Dual-Language Immersion Programs: A Cautionary Note Concerning the Education of Language-Minority Students

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Dual-language immersion programs have received a great deal of attention from parents, researchers, and policymakers. The supporters of dual-language immersion see the promise of providing first-language instruction for children with non-English-speaking backgrounds, while simultaneously offering monolingual children access to non-English languages. In this article, Guadalupe Valdés concentrates on the possible negative effects of the dual-language immersion movement. After reviewing the literature on the success and failure of Mexican-origin children, the author raises difficult questions surrounding the use of dual-language immersion in the education of language-minority students. Among the issues raised are the quality of instruction in the minority language, the effects of dual immersion on intergroup relations, and, ultimately, how dual-language immersion programs fit into the relationship between language and power and how that relationship may affect the children and society.

Dual-language immersion programs bring children from two different language groups together. Beginning in kindergarten, monolingual anglophone children are put into classrooms with non-English-speaking minority children. According to Christian (1996), there are two major patterns of language allocation in such programs: 90/10 programs, in which 90 percent of the instruction is carried out in the non-English language and 10 percent is carried out in English, and 50/50 programs, in which the percentage of

instruction in each language is roughly equal. The aim of these programs is for majority anglophone children to develop a high level of proficiency in a "foreign" language while receiving a first-rate education, and for minority children who do not speak English to benefit from having instruction in their mother tongue, as well as by interacting with English-speaking peers.

The following anecdotes are composites derived from conversations with other researchers and from observations I carried out over many years in schools and communities in both New Mexico and California. These observations have been carried out as part of my research on English-Spanish bilingualism among the Mexican-origin population. Andrew represents a majority child who, in a bilingual situation, speaks English, the majority/prestige language. Maria represents teacher-activists, many of whom I have known for over twenty years, who have a deep commitment to using non-prestige minority languages in the education of non-Anglo students.

Andrew is a bright seven-year-old boy with flaming red hair and blue eyes. He is the child of an academic mother and a software executive, both of whom are deeply committed to social justice. Andrew's parents are also deeply committed to providing Andrew with educational opportunities that will help him attain a position in society commensurate with their status and accomplishments. Andrew is enrolled in a dual-language immersion program offered in a magnet school in a large city in California. At recess one day, Andrew and a group of three other boys were engaged in a noisy game, chasing and pushing each other. As often happens with seven year olds, what started as a game turned into a fight. Andrew felt outnumbered and, red in the face and almost in tears, shouted at the other three boys, "If you can't play fair, I'm going off to another school, and all of you will be here, all by yourselves." At seven, Andrew already understands a great deal about power and about the fragile relationships between groups in our society. His remarks, said in childish anger and frustration, reflect a fundamental difference between the two groups of children enrolled in this particular dual-language immersion program.

Andrew's school is located in a transitional area that until recently was almost entirely populated by lower-middle-class and middle-class Euro-Americans. In the last several years, however, large numbers of immigrants of Mexican origin have moved into the neighborhood, occupying most of the apartment rental property in the area. Until the dual-language immersion program was established, the school had experienced "White flight." White parents, fearing the declining quality of the neighborhood schools because of the need to accommodate "less able" students, moved their children to private schools or moved their families to different neighborhoods in order to send their children to more mainstream — that is, English-language — public schools.

Since the dual-language immersion program has been implemented, however, the school's enrollment is almost 50 percent White anglophone chil-

dren and 50 percent first-generation Spanish-speaking children of Mexican origin. From most available indicators, the program is successful. Children from the two groups interact daily. The children of Mexican origin provide language models for the children learning Spanish and, in turn, the anglophone children provide English-language models for the Mexican-origin children. At this particular school, the anglophone children receive a great deal of publicity and praise from both majority and minority teachers, from school district administrators, from members of the school board, and from the media for acquiring Spanish-language skills. The teachers are proud of what the school's immersion program has accomplished for these children.

In another area of the country, a statewide meeting of educators was held to discuss the merits of implementing dual-language immersion programs as alternatives to bilingual education. In this state, many educators are concerned about the dwindling resources available for bilingual education programs, about the constant attacks on such programs by legislators, and about their own inability to demonstrate by means of achievement scores that bilingual education is working. Dual-language immersion programs involving anglophone children appear to be the perfect solution to these problems. Linguistic-minority children will still be able to begin their education in their first language, while the presence of anglophone children will ensure community support.

One educator present at the meeting, whom I will call Maria, is not convinced. She is about sixty years old, and a veteran of many struggles. As a child she was involved with her parents in a historic strike against the state's powerful copper mining industry. As a young woman she worked to organize farm workers in a nearby valley. She has picketed, marched, and taken on numerous fights against wealthy White landowners on behalf of poor and powerless workers of Mexican origin. For fifteen years, before bilingual education training was offered at institutions of higher education, she ran a model training center for bilingual teachers. She has been a champion of bilingual education for children of Mexican origin, and is opposed to the concept of dual immersion. "Dual-language immersion education is not a good idea," she says, rising to her feet. Then, switching to graphic Spanish, she adds, "*Si se aprovechan de nosotros en inglés, van a aprovechar de nosotros también en español.*" Translated freely, she said, "If they take advantage of us in English, they will take advantage of us in Spanish as well." For Maria, what is at issue here is not an educational approach but intergroup relations, and the place of the powerful and the powerless in the wider society. In her view, the Spanish language is a resource that has served the community well. It has served as a shared treasure, as a significant part of a threatened heritage, and as a secret language. Many times, Spanish has also served to bring the community together, to delineate borders, and as an entry into the work domain where bilingual skills were needed. She worries about giving it away casually to the children of the powerful.

In this article, I focus on the realities reflected by the remarks I have attributed to Andrew and Maria, and raise questions about dual-language immersion programs from a number of perspectives.[1] I put on the table difficult issues surrounding this relatively new effort so that it can be examined closely by policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. I briefly discuss the rationales for dual-language immersion programs, which are intended to replicate the benefits of first-language instruction for children from non-English-speaking backgrounds and to offer monolingual anglophone children a rich opportunity to learn non-English languages. I then review the literature about the success and failure of children of Mexican origin, arguing that language is not necessarily the dominant factor in their education, but one of many factors that contribute to their success and failure in school. I conclude with a cautionary note on dual-language immersion programs that touches on the quality of minority-language instruction in these programs, on intergroup relations, and on issues of language and power.

Rationales for Dual-Language Immersion Programs

To a large degree, dual-language immersion is based on research carried out over a multi-year period on one-way immersion programs implemented in Canada. These one-way programs, known as Canadian Immersion Programs (Genesee, 1979, 1984; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982), educate anglophone children primarily through French. From research on these programs, we know that middle-class anglophone children (members of the linguistic majority in Canada) can be educated through a second language quite successfully. The only apparent shortcoming of such programs is that students, because they have no interaction with native French-speaking peers, develop somewhat limited interpersonal, as opposed to academic, skills in their second language.

U.S. dual-immersion programs, on the other hand, might be expected to result in developing more fluent second-language skills in young anglophone learners. Based on theories about second-language acquisition (Krashen, 1985; Long, 1985), as well as on work conducted in European bilingual education settings (e.g., Baetens Beardsmore, 1993), proponents of dual-immersion programs have suggested that the presence of native speakers of the target language who are available for peer interaction with language-majority children can add to the many strengths of the original models of immersion education. Early evaluations of established dual-immersion programs support this conjecture (Lindholm & Gavlek, 1994).

At the same time, from the perspective of educators concerned about the education of linguistic-minority children, the concept of dual immersion builds directly on the body of research (e.g., Andersson & Boyer, 1978; Craw-

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[1] I am indebted to Anne Haas Dyson for the remarks I have attributed to Andrew.

ford, 1989; Cummins, 1989; Dutcher, 1982; Hakuta, 1986; McLaughlin, 1985; Orum, 1983; Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991; Troike, 1978; Willig, 1982, 1985; Wong Fillmore & Valadez, 1986) that has focused on the benefits of primary-language instruction for at-risk minority children; that is, for children who are limited English speakers and members of groups that researchers have described as "recipients of varying degrees of socioeconomic marginality and racial or ethnic discrimination" (Ovando & Collier, 1985, p. 6). For many advocates of such programs, dual immersion offers primary-language instruction for language-minority children in programs that are highly prestigious and in contexts where there is access to the majority language through same-age peers.

Currently, there are two groups of professionals involved in the implementation of such programs:

1. bilingual educators who are primarily concerned about the education of minority students and who see two-way bilingual education as a means of providing quality education for these students, and

2. foreign-language educators who, while concerned about minority children, are mostly interested in developing second-language proficiencies in mainstream American children.

It is important to point out, however, that in spite of these superficial differences, these two groups of educators approach dual immersion from very different perspectives. For foreign-language educators, both immersion and dual-immersion programs offer the benefits of extended language sequences that have been found to result in highly developed target language skills. Having struggled to interest the American public in language study for many years, immersion education seems to be offering an attractive solution to the problem of majority monolingualism. For bilingual educators, on the other hand, who have struggled to ensure the implementation of quality programs for minority children, the presence of mainstream students in dual-immersion programs offers language-minority children what appears to be the best of two worlds: access to instruction in their primary language, and access to both school and community support. This can counter the trend that Wong Fillmore (1992) has found in many areas of the country where bilingual education has been implemented but language-minority students have not enjoyed the support of the school administration or of the surrounding community.

The key point is that, while language is important, it is only one of many factors that influence school achievement for language-minority and -majority children. In order to illustrate this point, I will focus specifically on Spanish-speaking children of Mexican origin. I have selected this group for a number of reasons. First, the debates surrounding bilingual education (Imhoff, 1990; Porter, 1990) have often focused on Spanish-speaking children;

second, Spanish is the language of instruction in 155 out of 169 programs recently studied (Christian, 1996); and finally, my own research has focused on Spanish speakers of Mexican origin.

I begin by reviewing some of the evidence that is available about the success and failure of Spanish-speaking children of Mexican origin in school from the broad perspective of the literature on education failure in general. I then examine the issues that are raised about the potential academic success of Spanish-speaking children of Mexican origin in newly implemented dual-language immersion programs. I argue that it is important for both policymakers and practitioners currently advocating the implementation of dual-language immersion programs to examine and consider all factors that have been shown to contribute directly to the educational success and failure of linguistic-minority children.

Education and Mexican-Origin Children[2]

Children of Mexican origin have not fared well in U.S. schools. Their problems have been documented by many researchers (e.g., Arias, 1986; Bean & Tienda, 1987; Carter, 1970; Carter & Segura, 1979; Duran, 1983; Keller, Deneen, & Magallan, 1991; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Olivas, 1986; Orfield, 1986; Orum, 1986; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972a, 1972b, 1972c, 1973, 1974; Valencia, 1991). Many attempts have been made both to explain the reasons for their poor school performance and to intervene in meaningful ways in their educational experiences. Within the last twenty years, for example, both the research and the policy communities have devoted a great deal of attention to studying the factors that appear to contribute to the school failure of Mexican-origin students. In general, research on the condition of education for these students has focused on issues such as segregation, attrition, school finance, language and bilingual education, and testing.

Mexican-origin individuals are, in terms of their school performance, part of a much larger population identified by sociologists of education (e.g., Karabel & Halsey, 1977; Persell, 1977) that includes the children of the socioeconomically marginalized and of racially and ethnically subordinated groups in industrialized societies throughout the world. A discussion of the school failure of Mexican-origin students must, therefore, be framed by a broader discussion that examines why other children who share similar backgrounds (i.e., racial/ethnic discrimination, economic deprivation) have also failed. It is important first to outline the causes of school failure among all children whom the educational establishment does not serve well and then to examine how the specific status of the Mexican-origin population might contribute in unique ways to this group's lack of educational success and achievement.

[2] The discussion in this section draws extensively from Valdés (1996).

396

In general, explanations of poor academic achievement by non-mainstream children can be grouped into a number of categories (e.g., Bernstein, 1977; Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1977; Giroux, 1983; Karabel & Halsey, 1977; Persell, 1977). I have organized this discussion around three categories used by Bond (1981) because of their clarity: 1) the genetic argument, 2) the cultural argument, and 3) the class analysis argument.

The Genetic Argument

In the United States, the genetic argument, the view that certain groups are genetically more able than others (Eysenck, 1971; Herrnstein 1973; Jensen, 1969), had been out of favor for a number of years. Revisited recently by Herrnstein and Murray (1994), the genetic argument holds that academic talent is largely inherited and that society rewards these genetically inherited abilities. Supporters for this position argue that, given unequal innate capabilities, children of different ethnic or racial groups perform *differently in* school.

Strong views about the relationship between heredity and intelligence, which are largely based on the analysis of group performance on IQ tests, have been criticized by a number of scholars. Such scholars question the premises underlying psychometric testing, and specifically challenge the entire notion of IQ, a notion that is based exclusively on psychometric procedures and practices (Figueroa, 1989; Gould, 1981; Kamin, 1977; Morrison, 1977; Schwartz, 1977; White, 1977; Zacharias, 1977). A number of individuals (e.g., McClelland, 1974) have pointed out that IQ tests do not measure important features of intelligence. Others (e.g., Samuda, 1975) argue that efforts to produce culture-free tests have been disappointing. *Still others (e.g.,* Roth, 1974) present evidence that procedures and practices in test administration may negatively affect the performance of minority children.

It is important to note that the genetic argument has failed to convince scholars within the research community who themselves may accept the assumptions underlying ability testing. Some individuals (Goldberg, 1974a, 1974b; Kamin, 1974), for example, have challenged specific aspects of research carried out by Jensen, one of the most prominent proponents of the genetic argument. Both Kamin and Goldberg question Jensen's findings based on available twin studies (Burt, 1966; Newman, Freeman, & Holzinger, 1937; Shields, 1962). Additionally, a number of scholars (e.g., Lewontin, Rose, & Kamin, 1984) have attacked the entire concept of race. They argue not only from a biological perspective that race is a fuzzy concept, but also that studies focusing on adoption across racial and class lines fail to separate the genetic from the social. More recently, a number of scholars (e.g., Sternberg, 1982, 1985; Sternberg & Detterman, 1986) have attempted to move beyond IQ and endeavored to examine conceptions of intelligence from a variety of different perspectives.

The Cultural Argument

In contrast to the genetic argument, the cultural explanation is currently drawn upon by many researchers and practitioners. In its strongest form, proponents of this position (e.g., Lewis, 1966) argue that poor children are trapped in a culture of poverty and locked into a cycle of failure. Those who subscribe to this position maintain that children succeed in school only if their many deficiencies are corrected and if they are taught to behave in more traditionally mainstream ways in specially designed intervention programs.

The less extreme forms of the cultural argument do not see poor children as playing a direct role in perpetuating their own circumstances. They nevertheless consider children who historically performed poorly in school to be either culturally deprived (Bereiter & Englemann, 1966; Deutsch et al., 1967; Hess & Shipman, 1965; Hunt, 1961; McCandless, 1952) or culturally different, and therefore mismatched with schools and school culture (Baratz & Baratz, 1970). Language, in particular, has been used as a primary example of the ways in which children are mismatched with schools and school personnel (Au & Mason, 1981; Bernstein, 1977; Drucker, 1971; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Heath, 1983; Michaels & Collins, 1984; Philips, 1982).

Although the line between theories of cultural difference and cultural deprivation is a fine one, advocates of the cultural difference or mismatch perspective ordinarily attribute value to the backgrounds of non-mainstream children. They do not speak of deprivation, but hold instead that rich and rule-governed as these children's experiences may be, they are not what educational institutions value and expect. Examples of work carried out from this perspective are those on Black English (Labov, 1973) and on children's socialization for literacy in the Appalachian region of the United States (Heath, 1983).

Closely related to the research on differences between mainstream and disadvantaged children is research on parents and their ability to "support" their children's education. This work has primarily focused on parental involvement in education, parental attitudes toward schools and education, and maternal teaching styles. In general, this research takes the perspective that at-risk children do poorly in school because of their parents' beliefs and behaviors. Non-mainstream parents do not have the "right" attitudes toward the value of education, or they do not prepare their children well for school, or they are not sufficiently involved in their children's education. During the 1960s and early 1970s, much of this research focused on Black American families. Descriptions of the supposedly inadequate home environments of Black children were used by well-meaning social scientists to refute the arguments made by geneticists about the causes of school failure. In a review of the several streams of research on the achievement of Black children, for example, Baratz and Baratz (1970) discussed the findings of this research.

Black children were found by some researchers (e.g., Hunt, 1961) to suffer from too little stimulation, while others found them to be victims of too much stimulation (Deutsch, Katz, & Jensen, 1968). Others defined the problem as rooted in the inadequacy of Black mothers' parenting skills (Hess, Shipman, Brophy, & Bear 1968) and advocated compensatory programs that would teach Black women how to become "good" parents from the perspective of the majority society.

While perhaps currently less popular with theorists than they were in the mid-1960s and 1970s, cultural difference arguments continue to undergird a variety of practices currently being implemented in schools and communities around the country. My own position corresponds closely to Nieto (1992), who has argued that:

> Culture is neither static nor deterministic. It gives us just one important way in which to understand some differences among students' learning and thus can indicate appropriate strategies and modifications in curriculum. The assumption that culture is the primary determinant of academic achievement can be over-simplistic, dangerous and counterproductive. Thus, the area of culture and cultural differences should be handled with great caution so that we as educators do not make assumptions about students because of the culture from which they come. (p. 110)

The Class Analysis Argument

The final explanation of school failure involves the analysis of the role of education in maintaining class differences, that is, in maintaining the power differential between groups. Proponents of this view argue that non-mainstream children do poorly in school because of the class structure of capitalist society. They argue that educational institutions function to reproduce the structure of production and that schools serve as sorting mechanisms rather than as true avenues for movement between classes. For these theorists, it is not accidental that the children of the middle classes are primarily sorted into the "right" streams or tracks in school and given access to particular kinds of knowledge (e.g., technology). The role of schools is to legitimate inequality under the pretense of serving all children and encouraging them to reach their full potential. The genius of the system resides in the fact that, although the cards are clearly stacked against them, students come to believe that they are in fact given an opportunity to succeed. They leave school firmly convinced that they could have done better, perhaps achieved as much as their middle-class peers, if only they had tried harder or worked more. They are then ready to accept low-paying, working-class jobs, and the working class is thus reproduced.

Explanations of school failure from this particular perspective, however, are more complex than I have outlined above. Essentially, as Giroux (1983) has argued, there are three different theories or models of reproduction: the economic reproductive model (Althusser, 1969, 1971; Bowles & Gintis,

1977); the cultural reproductive model (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1979; Bourdieu, 1977); and the hegemonic-state reproductive model (Dale & Macdonald, 1980; David, 1980; Gramsci, 1971; Sarup, 1982).

The economic reproductive model focuses on the relations between the economy and schooling and argues that schools reproduce labor skills as well as the hierarchical division of labor present in the society. The cultural reproductive model, on the other hand, attempts to link culture, class, and domination and argues that culture is itself the medium through which the ruling class maintains its position in society. Schools validate the culture of the ruling class, and at the same time fail to legitimize the forms of knowledge brought to school by groups not in power. Finally, the hegemonic-state reproductive model focuses on the role of the state in organizing the reproductive functions of educational institutions.

A particular concern for a number of theorists has been the role of human agency in explaining societal reproduction. A number of individuals, although willing to agree that macro-level factors lead to a reproduction of class relations and that schools play an important role in such reproduction, seek to understand exactly how individual members of society in particular institutions actually bring about such reproduction. These scholars hypothesize that the relationship between schooling and the perpetuation of class status is recreated at the interpersonal level in the school setting and that students contribute to the perpetuation of their situation actively by viewing mainstream students and the life choices valued by this group as worthy of contempt. Working-class students thus band with others of the same background and present an oppositional stance to that of the "good" or successful student. This "resistance," however, rather than allowing them to break out of the working-class cycle, results in the replication and reproduction of their class status. As compared to discussions about class reproduction, discussions of resistance in academic settings are based on field work carried out within schools. This particular trend in the investigation of the ways in which schools reproduce class membership is an attempt to understand the contents of the "black box," that is, to understand what actually goes on in educational institutions in order to bring about "failure" for certain groups of individuals. Work in this tradition is represented by the investigations carried out in Great Britain by McRobbie and McCabe (1981), Robins and Cohen (1978), and Willis (1977).

Understanding School Failure

From a theoretical perspective, understanding the difficulties surrounding the education of non-mainstream children must involve, as Persell (1977) argued, the integration of four levels of analysis: the societal, the institutional, the interpersonal, and the interpsychic. According to Persell, an adequate theory of educational inequality must take into account the distribu-

tion of power within a particular society and the ideology that supports that distribution. It must then link these macro-concerns to both existing ideologies about education and the nature of educational institutions. As Cortes (1986) maintains, moreover, such a theory must also take into account the educational process itself. It must consider factors such as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teachers, administrators, and counselors; individual student qualities and backgrounds; and instruction and the instructional context.

Unfortunately, as the discussion above suggests, to date, examinations and explorations of *school failure of non-mainstream students in school settings* have been explored primarily from a single perspective; that is, from the standpoint of either the genetic argument, or the cultural argument, or the class argument. These perspectives are seldom combined.

School Failure and the Education of Immigrants

Current discussions of differential achievement by "new" American immigrants (e.g., Asians and Latinos) have tended to suggest that the difficulties encountered in schools by these newcomers were surmounted easily by the immigrant groups that arrived in this country during earlier historical periods. Vehement arguments against special compensatory programs such as bilingual education are frequently based on the supposition that non-English speakers who entered the United States in the early part of the century managed to succeed in school without special attention given to their language or cultural differences.[3]

A review of the work carried out on the educational experiences of those immigrants who came into this country in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, presents a very different picture. It is evident that school failure or lack of school success was common, and that Italian, Irish, Polish, and many Jewish children left school early and did not enter high school. Recent work on New York public schools (Berrol, 1982) suggests that, until the 1950s, immigrant and even first-generation children in New York City received a very limited amount of formal education. Indeed, the picture that emerges from the work of most researchers who have focused on the education of turn-of-the-century immigrants is one that does not support idealistic views about the power of education to help all children succeed (Berrol, 1982; Bodnar, 1982; Fass, 1988; Handlin, 1982; LaGumina, 1982; Mathews, 1966; Olneck & Lazerson, 1988; Perlmann, 1988; Weiss, 1982; Williams, 1938/1969). Instead, what emerges is a sense that, between 1840 and 1940, immigrants, rather than immediately availing themselves of the opportunities offered by educational institutions, made choices for their children that were framed by their views about education in general, their

[3] For a discussion of these arguments as they relate to bilingual education policy, the reader is referred to Crawford (1989, 1992).

economic position, and the success or failure experienced by their children in school.

As has been the case in the examination of school failure in general, numerous explanations have been offered to account for the differences in academic and economic attainment among the various ethnic groups represented among turn-of-the-century immigrants. In particular, much attention has been given to accounting for the differences between generally "successful" groups, such as Jews, and generally "unsuccessful" groups, such as Italians, Irish, and Slavs. As Perlmann (1988) points out, however, most of these explanations have had a long and ugly history in American intellectual life. As was the case in the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, there was much concern in the early twentieth century about genetic differences. Indeed, interest in ethnic differences reflected a profound suspicion of new immigrants that took on what Fass (1988) has characterized as a "racist slant." For many individuals who wrote during the early part of this century and even as late as the 1930s, differences in economic attainments and educational attainments by new immigrants were considered to be the result of inborn "race traits" (Fass, 1988, p. 23). As Fass argues, however, race was confused with what we now would consider to be culture, and many discussions about race focused on the habits and values of immigrant families. According to Fass, the eager acceptance of IQ testing in this country after World War I occurred in response to educators' concerns about the "retardation" of large numbers of pupils. IQ testing supposedly provided a means for ranking individuals according to their innate and unchanging talents and for ordering a hierarchy of groups. It offered a "scientific" rationale for existing views about inherited endowment and provided educators with justification for creating different opportunities for different students.

For early twentieth-century immigrants, the genetic argument was used not only to account for differences in school performance, but also to argue for the development of differentiated curricula suited to the particular talents of the less able members of the population. As a result, children with lower IQ's (largely poor children of foreign parentage) were placed in vocational or commercial programs. According to Fass (1988), in New York City high schools, "as early as 1911–12, about one third of the population was enrolled in commercial tracks or in the two special commercial high schools." Moreover, "educators did not believe that the new masses were smart enough to benefit from traditional academic subjects" (p. 67).

The cultural difference or deficit argument has also figured prominently in discussions about educational attainment among immigrant groups in the United States. As Perlmann (1988) points out, variations in the attainment levels of different ethnic groups have been attributed in large part to their pre-migration histories. Much attention has been given both to the occupational skills, resulting from the positions they occupied in their countries of

origin, and to the cultural attributes (attitudes, habits, values, and beliefs) that newcomers brought with them. A number of scholars, for example, have argued that certain groups (e.g., Italians) did not improve their lot as rapidly as others because their cultural background did not allow them to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them by the educational system. These scholars generally maintain that other groups (e.g., Jews) did indeed bring with them views and attitudes about education that were congruent with the focus on the importance of schooling present in this country. Dinnerstein (1982), for example, argues that the cultural heritage of the Eastern European Jews, what he considers to be "their high regard for learning" (p. 44), was vital to their achieving social mobility through education. Agreeing with this general view of cultural deficit, LaGumina (1982, pp. 63–64) stresses that Italians did not enjoy similar rapid mobility through education because southern Italian peasants who immigrated to the United States were conservative, fatalistic, and family oriented. A parallel argument is made by Sowell (1981) and others about the Irish and their cultural orientation. Miller (1985, cited in Perlmann, 1988) views the traditional Irish peasant culture as communally dependent and fatalistic, and Irish people as "feckless, child-like, and irresponsible" (p. 53).

For those individuals who support the cultural background explanations of differences in school attainment, the issues are straightforward. Certain groups of immigrants did not bring with them life experiences and cultural values that allowed or encouraged them to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them by U.S. educational institutions. They failed because these cultural "differences" prevented them from expecting their children to persevere and to succeed in school.

Scholars who take this perspective do not generally ask questions about the ways in which children of different groups were treated in schools, about whether the curriculum responded or failed to respond to these children's needs, or about the ways in which extreme poverty might have had an impact on families' decisions to withdraw their children from school. The root of the problem is seen to reside in the shortcomings of the immigrants themselves. Other scholars offer a different perspective. Steinberg (1981), in particular, argues that cultural explanations of differences in attainment are based on a "New Darwinism" in which cultural superiority and inferiority have replaced biological measures of superiority. For New Darwinists, he maintains, there are certain cultural traits associated with attainment and achievement (e.g., frugality, temperance, industry, perseverance, ingenuity), while others (e.g., familism, fatalism) are associated with limited success and social mobility. Steinberg contends that Horatio Alger stories about success and hard work are based primarily on New Darwinism and glorify the effect of tenacity and hard work without taking into account the many other factors that have an impact on people's lives. Specifically, such myths discount the

importance of the structural locations in which new immigrants find themselves in their new society.[4]

More recently Perlmann (1988), in his work on ethnic differences in schooling among the Irish, Italians, Jews, and Blacks in Providence, Rhode Island, between 1880 and 1935, has presented evidence that supports the argument that differences in attainment among ethnic groups are the result of social processes that have long histories. He contends that an understanding of such differences involves "determining the specific manner in which these general factors — the pre-migration heritage, discrimination, and the place of the migrants in the new class structure — operated, and interacted, in the history of a given ethnic group" (p. 6). From the data he examined, Perlmann (1988) concluded that "neither culture nor discrimination nor class origins in the American city can alone provide a credible summary" (p. 219). He further argues that there is not a single consistently primary factor or a single generalization that will account for differences in individual ethnic histories.

In sum, explorations of differences in school success among the various immigrant groups that entered this country between 1840 and 1940 have in general terms attempted to account for the inequality of their educational outcomes by using the same three arguments used to explain the educational failure of non-mainstream children in general. The genetic argument, coupled with the cultural difference argument, appears to have been used most frequently. However, the cultural argument, with its perspective on desirable cultural traits and characteristics, appears to have been the most influential. Beliefs about desirable individual and family characteristics continue to be reflected in both research and practice.

Recent Immigrants, Minorities, and School Achievement

In present-day U.S. society, the success or lack of success experienced by turn-of-the-century immigrants is often contrasted with that experienced by African Americans and Latinos. While there are some parallels between the position occupied by African Americans in this country and the positions occupied by both Latinos and earlier "problem" immigrant groups, there are also many significant differences. For example, both the Irish and the Italians immigrated to this country voluntarily and were often able to settle near co-nationals and profit from their experience. African Americans, on the other hand, came to this country involuntarily, as property to be sold. More importantly, perhaps, both the Irish and the Italians were White Europeans

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[4] Steinberg (1981) directly refutes the myth of Jewish intellectualism and Catholic anti-intellectualism and argues that many poor Jews in this country did not rapidly ascend the social ladder. He coincides with Berrol (1982) in his claim that poor Jews (like poor Italians, poor Irish, and poor Slavs) dropped out of school quite early. He contends that cultural values were not the major or primary cause of school success and social mobility among Jews, but rather that economic success of the first and even second generation led to the educational success of succeeding generations.

whose religion was suspect, but who over time were able to carve out a special niche in large northern cities. African Americans and Latinos of mixed ancestry are non-White, and are therefore immediately perceived as different by the White mainstream population.

A few scholars have attempted to understand these differences by focusing on the economic-reproductive effects of societal arrangements and taking into account the responses of oppressed or exploited populations to these societal arrangements. Ogbu (1978, 1983, 1987a, 1987b), for example, has sought to identify important distinctions between different groups of present-day "minorities" in the United States. He discusses immigrant minorities and caste minorities and shows that there is a clear difference, for example, between newly arrived Korean immigrants (an immigrant minority) and African Americans (a caste minority) who have suffered generations of discrimination and racial prejudice. He argues that immigrant minorities frequently achieve success in ways that caste minorities do not, because they are both unconscious of the limits the majority society would place upon them and content to do slightly better then their co-nationals who remained at home. Caste minorities, on the other hand, are quite aware of the reality in which they live, of the jobs they will never get, and of the kinds of lack of success they will experience. Arguing that caste minorities develop folk theories of success based on the options available to them in that society, Ogbu suggests that these individuals reject education because they also reject the common view that it can provide them with true alternatives.

For Ogbu, the question of why different groups of non-mainstream children succeed while others fail is answered within the tradition of the class analysis argument and, in particular, from the economic reproductive perspective. For Ogbu and other theorists who work in this tradition, pre-migration factors are of less importance than the discrimination that is experienced by different groups in this society, their particular location within the class structure, and their awareness or perception of the permanency of that location.

The Mexican-Origin Population

The Mexican-origin population of the United States, as opposed to other recently arrived immigrant groups, includes individuals who have been here for generations and who see themselves as the original settlers of parts of the United States, as well as individuals who have arrived here recently as both legal and illegal immigrants. Generalizations about the Mexican-origin population with regard to educational success or failure are difficult to make because there are important and significant differences (generational, regional, experiential, linguistic) among the various groups that make up this population.

There is evidence to suggest, however, that a large majority of Mexican individuals who emigrate to the United States do not come from the groups

that have obtained high levels of education. There are problems in generalizing about the class origins of both early (before 1920) and recent Mexican immigrants. According to Bean and Tienda (1987), Jasso and Rosenzweig (1990), Portes, McLeod, and Parker(1978), and Portes and Bach (1985), Mexican-origin immigrants are poor and have low levels of educational attainment. However, Durand and Massey (1992) have argued that generalizations about Mexican migration to the United States are inconsistent and contradictory. They maintain that case studies of communities from which large numbers of Mexican nationals have emigrated (e.g., Cornelius, 1976a, 1976b, 1978; Dinerman, 1982; Massey, Alarcon, Durand, & Gonzalez, 1987; Mines, 1981, 1984; Mines & Massey, 1985; Reichert & Massey, 1979, 1980) have yielded very different views about a number of topics. For example, these studies present contradictory evidence about the class composition of U.S. migration. Durand and Massey (1992) argue that a few community factors, including age of the migration stream, the geographic, political, and economic position of the community within Mexico, and the distribution and quality of agricultural land affect the class composition of migration. These authors stress the difficulties surrounding attempts at generalization, and suggest that such generalizations can only be made when a number of communities are studied using a common analytic framework. Thus, educational researchers must use caution in interpreting findings about Mexican immigrants and individuals of Mexican background.

As might be expected, a number of researchers have attempted to be sensitive to intra-group differences when working with Mexican-origin populations in educational settings. Matute-Bianchi (1991), for example, proposes five different categories for students:

> 1) recent Mexican immigrants who have arrived in the U.S. within the last three to five years; 2) Mexican oriented students who are bilingual, but retain a Mexicano identity and reject the more Americanized Mexican-origin students; 3) Mexican American students who are U.S. born and highly acculturated; 4) Chicanos who are U.S. born, generally second generation, and frequently alienated from mainstream society; and 5) Cholos, who dress in a distinct style and are perceived by others to be gang affiliated. (p. 220)

Consistently clear differentiations between members of these several categories are difficult to make. Because of this, the study of the causes of school failure for the different segments of this population becomes complex. The Mexican American group does not fit neatly into the categories proposed by a number of researchers. For example, the Mexican-origin population cannot be classified adequately using Ogbu's (1978, 1983, 1987a, 1987b) two categories, immigrant and caste minorities. The problem is that both immigrant and caste minorities exist within this single population. The former group includes those individuals who have recently entered the United States and cyclical immigrants who have worked in this country for years at a time, but who return to Mexico for extended periods. The latter group

could include children of recently arrived Mexicanos, whether U.S.-born or not, as well as first-, second-, third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation residents of several regions of the country.

I take the position that the distinction between people of Mexican origin who can still be categorized as immigrants and those who must be considered "hyphenated Americans" (Mexican-Americans/Chicanos/Cholos) has to do with a number of factors. Those who can be categorized as immigrants from Mexico (whether born in this country or not) still have what can be termed an immigrant mentality; that is, they are oriented toward the home country, identify with Mexico, and measure their success (as Ogbu has suggested) using Mexican nationals in Mexico as their reference group. Mexican Americans or Chicanos, on the other hand, no longer look to Mexico for identification. Their ties with Mexico have weakened, and they see their lives as being carried out exclusively in this country. In general, these individuals consider themselves to be different from White Americans and from Mexican nationals. More importantly, however, members of this group have often experienced discrimination in this country as members of a low-status and stigmatized minority. They have frequently developed an "ethnic consciousness" and have a sense of sharing the same low status with other Mexican-origin people. Mexican immigrants are immigrant minorities, while Mexican Americans/Chicanos are caste minorities. This latter group is conscious of discrimination and prejudice by the majority group directed at Mexican-origin people in particular, rather than at new immigrants or at outsiders in general.

What I am suggesting is that the development of an awareness of being both different and unacceptable to the majority society is a key factor in the shift in identification from immigrant to caste minority by Mexican Americans/Chicanos. I would argue that Mexican immigrant individuals can be considered full members of the caste minority group in the United States when they 1) become conscious that they are no longer like Mexican nationals who have remained in Mexico, 2) feel little identification with these Mexican nationals, 3) self-identify as Americans, 4) become aware that as people of Mexican origin they have a low status among the majority society, and 5) realize the permanent limitations they will encounter as members of this group.

Mexican-Origin Students and Explanations of School Failure

According to a number of researchers (Arias, 1986; Duran, 1983; Fligstein & Fernández, 1988; Meier & Stewart, 1991; Rumberger, 1991; Valencia, 1991), Mexican-origin students have experienced a long history of educational problems, including below-grade enrollment, high attrition rates, high rates of illiteracy, and underrepresentation in higher education. As might be expected, a coherent theory that takes into account the many factors that

have an impact on the poor school achievement of Mexican-origin students has not been proposed. However, a number of factors have been identified as influencing the school achievement of Mexican-origin children. These include: family income, family characteristics, and language background (Macías, 1988; Nielsen & Fernandez, 1981; U.S. Department of Education, 1987); teacher/student interaction (Buriel, 1983; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972c; So, 1987; Tobias, Cole, Zinbrin, & Bodlakova, 1982); school and class composition (i.e., segregation and tracking) (Espinosa & Ochoa, 1986; Fernández & Guskin, 1981; Haro, 1977; Oakes, 1985; Orfield, 1986; Orum, 1985; Valencia 1984); and school financing (Dominguez, 1977; Fairchild, 1984).

It should be noted that of the factors identified as influencing the school achievement of Mexican-origin students, family income can be said to be indicative of the family's location in the social structure. School composition and financing can be identified as involving the school or institutional context, and family characteristics and language background can refer to a set of cultural traits like those discussed by the literature on immigrants written in the early part of this century.

Recently, much attention has been paid by both researchers and practitioners to language differences and family characteristics. This is not surprising, given that the cultural difference explanation of school failure is still prevalent in the research. Although most researchers working on the language problems of Mexican-origin children do not see themselves as working primarily within the deficit/difference paradigm, language issues have come to dominate the debate surrounding the education of today's new immigrants. The literature that has concentrated on language background issues as they relate to Mexican-origin children is immense and encompasses the study of a number of different areas, including the investigation of the process of second-language acquisition, the sociolinguistic study of language use in Mexican American communities, the study of the relationship between teacher behaviors and second-language acquisition, the instructional use of two languages (e.g., bilingual education, two-way immersion), and the effects of various types of language-intervention programs on Mexican-origin children.[5]

As compared to the literature on language background, the study of family characteristics as they relate to the education of Mexican-origin children has, in general, attempted to discover whether and to what degree these characteristics are like, or unlike, those found in mainstream American families. One important trend in this research (e.g., Laosa, 1978; McGowan & Johnson, 1984) has been the study of socialization practices within Chicano

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[5] The literature on the research carried out on the effectiveness of bilingual education is voluminous. For excellent reviews of this research, refer to Cazden and Snow (1990) and to Arias and Casanova (1993). Both Hakuta (1986) and August and Garcia (1988) include comprehensive overviews of language research as it relates to the education of language-minority students.

families. Interestingly, in spite of clear evidence that research conducted in this country on child development and on "desirable" socialization practices is biased (Laosa, 1984; Ogbu 1985), recent implementation efforts focusing on parent involvement include family education components that are directly based on a deficit-difference paradigm.

Much less investigation of the causes of low school attainment in the Mexican-origin population has been carried out from the class analysis perspective than from the deficit/difference perspective. Increasingly, however, broad examinations of the educational experiences of this population are being written that include attention to the power relationships between the dominant majority population and the Mexican or Chicano minority. These analyses take the perspective that policies resulting in segregation practices and in unequal school financing reflect the structural location of the Mexican-origin population (Meier & Stewart, 1991; San Miguel, 1987).

Work in the tradition of the economic reproduction model has been carried out by Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986), Matute-Bianchi (1986, 1991) and Foley (1990). This work has focused on understanding differences in performance by Mexican-origin students of different types and has included an attempt to link factors (such as pre-migration educational experiences, attitudes toward education, and attitudes toward the majority group) with academic achievement. Foley (1990), in particular, in a school ethnography entitled *Learning Capitalist Culture*, examined high school students' behaviors against a parallel study of discrimination and prejudice present in a Texas border city. His purpose was to illustrate how schools "are sites for popular culture practices that stage or reproduce social inequality" (p. xv). By focusing on how the styles and values of middle-class youth are held up as models to working-class kids and how the position of each group of kids in the social structure remains the same, he exemplifies the work carried out by other researchers working within the economic reproduction model. For these researchers, such as Willis (1977), who focused on working-class youth in Great Britain, societal arrangements are reflected in teacher-student and student-student interactions in the classroom, which result in the reproduction of these arrangements.

In sum, research carried out on the causes of school failure in Mexican-origin students has followed the principal trends present in the research on non-mainstream populations in general. Less attention has been given to examining the genetic argument among this population, although interest in testing and test bias has been high.[6] For the most part, the research on this population can be categorized as falling within the cultural difference/deficit paradigm, in that it attempts to explain low scholastic achievement by focusing on differences brought to school by the children them-

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[6] Two recent volumes contain excellent bibliographies on testing and Mexican-origin students: Keller, Deneen, and Magallan (1991) and Valdés and Figueroa (1994).

selves. It is evident that single-factor explanations of school failure among the children of first-generation Mexican immigrants are inadequate and cannot account for the complexity of their experiences. To attribute to language factors alone, for example, what is inextricably linked to elements such as children's non-mainstream behavior, teacher perceptions, assumptions made by the schools about parents and by parents about schools, is simplistic. In order to account for the academic failure of Mexican-origin students from, for example, the perspective of theories of reproduction, researchers are faced with the challenge of having to account for the elements that lead to this reproduction using a binational framework.

Fixing the Problem: Educational Interventions

In spite of the complexity of the problem of school failure for non-mainstream children, those concerned with its remediation have focused on attempting to change particular aspects of the institutional and instructional contexts, hoping that such changes will bring about increased school success. While aware of the structural factors that frame the problem, these researchers and practitioners represent the tension that Carnoy and Levin (1985) have described as existing between "the unequal hierarchies associated with the capitalist workplace" and "the democratic values and expectations associated with equality of access to citizen rights and opportunities" (p. 4).

In comparison to theorists who have sought to explain the nature and circumstances of educational failure, practitioners and policymakers have focused on breaking the cycle or bringing about change in schools and in school outcomes. It is interesting to note, however, that programs that have endeavored to alter or reverse educational outcomes for poor, disadvantaged, or at-risk children have reflected the thinking of theorists who have worked within the deficit/difference paradigm. Many of these theorists have tended to address single micro-level factors such as English-language fluency, standardness of spoken English, or the blend and mix of students of different racial groups within a given school. These research and theoretical foci in turn have led to the implementation of programs that offer narrow solutions to far broader problems (e.g., bilingual education programs, desegregation programs, Head Start). Ironically, even though the theories that held that problems experienced by at-risk children were their own "fault" or responsibility have been called into question, program implementation still rests on this fundamental view. With few exceptions, programs aimed at at-risk children are designed to address key shortcomings or deficits in these students in order to help them succeed in the school environment.

It is not surprising that researchers working within the class-analysis paradigm argue that the aforementioned programs leave existing institutions largely untouched and that these institutions continue to reflect the power

realities of the larger society. For that reason, they point out, compensatory programs have failed to meet the expectations of those policymakers and practitioners who sincerely hoped that correcting or compensating for key factors would bring about significant changes in total educational outcomes.

In the case of Mexican-origin students, the absence of a sound underlying perspective that brings together explanations with interventions is particularly evident. Not only is there a lack of a coherent theory about macro-level factors that can adequately *explain the failure and success of these children* in U.S. schools, but there is also a lack of coherence among the many theories that have focused on micro-level variables. In general, the work of both policymakers and practitioners involved in the education of Mexican-origin children also reveals a very practical and problem-oriented focus. The focus for such individuals has been finding solutions, establishing policies, and funding programs that will address what are seen to be the needs of these children, and implementing promising programs in spite of heavy local and national political fire.

While from the perspectives of class analyses of schooling and society the educational problems of Mexican-origin children cannot be alleviated without a major change in the societal structure that impacts on every level of students' lives, many policymakers and practitioners believe that the right kinds of instructional solutions and school programs can bring about observable, if not lasting, change (such as higher test scores and lower dropout rates). Single and partial solutions, then, often take on extraordinary meaning, and these interventions become the focus of intense debate. The politics of bilingual education (a solution designed to focus on children's inability to profit from instruction carried out exclusively in English), for example, have been particularly acrimonious. Many practitioners, parents, and policymakers are convinced that good bilingual education programs in and of themselves will impact significantly on educational outcomes.[7]

The fact is that current educational outcomes — high dropout rates, grade retention, low test scores, and low college enrollments by Mexican-origin students — demand solutions. Whatever the realities of the structures of inequality in this country may be, practitioners feel a strong pressure to find ways of helping their students to succeed in school. For a number of educators who care deeply about language-minority children, and particularly about Mexican-origin students, dual immersion appears to be a very promising solution. Several reasons exist for their enthusiasm about such programs.

First and most importantly, dual-language immersion programs directly address the language "deficit" issue. Dual-language immersion provides instruction in the primary language for minority students. These students can

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[7] For a discussion of the bilingual education debate in this country see Crawford (1989), Hakuta (1986), and Imhoff (1990).

therefore begin their academic work in a language they already speak and understand. They can have access to the curriculum and they can develop what Cummins (1979) has called "cognitive academic proficiency" in their first language. This "proficiency" is believed to form the basis for the acquisition of higher order academic skills in a second language as well.

Second, dual-language immersion programs bring together mainstream and minority children. This is an important benefit in an age in which both residential *and* linguistic segregation have compounded an age-old problem. In dual-language immersion programs, minority children are no longer segregated from their English-speaking peers. The presence of children from two groups ends the linguistic isolation in which many minority children find themselves. More importantly, perhaps, the mere fact of bringing mainstream children into a school where they were not present before gives a middle-class orientation to what might have been low-income schools. There is no question that different resources are available to children in schools with a predominantly middle-class population. As Kozol (1991) dramatically points out, differences in funding result in vastly different school facilities, teaching staff, availability of materials and supplies, access to technology, and availability of programs.

Beyond these obvious benefits, many educators are enthusiastic about dual-language immersion programs because early results of the measurement of achievement levels of both minority and majority children in these programs have been encouraging (see, for example, the work carried out by Lindholm and Gavlek, 1994). Test scores, while not as high as some educators would wish, appear to suggest that low achievement is not concentrated among students of lower socioeconomic levels.

It is not surprising, then, that in many areas of the country bilingual immersion is seen as a win-win solution. Not only do such programs appear to benefit minority students, but they have been found to offer important benefits to majority students as well. The implementation of such programs can contribute directly to the development of national language resources in the general population. If these programs are implemented widely, and if mainstream American children begin to consider it normal to acquire a second language from childhood, the fears about the dangers of bilingualism (e.g., retardation, intellectual impoverishment, schizophrenia, anomie, and alienation) that Haugen (1972) argued were prevalent in the majority society might begin to break down.

A Cautionary Note on Dual-Language Immersion Programs

In spite of these encouraging results, in the final section of this article, I want to suggest that it is important to exercise caution as we move forward to a wholesale implementation of such programs. In particular, I want to

suggest further that school board members, school district administrators, and school practitioners who are engaged in the planning and implementation of dual-language immersion programs are, as Freeman (1996) points out, also engaged in the process of language planning in much broader terms. As defined by Cooper (1989), language planning "refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes" (p. 45). Others (Jernudd & Das Gupta, 1971) define language planning as "a political and administrative activity for solving language problems in society" (p. 211).

In the case of dual-language immersion in English and Spanish, elected officials and school personnel are clearly engaging in language policymaking and attempting to solve two very different language problems simultaneously. The first problem involves the limited acquisition of non-English languages by monolingual anglophone students. Dual-language immersion policy addresses this problem by providing multi-year content-based language instruction for these students and by making native Spanish-speaking peers available for interaction. The second problem involves the choice of instructional language for teaching hispanophone minority students who, for the most part, are socioeconomically marginalized and often the targets of racial or ethnic discrimination. Dual-language immersion policy addresses this problem by giving legitimacy to Spanish as a language of instruction in programs designed to provide these latter students with the same academic benefits obtained in late-exit bilingual programs as described by Ramirez et al. (1991).

As I have noted above, supporters of dual-language immersion programs are members of two very different groups. One group, foreign language teachers, hopes to appeal to parents largely by emphasizing the instrumental value of Spanish, that is, its value in the world of business, politics, law, etc. The other group, former bilingual teachers, hopes to bring about educational success for linguistic-minority students by providing them with an excellent education in their first language and with a school context in which Spanish is more valued than it is in the majority society. In some dual-language immersion contexts (such as the Oyster School described by Freeman, 1996), schools and teachers also have as their goal promoting social change — that is, opposing existing practices and ideologies and socializing "language minority and language majority students to see themselves and each other as equal participants in school and society" (p. 572).

As Tollefson (1991) argues in his book, *Planning Language, Planning Inequality,* language policy is a mechanism that can either support or oppose existing hierarchies of power. Moreover, language planning, because its focus is on language, is never neutral. As Ricento and Hornberger (1996) maintain: "Politics is inseparable from any discussion of something so central to human society as language" (p. 411).

By engaging in language planning, that is, in the development of language policies for education, proponents of dual-immersion education are engaging in a process that will directly affect the future lives of two groups of students. Moreover, they are engaged in this endeavor at a time in U.S. history when there is intense anti-immigrant sentiment coupled with clear opposition to the use and maintenance of non-English languages by minority communities. It is important, therefore, that conversations carried out by members of the different policy sectors (foreign language educators, bilingual educators, advocates of educational equity) supporting this educational solution carefully examine the many difficult questions surrounding language policy decisions that focus on which languages should be used in public education and on how and to whom non-native languages should be taught. In the final section of this article, I discuss three of these issues: 1) the use of minority languages in public education, 2) the issue of intergroup relations, and 3) issues of language and power.

The Use of Minority Languages in Public Education

Within the last decade, numerous countries around the world have grappled with questions surrounding the choice of language to be used in the education of linguistic-minority children. Publications focusing on language policies in education number in the hundreds, and include examinations of language and education issues in Africa (Bokamba, 1991), India (Dua, 1991; Srivastava, 1988), the Phillipines (Smolicz, 1986), Spain (Siguan, 1983), Australia (Kalantzis, Cope, & Slade, 1989), Germany (Raoufi, 1981), Belgium (Roosens, 1989), Jamaica (Craig, 1988), and Switzerland (Kolde, 1988). Additionally, a number of publications have examined specific aspects of education and language policies affecting linguistic minorities. Tosi (1984), for example, examined the entire issue of immigration and bilingual education in the European context. Churchill (1986) focused on Organization for Economic and Community Development (OECD) countries and the education of both indigenous and immigrant linguistic minorities. Spolsky (1986) focused on language barriers to education in multilingual settings, and Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) and Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (1988) have examined violence and minority education and community struggles for educational rights around the world.

In this country, as Paulston (1994) argues, the key question for educators and policymakers is, "Under what social conditions does the medium of instruction make a difference for school children in achieving success?" (p. 7). As Snow (1990) reminds us, the issues are complex:

> Clearly the decision whether or not to use native language instruction is not the only challenge to educational policy makers; one must also decide, if the choice is in favor of native language use, *how* it should be included, *how much* native language

instruction is optimal, and what constitutes the best quality instruction. (p. 60, italics *in original*)

In contexts in which their culture and identity are supported, children can develop enhanced cognitive abilities, as well as key academic linguistic skills, which will then transfer to their acquisition of academic English. While the research on the success of bilingual education is not unambiguous (Baker & de Kanter, 1981; Ramirez et al., 1991; Secada, 1990; Willig, 1985), many individuals concerned about the education of linguistic minorities believe that existing evidence strongly supports the position that the use of native languages in education will ultimately result in educational success in English (e.g., Cummins, 1977, 1981; Lyons, 1990; Wong Fillmore & Valadez, 1986). It is not surprising, given the fact that dual-language immersion programs provide both a context in which native culture and identity are valued and in which children's first language can grow and develop, that an increasing number of experts (e.g., Lyons, 1990) are persuaded that such programs provide the optimal solution for linguistic-minority children.

As Snow (1990) has argued, however, simply introducing native-language programs will not automatically solve all the educational problems of linguistic-minority children:

> Poor quality bilingual programs do not work any better than poor quality ESL or submersion programs. Language minority children are typically at considerable educational risk for reasons that have nothing to do with their bilingualism, so they need the best quality instruction available to insure their continued progress. (p. 73)

In dual-language immersion programs, therefore, special attention must be given to the quality of the primary language used with minority children.[8] I am especially concerned about the fact that, while Spanish is being used in dual-immersion programs, instructional strategies are also being used that must take into consideration the needs of the mainstream children. What this means, in practice, is that the language in which both majority and minority children receive instruction, especially in the early grades, is a language that must be modified somewhat in order to respond to the needs of those children who are in the early stages of acquisition. It may be that the modification is slight, or, even if the modification is significant, it might make little difference. But there is no evidence to support either position. What the research has not told us is how using language in an even slightly

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[8] My interest in this issue stems from conversations that I have had with both teachers and administrators of dual-language immersion programs who have expressed concerns about the Spanish-language and reading test scores of Mexican-origin children. As a result of these conversations, I was invited to give a talk at the Annual Conference on Developmental Bilingual Education (Valdés, 1995) in which I attempted to help teachers examine the disappointing test scores of Mexican-origin children by analyzing the knowledge/skill demands made by the standardized Spanish-language tests they were currently using.

distorted fashion influences the language development of children who are *native speakers of that language. This is a serious question, especially if* language is the primary focus in such programs. Were the situation reversed, mainstream parents would vigorously protest having their children in classrooms in which the instructional needs of language-minority children required that English be used in ways that did not provide their children with the fullest possible exposure to school language.

The question I am raising may be a non-question. It may indeed be that the Spanish spoken in a first-grade classroom, in which half the children are sophisticated speakers of Spanish and the other half have had only one year of Spanish in kindergarten, is still very much like the Spanish one would expect to hear in any monolingual setting where Spanish is the language of *instruction. But if it is not, the implications of this question must be attended* to closely. Will hispanophone children acquire native-like academic Spanish? Will they learn as much and as rapidly as they might have in standard bilingual programs? Will they develop the cognitive academic proficiency that Cummins (1979) has claimed undergirds development of similar proficiencies in a second language?

In a relevant article provocatively entitled "Should the French Canadian Minorities Open Their Schools to the Children of the Anglophone Majority?" two Canadian researchers (Mougeon & Beniak, 1988) argued that:

> Negative repercussions can also be feared as regards achievement in other subjects than French. A recent survey (Desjarlais et al., 1980) revealed that in those French language schools where English-dominant students are in the majority, Franco-Ontarian teachers have to slow down and simplify their French so as not to leave these students behind. Franco-Ontarian educators believe that as a result, the other students do not learn as much or as fast as they could. (p. 172)

Bilingual educators working in dual-language immersion programs, then, must make every effort to ensure that minority-language children are being exposed to the highest quality instruction possible in their native language. They must grapple with the conflicts engendered by the fact that they must educate two very different groups of children in the same language.

The Issue of Intergroup Relations

According to Christian (1996), based on Lindholm (1990), there are eight criteria that are essential to the success of dual-language immersion programs. One is the issue of intergroup relations: "Positive interactions among students should be facilitated by the use of strategies such as cooperative learning" (Christian, 1996, p. 68). Because of interest in cross-cultural interactions and their effects on children, a number of researchers (e.g., Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Lambert & Cazabon, 1994) have examined social networks in classrooms and children's perceived competence.

As Freeman (1996) points out in her study of the Oyster School, however, even when there is a conscious effort by school personnel to construct an alternative discourse and practices, it is difficult to counter the impact of the larger society on both teachers and students. Freeman observes that, while students could recognize discriminatory practices both in and outside the school, girls tended to form separate groups in the lunchroom based on race and class. Dark-skinned Latina students sat apart from light-skinned Latinas. African American anglophones did not mingle with White Euro-American anglophones.

Freeman (1996) quotes a staff member who, in responding to Freeman's comments about such groupings, criticized her colleagues by saying that it was "the fault of the teacher for not watching" (p. 579). One may wonder, like Freeman, to what degree it is possible for school personnel to counter the influence of interactional norms that are part of the larger society. This example suggests that in terms of intergroup relations, school personnel need to be particularly sensitive to the realities of the ways the children interact with one another and to the messages that they send to each other in numerous ways. Majority children bring to their interactions with less privileged peers a mixed bag of attitudes and feelings. And while we know that these attitudes can change — and, indeed, that is one of the benefits attributed to dual language immersion programs — we know little about what impact mainstream children's original attitudes have on minority children with whom they interact.

Because of this, it is important to realize that we are experimenting in potentially dangerous ways with children's lives. Certainly some research (Cazabon et al., 1993; Lambert & Cazabon, 1994) has found that children from different groups become friends at school. They play together and otherwise interact. In their out-of-school lives, however, the picture may be very different. Children sense exclusion quite quickly, and minority children realize, when several of their mainstream friends talk about weekend excursions and out-of-school activities to which they were not invited, that they are not really part of the same group.

In addition to intergroup relations within the school, there are external structures that differentiate the significance of acquiring a second language for both groups of children. For minority children, the acquisition of English is expected. For mainstream children, the acquisition of a non-English language is enthusiastically applauded. Children are aware of these differences. The reporter who writes a story on a dual-language immersion program and concentrates on how well a mainstream child speaks Spanish while ignoring how well a Spanish-speaking child is learning English sends a very powerful message. The next day, after the reporter is gone and everything seemingly returns to normal, all may appear to be well. I suspect, however, that children are deeply wounded by such differential treatment. This is clearly an issue that must be attended to by educators.

Issues of Language and Power

Researchers working within the perspective of conflict theory (Coser, 1956; Schermerhorn, 1956; Wilson, 1973) argue that groups in society compete with each other for tangible benefits. They argue further that conflicts over education have to do with the labor market and with the allocation of people to jobs with varying rewards. The ruling class maintains its position of power and domination in part through education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Collins, 1971) and ultimately reproduces itself from generation to generation. Influenced by work carried out in this tradition, other theorists working from the perspective of critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1989, 1992; Tollefson, 1991) have argued that language must be seen as an important tool that can be used by both the powerful and the powerless in their struggle to gain or maintain power. In Tollefson's (1991) words:

> Language policy can be analyzed as the outcome of struggle as well as a component of it. In other words, particular polices in specific countries result from and contribute to the relationship among classes. (p. 14)

These scholars criticize "pluralist" positions, such as recent language policies in Australia and Great Britain that advocate the study of minority languages by the majority and raise questions about whether prejudice and discrimination by members of the dominant culture can be decreased by their children's study of minority languages. Like class analysis theorists, researchers working within the critical language awareness perspective (Bhatt & Martin-Jones, 1992; Tollefson, 1991) also question whether societal inequalities can be overcome by curriculum and teaching practices.

In spite of the impact of the above perspectives on many educators and theorists in this country, conversations surrounding bilingual education and dual-language immersion programs have not been couched in these terms. As Ada (1995) points out, bilingual educators have sought to maintain a non-confrontational attitude and have not generally engaged in carrying out critiques of the educational system. Ada contends that bilingual educators have struggled to maintain an appearance of neutrality so as not to seem political to their opponents. Making the same point even more harshly, Walsh (1995) argues that bilingual education is neither progressive nor empowering and criticizes bilingual educators quite strongly. Because of the importance of her position to my arguments here, I believe that she is worth quoting at some length:

> While most bilingual educators do not adhere to this limiting definition of bilingual education or to the assimilationist notion of a mainstream, most continue to work in or with such programs, probably with the hope of somehow making a difference in districts, programs, classrooms, and/or students' lives. Energy often is directed at small victories like convincing school boards to replace transitional programs with developmental, two-way, or Spanish immersion programs. However a good heart, a good effort, and even a good program are not enough to shift the dominant

conceptions, relations, and practice of schools and societies that situate bilingual/
bicultural students and communities as "other." (p. 85)

Arguing that the practical manifestations of this otherness include the im-
position of a White, middle-class standard as a base against which all other
students are measured, she concludes:

> Such reality is illustrated by the fact, for example, that White, native English speak-
> ers in two-way or Spanish immersion programs often outperform native Spanish
> speakers on Spanish-language achievement tests. Of course the norms, values, con-
> cepts, skills and experiences such tests support are those taught and reinforced in
> White middle-class families. (p. 85)

What Walsh's criticism suggests is that discussion by the bilingual educa-
tion policy sector of dual-language immersion programs must take into ac-
count the fact that diversity is a challenge. For us to succeed as educators in
a context where deep racial and linguistic divisions are present, we must do
more than simply wish these differences away. In implementing dual-lan-
guage immersion programs, there must be sensitivity to the realities of in-
tergroup relations in the communities surrounding schools to the fact that
teachers are products of the society with all of its shortcomings, and to the
fact that mainstream and minority children live in very different worlds.

If we are truthful, perhaps we will admit that supporters and proponents
of dual-language immersion programs face a dilemma. They want to find
ways to support language study among majority group members, and they
want to provide minority children with access to the curriculum in a lan-
guage they can understand. These two objectives, however, have very differ-
ent agendas. Thus, it is not surprising that, as Freeman (1996) found, even
in a school that had a stated commitment to social justice, administrators
presented arguments to majority parents in support of dual immersion that
"focused on economic and security benefits to the community rather than
on the benefits of bilingual education or any moral commitment to equal
educational opportunities for the native Spanish-speaking students"
(p. 569).

While it is tempting to bill dual-language immersion programs as exam-
ples of implementations in which language is a resource rather than a prob-
lem (Freeman, 1996; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), it is important to note
the arguments of Bhatt and Martin-Jones (1992) within the critical language
awareness perspective, which contend that educators need to carefully ex-
amine who the main beneficiaries of these language "resources" will be.

An actualization of the above discussion could lead us to recall that, in
this country, when all else failed, skills in two languages have opened doors
for members of minority groups. Being bilingual has given members of the
Mexican American community, for example, access to certain jobs for which
language skills were important. Taken to its logical conclusion, if dual-lan-
guage immersion programs are successful, when there are large numbers of

majority persons who are also bilingual, this special advantage will be lost. We can only begin to conjecture about what the consequences of such a change might be. At this moment in time, given strong anti-immigrant sentiments, it is not difficult to imagine that an Anglo, middle-class owner of a neighborhood Taco Bell might choose to hire people like himself who can also talk effectively to the hired help instead of hiring members of the minority bilingual population. While Maria, the sixty-year-old bilingual educator mentioned at the beginning of this article, may not be right in saying that majority group members will take advantage of minorities any chance they get, policymakers, administrators, and practitioners must recognize that language is not neutral. Bilingualism can be both an advantage and a disadvantage, depending on the student's position in the hierarchy of power.

Language acquisition is extraordinarily complex. The issue that I raise here may again be a non-problem. It is possible that, as Edelsky and Hudelson (1982) and Ellman (1988) have found, anglophone children will not really acquire lasting language competencies in minority languages. What is important is that conversations surrounding dual-language immersion programs include discussions of difficult issues and complex questions with both majority and minority parents. It is essential that such conversations also take place across the different policy sectors that support such educational implementations.

Conclusion

I began this article by talking about two composite characters. One character, Maria, cares deeply about excluded children, worries about their future, and opposes practices that may result in their further exclusion. The other character, Andrew, is a majority child who appears to have every advantage in this society. I also describe Andrew's parents as having a deep commitment to social justice. It is my hope that bilingual educators can talk to parents like Andrew's about dual-language immersion programs in terms of equal educational opportunity and social justice, not just in economic terms. It is also my hope that parents of both groups, educators, and children can engage in an extensive emancipatory dialogue that involves what Cummins (1994) has described:

> The curriculum in schools and the interactions between educators and students reflect the societal power structure in virtually all societies. In other words, they reinforce the lies, distortions, and occasional truths upon which national and dominant-group cultural identities are built. . . . In culturally diverse societies, a central goal of education should be to create interactional contexts where educators and students can critically examine issues of identity and experience and collaboratively deconstruct the myths that are inherited from one generation to the next. . . . For educators to create an educational context with their students where the assumptions and lies underlying dominant group identity become the focus of scrutiny

rather than the invisible screen that determines perception is to challenge the societal power structure. Educational equity requires no less. (p. 153)

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