goes further still in suggesting that all students would be better served by a total reconstruction of the school into a real community in which "interdependence, achievement for the well-being of the group, affective and particularistic ties and a deep sense of moral responsibility" are the central values.

Where might bilingual fit into such proposals for the restructuring of schools? There are recent conceptualizations within the bilingual education literature that look very much like these reform proposals. For example, the study of six high schools by Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990) is a comprehensive look at the structural features of the schools that seemed to promote success among language minority students. Consider the eight features they identify as the most important in that success:

1. there is a demonstrable value placed on the students' language and culture;
2. high expectations of these students are "made concrete";
3. school leaders make the education of language minority students a priority;
4. staff development is designed to serve language minority students more effectively;
5. the school offers a variety of courses and programs for language minority students;
6. counselors give special attention to the needs of language minority students;
7. parents are encouraged to become substantively involved in the education of their children; and
8. the school staff shares a strong commitment to the empowerment of language minority students.

Although these statements are presented as ways to promote the success of a special population within the school, taken together they could easily be seen as a vehicle for the general restructuring of the school, for the benefit of all students. What makes this list different from others that might be included in proposals for school restructuring is the first item on the language and culture of the child. But why should anyone think that this is important for only language minority children? I do not suggest that we do away with the emphasis on the language and culture of the child; rather, this is a call for the recognition that this should not be a special consideration reserved for special populations. To the extent that bilingual education is distinctive in this feature, it is a shame that it is. It is interesting that few of the case studies included in the

high schools project mentioned above (Wehlage et al., 1989) even mention the importance of the language of the child. The program at the Media Academy did publish two newspapers, one in English and the other in Spanish, but little was made of the general pedagogical value of such inclusion; it did not appear to be a critical part of the curriculum. (Furthermore, as I have mentioned elsewhere (Ruiz, 1990), the idea of "including the language and culture of the child" is unclear in many school programs. Is the language of the child that which is actually used at home and in the community, or some idealized form of the language more often found in textbooks? The difference between these manifestations of language can be great, especially in the case of language minority communities without a school tradition. In these cases, the purpose of "including the language of the child" in the school program is often to show the child that his or her language needs to be changed in order to be acceptable. The result of these school efforts is to exacerbate the alienation between school and community, child and family, teacher and parent.

Another important item in the literature on bilingual education makes great use of the school/community theme. Cummins (1989) has developed his earlier, predominantly psycholinguistic, work into an emphasis on the structure of the school and its relation to the community around it. He contends that schools "empower" or "disable" students to the extent that they incorporate the language and culture of the community from which minority students come, include parents in the substantive education of their children, advocate for minority students in the assessment process, and develop pedagogical approaches that respect the knowledge these students possess when they enter the classroom. These are general recommendations for schools serving minority students; although most of the examples offered by schools with some of these dimensions are at the elementary level, it is reasonable to infer that students at the secondary level would also be better off in this type of social arrangement. But the question arises again: why limit ourselves to a particular group of students in offering these proposals for positive change? Would not every student in the school profit from them? What I am suggesting is that theory development and research in bilingual education has been segregated within the scholarly community, in large part because bilingual education itself is separate from general education: the target populations are special, the questions are different, and the results are applicable to only a small segment of the school community. Whatever "good" or "effective" bilingual education is, it is good or effective only in very marked contexts of school experience. It should not therefore surprise us that proposals for school restructuring do not include such concerns.

Systemic Curriculum Reform

Another recent concern in the literature on the improvement of schools is systemic curriculum reform (Smith and O'Day, 1991). Although school restructuring concentrates on the organizational arrangements inside the building, systemic curriculum reform sees problems in the whole process of instructional delivery. The targets of these proposals are schools and colleges of education that prepare teachers for the classroom; state licensing agencies; textbook and test developers; national and regional accreditation organizations that issue regulations and guidelines on acceptable programs of teacher preparation; and organizations that provide staff development opportunities for teachers already in service. In the present state of affairs, there is little or no coordination of these various offices and organizations that might lead to a coherent curriculum for students. Although it is true that in many states the licensing offices try to work closely with the colleges and universities offering courses and programs in various specialties, this coupling is loose at best. Partly this has to do with the lack of a formal liaison charged with the specific responsibility of monitoring the articulation between state regulation and university offering; partly, also, it has to do with the general role that universities see themselves as playing. They will probably always resist offering without deviation or criticism a state-issued curriculum; this is especially true of research-oriented universities

whose mission is as much social criticism as social service.

The approach to such lack of alignment is not a centralized system of education in which the state mandates matters of curriculum. Rather, national and regional organizations would offer general guidelines, promote curriculum and teacher standards, coordinate the dissemination of instructional materials and assessment instruments, and provide resources and assistance in staff development. This would allow for flexibility at the local level, while allowing programs to monitor their progress in relation to criteria and standards applicable to a wide range of institutions.

There are already organizations responsible for some of these tasks. Regional and national accreditation bodies such as the North Central Association (for the early elementary grades) and NCATE (for teacher preparation programs) offer guidelines to their members on a wide range of curricular topics. Some of those guidelines concern multicultural education (but these do not include the specific area of bilingual education). In general, however, the guidelines are not informed by the considerable amount of research activity in bilingual education.

The Multifunctional Resource Centers (MRCs) funded through the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) offer much of the same sort of service being proposed by the advocates of systemic school reform. These regional centers are staffed by experts in instructional delivery, assessment and evaluation, staff and curriculum development, grant writing, and program management. Furthermore, because most of them are located in or near universities, they draw upon the considerable research base developing in bilingual education, second language acquisition, and instructional methodology. They are also designed to work closely with state education agencies (SEAs) in order to facilitate the coordination of services to local schools and districts. It should be noted that, although the MRCs themselves are relatively new entities, having been established in the 1980s, their work is informed by offices and agencies that have a considerably longer history, as these things go. Early Title VII efforts gave rise to regional and national curriculum development and dissemination centers that has resulted in a large storehouse of material, much of which has been passed on to the new MRCs. Beyond that, other institutions such as the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education and the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning have developed a substantial network of researchers and practitioners who use their services. Finally, the National Association for Bilingual Education and its state affiliates, especially the stronger ones in California, Texas, New York, and Arizona, have been able to develop instructional delivery systems in bilingual education that are made available to local districts. For example, the California Association for Bilingual Education has been able to engage consultants such as Jim Cummins and Stephen Krashen to develop frameworks for instructing language minority students; dissemination of this information has been coordinated through Sacramento and many schools both within and outside of California have taken advantage of it.

It appears, then, that much of the structure being proposed by those who write about systemic curriculum reform already exists within the bilingual education academic and professional community. Yet, nowhere in these proposals is there any mention of their potential usefulness in coordinating the system of instructional delivery. One needs to ask why this is true. Two different but related conclusions seem reasonable. First, there is a generally accepted perception that whatever might be good for the education of minority students is largely irrelevant to the student population as a whole. This perception is based on the assumption that the issues raised by the existence of minority students in schools are "special"--that is, they are *sui generis*, so that they require their own quite peculiar solutions. Second, researchers within minority group education in general and bilingual education in particular have contributed to their own segregation. In part this is an understandable reaction to limited research opportunities: a great deal of the funded research in bilingual

education is carried out with money targeted to a specific population. In part, too, it is no doubt the result of inertia: we have gotten used to calling ourselves minority researchers, experts in minority education, developers of special curriculum for minority students. It is difficult, even for us, to make the argument that the truth we have uncovered has more general application.

De-tracking

The work of such researchers as Jeannie Oakes (1985, 1992), Robert Slavin (1990) and Reba Page and Linda Valli (1990) has in recent years drawn attention to the need to question the effects of heterogeneous grouping and differentiated curricular experiences in school. Although we might reasonably concede that such differentiation has been motivated by a concern for the well-being of certain students identified as "at-risk" for failure in school, the effect of a tracked system generally is that students placed in lower tracks almost never graduate to higher tracks. The best research evidence on tracking "supports the increasingly clear and consistent (if not yet universally accepted) conclusion that this common way of organizing students for instruction is, in most instances, neither equitable nor effective" (Oakes, 1992, p. 12). Moreover, curriculum differentiation usually results in students of particular racial and class backgrounds, especially African American and Hispanic, being placed in the lower tracks (Page and Valli, 1990).

Differentiated education experiences start early for minority students, particularly language minority students. Aside from historical and continuing problems of discrimination, much of the reason for such differentiation lies in structural biases in school and society, commonly referred to in the sociological literature as "institutional racism" (Knowles and Prewitt, 1969; cf. Banks, 1988). These structural biases can, it is fair to say, be traced to a concern on the part of school and public authorities about the lack of academic achievement of minority students. Solutions to the problem—programs of study in general and vocational education and classes in remedial subjects—were envisioned as a way for these students to get *some* benefit out of the system, and find their place in the job market. Such programs of study, or "tracks," were supported by a network of practices that themselves served to solidify and legitimize the differentiated system. For example, aptitude testing of students served as an early identification device for intervention. Such testing also allowed the professional staff—teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, reading specialists, and others—to "protect" these students in special programs as they advanced through the school system, and to monitor whatever progress they made. (Language minority students were at a greater disadvantage in these situations than other minority students because the testing was, and is, conducted primarily in English.) Students were thus placed in classes where the material was "at their level." If students persisted through junior high school, they could be counseled into high school classes and programs appropriate for them. These programs included few if any of the "academic" units they would need to enter college. They are also a major contributor to the lack of minority achievement in the economic system, a phenomenon Ogbu (1978) calls the "job ceiling."

This brief analysis suggests that the lack of representation of certain cultural and language groups in college and in some sectors of the work force is an artifact of a system of education designed specifically for those groups, rather than the result of a lack of individual effort or the failure of group norms. We might conclude that tracking in our schools is characterized by an embedded ambivalence: we recognize its failures, but we also assume that it is the product of the best intentions of dedicated, caring professionals who would do something better if they knew what.

Solutions to the problem of tracking are difficult, precisely because this practice is embedded in the very norms of school, that themselves have their roots in larger social and political ideologies (Oakes, 1992).

This is not accidental, since schools are social institutions designed to reflect the interests of the society in which they develop. De-tracking a school system thus comes close to promoting social change; in other words, it is itself a kind of school restructuring. Oakes and others understand that; this is why they have called in recent years for fundamental normative changes in the structure of the schools as a way to improve the prospects of minority students, rather than merely a narrow focus on heterogeneous grouping or program redesign.

A recent research project funded through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning has investigated the problem of curriculum differentiation for high school students in San Diego schools (Mehan et al., 1992; Mehan and Villanueva, 1992; cf. Mehan and Swanson, 1992). The principal question of the study is whether there is appreciable change in the college-going rates of minority students after they have been moved from remedial to high-achiever tracks in high school. The project focuses on a special program in San Diego City Schools that places low- and high-achieving students in the same rigorous academic classes, a program known as "Advancement Via Individual Determination" (AVID). In the very early stages of the project, results are encouraging. Half of the students interviewed after three years of participation in AVID were attending four-year colleges, and 42 percent were attending two-year or junior colleges. These figures are far above both local and national averages for the general population.

Two observations are relevant here. First, it is not clear from the description of the project what role, if any, bilingual education or, at least, the students' home language, specifically plays in the rigorous program of studies experienced by these students. If, as I suspect, there is no role for it, it is probably explained by the fact that bilingual education is not conceptualized nor implemented as a rigorous academic program. Quite to the contrary, it may well constitute the sort of program from which these students have been untracked—remedial and compensatory programs of doubtful use, even for their fairly modest purposes. Second is the matter of diffusing these ideas into the general education literature on tracking. Why are not such results more prominent in the work of those writers not usually identified as "bilingual researchers"? The San Diego project is just as significant as those described by Oakes, Slavin, and Page and Valli; in its general orientation, it is very close to the Accelerated Schools project described by Levin (1991). Why, in spite of the Center's best efforts to disseminate these findings (now through the good offices of the Center for Applied Linguistics), are they still segregated in the bilingual education literature? Once again, I suggest it is because most of us in the research community have found ourselves incapable of conceiving of bilingual education as anything but a special program for a special population of students.

Home-School Isomorphism

“Home-school isomorphism” is my term for proposals that in a variety of ways suggest that minority students do not achieve in school, in large part because the structural and normative patterns of the home and the school differ radically from each other; success in school, therefore, will depend on the extent to which the home and the school come to resemble each other in these patterns. Such proposals have existed in the anthropological literature for at least half a century. Ruth Benedict, C. M. W. Hart, Margaret Mead, Jules Henry, George Spindler, and other anthropologists interested in education spoke of cultural discontinuities in the enculturation process, by which they meant that there were contrasts between the ways that children were taught cultural knowledge in intimate contexts within the household and more formal, public ones such as initiation ceremonies and schools. Spindler (1974) was one of the first of this group to suggest that these discontinuities were perhaps more severe for some groups than others. Although most early education anthropologists examined the role that formal enculturative institutions played within a

cultural tradition, Spindler was most interested in situations of culture contact, especially those where there was a clear dominant-subordinate relationship. In these contexts, he contended, the dissonance between the home and the school accounted for much of the school failure of minority group members. This is the situation of minority groups in the United States. Since this initial work, a generation of education anthropologists, many of them Spindler's students, have continued to examine the problems of home-school disarticulation in minority group education (see, e.g., Trueba, 1989). Similarly, Susan Philips (1987) concludes from her work among American Indian groups in the Northwestern United States that much of the school failure of students from the Warm Springs Indian Reservation results from a lack of communicative competence (on the part of both them and their teachers); the "participation structures" within which discourse occurs in their home environment is very different from, sometimes in conflict with, those that operate normatively in the classroom. An important result of this conflict is misunderstanding and hostility between students and teachers, and school and community. Ultimately, the students find passive silence more convenient than constant struggle, and thus the stereotype of the uninterested, perhaps incapable, student is reinforced for the school. Philips' study suggest ways in which school and community might begin to resolve this conflict.

Recent studies focusing on the education prospects of minority students have also had this concept as their main emphasis (Azmitia, 1992; Gallimore, et al., 1991; Moll and Greenberg, 1990; Moll et al., 1991; Tenery, forthcoming). The work of Azmitia and colleagues is a test of what they call the "match-mismatch hypothesis." Their approach is to try to identify and isolate as many significant features of mismatch between Mexican American and European American students through the middle school level. Gallimore and his colleagues articulate an "ecocultural" approach to the education of minority children. They investigate the extent to which the uses to which different language behaviors (particularly literacy) are put at home and at school affect proficiency levels in students. They suggest the development of "culturally compatible" curriculum and teaching behaviors in order to give minority children greater access to conceptual learning and cognitive development in the classroom. Their work has been conducted most effectively in Hawaii and on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. Finally, the work by Moll and his associates on "funds of knowledge for teaching" assumes that children come to school already possessing valuable cultural knowledge upon which teachers could build, if only this knowledge were seen as valuable and useful to classroom literacy. Their contention is that what has historically been described as a "culture of poverty," with few literacy opportunities in the home and tradition contexts, is far from that. They find these contexts to be storehouses of literacy materials. The materials themselves belong to a universe of discourse not normally associated with school—vocations (operating manuals and inventories), religion (Bibles and liturgical texts), and recreation and social texts (comic books, calendars, and so on). Therein lies the principal problem in their use in school; teachers assume that they have little value for literacy purposes, so the strengths that have already been developed in the child are ignored or, worse, devalued. The funds of knowledge project has the goal of identifying such literacy opportunities in the households, showing students and their parents how they might use these materials to promote their school-based literacy, and persuading school staffs that these indeed are valuable opportunities that up to now have been squandered.

One study within the "funds of knowledge" project typifies the approach. Tenery's ethnographic research focuses on the problem of the teacher who lives outside the school neighborhood. She suggests that many of the problems of school achievement among the Mexican students in the school have their roots in this simple fact. How can teachers know their students—their needs, their desires, their stock of cultural knowledge, the values of their communities—if they live in a separate world? Her approach to the problem is not to have the teacher move into the neighborhood (although she does not preclude it); rather, her research is intended to demonstrate how teachers can become sympathetic observers and attached

participants in the communities in which they teach. She explains the need for the "ethnographic home visit" in which the teacher gradually comes to understand and be accepted into the student's community. The most important result of the visit is not so much factual knowledge but what is called "confianza," a mutual trust between teacher and student, and school and parent. It is the beginning of a process that leads to validation of the home culture and legitimacy of the role of the teacher. In other words, both teacher and student gain a sense of belonging. This is similar to what Ruiz (1988) calls "eco-system trust," the sense on the part of the student that the dominant society is at least treating the minority community fairly; without such trust, students may find it more rational to leave the system to find alternatives to the traditional modes of advancement. Eco-system trust is more difficult to achieve when the school and community are perceived to be very different, and when teachers are seen as aliens in the neighborhood.

Home-school isomorphism seems to have general appeal as an approach to the problems of minority group school achievement. This is true regardless of the level of analysis or the groups studied. It is also as applicable to elementary as to secondary and adult education. The caution I give to it is the extent to which there is mutual accommodation in the process of change. In other words, if the home and the school are to become more like each other in the interest of minority school achievement, is there a disproportionate amount of change expected on one side or the other of the relationship? Often, such proposals for change assume the fundamental goodness of the school, while families and their communities are seen as the source of the problem. In that case, it is only reasonable to expect that homes will imitate schools more than vice versa, since the interest of the student supersedes any sentimental attachments we may have to maintaining traditions that hinder academic achievement. To their credit, the projects mentioned in this section are balanced in their views of the relationship between home and school. Unless we achieve that balance, and unless we can see that balance represented in genuine research projects, we are proposing nothing different than the situation that led us into the present unfortunate circumstance.

Conclusion

In the United States, we have conceptualized bilingual education as primarily a remedy for identified academic and social problems in a particular population in school, a population we refer to as "limited-English proficient." This has forced research in bilingual education, especially that funded by the Department of Education, to articulate and develop this basic orientation. In doing so, it has contributed to the popular associations of bilingualism with disadvantage and bilingual education with remedial and compensatory education. Thus, even the most enlightened among us has been found to be singularly incapable of suggesting bilingual education as a general model for education. It is a special program, for special populations, out of which students will soon exit, if they are lucky.

There is much we still need to know about second language acquisition and bilingual education. The robust program of research in which we are now engaged will in the long run help us understand some of these important issues. But we should also acknowledge that we know a lot of things, very important things. We know, for example, that a strong foundation in one's first language, whatever it is, is crucial to any academic achievement. Beyond that, we know that biliteracy development is an asset in cognitive development. We also know what sorts of instructional practices, programmatic arrangements, and school organization lend to good results. These are conceptual issues that should be attractive to anyone interested in education, especially at the secondary level. They should be at the basis, not the periphery, of education research. They should be the stuff of our education conversations, both scholarly and everyday. They should predominate in our education research journals. Instead, those outside of the narrowly circumscribed bilingual education research community are still ignorant of our discoveries. Perhaps in some distant future, they, like

Columbus, will "discover" the world in which we have lived for centuries.

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Examples of current educational issues. How to find the latest issues in education. Discussing educational issues in your teaching interview. Keeping up to date with current educational issues is an important factor in making a good first impression at your teaching, NQT or teacher training interview. It's not possible to predict all future educational issues, or know every detail of the sector's current situation, but in the process of applying for teacher training some preparation and research will go a long way in demonstrating your enthusiasm and impressing potential employers.Â How does this response impact teacher recruitment and overcapacity of secondary schools? What do budget cuts mean for pupils and teachers? Technology and education. Critically assessing the 1968 Bilingual Education Act at 50 years: Taming tongues and Latinx communities. *Bilingual Research Journal*, Vol. 41, Issue. 4, p. 318. CrossRef.Â The education perspective. In *Bilingual education: Current perspectives: Vol 4. Education* (pp. 1â€“68). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Browning, H., & McLemore, S. D. (1964, January).Â Committee print: Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments of 1967 with background materials and tables. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. ValdÃ©s, G. (1997).