

Extending Bilingualism in U.S. Secondary Education:

New Variationsⁱ

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Abstract:

This article challenges 20th century ways of conceptualizing bilingualism, arguing that they are no longer applicable to the linguistic heterogeneity of the 21st century. Using case studies of two small high schools in New York City, this article re-imagines the possibilities of bilingual education to more accurately reflect the realities of bilingual students. Rather than imposing a top-down process, these two schools, although very different demographically and pedagogically, attempt in different ways to create language education policy through a collaborative process that incorporates bilingual students' hybrid practices and gives students agency in negotiating their linguistic repertoires. These two schools provide a window into new and innovative ways of approaching bilingual education for the 21st century.

Keywords: bilingualism, dynamic, secondary schools, translanguaging, New York, small schools

Word Count: 9084

Introduction

Are the ways in which bilingual education was conceptualized in the 20th century still relevant in the 21st century? Are the bilingual education programs that were developed when language minority populations in the U.S. were more homogeneous, as well as more residentially isolated and stationary, still applicable? Are the policies and practices that were developed mostly for elementary school children applicable to adolescents whose bilingualism and biliteracy is still emerging? These are the main questions that this article seeks to answer.

Given the changing nature of bilingualism in the 21st century, the more diverse student population in secondary schools, as well as the small school movement that is transforming secondary education especially in urban contexts, we focus on the important implications for bilingualism in the education of language minority youth. By profiling two New York City high schools, we provide examples of how these small schools are drawing upon students' bilingualism in new ways. Instead of the usual macro-linguistic curricular arrangements of large bilingual education secondary programs where one language is used at certain times or for certain subjects with some teachers, these schools build on micro-linguistic adaptations that respond to students' complex bilingualism. That is, instead of bilingualism being enacted top-down by administration and teachers, bilingualism is enacted from the students and teachers' own bilingual language practices. Although some may see this as a loss of bilingualism as a tool in education, we argue here that if properly carried out, the dynamic bilingualism present in these two small schools could extend and expand bilingual practices in the education of adolescent language minorities in all school settings.

Bilingualism reconceptualized: From the 20th to the 21st century

In the 21st century, more and more interactions and encounters are multilingual as people, goods, services and information move with increased speed and frequency as a result of new technology in a globalized world. As global languages, especially English, are appropriated by many people around the world, bilingualism itself has spread. No longer seen as simply the privilege of the world's elite, or limited only to Asian and African societies, bilingualism is now acknowledged as the common way of “*linguaging*”ⁱⁱⁱ in the world. This acknowledgement has led some scholars to question general assumptions about bilingualism that were developed in the 20th century in Western contexts (see García, 2009a).

Our present conceptions of bilingualism in education have been mostly shaped by North American scholarship, most especially by the work of Canadian scholars on immersion bilingual education for Anglophone majorities, and of U.S. scholars on transitional and maintenance/developmental bilingual education. In Canada, Wallace Lambert and his associates proposed that bilingualism could be either *subtractive* or *additive*. According to Lambert (1974), language minorities usually experience subtractive bilingualism as a result of schooling in a language other than their own. Their home language is subtracted, as the school language is learned. On the other hand, language majorities usually experience additive bilingualism, as the school language is added to their home language. These models of bilingualism can be rendered as in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 here

Responding to the greater bilingual complexity of the 21st century, as well as the increased understanding of the multilingualism of the “developing” world, García (2009a) has

proposed that additive and subtractive conceptions of bilingualism are no longer accurate in describing the reality of bilingual populations. While additive and subtractive *schooling practices and programs* continue to exist, it is her contention that additive and subtractive conceptions of what it means to be bilingual fail in describing the actual processes of bilingual acquisition and development. We, therefore, follow her lead in proposing that bilingualism in the 21st century needs to be reconceptualized as *recursive* or *dynamic*ⁱⁱⁱ. These two models of bilingualism go beyond the conception of two separate autonomous languages of additive or subtractive bilingualism, suggesting instead that the language practices of bilinguals are complex and interrelated, and are not simply linear. Language minority communities who have experienced language loss and then attend bilingual schools in hopes of revitalizing their languages undergo a process of recursive bilingualism. They do not start as simple monolinguals (as the subtractive or additive models of bilingualism assume). Instead, they recover bits and pieces of their existing ancestral language practices, as they develop a bilingualism that continuously reaches back in order to move forward. Dynamic bilingualism, on the other hand, refers to the development of different language practices to varying degrees in order to interact with increasingly multilingual communities. In some ways dynamic bilingualism is related to the concept of *plurilingualism* proposed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe (2007). The difference is that within a dynamic bilingual perspective, languages are not seen as autonomous systems. Thus, educating for dynamic bilingualism builds on the complex and multiple languaging of students as they interact in multilingual classrooms in order to develop new and different language practices. These models can be rendered as in Figure 2:

Insert Figure 2 here

Bilingualism in U.S. schools in the 21st century

As Table 1 indicates, today in the United States, 20% of the school population is bilingual and students are increasingly from many language backgrounds. Bilingual students who are speakers of Spanish are certainly the majority, making up 72% of those who are bilingual and 15% of all students in the country (United States Census Bureau, 2006).

Insert Table 1 here

Although Spanish speakers constitute a growing number of bilinguals in the United States, the number of speakers of languages other than English and Spanish has increased greatly in the last decade. As Asian and African populations grow to make up a greater proportion of U.S. society, the linguistic complexity of these more multilingual contexts is manifested in U.S. classrooms. For example, students of Chinese descent speak many languages (or dialects, as Chinese authorities insist they be called) beyond Mandarin, official in Mainland China and Taiwan, and Cantonese, traditional in U.S. Chinatowns. And students from every country in Africa are speaking not only major African languages like Swahili and Yoruba, but also local languages of small nations. Even U.S. Latinos have become more linguistically complex, for although the majority are of Mexican descent (65%), an increasing number have indigenous language backgrounds. No longer is it possible to assume that U.S. Latino students are solely Spanish speakers, for many are also speakers of Mixteco, Zapoteco, Quechua, and Garifuna, among other languages. Furthermore, even among those who claim to speak Spanish, the varieties of Spanish have grown, including not only more wide-ranging countries of origin, but also U.S. Spanish. U.S. Spanish itself shows great variability, the result of the degree of language contact with English and experience with bilingualism.

This greater linguistic heterogeneity has made U.S. classrooms rich linguistic landscapes, but also complex sociolinguistic contexts. In the case of immigrant students, local minority

languages have often suffered stigmatization in the students' country of origin. As such, they have been ignored in schools where immigrant adolescents have previously studied. Although able to speak these languages competently, some of these emergent bilingual students^{iv} have not been schooled in their home languages. Thus, they come to school with bilingual oral competence, speaking both their home languages and the language of their former school. But many times, adolescent emergent bilinguals are not literate in their home language, and, depending on their socioeconomic status, have poor literacy in the former school language. Likewise, many native-born Latino adolescents have been schooled in English only or in transitional bilingual education programs where their home language and literacy have not been appropriately developed. The lack of rich literacy practices in home languages is often an obstacle for the academic success of language minority students.

Cummins (1979, 1981a, 1981b) has proposed the important concept of *linguistic interdependence* to point out that the languages of a bilingual bolster each other: "To the extent that instruction in Lx [one language] is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx [that language], transfer of this proficiency to Ly [the additional language] will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly" (Cummins, 2000, p. 38). In addition, Cummins has posited that knowledge and abilities acquired in one language are potentially available for the development of another because of a *common underlying proficiency*.

In the 20th century, many misinterpreted Cummins' theoretical constructs by insisting that the home language must be fully developed *first* in order to develop students' additional languages. It is true, as we have said, that strong home language and literacy practices are important in the development of English. However, Cummins' theories of linguistic interdependence and common underlying proficiency go beyond this interpretation and are still

very relevant today, pointing to the greater interdependence and dynamic interrelationships that exist in the languaging of bilinguals. In other words, Cummins' theoretical constructs never advocated teaching the home language first before introducing an additional language. On the contrary, because of their interdependence and the reality of many schooling situations, it is often desirable to introduce and use both languages simultaneously in instruction.

The changing nature of immigration in the U.S. also means that many bilingual students today are more comfortable with their own bilingualism. In the past, immigrant students abandoned their home languages in favor of English (Fishman, 1966). In contrast, today's multilingual students often understand that it is possible and desirable to acquire and develop language and literacy proficiency in many languages. Although they see the development of English literacy as important, they know that this need not affect their home language practices.

In the 21st century many more students also lead transnational lives, able to go back and forth physically, and electronically, between different social contexts (Appadurai, 1996; Canagarajah, 1999). Thus, their language practices are much more fluid than in the past. This greater agility at juxtaposing messages through multiple language practices also means that students are more comfortable translanguaging,^v as García (2009a) has referred to these complex interrelated discursive practices. For García, translanguaging is an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages, but on the observable communicative practices of bilinguals. Although translanguaging may include code-switching, that is, the alternation of languages within discourse, it also comprises other forms of hybrid language use that are systematically engaged in sense-making. Bilinguals, for example, draw from sources in all their languages as they construct their understandings, and especially with the facility of today's technology, often simultaneously. They very often listen to discourse in one language and speak in another; and

they often use different languages to read as they amass information, and then render their knowledge in writing in a language other than the one in which they have read the material.

Furthermore, bilinguals' personal talk is often hybrid, as the time one of us heard a Spanish-speaking kindergartener make sense of comparisons in English, by saying to herself, "that tree is *grandet*."

Although many have claimed that racial integration in U.S. schools is decreasing (Orfield & Lee, 2006), linguistic heterogeneity in classrooms is actually increasing. This growth has to do with the fact that most speakers of languages other than English are brown and black people; thus, Latinos, Africans and Asians often live in the same non-white segregated areas. Because of the prevalence of Spanish speakers, there are, of course, many communities in the United States that are overwhelmingly Spanish-speaking. In 2007, in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas, one in five residents spoke Spanish at home (United States Census Bureau, 2007). Clearly, there are communities in these five states, and in many others, where students in particular schools are overwhelmingly or solely Spanish speakers, and where the bilingual education programs of the past are still quite applicable, but this is certainly not the trend everywhere.

In the past, individual bilingual education programs have targeted speakers of one specific language group at a time. Bilingual education programs generally include emergent bilingual students of one language background (*transitional bilingual education* or *developmental bilingual education*) or, in some cases, bilingual students of the same language minority background (emergent and not) alongside those of English-speaking background (*two-way bilingual education*). Although residential segregation as well as the large population of Spanish-speaking students continue to make these bilingual education programs important in

some communities (see, Bartlett & García, forthcoming; García & Bartlett, 2007, for an example of a bilingual secondary school for Latino newcomers), there is also a growing need to develop secondary education models that build on adolescents' complex bilingualism and respond to and validate their multiple bilingual practices.

Schooling adolescent emergent bilinguals

Language minority adolescent students, large proportions of whom are emergent bilinguals, are entering U.S. secondary schools in greater numbers, and constitute a greater proportion of the secondary school population, than has ever been the case. And yet, in the past, this important segment of the U.S. high school population has been mostly ignored (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

The increasing immigration of adolescent students to the United States is the result of many factors. Young children are often left behind with grandparents, as one parent or the other seeks a better future in the United States. Even when parents are documented immigrants, it is often impossible to do the hard work in the United States and care for young children, but adolescents can mostly take care of themselves. So, it turns out that it is most often at the age of 15 when parents “claim” their children who now join reconstituted families where they meet step-parents or half-siblings for the first time, and even parents whom they no longer recognize (García, 1999). Many immigrant families also view their adolescents' learning of English as a highly useful and marketable ability. And thus, sometimes with huge sacrifices, they bring their children to the United States as these adolescents start secondary schools in the ninth grade.

Adolescent emergent bilinguals face, however, literacy demands well beyond those of young children. Cummins (1981a, 1981b) has called language that is accompanied by cues other than linguistic ones *contextualized language*, which is what one uses for *basic interpersonal*

communication (BICS) (Cummins, 1981a, 1981b). To complete school tasks, however, more *abstract language*^{vi} is needed in order to participate in most classroom discourse. In speaking about the need for these abstract language skills, Cummins used the term, *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP). Cummins (1979, 1981a, 1981b, 2000) proposes that it takes *five to seven years* to develop these more abstract skills in a second language, whereas the language of everyday communication is usually acquired in one to three years. Adolescent emergent bilinguals have a more difficult task than young children in developing literacy in an additional language, since secondary texts tend to be much more abstract than those used in elementary schools where picture books, visuals and gestures contextualize instruction. Adolescent emergent bilinguals also have more complex messages to communicate, and thus, the language that they require is also more abstract and difficult. Thus, adolescent emergent bilinguals do not have the luxury of building on contextualized language first. Instead, they have to start using decontextualized language to express abstract ideas, while simultaneously having to develop contextualized language.

Language education policies in U.S. schools

In the era of *No Child Left Behind*, bilingualism as a resource and tool in the education of emergent bilinguals has been increasingly marginalized (Crawford, 2004), as English-only high-stakes tests become the only measure of academic accountability (Menken, 2008). Transitional bilingual education programs are under attack, and in decline in terms of enrollments, although they are tolerated. In the past, most bilingual education programs at the secondary level have been transitional. Meanwhile, developmental bilingual education programs where language minority students, usually at the elementary level, are taught in two languages throughout schooling, have mostly disappeared. Instead, so called “dual language” bilingual education

programs have been scarcely implemented. At the secondary level, dual language bilingual education programs are almost non-existent. In New York City, for example, there is currently only one dual language bilingual education program at the high school level in Mandarin/English.

As the name “dual language” implies, the current thinking is that bilingual education needs to occur in two separate languages, and that the bilingual discursive practices that characterize bilingual communities need to be stamped out (Zentella, 1997). Sometimes dual language education programs act as two-way bilingual education, also including English-speaking children who are learning the additional language. Other times, however these dual language education programs include only language minority students of one language group but with different levels of proficiency in both English and the home language. Although promising in their ability to include a broader range of language proficiencies, dual language bilingual education programs strictly limit the multiple discursive practices of their bilingual students by insisting on clear allocation and separation of the two languages.

Dual language bilingual education programs are a step in the right direction in that they include more than one language group and varying linguistic proficiencies, but they do not go far enough in acknowledging the linguistic complexity of their students or the translanguaging practices that characterize the students’ interactions as they attempt to communicate. By strictly separating the two languages, bilingual educators in these programs fail to build on the students’ home language practices in bilingual communities. Furthermore, these programs do not allow for the cross-linguistic comparisons that will spur the children’s metalinguistic awareness, nor the translanguaging that will become a most important ability in the 21st century.

Until very recently, translanguaging was not seen as appropriate in bilingual classrooms. But there is now emerging evidence that keeping the two languages separate at all times and following only monolingual instructional strategies is not always appropriate (Cummins, 2007; García, 2006; García, 2009a). Translanguaging, if properly understood and suitably applied in schools, can in fact enhance cognitive, language and literacy abilities (Gajo, 2007; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; Lewis, 2008; Martin-Jones & Saxena, 1996; Serra, 2007; Li, 2009). Duverger (2005, p. 93) has pointed out that both macro-alternation (in the sense of allocating languages to periods of the day, teacher or subject matter) and micro-alternation (or the use of hybrid language and instructional practices by both teachers and students) are important in bilingual schools: “Macro-alternation is programmed, institutionalized, demanding; micro-alternation adds suppleness, flexibility, and efficiency. The combination of the two is subtle.”

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 macro-alternation of languages. But rarely do these policies include thinking about the micro-alternation of languages, the translanguaging, which bilingual educators must learn to build upon. Translanguaging is an important resource for all educators of language minority students. Educators meaningfully educate when they draw upon the entire linguistic repertoire of all students, including language practices that are multiple and hybrid. Any language-in-education approach— be it monolingual or bilingual—that does not acknowledge and build upon the hybrid language practices and the translanguaging in bilingual communities is more concerned with controlling language behavior than in educating (Cummins, 2007; García, 2009a). This top-down approach to language education policy has been associated with a long history of colonialism that has served to disempower bilingual populations (Pennycook, 1998).

In order to counteract this colonizing history, language education policies, especially at the secondary level, must involve educators in negotiating these sense-making, moment-by-moment, instructional decisions (for educators as language policy makers, see Menken & García, forthcoming). 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.

The small schools movement in New York City

Large secondary schools in urban contexts have historically failed to serve poor minority students. To improve the education of these students, many large cities, including New York City, have been dismantling large comprehensive secondary schools and establishing small high schools (Advocates for Children, 2009). As a result, transitional bilingual education programs that were prevalent in large secondary schools are disappearing. Despite official rhetoric to the contrary, the small schools movement has not been sufficiently responsive to emergent bilingual students. Most immigrant students are being excluded from small schools because many small schools claim not to have the personnel, the resources, and the educational programs (either bilingual or ESL) needed to educate them (Reyes, 2003).

And yet, as we will see, with strategic planning, sustained efforts, and flexibility in our understandings of bilingualism as a resource in schools, small high schools have the potential to meaningfully educate emergent bilinguals. To do so, we would have to shed not only the pervasive suspicion about bilingualism within contemporary US educational practices, but also our previous constructions of bilingual education as serving only one language group with a clearly articulated macro-level language education policy, and without regard to the language practices of students. There are small schools for emergent bilinguals in residentially segregated

neighborhoods where bilingual education programs are still very much relevant (Bartlett & García, forthcoming; García & Bartlett, 2007), 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.

We consider here two small schools where bilingualism is at the center of educational practices for emergent bilinguals, but where the New York City's Department of Education would not recognize or classify the programs as either "transitional bilingual" or "dual language". We describe here how bilingualism emerges not from program type, but from the educators' and the students' negotiations and sense-making. Because of the schools' language ideologies concerning the importance of bilingualism in the education of these students, students are better able to invest in English literacy development. We acknowledge that the two small schools have limitations and more can be done to encourage the bilingual development of all students, but they provide examples of how bilingualism can be used, by students or teachers from a variety of language backgrounds, as an important tool in the education of emergent bilinguals at the secondary level, in particular in the new small schools.

Cooperation Academy^{vii}

Except for its small size, Cooperation Academy is similar in racial and linguistic composition to many secondary schools in the Bronx. Its 419 students are 64% Latino, 34% African American, and 1% White, with all students eligible for free lunch. Sixteen percent of all students are categorized as "English language learners" (almost all of them from Spanish speaking countries), others are bilingual, and yet others are English monolinguals. There are emergent bilinguals who have recently arrived, as well as some who have been in US schools

more than seven years (referred to in NYC as “Long Term ELLs”). There are also beginning and advanced ESL students.

Because of its small size and its heterogeneous population, the school has been unable to develop a traditional secondary bilingual program where Spanish is used to teach content while students develop English. Furthermore, because many of the emergent bilinguals in this school are not recent arrivals, instruction through the medium of Spanish would be inappropriate, since these students’ Spanish literacy is often much weaker than their English literacy, a product of an education in English as a Second Language Programs or poor transitional bilingual education programs.

Although not providing the same type of bilingual education as a large high school, this school builds on the students’ full range of bilingual abilities, giving Spanish /English bilingualism an important role in the education of its Latino students, regardless of language proficiency in one or the other language. This school has, therefore, adopted a more dynamic bilingual framework in creating the language support that bilingual students need. According to García (2009a, p. 119):

A dynamic theoretical framework of bilingualism allows the simultaneous coexistence of different languages in communication, accepts translanguaging, and supports the development of multiple linguistic identities to keep a linguistic ecology for efficiency, equity and integration, and responding to both local and global contexts. This theoretical framework supports the integrated education of children at different points of the bilingual continuum, sometimes from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The school has gone through great effort to recruit bilingual English/Spanish teachers. For example, all three ESL teachers in the 2008-2009 school year (including one of the authors)

were bilingual. In this school, ESL teachers are seen as not only responsible for English language development, but also for home language support and development where applicable. In addition, two out of the three guidance counselors, both the parent coordinator and the community liaison, both assistant principals, two school aides, and two of the four content teachers on the 9th/10th grade English Learner team are bilingual.

The dynamic and flexible approach to bilingualism in education of this school consists of a “push-in” model where a bilingual/ESL teacher comes into the subject-matter classroom on a daily basis to work with the content teachers. The two teachers plan instruction beforehand collaboratively and implement the lesson jointly. According to the school’s Language Allocation Policy, a document required by the New York City Department of Education:

In team-taught content area classes, the language policy varies based on the needs of the students. Whole class instruction is always given in English. In addition, reading materials are also in English. Students who have stronger English skills (most of our Long Term ELLs) do their assignments in English. However, our newcomer students are permitted to write their answers in Spanish. In addition, oral translation of the content is provided to these students by the ESL teacher, if necessary. This comes in the form of responsible code-switching, where when it is clear the student does not understand the material, a summary of the material is provided in Spanish. The idea behind this is that in these content area classes, mastery of content is most important and if a child needs to make meaning in their native language this should not only be permitted but encouraged.

Many traditionally trained bilingual educators may look at this language allocation policy and wonder at its coherence. Yet, the approach to home language support is systematic and simultaneously flexible in order to meet the needs of all emergent bilingual, bilingual and

monolingual students, within one classroom. On a given day this may look like a student sharing answers in Spanish and a bilingual student translating what he/she said for those who do not speak Spanish. This not only provides meaning for the emergent bilingual, but language practice for bilingual students in both Spanish and English, as well as exposure to Spanish and awareness of its value for those who are English monolinguals.

This dynamic approach to bilingualism in education puts adolescent youth in charge of their language practices, and the development of their bilingualism. For example, as part of their class requirements, all students are expected to complete what are called “Roundtable Projects” - long-term projects that they must complete for each content class every year. Students present their projects to a panel of teachers, and then once approved, can present them to their families and other community members. Emergent bilingual students are given the option of doing their projects in English or in Spanish, or where appropriate, in both. Students are given language support during the presentations to teachers in the form of a teacher translator when necessary. When appropriate, students are paired up with other Spanish-speaking students. Some emergent bilingual students complete their projects in Spanish and then share the oral presentation in English. Others do their projects in English and then present in Spanish. The point is that when content mastery is the priority, as is the case with most work at the high school level, students are given a great deal of autonomy in choosing when and how to use their linguistic resources.

While students are allowed to use Spanish in their work, subtractive schooling practices (Valenzuela, 1999) over many years has led to low Spanish literacy among many still considered emergent bilinguals. For these students, the development of English literacy, but also of Spanish literacy, is important, since bilingualism is seen as an important resource. The school has taken specific steps in order to provide Spanish language instruction for students who may be orally

proficient in Spanish, but lack Spanish academic literacy. A Spanish Native Language Arts class is taught by one of the bilingual/ESL teachers. This has helped extend the responsibility of teachers hired for ESL to language development in general, with Spanish language development also becoming part of the job description and responsibility of bilingual/ESL teachers (hence the slash showing the connection and balance between the two roles.)

Bilingual/ESL teachers have also begun to offer ESL literacy classes to parents and community members on Saturdays, bringing the Spanish-speaking community into the school. These classes serve as a bridge for community involvement. But furthermore, these classes use a bilingual methodology, offering both traditional ESL as well as information in Spanish on issues such as literacy, immigrant rights, and computer literacy. These classes have expanded the role of the bilingual/ESL teachers even further to include not only the bilingual language development of their emergent bilingual students, but also the bilingual language development and incorporation into the school community of the emergent bilingual families.

This school and the bilingual support services it has developed are far from perfect. For example, the Spanish Native Language Arts class was first placed at the end of the day and then at the very beginning of the day because it was deemed not as important as “core classes” that students needed in order to pass New York State Regents examinations required for graduation, sending the message to students that Spanish was not as important as English. In addition, the challenges of having newcomers in mainstream classrooms, albeit with two teachers in the room, are significant for both teachers and students. In addition, the sustainability of a program that rests heavily on the shoulders of three bilingual/ESL teachers is questionable, leaving one to wonder what will happen if and when these teachers leave, taking institutional memory with them. Nevertheless, the dynamic bilingualism used in instruction in this school clearly

demonstrates that with a little bit of creativity and flexibility a small school—even one that is not exclusively for immigrant students—can provide home language support through a more dynamic approach to bilingualism.

Unfortunately, bureaucracy has a hard time dealing with creativity. In a recent visit by representatives of the New York City Department of Education in anticipation of a state audit of the language support programs in the school, the visitors expressed concern about the lack of what they perceived to be a coherent language policy. They told the staff members that an ESL program should not be providing bilingual support and that it will confuse state auditors to discuss this component of the program. They also informed the staff that an ESL teacher should not be providing home language support. The idea of a hybrid bilingual/ESL teacher that addresses bilingualism across the continuum rather than focusing exclusively on English language acquisition seemed to truly baffle these bureaucrats who were interested in finding ways to make the program at the school fit into the checklist they came with.

The representatives, while well-intentioned, came in with a large-school mentality and wanted to impose a traditional model of language support (in the form of ESL instructional strategies or bilingual education types) rather than work with the school to create a more dynamic bilingual approach that would better meet their needs. What this school really needs is for both the city and state education officials to provide support and space for its experimentation and provide expertise in how to improve the bilingual support services it is creatively providing. A checklist, designed for large schools with traditional ESL or bilingual pedagogy, is not what is needed to support this school. Dynamic bilingualism, a product of being responsive to students' diverse discursive needs, doesn't fit nicely into checklists. We now turn to another description of

how a small school builds on students' bilingualism, without following either a traditional ESL or a traditional bilingual education model.

Multilingual Academy

Founded in 1985, the Multicultural Academy was the first school in what would grow into a network of schools, which now includes ten schools in New York City and two schools in California. These schools implement a shared pedagogical approach, which engages a linguistically diverse group of immigrant newcomers, all of whom are classified as “English Language Learners” upon admission, in working collaboratively on projects through which English becomes an academic and social *lingua franca*. As students develop English language proficiency, however, students' home languages do not merely support English language acquisition, but also are supported by the content-rich, interdisciplinary, and collaborative work students do.

The third author has taught for five years at Multicultural Academy as a mathematics teacher on one of the six interdisciplinary teams. These teams consist of teachers from the four core academic subject areas and a guidance counselor. Each team also includes a group of approximately seventy students who by design remain with the team for two years. Within the “junior institutes” of mixed 9th and 10th graders, students move together in “strands”—cohorts of students that move together through their daily classes in the core academic subject areas and weekly seminar classes. Teams collaborate to plan interdisciplinary curriculum and to do “case management” of students who need additional academic, emotional, or social support. Every effort is made to ensure heterogeneity in each strand in terms of gender, language, academic preparation, grade level, age, and time since arrival in the United States. At the same time, since students' home languages are essential sources of social and academic support, students from

less common language groups are placed in the same strand to ensure that some peer support will be available.

The student body, which numbers just under 500 students, a little over half of whom are still categorized as “English language learners,” come to the school with a broad variety of languages. The largest language groups are Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin, as well as dialects from Fuzhou, Wenzhou, and Shanghai), and the languages of the Indian subcontinent: Bangla, Hindi, Nepalese, Tibetan, and Urdu. There are sizable populations of speakers of Portuguese (via Brazil), Polish, Arabic, and Haitian Creole, but also smaller subgroups (fewer than five students) of Thai, Korean, Mongolian, and Vietnamese, as well as a small number of speakers of the West African languages of various Francophone countries.

For some of these students, the Department of Education’s Home Language Identification Survey barely begins to capture the complexity of their linguistic practices. There may be a Tibetan student, for instance, who was educated in Nepal in an English-medium school, and so speaks Tibetan at home, but has at least two school languages. Other students’ families have immigrated multiple times, so there are students who are ethnic Chinese but who were raised in Latin America so that the language spoken by parents at home is a dialect of Chinese, but the student socializes in Spanish and identifies mostly closely with other Latinos.

The staff of Multilingual Academy includes many fluent speakers of the students’ most common languages (see Table 2), as well as many who are receptive bilinguals in languages such as Spanish. While the staff does not fully reflect the diversity of the student body, the hiring process, which is driven by teacher-based teams, places strong value on candidates’ abilities in languages other than English as being essential to understanding what it is like to teach students who are learning another language.

Insert Table 2 here

While the capacity thus exists for the staff to provide explicit home language supports, students are the primary agents in using languages other than English. That is, while instruction by the teacher from the front of the room is in English, other languages are used, as students become peer-instructors. One fundamental premise of the shared teacher-student pedagogical approach is that the locus of control for the use of languages rests with the student. Students are allowed to decide what languages they want to use in order to make sense of the material. Students develop their own strategies for learning and making sense of languages, whether it is using Google Translate, penciling in translations above words, teaching each other and learning phrases in languages other than English, or just playing with languages. The teacher often interacts with small groups and individual students in the languages they're using. In no sense is the pedagogy or program of the Multicultural schools "English-Only".

At some points, however, work in languages other than English becomes the object of explicit attention in the curriculum. A variety of such "native language projects" provide an illustrative range. In English class for example, students have done "native language interview projects" in which adults in their lives have been interviewed in languages other than English about their immigration and education experiences. These interviews are then transcribed in those languages, and students then write linguistic summaries in English. As part of a math project on mobile phone text-entry systems, students had the option of redesigning keypads for other languages or creating predictive "lexicons" in their home languages while exploring the problems posed by key sequences that could refer to more than one word. In science class, students produced profiles of biomes and food webs in their native countries and then translated these profiles into their home languages. Students then took an oral exam on this translation

where the instructor points at a part of their home language profile and the students explain, in English, the content of that section. In this case, students needed to learn the specialized technical vocabulary in their own home languages, while engaging in a genre of academic writing. In each of these cases, the projects and units of instruction were designed by teachers who enjoy a great deal of autonomy in deciding how native languages will figure into their curriculum.

One project where the role of home languages is the most explicit is a unit on teaching and learning languages other than English. Students studied some ways of mapping sentences and diagramming syntax as well as some verb tenses in English. Students then worked collaboratively in groups to produce a teaching project in which they taught their classmates about the features of some other language. While a few groups chose to teach about features of English, most groups chose a language other than English. At the same time, given the linguistic heterogeneity, not every student could be grouped with others who spoke his or her language. As a result, students formed unlikely partnerships, such as a Farsi speaker teaching Chinese, or Spanish and Ukrainian speakers helping out the Polish group. The language interactions here can be characterized as not only dynamic but also multilingual.

Another important use of home languages is in the “native language” project required for the graduation portfolio. Students’ home language work is assessed along three dimensions: 1) creation and expression in a language other than English, 2) communication of purpose, and 3) connection of home language literacy to English language development. In each case, students produce not only a piece of work in their home language, but also a reflection which contains some of their metalinguistic understandings about the differences between their home language and English. To achieve a passing level of competence in creation and expression, students must

communicate ideas in a language other than English; outstanding work is extended in length and can be informational, communicative, or creative in ways which are both well-articulated and well-developed. To pass, students must at least make some observations about their growth as bilinguals.

The roots of this home language portfolio project lie in the Native Language Enhancement (NLE) project, which began in the early 1990s (Sylvan & Romero, 2002). By moving home language squarely into the center of the curriculum while holding that students are capable of guiding their own learning and growth, the NLE unit had students explore different themes within “American Reality” through the meaningful use of home languages in multiple modalities. The impact on students was to renew their appreciation for their home languages while understanding the extent to which they have begun to suffer from language loss. Students also began to gain a sense of the kind of work that they would need to do in order to maintain and develop their home language abilities, while providing another means with which to connect with their family members. Teachers, meanwhile, had to surrender some of their “control” and mastery of the subject matter as they were placed in the position of facilitating the learning of languages that they themselves may not know well at all.

Through collaboration with the community college in which the school is housed, in the 2008-9 school year, Multicultural Academy offered five sections of college-level language classes for bilingual students. Four languages were offered: Spanish (at two levels, one introductory and the other a history-based course), Polish, Chinese (Mandarin), and Bangla. A total of approximately one hundred students thus not only sustained and developed their abilities in languages other than English, but also received nine college credits free of charge.

The culture of support and development extends well beyond these formal course- and curriculum-based sources of home language development. There is a variety of clubs and after-school programs, which draw upon and develop students' home languages. The Chinese club, for example, is a Wednesday afternoon elective in which students organize cultural events, as well as publish an extensive magazine in Chinese each year. Partnerships with groups such as SAYA (South Asian Youth Action), a community-based organization, also connect students to communities. Other students, through their internships, are placed at community-based organizations, such as Make the Road New York (which advocates primarily in English and Spanish for two communities), Asian Americans for Equality, Desis Rising Up and Moving, and Students for a Free Tibet. The school thus facilitates connecting students with communities where their home languages are an undeniable and indispensable resource.

Challenges, however, remain. "Singleton" students, who are the only ones in their class to speak their home language, face more difficulties and fewer opportunities to build on their bilingualism than students in language groups with the critical mass for more support. Validity, reliability, and teacher "control" are questions inherent to assessing any kind of academic work, but are especially stark when teachers themselves often do not have knowledge of students' languages. Yet, these challenges and how they are continually addressed in different, reflect the commitment of this school to the complicated work of using the students' bilingualism to support their learning.

Conclusion

These two small schools do not fit traditional definitions of either ESL or bilingual education programs. And yet, although the schools do not identify as being any of the educational program models for emergent bilinguals, they give evidence of how bilingualism is

an important resource in the meaningful education of their adolescent students. Given the more dynamic bilingualism of the 21st century, a product of greater heterogeneity in a global context, schools must find ways of making ALL students familiar with different language practices and the world's multilingualism. Schools with highly linguistically heterogeneous populations have an advantage in doing this, for they can draw on the students' diverse language practices outside of school and their dynamic bilingualism.

Schools in the 21st century must think beyond the four false dichotomies that often dominate discussion of language education practices –1) English-Only vs. bilingual use; 2) teacher-centered language use vs. student-centered language use; 3) language/literacy-based language practices vs. subject matter-based language practices; 4) school-based language practices vs. community-based language practices. Schools that adopt the dynamic bilingual approach that we have described before understand that the classroom is an open terrain and not a closed domain where choices are made *a priori* by educational authorities. Such schools turn the dichotomies into continua, as they flexibly navigate the terrain within the classroom ecology. The four continua^{viii} of interrelated language education practices are then dynamically interrelated, as in Figure 3:

Insert Figure 3 here

Schools in the United States have tended to focus on the right side of the continua of language practices – use of English-Only, teacher-centered language use, language/literacy focus, school academic language practices, often excluding the left side. But the success of all US students, especially of the increasing number of emergent bilinguals, will depend on the degree to which US schools move toward the left side of the continua: ensuring that their language education practices are bilingual and include translanguaging, are student-centered and

respond to their discourse and sense-making needs, are embedded in subject-matter content where communication is meaningful, and include the language practices of the community. To do this, the two schools in our case studies devote themselves to creating a trusting, respectful and collaborative context among school leaders, teachers, and students, with all parties enjoying a high degree of autonomy to negotiate their language education practices on a moment-to-moment basis.

It is often said that there is no future for bilingual education given the greater heterogeneity of linguistic profiles in classrooms. It is important to remember that in most of the world, local language communities are often isolated, and despite globalization, there is the persistent importance of the local (Canagarajah, 1999) or what Appadurai (1996) calls “globalization from below.” As such, there are many local communities in the United States, including communities of speakers of indigenous languages, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and a myriad other languages, which continue to be isolated and residentially segregated. For these communities, traditional bilingual education programs continue to be extremely important.

But for those communities that show a high degree of linguistic diversity, more dynamic understandings of bilingualism in education, especially when there is a large emergent bilingual student body, is critical. One challenge is to find ways to use the students’ home varied language practices as scaffolds for the development of English literacy for emergent bilinguals. A further challenge is to find ways of developing the students’ dynamic bilingualism as an important ability for the 21st century. It is clear that traditional bilingual education programs or foreign language education programs that rely on the teacher knowing the language being used in the curriculum are not sufficient to meet either of these challenges.

Rather than seeing linguistic diversity as a setback for bilingual education or foreign/second language education programs, educators in the 21st century must find ways of using the students' bilingualism "from the students up." To do this, educators must share control with students as they guide their own learning and development, trusting that students will invest more into their education when they are in the driver's seat. This increased autonomy is particularly appropriate for adolescents at the secondary level.

The practices in these two small schools show us how bilingualism in the 21st century has to be reconceptualized, understanding that bilingualism is not about the linear addition or subtraction of two autonomous languages within rigidly defined programs but of the dynamic use of bilingual practices that characterizes all bilingual communities in the 21st century. Rather than abandoning bilingualism when it becomes complex, educators must find ways of using bilingualism differently, as these two small schools have done. The future for education in the 21st century, and especially in the United States, lies in its ability to provide all students with *more* bilingualism in their education, rather than less. This extension of bilingualism in education will be important not only for language minorities, but especially for English-speaking monolingual students.

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ⁱⁱ We use languaging to refer to the multiple discursive practices that individuals use. These practices go beyond the socio-political constructions of a “language” as proposed by states (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) and used in schools.

ⁱⁱⁱ We in no way mean to suggest that recursive and dynamic bilingualism are mutually exclusive. On the contrary, for many bilingual people their bilingualism may be recursive-dynamic. However, because each conception of bilingualism offers different implications for bilingual programming we treat them separately here.

^{iv} We name these students emergent bilinguals, that is students who are developing academic English and becoming bilingual, following García, Kleifgen & Falchi (2008) and García(2009b). These students are referred to by federal government designations as Limited English Proficient (LEP), and by others as English Language Learners (ELLs).

^v García (2009a) extends Cen Williams’ translanguaging term, which Williams uses to refer to a specific pedagogic practice in bilingual Welsh classrooms (Baker, 2006).

^{vi} Cummins called this *decontextualized language*, a term that has been controversial, since no language, however abstract, can truly be called decontextualized.

^{vii} The schools names have been changed.

^{viii} The concept of continua owes much to the use of biliteracy continua in the work of Nancy Hornberger (1989, 2003).

Figure 1

Subtractive Bilingualism

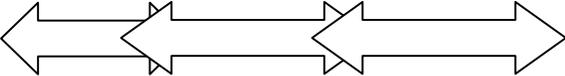
$$L1 + L2 - L1 \rightarrow L2$$

Additive Bilingualism

$$L1 + L2 = L1 + L2$$

Figure 2

Recursive Bilingualism



Dynamic Bilingualism

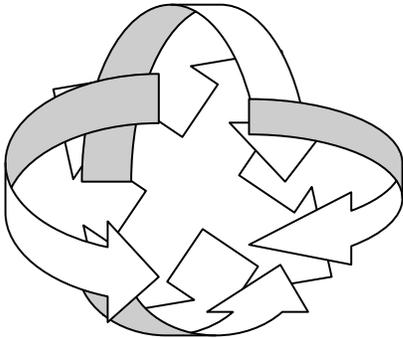


Figure 3

Continua of language education practices

Bilingual-use (translanguaging) -----English only
Student-centered -----Teacher-centered
Subject-matter-centered ----- Language-literacy centered
Community-based -----School-based

Table 1. Languages spoken at home, 5-17 year olds

Languages Spoken at Home, 5 to 17 year olds*		
English Only	42,517,578	79.7%
Languages Other than English	10,861,792	20.3%
Spanish	7,804,711	71.9%
Other Indo-European languages	1,458,438	13.4%
Asian & Pacific languages	1,177,135	10.8%
Other Indo-European languages	421,508	3.9%
TOTAL	53,379,370	
*2006 American Community Survey		

Table 2. Number of fluent speakers on staff

Language	Number of Fluent Speakers on Staff
Spanish	11
Mandarin	6
Bangla	4
Urdu	3
Russian	3
Korean	2
French	2
Polish	1