

# Language Minorities Developing Multiple Literacies

Additive Bilingual Education and Transformative  
Pedagogy

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## Abstract

This thesis explores issues of academic achievement in Spanish speaking linguistic minorities in the United States. It argues for the implementation of pedagogy that develops not only English language and literacy skills but also strives to develop language and literacy skills in Spanish. This argument is in light of the vast amount of research that has found that home language literacy is a necessary prerequisite for effective second language and literacy acquisition (Beykont 1994, Collier 1987, Cummins 200, Ovando & Collier 1998, Stong & Prinz 2000). Currently, school systems do not have educational resources in place, many times because of legislation that prohibits it, that would allow for the large and growing percentage of our student population of linguistic minorities to develop their home language. This failure to implement theoretically sound educational programs for linguistic minorities has had horrific implications for the academic achievement and school retention rates for students of Latin American descent. Almost one in three Latino students drops out of high school (US Department of Education 2003) compared to 13% of African Americans and 7% of white students. This paper provides an overview of the history of oppression of cultural and linguistic minorities, shedding light on some of the underlying racially prejudiced beliefs that have contributed to systematic oppression. It also problematizes some common ideas of what it means to be literate and biliterate in our society and suggest a better working definition of the terms. Included is a discussion of some of the models of bilingual education and why some are less effective as well as less socially just than others. Most important is the argument that education should not aim to simply reproduce the societal

structures of power, but that it should work to cooperatively engage students and teachers in a dialogue for societal change. By exploring and developing multiple literacies in schools, not only are students' languages legitimated but so are their own personal identities. By doing this, the educational outcomes of language minority students can be improved and in turn the future of this nation and the world can expect a much brighter future.

## **Privilege**

*I have been privileged. I have been privileged because since the day I was born, I have been bilingual. I don't mean to say that I entered the world already able hold a conversation in two languages. Everyone knows that newborn babies can't produce or understand language; you don't have to be a linguist to know that. What I mean is that on that autumn day in a hospital near the nation's capital, I entered not just one world full of opportunities for expression, but two. I was privileged because my parents were linguistically enlightened enough to know that speaking to me in both of their native languages would open up doors of opportunity for me. From the start, my father, a noble, charismatic man from El Salvador, spoke with me primarily in Spanish and my mother, a strong, intelligent woman from a European-American background spoke with me primarily in English. Their choice to raise me in two languages was not just because they knew that bilingualism had cognitive and developmental benefits, it was also because they knew I would need them both for survival. I was, after all, a part of two different worlds; two cultural backgrounds (or maybe even more), each with its own set of valuable linguistic tools.*

*When I was four, we moved to El Salvador. Children tend to learn what is meaningful to them and during the time we spent in El Salvador, English was not as meaningful to me as Spanish was, because now I was living in a Spanish speaking world. I was much more willing to speak in Spanish and so my mother had to create incentives for me to use my English. If I wanted a cookie or help getting something*

*down from a high place, I had to ask for it in English. She would pretend not to understand me otherwise. For her making meaning for me I was privileged.*

*At the International School, where students came from all over the world, we learned how to read in Spanish first. They figured Spanish would be a better starting block for literacy skills to be developed because it is phonetically less complex. My parents continued to read to me in English at home, and eventually, I applied the deciphering skills I had picked up in school to the English words written on the pages of the books, even before they introduced reading in English at my school. For developing literacies in multiple contexts, I was privileged.*

*Still, Spanish was generally more important socially during this time in my life. I spoke Spanish with most of the kids in my class because it was the first language of the majority. I spoke Spanish with the women who took care of me, with my little sister, my dad, my aunts, uncles and cousins and with the people I interacted with on the street. I don't think I liked speaking English in public places because it labeled me as an outsider. I already felt far too different because I have the same fair skin as my mother instead of my father's chocolate complexion that is more typical of Salvadorans. Still, I was privileged. I was privileged because I was learning both languages in school as well as at home.*

*My mother recalls that after moving back to the United States, it took no more than a week for my sister and me to switch from playing together in Spanish to playing in English. We caught on quickly to the social norms of the context in which we were living, and we had the linguistic skills to easily transition from one language to the*

*other. We were privileged because we had very little trouble adjusting to a new school. I think the other students in my new fourth grade class were initially baffled by idea of a new student who just arrived from a Latin American country being able to speak English perfectly well and without the expected accent.*

*Some of the other students in my new class were also either first or second-generation immigrants from Latin America. And they were privileged too, because our class was a Two-Way Spanish Immersion class and they were learning both English and Spanish language and literacy skills. They were privileged because the language they spoke at home was being valued in school. They were privileged because they had access to understanding through two languages. Even if we were studying the Civil War during our English Social Studies period, it was not discouraged to use Spanish to ask questions. They were also privileged because they probably learned English much faster than if they hadn't also been learning Spanish in school. They were definitely privileged that they at least had that because most children who speak Spanish at home in this country do not have the same opportunity to develop their home language in school.*

*Looking back though, I was still more privileged than they were. I was more privileged because most of them only had one language at home and not only was it the language that was less valued in our society at large, it was also often not the same Spanish that was valued at this particular school. Most of the kids from Latin American families tended to be from lower income families than the white kids. My father was an immigrant, one who had been born into poverty, just like most of theirs,*

*but the difference is that he had been able to get a college education. He was the only one of his twelve brothers and sisters; all the odds were against him. But he did it, and he became privileged once he gained access to the dominant structures of language. And I was privileged because I had access to some of the dominant structures of language at home, because of my mother and my father.*

*Linguistically I was definitely privileged, and on top of that, I was also privileged because no one made negative assumptions about my family or me from looking at the color of my skin. The fair skin, that I had originally resented because it marked me as an outsider in El Salvador, now helps me to blend in to the dominant culture in the U.S. whether or not I want to.*

## Introduction

My thesis in this paper is that the development of two or more languages and literacies in a school setting in which critical thinking skills are promoted can support the development of a more socially just, aware and better-educated citizenry. In light of a long history of repression of language and cultural minorities and of the breadth of research advocating schools to become more culturally and linguistically responsive, I write this paper to advocate for more schools to implement enrichment bilingual programs that are designed based on theoretically sound first and second language acquisition research. I start by summarizing some of the history of oppression of cultural and linguistic minorities, shedding light on some of the underlying racially prejudiced beliefs that have contributed to systematic oppression. I continue by problematizing common ideas of what it means to be literate and biliterate in our society and suggest a better working definition of the terms. Next, I discuss what some of the models of bilingual education are and why some are less effective and socially just than others. I suggest that the most advantageous way to educate language minority students is through a program that develops and legitimates both of their languages as well as engages them in a conversation about power structures in society.



## Socio-Political Context

A large and growing number of students in our public schools come from homes where English is not the primary language. A 2007 report released by Congress found that 10% of the total student population is deemed Limited English proficient (LEP) in the United States. Of that 10%, 75% come from homes where Spanish is the primary language of interaction (US Congress, 2007). So far, our schools are failing miserably at educating our Language Minority Student (LMS) populations and the repercussions for all of us are enormous. In 2000, 28% of Latinos dropped out of high school, compared to 13% of African Americans and 7% of white students (US Department of Education 2003). “Every dropout carries a huge price tag for the society: these students’ potential to contribute to the economic and social well-being of their society is not realized, there are increased costs for social services ranging from welfare to incarceration, and tax revenues that they might have generated are lost.” (Cummins 2000: 240) In recent years, researchers in the field of Bilingual Education have strongly recommended that more programs focusing on multicultural and bilingual education have the potential to reverse the unfavorable educational outcomes of Language Minorities. Unfortunately, bilingual education continues to face a great deal of resistance because of a combination of misinformation and the view that maintaining one’s native language is inherently “un-American”.

One such barrier to effective implementation of appropriate bilingual programs is the 1998 passing of Proposition 227 in California. The law eliminated

the use, with very few exceptions, of student's home language for instructional purposes (Ovando & Collier 1998). As a consequence of such legislation, only 42 percent of the English Language Learners (ELLs) in California who were not proficient in 1998 were deemed proficient in English five years later (Bartolome & Leistyna, 2006). Even before the passing of Proposition 227, 70% of ELLs in the state were not receiving any linguistic support at all and the majority of the other 30% were receiving support mostly through transitional bilingual education programs that made use of students home languages only as long as they deemed necessary (usually between one to three years) before moving them into the mainstream English-only classrooms (Cummins 2000).

Laws such as Proposition 227 in California that banned bilingual education were passed democratically, with a majority of voters favoring a delegitimation of the "other" in our society. Included in that majority were linguistic minorities themselves. Interestingly, immigrant families are frequently the first ones to stand up in opposition to bilingual education. It is possible that this phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that immigrant families do not wish to maintain a stigmatized social status. They share the mainstream society's desire for their group's assimilation because they see it as the only way out of their continued systematic oppression. Attaining the "American Dream," for them often means rejecting their native language and culture in favor of the dominant one. For this reason, they want their children to devote as much time and energy as possible solely to learning English, so that they might have life opportunities that the parents were denied. It is understandable for families to want their children to learn English since it is the

language that opens doors of opportunity in this country. Having access to the discourses of power of society is what facilitates the acquisition of economic stability through social and professional networks. It is not surprising then, that a great deal of Latin American immigrant families, do not see it as imperative to spend time in school developing Spanish language and literacy skills.

The phenomenon of buying into the rejection of their own language and culture implies that there are two equally problematic forces acting at the same time on those in opposition of bilingual education. The first is an internalization of the coercive relations of power between the dominant social groups and the oppressed ones. A majority of the members of society continue to buy into the idea that some groups should hold more power in society than others, rather than questioning the unequal distribution of power itself. The dominant population imposes its cultural beliefs on the rest of society and sends the message that those who do not adopt the same social, cultural and linguistic norms as those in power are somehow less valuable. The second powerful force is the spread of inaccurate information about effective educational practices for language minorities. Many educators and policy makers continue to maintain these misguided beliefs about bilingual education. Instead of questioning their underlying beliefs, many have come to expect failure from language and cultural minorities, blaming their lack of success on lack of motivation, lack of parental involvement or lack of intelligence (Gillanders & Jimenez 2004).

Cummins argues that simply labeling people as “racist” or “oppressive” is working against the possibility understanding and dialogue (Cummins 2000). Aiming to gain a better understanding of why people feel threatened by the prospects of bilingual education is much more constructive. Cummins identifies three key misguided beliefs among opponents of bilingual education that are contributing to the continuing miseducation of ELLs. The first one is the maximum exposure or time on task hypothesis. Many parents and educators believe that the most effective way for their children to learn English is by immersing them in the language for the most amount of time possible. This hypothesis implies that time spent developing their native language is actually counteracting the desired outcome of English acquisition. The second common assumption is that ELLs can learn sufficient academic English within one to three years of ESL support before being transitioned into a mainstream classroom without linguistic support. This assumes that just because they have enough English for basic survival, that they will also have enough English to succeed academically in school. The third belief is that the younger students are exposed to total English immersion, the better, because younger students are better language learners than older students. Yet another objection to the implementation of bilingual education programs is that they have the potential to further segregate language minorities from the rest of the student population. These misguided beliefs will be further deconstructed in the remainder of this paper.

Social stigmas and expectations have had an enormous effect on the educational outcomes of certain social groups. Ogbu calls stigmatized social groups

*Caste-like or involuntary minorities* (Ogbu 1987). These are groups that have been brought here by force such as the descendants of enslaved Africans, taken over by force such as the Native Americans or forced here by political or economic strife in their home countries like many more recent Latin American immigrants. Although Ogbu's distinction between subordinated and dominant groups may be over simplified, it is useful for making sense of how some immigrant groups have been more successful than others. He notes that the groups that have had the opportunity to make a more conscious decision to come to the United State are more able succeed in mainstream society, whereas involuntary minorities are systematically excluded from becoming fully functional. Voluntary minorities often look racially more like the dominant society and are able to assimilate more easily within a couple of generations and/or come into society already with some of the cultural, social and linguistic skills necessary for active participation in a desirable section of the workforce. Involuntary minority groups have been historically exploited and stripped of their native languages and cultures by only being offered segregated, second-rate schooling. They are told that the skills and knowledge that they bring are somehow less valuable than those of the dominant groups and therefore unworthy of being taught in schools. What our schooling system is effectively doing is stripping them of the skills that they came in with and then offering them an education that does not truly teach them the skills necessary to succeed in the dominant culture. "Such a deskilling process in which people are rendered semi-literate in both languages effectively works to deny them access to the mainstream while simultaneously taking away essential tools that can be used to build the

cultural solidarity necessary to resist exploitation and democratize and transform society (Bartolome & Leistyna, 2006: 3)” Offering Language Minority students an unsatisfactory education is not only holding them back, but also holding back the possibility of a truly democratic nation of citizens. To achieve a truly democratic nation, we need to educate our citizens to be active participants and responsible thinkers. Failing to develop native languages in linguistic minorities has negative implications for cognitive abilities (Cummins 2000), and therefore linguistic minorities from their potential to participate fully in our democratic society.

This country is a nation of immigrants. Aside from the Native Americans, who were robbed of their voice with the arrival of the first Europeans, everyone is the descendant of an immigrant within recent genealogical history. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the statue of liberty has stood as a symbol of welcome to new Americans: “cries she with silent lips. ‘Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...’” (Lazarus 1883) The poem fails to communicate the expectation of total assimilation that was and remains the common reality for immigrants who wish to succeed in this country. For most immigrants around the turn of the nineteenth century, home languages were everything but forgotten by the second generation of Americans (Freeman 1998).

One such argument among those in opposition to bilingual education is that their grandparents or great grandparents were able to make it in this country without bilingual education, and so the more recent immigrants should be able to as well. Not only does this not take into account the complexities of the differences

between the earlier immigrant populations and the more recent ones, but they are also forgetting that for many early immigrants bilingual education *was* in fact available. Bilingual schools were very much a presence in the early history of this country, with small pockets of linguistic groups all over the nation. Bilingual public and private schools existed in German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Dutch, Polish, Italian, Czech, French and Spanish across a great number of states (Ovando & Collier, 1998). It wasn't until the early 1900s, when there was a sudden influx of new immigrants to the United States that bilingual education began to fall out of favor. At that point, the focus of public schooling became the "Americanization" of the new immigrants by stripping them of their home languages and cultures as quickly as possible into a new assimilated, monolingual way of life. Prejudice was a major factor in the desire to keep citizens who were different from having access to bilingual education. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the most common bilingual schools in the US were German-English. This particular language was so widespread, in fact, that 4% of all elementary aged students at the time attended a bilingual German English school (Rethinking Schools Spring 1998). Unfortunately, after the beginning of WWI, anti-German feelings were so prevalent in the country that all bilingual schools were completely wiped out (Wiley 1998, Wittkey 1936). Instruction for English Language Learners after WWI consisted of a "sink or swim" approach termed Submersion. Until 1968, all ELLs were placed in mainstream classrooms without any linguistic support and expected to keep up academically with their native English speaking peers. (Bikle Billings & Hakuta 2004). The results of adopting a "sink or swim" method

for educating ELLs were disastrous in terms of academic achievement (Ovando & Collier, 1998).

In response to the failing outcomes of the “sink or swim” approach and in the wave of the civil rights movement, Senator Ralph Yarborough (D-TX) sponsored the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 (Ovando & Collier 1998). The Bilingual Act of 1968 became Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a centerpiece on the War on Poverty. The intent by the authors of the Act was to “emphasize the advantages to the nation of developing students’ bilingualism/ biculturalism, resulting in increased academic achievement and bilingual resources for the United States (Ovando & Collier 1998: 40)”, the ultimate policy result of the act however, was to merely fund programs that focused on compensatory and remedial education for ELLs such as transitional programs that exited them out of a linguistically supportive environment as soon as possible. There are other program types for ELLs that are non-bilingual in nature such as pull-out ESL and Sheltered English Instruction (Freeman 1998) that are beyond the scope of this paper but also important for the appropriate implementation of educational programs for ELLs because even without the explicit presence of a bilingual program, transformative pedagogy, which will be discussed later on in this paper, can be utilized within a classroom setting to have positive effects on academic achievement.

In 1974 Kenny Lau filed a lawsuit against the San Francisco Unified School District because of they were still providing ELLs with an inferior education (Ovando & Collier 1998). Although The supreme court ruled in favor of Lau, concluding that “there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum,” (Lau v. Nichols, 1974: 26) the supreme court still



did not specify how exactly schools were to modify their instruction in order to meet the needs of English Language Learners. Bilingual education since then has not mandated by the federal government, but the Bilingual Education Act does require that LEP students be given an equal opportunity of education. The office for Civil Rights use three criteria to determine whether the goal is actually being met. An equal opportunity education must have “Research-based programs that are viewed as theoretically sound by experts in the field; adequate resources -- such as staff, training, and materials -- to implement the program; and Standards and procedures to evaluate the program and a continuing obligation to modify a program that fails to produce results.” (Rethinking Schools Spring 1998). The Federal law clearly states that an equal opportunity education must be based on theoretically sound evidence. California Proposition 227, as well as other similar laws, are in violation of the Federal Law because denying access to bilingual education programs to Language Minorities, as will be spelled out in the remained of this paper, is by no means “theoretically sound”. An understanding of what it means for a program to be “theoretically sound” is a complex endeavor, but a good starting point is to look at the research that has been done on the cognitive and academic benefits for students who are bilingual and biliterate.

## **What is Biliteracy?**

Even before we can come to an understanding of what biliteracy means, we have to understand what it means to be literate. Gee makes a useful point in saying that literacy is much more than just reading and writing. He argues that literacy is embedded in a much larger political entity (Gee 1989 as seen in Delpit 1993).

Namely, that individuals acquire “identity tool kits”, or sets of ways to conduct themselves that correspond to various socially constructed environments. He calls each “identity tool kit” a *discourse*. More precisely, he defines discourse as “a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network.’” (Gee 1987: 51) He further distinguishes that primary discourses are those utilized in the home, while secondary discourses are those utilized in social institutions beyond the family such as in school or specific work places. Resnick (1990) argues that the role of education therefore, is to introduce students into a community of “literacy practitioners”.

In an ethnographic study of three neighboring but separate communities-- Roadville (working-class black), Trackton (working-class white) and the towns people (middle class both black and white), Heath found that the reason why middle class children were more successful than children from working class communities was because aspects of middle class students’ primary discourse were more readily aligned with the secondary discourse of school. In each discourse community, different linguistic aspects were valued and developed differently. To take an example of this being articulated from the text: “For Roadville, the written word limits alternatives of expression; in Trackton, it opens alternatives. [But] neither community’s ways with the written word prepares it for the school’s ways” (Heath 1983: 235) Heath concludes that raising awareness of the differences between primary discourses among educators is the key to allowing working class and minority communities to access the powerful discourses. Teachers must become

learners of their students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds in order to help them understand and value the discourses that they bring to the classroom. Only by validating students' already acquired "identity tool kits" can teachers effectively introduce students to the more powerful communities of "literacy practitioners." Failing to do so can raise a significant affective filter that keeps students from engaging with the classroom community and with the academic content.

Hornberger defines biliteracy as "any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing" (1990: 35). With Gee's distinction between primary and secondary discourses in mind, and for a more useful working definition for the purposes of this paper, I suggest a modification to Hornberger's definition of being biliterate to the following: *Any and all instances in which an individual has the capacity to operate through two (or more) secondary discourses and also understand the relationship between one's primary and secondary discourses enough to be able to take responsibility for their social repercussions.* For example, many Latin American families often use some degree of "Spanglish" as a primary discourse, where English and Spanish are mixed to create a new hybridized language. In communities where English and Spanish speaking worlds are overlapped, there are unwritten conventions about how to appropriately communicate in Spanglish, and diverging from the perceivably more informal manner of speaking might actually distance the speaker from the linguistic community to which he or she belongs. In a traditional academic setting, however, Spanglish is not considered an appropriate discourse through which to communicate. A Spanglish utterance such as "*Me comí el sandwich*" [English: "I ate the

sandwich”] is considered incorrect in the Spanish language discourse because it is unconventional to insert Anglicized words such as “sanwich” into an utterance. More acceptable would be either of the Spanish words “pan” or “bocadillo.” Instead of simply correcting the student, and implying that their primary discourse is somehow inferior, a teacher could bring attention to how language can be altered to make it more context appropriate.

Aiming to develop not one but two secondary discourses in language minority students needs that much more of an acute understanding of the complexities of language and power. Teachers need to move away from the view of non-dominant discourses as something that must be eradicated, and instead bring explicit attention to the differences between their primary and secondary discourses and their current acceptable uses in various social contexts. Teachers can also bring awareness to the fact that students have choices to make as to what language or type of language to use in specific contexts, but that those choices come with consequences (positive, negative or neutral) related to the structures of societal power. One of the responsibilities of the teacher, therefore, should be to raise a sense of responsibility for student use of primary and secondary discourses.

Hornberger offers an interesting framework for understanding the relationship between power relations among various discourses. She places language practices along continua of traditionally more powerful versus traditionally less powerful (2003). Hornberger argues that it just so happens that in this time in history certain points on the continua are deemed more valuable than

the others, and that “power varies between sites and contexts and is exercised through force, through discourse, and through acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital (Hornberger 2003: 39).” For historically subjugated language minorities, for example, home languages sit at the traditionally less powerful end of the continuum and the dominant variety of English sits at the traditionally more powerful end. These points, therefore, can be called to question through educational practice. Literacy development for all students means not just introducing them to the traditionally more powerful language practices, but also pushing them to critically examine the power structures of language at large. In Street’s words “for educationalists concerned with...power, the question is not ‘how can a few gain access to existing power,’ nor ‘how can existing power structures be resisted,’ but rather how can power be transformed.” (Street 1996 as quoted in Hornberger 2003: 39)

## **Not all Bilingual Education Models are Created Equal**

One of the things that most of those in opposition and those advocating bilingual education can agree is that all children in the United States should have the opportunity to learn English. Gaining access to the dominant discourses in English is important because it is currently the dominant language in the United States and therefore the means through which to access the dominant structures of power. However, acquisition of dominant discourses does not have to be and absolutely should not be at the expense of anyone’s cultural and linguistic identity. There is also nothing inherently “better” about English as a cultural discourse other than the

fact that it is the one that is currently powerful in our society. What is problematic about many models of education utilized to educate language minorities is the assumption that English, as a medium for discourse is somehow superior to any other language.

Wherever a significant population of ELLs from a linguistic background is present in a school or school district, an additive bilingual program should be created to meet the educational needs of those students that focuses not only on rigorous academic content but also on achieving full bilingualism and biliteracy. Only by doing this can language minorities overcome the systematic oppression that has been forced on them throughout the history of our country. Furthermore, the implementation of transformative pedagogy in enrichment bilingual programs can also be one of the major steps towards social reform by engaging both minority and majority language speakers in a critical dialogue that can bring about greater understanding.

Prescribing a specific program type is irrelevant because programs can only be created while taking into account the specific context in which it is being created. It is impossible to prescribe a specific program type because schools can vary by the needs of the student population in question, the types of teachers available and the relationship of the program to the rest of the school. They can also vary in whether native English speakers will be incorporated into a Two-Way program (where native Spanish speakers and native English speakers are taught together and through both languages), how languages will be allocated among specific subject

areas, and others. An appropriate program type can, however, only be effective if it aims for additive bilingualism rather than subtractive bilingualism (Freeman 1998). Furthermore, adopting transformative pedagogical methodologies along with an additive bilingual methodology can be transformational of the educational outcomes of linguistic minorities.

Hornberger (1991) identifies three main educational models of bilingual education. It is important to define and differentiate enrichment models of bilingual education from other models because all are not created equal; their foundational language-planning goals and ideological orientations toward linguistic and cultural diversity in society vary greatly, and thus also give rise to very different results.

Transitional Model	Maintenance Model	Enrichment Model
Language Shift	Language Maintenance	Language Development
Cultural Assimilation	Strengthened cultural identity	Cultural Pluralism
Social Incorporation	Civil rights affirmation	Social autonomy

**Figure 1** Bilingual education model types (Hornberger, 1991: 223)

### Subtractive Bilingualism: Transitional Models

Transitional Models are currently the most common type of bilingual program model made available for ELLs to learn English (Freeman 1998). Most commonly, programs are set up in such a way that students are taught separately from the rest of the school for one to three years to receive content instruction in their native language as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) before being required to exit the program and join their native English speaking peers in the mainstream classroom (Freeman 1998). Although the idea is that students can stay

caught up on academic content while they are learning, transitional models assume that one to three years of ESL support is sufficient for students to be able to achieve academically in the mainstream English-only classroom. In a study conducted by Collier (1987) it was found that it actually takes five to ten years for students who are taught *exclusively* through English to catch up with their English speaking peers. Conversational English may be acquired at a much faster rate, but the language required to succeed in an academic context takes much longer to acquire (Collier 1987). Another underlying assumption of this model type is that the more classroom time spent in English, the better students will be able to acquire the language (called the maximum exposure or time on task hypothesis). Another study by Beykont (1994 as seen in Cummins 2000) found that the more developed students' reading ability was in Spanish, the greater progress made in English reading ability later on. Students who had their Spanish literacy skills developed ultimately performed better on both academic subject matters and in English. A great deal of other studies have been done on other languages whose findings were essentially the same. A second example, consistent with other research, found a strong correlation between English literacy skills and signing skills in American Sign Language (ASL) (Strong & Prinz, 2000). The more a deaf student had been exposed to development in sign language, the more likely they were to become successful readers of the English language. Cummins (2000) suggests that these strong correlations may be explained by the presence of a linguistic proficiency threshold, meaning that students need continued development in two languages and literacies in order to experience the cognitive, linguistic and academic benefits of full bilingualism and



biliteracy. “If beginning [second language] learners do not continue to develop both their languages, any initial positive effects are likely to be counteracted by the negative consequences of subtractive bilingualism.” (Cummins 2000: 37)

Transitional programs tend to view native languages as a problem that must be overcome through remedial and often stigmatized segregated classrooms. This program model is often referred to as “subtractive bilingualism” because students are expected to forget their native language and culture once they have what it takes to assimilate into the dominant community. In many educational settings, Language Minorities are discouraged and sometimes even punished for using their native language in the classroom or even on the playground. Transitional bilingual education models might have the good intention of helping Language Minorities succeed in society by helping them assimilate, but it is important to note that this subtractive educational model has been found to contribute and not eradicate the high drop out rate of Latino students (Cummins 2000).

Linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf believed that the language that we use is directly linked to the way we perceive the world and that the higher level thoughts that we are capable of thinking are preconditioned by the language that we have at our disposal (Whorf 1956). Research has told us that the neglect of home language development stumps not only that language but also the potential for development of successive languages (Beykont 1994, Collier 1987, Cummins 2000, Ovando & Collier 1998, Stong & Prinz 2000,). Denying students of the ability to develop their native language is therefore not only cutting ties with a rich alternate system for

looking at and understanding the world, but it is also limiting the possibility of higher order thinking in students whose home language is not the one used in mainstream society.

The systematic repression of home languages is comparable to the terrifying dystopian society found in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. In the novel, the government gradually condenses the language of the society in order to prevent citizens from having even the slightest possibility of thinking disobedient or rebellious thoughts. They are prevented from having their own thoughts because they simply do not have the language necessary for thinking them. In the novel, the citizens are maintained in a constant state of confusion, stupor and fear by constant control and manipulation from the government. Our public school systems are exerting a similar control and manipulation of historically oppressed social groups by forcing newly arrived Americans to be ashamed of their home languages and cultures and at the same time generally only offering them and their descendants a second rate opportunity at a descent education.

The continuation of ineffective educational opportunities for our ELLs therefore acts to effectively reproduce societal structures of oppression and impoverishment. For ELLs to be able to break out of the pattern, we must ensure that they are able to effectively acquire both their home languages and English as well as keep up with academic content needed to open doors to a brighter future. In order to do this, we must cease to perceive ELLs' language and culture as a problem, and open our eyes to the plethora of diverse knowledge, experience, language and

culture they are bringing to our schools, and to our society at large. Most great innovations have come from individuals that were willing to think outside the box. If different languages are what Whorf called “different pictures of the universe,” then it would be backwards and hypocritical to devalue any other perspectives of the world that could contribute to the collective advancement of the human race.

### **Additive Bilingualism: Maintenance Models**

A second model of bilingual education is the maintenance model.

Maintenance models encourage native language maintenance in order to strengthen cultural identity and affirm the civil rights of the minority language speakers (Freeman 1998). Like transitional programs, maintenance programs usually segregate language minority students within a school, but unlike transitional programs students are allotted more time to develop their home language and literacy skills, granting students the cognitive benefits of having both of their languages developed.

Maintenance programs as well as Enrichment programs are considered “additive bilingualism” because they support the *addition* of a second language to students’ linguistic repertoire. Additive bilingual programs have been proven to be more beneficial than subtractive ones in their ability to increase academic achievement. This might be partially due to the fact that academic knowledge and cognitive skills can transfer from one language to another (also known as the interdependence hypothesis)(Thomas & Collier 1997). Since skills, concepts and knowledge are best acquired through the language a student understands best, it is

most beneficial to teach academic content areas through the student's native language at least until they are proficient enough in academic English. It has also been found to be possible to teach academic content through Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) without the support of the native language, but this does not contribute to the development of the home language, it is purely for keeping up with the academic content.

It is important to note that it has *not*, been determined whether language and literacy skills need to be taught in any sort of order (Cummins 2000). It has been found that bilingual models where literacy skills are introduced in students' L1 have been highly successful, as have models where literacy skills in both L1 and L2 have been introduced in quick succession. Cummins maintains that the most important thing is that schools are developing home language literacies in general, not that it necessarily has to be a certain level of L1 literacy before L2 literacy can be introduced.

Cummins also states that it is important that academic knowledge and cognitive skills do not always transfer automatically from one language to the next. This is especially true in languages that are linguistically divergent from one another, but still true in languages as similar as English and Spanish. He argues that although it does happen, it is more productive for teachers to assume that they should formally and explicitly bring attention to the similarities and differences between the two languages. "When teachers draw students' attention to similarities and contrasts between their two languages and provide them with opportunities to

carry out creative projects on language and its social consequences, students will be enabled to transform their spontaneous use and experience of two languages into a more conscious and 'scientific' awareness of their linguistic operations." (Cummins 2000: 195) This element of effective language instruction research is interesting because many bilingual programs tend to strictly separate the two languages from each other by content area or teacher. What Cummins is bringing to light is that there is a great deal of value to the act of interacting with the two languages in one setting because it increases cross-linguistic awareness.

Additive bilingualism is beneficial because students who have developed their home language (L1) literacy tend to be more successful at acquiring a second language (L2). As early as the nineteenth century, educators in Scotland were noticing that Gaelic students were more successful in learning English if they had at least basic literacy skills in Gaelic (Cummins 2000). Bialystok suggests that it is a metalinguistic awareness that comes with dual literacies that promotes an enhanced ability in the analysis and control components of linguistic processing. In other words, the greater the development of two or more languages, the greater the ability of the student to process and analyze information (Bialystok 1991).

The benefits of L1 development extend beyond just assisting in L2 language and literacy acquisition. Students given the opportunity to develop both of their literacies have been found to be more successful in acquiring third, fourth and successive languages (Bild & Swain 1989; Swain & Lapkin 1991; as seen in Cummins 2000). They have also been found to score higher on mathematical standardized

tests (Clarkson 1992; Clarkson & Galbraith 1992; Dawe 1983; Li, Nuttal & Zhao 1999; as seen in Cummins 2000).

It is clear from the research that metalinguistic, academic and cognitive benefits result from the development of two academic languages, but what has yet to be determined, and which may not be of great importance is whether there is a specific “threshold” at which these benefits suddenly appear. Also noteworthy is the finding by Genesee (1979 as seen in Cummins 2000) that even when a student’s two languages are linguistically dissimilar the cognitive and academic benefits (although less so) are still present.

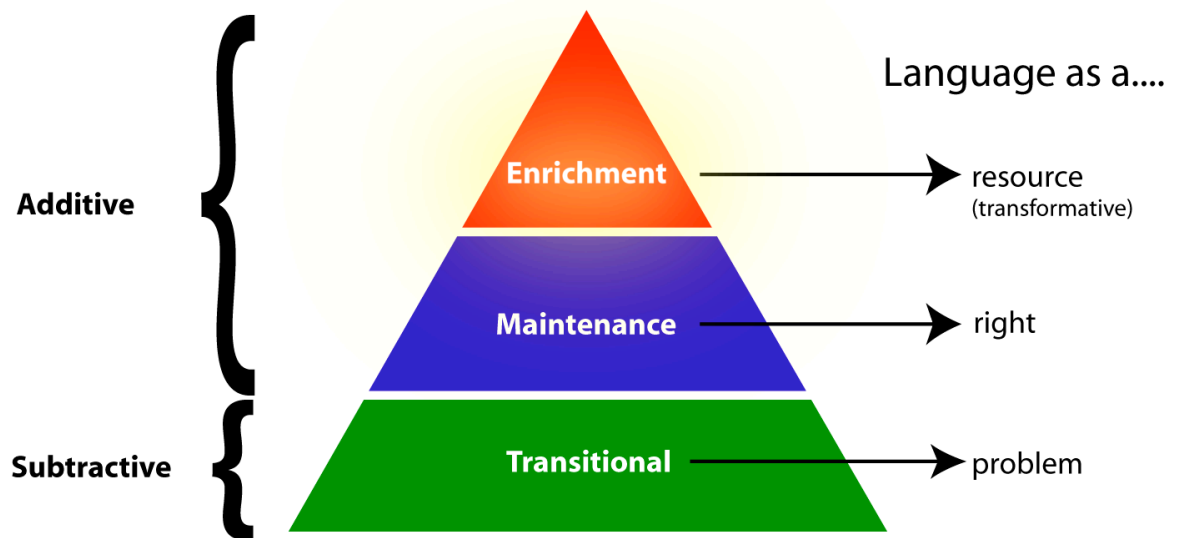
From Hornberger’s working definition it can be assumed that maintenance programs remain different from Enrichment programs because they maintain the idea that language minority populations are “other” in our society. Ruiz suggests that viewing language maintenance as a problem or a right remains problematic because it can maintain feelings of hostility between cultural and linguistic groups (Ruiz 1997).

## **What is the role of Education?**

What is different about each model of bilingual education is the underlying understanding of what the role of education should be. Transitional models aim to move students from a state of monolingualism in their first language to a state of monolingualism and literacy in English in order to help them better assimilate into traditional American society. Maintenance models aim to develop students’ native

language because it is their right to stay connected to their home language and culture, but it preserves the separatist structures of society and does not necessarily engage students in an ongoing conversation about issues of power in language, in the classroom, or in society. The goal of Enrichment bilingual programs, for which this paper advocates, is to allow linguistic minorities to become empowered through the continual development of their native language and to legitimize their identities through transformative pedagogy.

## Bilingual Models



**Figure 3:** The hierarchy of Bilingual Education Models

Figure 3 above is meant to illustrate the hierarchy of bilingual education models. Transitional models are situated at the bottom of the pyramid because they are the least effective in bringing about positive educational achievement outcomes for ELLs. Maintenance models are much more effective because they aim to add the

English language to ELLs “identity tool kit” rather than simply switch one language for another. Finally enrichment models of bilingual education not only aim to add to the linguistic repertoire of ELLs rather than subtract, but they also question the relations of power between languages and social groups at the micro level with the potential for altering group dynamics at the macro level.

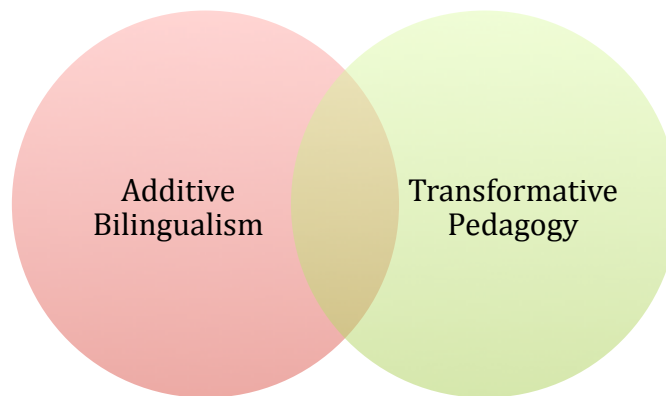
### **Additive Bilingualism: Enrichment**

Enrichment models are those that “encourage the development of minority languages on the individual and collective levels, cultural pluralism at school and in the community, and an integrated national society based on the autonomy of cultural groups (Hornberger 1991: 222).” In contrast to the other two model types that see language as a problem and right respectively, enrichment programs tend to view language as a resource to be utilized for the advancement of both the individual student and of society. More than just maintenance of native languages, enrichment programs have embedded in their mission the goal of legitimating and empowering language minority populations in the eyes of both non-dominant and dominant discourse speakers alike. Enrichment programs often do this by not only legitimizing the minority language by developing it in ELLs, but also by giving the language *majority* access to the discourse. One way that this is done explicitly is in Two-Way bilingual immersion programs, where there is a balance between language majorities and language minorities in one classroom and a balance between the times allotted to each language. Within Two-Way immersion classrooms, all students’ primary language is valued as is the student for being a



linguistic role model for his or her peers. In doing this, many have argued, the educational structure is breaking through linguistic prejudices that may be deeply embedded in society (Freeman 1998). Enrichment Bilingual programs can be conceptualized by viewing them at the intersection of Additive Bilingual Education and Transformative Pedagogy. Implementation of bilingual education can positively affect the academic achievement of Language Minorities, but it is the transformative pedagogy piece that calls to question the continuation oppressive social structures that allow social groups of all types to be oppressed.

### Enrichment Model



**Figure 2:** The Enrichment Model at the Intersection

### **Transformative Pedagogy**

Cummins defines Transformative pedagogy as the “interactions between educators and students that attempt to foster collaborative relations of power in the classroom (Cummins 2000: 253).” Micro and macro relations of coercive power have been responsible for the continued failure of cultural and linguistic minorities, and too often the failure is blamed on the students themselves. If instead we begin

to question the sociopolitical conditions under which schooling operates, then change in the academic achievement outcomes of linguistic and cultural minorities can be ameliorated.

Moraes argues that there are two related but essentially different ways to look at transformative pedagogy. Transformative pedagogy is about engaging in an active dialogue with the intention of bringing about social change. Moraes compares the model for change that revolutionary educator Paulo Freire (1970, 1985 as seen in Cummins 2000) calls for with a Bakhtonian Circle model (1996 as seen in Cummins 2000). Freire argued that educational reform needs to happen from the ground up, with those who have been historically oppressed taking power among themselves and rising above the oppression. The Bakhtonian model of social change, in contrast, calls for a more dialogue oriented method between those who have historically held power and those who have not. "The foundations of a dialogic-pedagogy are rooted in the fact that 'both the oppressed and oppressor must understand that our dialogic existence is something that cannot be denied.'" (Moraes 1996: 112 as seen in Cummins 2000: 237) By engaging all players in a collaborative conversation, an understanding of the societal distribution of power can be understood. Those who have historically held power can then begin to understand that it is in the best interest of the all members of society to work towards a more equal distribution of power.

Cummins argues that determining what effective schools should concentrate on critical thinking and this aspect of transformative pedagogy. He also

acknowledges that the reality is that we are currently living during a period obsessed with standardized testing (Cummins 2000). He states that, actually, the two ways of measuring academic achievement are compatible, because effective critical pedagogy will bring about higher standardized tests scores. In fact, traditional measures of enrichment bilingual programs have showed this. ELLs enrolled in enrichment bilingual education programs demonstrate higher standardized test scores in subjects such as mathematics and language arts (Bikle, Billings, Hakuta 2004). This furthers the finding that spending class time on explicit teaching of both languages has positive effects on academic achievement in both languages as well as in content areas. Cummins emphasizes that by bringing a meta-awareness of students multiple discourses to the classroom and engaging in an ongoing dialogue between teachers and students, where student perspectives are legitimated, we can turn around the educational outcomes of our cultural and linguistic minority population (Cummins 2000).

Even if a classroom teacher does not have access to a student's home language, she can still actively incorporate transformative pedagogy into her curriculum that aims to affirm student identities and to demystify misunderstood assumptions. Cummins (2000) argues that "students' identities are affirmed and academic achievement promoted when teachers express respect for home language and cultural knowledge that students bring to the classroom and when instruction is focused on helping students generate new knowledge, create literature and art, and act on social realities that affect their lives." (Cummins 2000: 34) Even in non-bilingual classrooms multicultural, transformative pedagogy is imperative in order

to instill in both language minority and language majority students a respect for cultures different from their own and a sense of value of the contributions of diverse groups to our society.

Implementing enrichment bilingual education programs wherever possible can have substantial effects on the educational outcomes of a considerable proportion of our society. Developing multiple languages and valuing multiple discourse types in a classroom setting can have revolutionary effects for our society at large.

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