

New Perspectives on Bilingualism, Biliteracy, and Biculturalism in a Globalized World

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We are living through changes far greater in magnitude and many times more rapid than any generation in human history, primarily due to globalization and the development of new learning technologies (Kellner, 2000; Pea, 2009; Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2001). Globalization moves jobs, people, products, and ideas, blurring national boundaries and augmenting the racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of schools (Banks et al., 2007). In this context of globalization, technological change, and social diversity, a new and broader term for literacy development has emerged: *multiliteracies*. Multiliteracies was coined in 1996 by a group of international literacy researchers and educators (the New London Group) who gathered in New London, New Hampshire, United States (U.S.), to discuss the changes in literacy development. The term builds upon the underlying theories that literacy development cannot be separated from language and culture (Vygotsky, 1978), and that knowledge cannot be transmitted, but rather is constructed by each learner on the basis of what is already known and by the strategies developed over a lifetime, at home and in school (Wells, 1986).

For the New London Group (1996), literacy is multidimensional, reflecting the changing social and educational perspectives of learning. From a sociocultural context, for example, literacy tools such as books and technology do not have meaning in and of themselves. Instead, they can only be understood in terms of what they provide the individual in achieving a particular purpose in meaningful social contexts. The New London Group argued for a different understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity by recognizing the local and global connectedness of languages and cultures in contact:

Effective citizenship and productive work now require that we interact effectively using multiple languages, multiple Englishes, and communication variations in language, be they technical, sporting, or related to groupings of interest and affiliation. When the proximity of cultural

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and linguistic diversity is one of the key facts of our time, the very nature of language learning has changed. (para. 13)

Within this new local and global reality, bilingualism has found its place — providing educators with a clearer lens for understanding the phenomenon as a complex, dynamic process, and consequently suggests that “bilingual education practices must be extended to reflect the complex multilingual and multimodal communicative networks of the twenty-first century” (García, 2009, p. 5). García defined bilingualism as “using more than one language, and/or language varieties, in whatever combination” (p. 9) thereby addressing national multilingual positions, policies and practices in countries worldwide today.

The development of bilingualism and biliteracy within educational contexts varies based on geographical location. In Europe, for example, bilingualism and linguistic diversity have been long held norms “based on human rights, democracy, and the rule of the law,” (Baetens Beardsmore, 2009, p. 198), and supported through policy and funding for bilingual education by supra-national institutions that promote plurilingualism and multilingualism such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Notwithstanding, Baetens Beardsmore noted that although major policy changes in recent years by the Council of Europe and the European Commission promote bilingual education programs for majority and minority languages that integrate second or foreign language learning with content instruction, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), they have yet to address the languages of immigrants.

English has emerged as a world language and is taught in schools and universities today as English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign

language (EFL) (Sharma, 2008). Kachru (1985) developed a framework of three concentric circles for discussing the prominent role of English and its varieties globally and the functional domains of its bilingual development alongside native and indigenous languages: (1) *Inner Circle* native English-speaking countries such as the US, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, (2) *Outer Circle* former British and U.S. colonized countries such as India, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Jamaica, South Africa, the Philippines, etc., where English plays an important historical and governmental role, and (3) *Expanding Circle* countries where English is not an official language but is recognized as an important international language for business, science, technology, among them Western Europe, Israel, Japan, China, Korea, Russia, Taiwan, and Saudi Arabia.

In the U.S., recent research indicates that 75% of the U.S. Latino population uses both English and Spanish in the home (Krogstad & González-Barrera, 2015), and 95% of Latinos believe it is important for Latinos to continue to speak Spanish in the future (Taylor, López, Martínez, & Velasco, 2012). Immigration from Central and South America to the U.S. has dramatically augmented the Spanish speaking population, and Latino immigrant children, predominantly Mexican, account for more than half (58%) of all immigrant youth (Kohler & Lazarín, 2007). Lacking in material resources, and nonmaterial resources (Young, 1990), Latinos from marginalized communities interact in transnational or diasporic spaces to survive and adapt, and, as a group, continue to forge new ways of being Latino, which includes new ways of communicating in Spanish, English, indigenous languages of the Americas, and the various combinations to which these give rise.

U.S. policies shaping teacher recruitment and preparation resulting from the influential No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (a) reduce the

curriculum to a few core subjects (mainly reading and mathematics), and (b) shift student and teacher evaluations to high-stakes tests with public accountability. These policies serve to pressure many states and local schools into the placement of bilingual immigrant students in mainstream English-only classrooms with additional English as a Second Language (ESL) support or transitional Bilingual Education programs which aim at scaffolding learning for students as they acquire English, over placing them in maintenance bilingual education, or dual language programs which focus on long term bilingualism (Rodríguez, Carrasquillo, & Lee, (2014). The rigorous Common Core Standards (2010) approved by 45 states of the U.S. have done little in the way of promoting bilingualism or improving educational outcomes for bilingual immigrant students, and beliefs and practices that contribute to the low level education to which Latino children and youth have access, contrasts sharply with the educational dreams and aspirations of these communities (Brittain, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999).

Language proficiency and academic performance for bilinguals is compounded by the complexity of bilingualism and the degree of proficiency in each language (Mackey, 1968; Macnamara, 1970). In addition, communicative competence for bilinguals develops differently from monolinguals with regard to language use at home, along with each linguistic community's attitudes and understandings about what accounts for competence (Bialystok, 2001; Grosjean, 1989; Romaine, 2000). For example, Zentella (1988) identified four major patterns of communication in the home for migrant Puerto Rican families in New York City which were related to the fluid use and mixing of language(s) that the parents speak to each other, the language(s) that the parents speak to the children and vice versa, and the language(s) the children speak among themselves. Ferrer (in

press) found clear evidence for Puerto Rican families engaging in the bilingual practice of code-switching between Spanish and English at home, thereby demonstrating "a fluid comfort with both languages at the spoken level" (p. 45).

These communication patterns in the home support the notion García (2009) posited of "multiple discursive practices" or *translanguaging* where, "Bilinguals translanguaging to include and facilitate communication with others, but also to construct deeper understandings and make sense of their bilingual worlds" (p. 45). Consequently, no single profile or test score can adequately measure bilingual competence because single language scores do not capture the richness and fullness of a bilingual's repertoire (Bialystok, 2001; Grosjean, 1989; Romaine, 2000). Further, Bialystok stressed that advanced from a methodological stand point, "bilingualism is not a categorical variable" (p. 19).

This issue of *Global Education Review* presents new perspectives on bilingualism in all of its dynamism and complexity seen through the lens of multiliteracies to examine the teaching and learning process in developing literacy in two languages that occurs transnationally within the social contexts of school, family, and community. Correspondingly, these perspectives serve to underscore the pivotal role biculturalism plays in forming new civic identities in four diverse global contexts where English is used alongside multiple native and indigenous languages: the United States, Austria, the United Kingdom, and Kenya.

In the first article, "The Construction of Biliterate Narratives and Identities between Children and Families," Bobbie Kabuto explores the social and cultural perspectives of bilingualism in the home through research with two families in the United States: one a Greek-

speaking family and the other a Spanish-speaking family. Her article presents a definition of a bilingual family within a U.S. context. Further, she considers the influence of social class and global power in the families' varied emphasis on their children's biliterate development. The construction of bilingual identities and the concurrent construction of bicultural identities are highlighted in Kabuto's research as it is in subsequent articles in this issue.

Robin Danzak, in her article, "The Meaning of Roots: How a Migrant Farmworker Student Developed a Bilingual-Bicultural Identity through Change," introduces research that explores the linguistic and cultural tensions that exist for young bilingual migrant farmworkers throughout the U.S. She presents a case study of Manuel, a Mexican teen migrant farmworker in the Southeastern U.S., and bilingual speaker of Spanish, English, and Otomi (indigenous language). Manuel's story, documented through interviews and autobiographical writing at two points in time, age 14 and 18, offers keen insights into the academic and sociocultural challenges of school that bilingual immigrants face, and the role that family plays in the development of their bilingual-bicultural social identities.

The importance of educating bilingual children is complemented in this issue by a concurrent inclusion of research that incorporates the training of bilingual pre-service teachers. María Arreguín-Anderson presents research on an inquiry-based afterschool program in San Antonio, Texas, in her article, "Bilingual Latino Students Learn Science for Fun while Developing Language and Cognition: Biophilia at a La Clase Mágica Site." Writing from this border region between the U.S. and Mexico, the participating students were Mexican-American and Mexican. She found that the inquiry approach allowed for rich linguistic

and cognitive development for the children in both Spanish and English. Because the children were being educated in a dual language school, the goal of the after-school program was to enrich the children's language and cognitive development in both Spanish and English.

In their article, "Teaching English as an Additional Language in the Global Classroom: A Transnational Study in the United States and the United Kingdom," Gail McEachron and Ghazala Bhatti, compare educational outcomes and programs for language minority students learning English as an additional language (EAL) in grades K-12 in Henrico, U.S. and Bristol, United Kingdom (U.K.). McEachron in the U.S. and Bhatti in the U.K., worked collaboratively as teacher educators alongside a team of exchange pre-service teacher candidates from their two universities. They observed classroom teachers in practice, collected data, made comparisons, and generated global insights. McEachron and Bhatti's research underscores the commonality of linguistic, cultural, and instructional needs for language minority students learning EAL in two inner circle countries where English is the native language, and the value of collaborating across national boundaries for teacher preparation to develop "a more global dimension for perspectives on bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism" (pp. 19–20).

In another transnational study, "Teaching English as a 'Second Language' in Kenya and the United States: Convergences and Divergences," Zaline Roy-Campbell compares the linguistic needs and instruction of high school students learning English as a second language (ESL) in two diverse global contexts where English is used for different purposes as outer circle and inner circle countries. She presents instructional models and materials for teaching ESL that integrate academic content with language at the secondary school level, and suggests an

alternative focus in the preparation of ESL teacher candidates for secondary schools.

Finally, Claudia Mewald presents research on vocabulary development in the context of CLIL classrooms in Lower Austria in her article, "Lexical Range and Communicative Competence of Learners in Bilingual Schools in Lower Austria." Mewald's research further develops ideas associated with the Lexical Approach and Lexical Priming Theory and offers conclusions that can be applied to bilingual education occurring in many different program models. Her research confirms for us the great value in vocabulary work as a tool to developing greater communicative competence in a non-dominant language. Further, her article offers examples of vocabulary strategies that lead educators away from straightforward memorization of vocabulary to richer means of assisting students to create connections between new vocabulary and existing vocabulary in their non-dominant language.

Implications of the research presented here lead us to consider three ideas. First, Europe has taken multiple steps in the direction of creating policy and practices across nations as opposed to an approach toward the bilingual education of citizens that goes nation by nation. This is a worthwhile trend that other nations should consider. Second, educators around the globe are moving away from terms that represent the presence of two languages in an educational context, bilingualism, to terms that represent more than two languages such as multilingualism or plurilingualism. This semantic shift allows for the recognition of multiple home languages for children. Finally, educators are encouraged to take into account parents' perspectives on bilingualism and biliteracy for a number of reasons. Educators and parents may have different perspectives on the bilingual development of the same child. Further, the shifts around the development of

bilingual education are promoting a different perspective than held by educators in the past: that developing biliteracy is not an "all-or-nothing" proposition, as Kabuto writes in her article published here (p. 7).

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