



COLUMN: BILITERACY IN TEXAS

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COLUMN INTRODUCTION

The number of bilingual students in our schools is growing which includes many different kinds of learners, each with their unique potential and literacy needs. These multilingual learners are in various educational programs including mainstream, ESL, sheltered, bilingual, language immersion, or world language classes. Though not mutually exclusive, we might refer to them by using these categories: emergent bilinguals (students who are acquiring English as an additional language), heritage language speakers (students who speak a language of their parents in addition to English), simultaneous bilinguals (students who have grown up with more than one language), sequential bilinguals (students who are acquiring an additional language after the beginning of formal education such as in a secondary world language classroom), or even dual-language learners (students are beginning their education by receiving instruction in two languages). This myriad of classifications of bilingual students only scratches the surface of understanding this growing and complex group of global citizens. Therefore, there is a need for all literacy educators (bilingual or not) to have working knowledge of biliteracy assessment, development, and instruction in order to help all students reach their full potential. This column will be devoted to discussing relevant trends of biliteracy in the state of Texas. If you would like to contribute to future columns, please contact the column editor Mandy Stewart at MStewart7@twu.edu.

In this issue's Biliteracy in Texas column, we are focusing on professional learning all educators need to teach students who are acquiring English as an additional language. As U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona has stated, "[Every teacher is an EL teacher](#)". Two veteran bilingual educators encourage us to continue learning about second language acquisition and biliteracy as they share the following book review.



TRANSFORMING SCHOOLING FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A REVIEW

PAUL PARKERSON AND JUAN BORDA

INTRODUCTION

This book is an exploration into the heart of current actions and thoughts occurring in the realm of education with respect to emergent bilinguals (EBs) in the United States. The text is divided into four main sections: Theoretical Insights, Transformative Policies, Transformative Pedagogies, and Transformative Practices. Within each section, the editors, Mariana Pacheco, P. Zitlali Morales, and Colleen Hamilton, have included chapters that focus on particular cases that fit within the parameters of each, including precise examples of transformational practices currently carried out in learning environments.

We approach this review in a holistic manner: each of us chose individual chapters to focus on within the four sections. Using this method, we will be able to touch, in brief, the portions of the book that stand out to us as educators and explain the reasons for this. By merging two independent interactions, this review attempts to provide a broader overview for the reader that encompasses a gathering of information in a more generalized point of view, and yet remains specific enough to focus and reflect the interests of two individual reviewers.

THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

The section examines various facets of ideology in practice. The opening of this theoretical section (Chapter 2, *Spinning Trump's Language: Cracking the Code and Transforming Identities and Ideologies*), written by Aria Razfar, causes the reader to think about how the initiation of Trump's inauguration as president in 2016 was a chance to disrupt monolingual ways of thinking at an ideological level by reconsidering and amalgamating the reality of a nation's multilingual experience. Looking at the perceptions and reactions of the witnesses to the discourse set forth by Trump, Razfar focuses on the theoretical implications of considering language in terms of an "identity/solidarity." Mentions of Clinton, Bush, and Obama set the stage for the very detailed picture Razfar paints of the various ways in which Trump has managed to use Twitter to accommodate his political agenda or voice. Specifically, Razfar points out the importance of understanding how populism has altered society's perception of speech. This speaks to the importance of understanding how a theoretical framework allows for a discourse that can potentially give a voice to emerging multilingual speakers, and thus, an inherent value to the transformation of second language learners.



In Chapter 3 (Dual Language Teachers as a Potential Democratizing Force in English Learner Education), Macedo and Bartolomé discuss two extremely relevant sociocultural concepts that teachers must embrace in their practice: critical consciousness and political clarity. They argue that teachers are responsible for developing students' critical consciousness about socio-political and economic inequalities that directly affect their development. Critical consciousness allows EBs to decolonize their minds and reject all subjugation forms of oppression already established by dominant groups. Macedo and Bartolomé clearly urge and motivate teachers who serve marginalized students to uncover forms of systematic oppression that perpetuate injustices and raise sociocultural awareness and implementation of social justice--emphasizing the humanity and individuality of each student. They also make readers reflect on their responsibility in humanizing the schooling experience for bilingual students whose heritage language is a right and resource to maintain and increase their identity.

TRANSFORMATIVE POLICIES

This section addresses ways to transform educational policy to purposefully include diverse linguistic students. In Chapter 4 (Transforming School District Policy for Emergent Bilinguals in New Immigrant Destinations: The Role of Community-Based Organizations), Hopkins and Brezicha describe how demographic shifts challenge traditional monolingual school policies. They offer an example of how community-based organization members served as boundary spanners, or community networks, to facilitate communication between community members and school district leaders.

In Chapter 5 (Reimagining the Educational Environment in California for Emergent Bilinguals: The Implications of the Passage of Proposition 58), Aldaña and Martinez share how Proposition 58 changed California's state and local language policies, affecting EBs, by repealing bilingual restrictions put in place by Proposition 227 in 2016. This directly affected California's legislation through the influence of Ron Unz (the Silicon Valley millionaire pushing the proposal) and gave rise to similar proposals in Arizona, Colorado, and Massachusetts, aiming to limit bilingual education.

The changes in policy from Proposition 217 to Proposition 58 allowed schools to use languages other than English for school instruction without parent permission. Aldaña and Martinez also describe how The Secondary Online-Learning project (SOL) helped ground bilingual policy implementation. In this program, high school students use their linguistic repertoire to access academic knowledge and resist language restriction policies. The two cases indicate how communities can influence policy changes to benefit under-represented groups where the linguistic and cultural diversity of minority students is an asset.



In Chapter 6 (How School-Level Practices Transform Federal and State Policies: One Dual-Immersion School's Response to the Common Core State Standards), Stillman discusses how school level policy can affect Federal and State policy and pursues the question of how Common Core States Standards in English language arts are moved through the school-level bureaucracies. The focus of Stillman's writing is on how the instructors promote both "asset-oriented" and "strengths-based" pedagogy for EBs in this context. In discussing the ethnographic case study with 10 teachers' involvement over two years at Playa, Stillman makes mention of the whole school reading Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2018) and aspiring to follow his model of dialogical teaching. Stillman further walks the reader through a fascinating glimpse into a transformation at a campus level, with very positive results in both students and teachers. However, she does mention that "findings also intimate that the presence of transformative school-level policies and practices cannot fully protect teachers (...) from the colonizing power of reductive policies" (pg. 116), intimating that PD should push to develop educators' "critical policy responses". This is an illuminating read, showing the value of educating teachers and a clear effect in student learning. This is a result of adopted changes in instructor ideology and ultimately becomes a classroom reality.

TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGIES

In Chapter 7 (Socio-Spatial Repertoires as Tools for Resistance and Expansive Literacies), Cortéz and Gutiérrez discuss the nuances of socio-spatial repertoires and share how linguistic and sociocultural practices are used as resources. Specifically, they show how EBs use their discourse to negotiate power, mediate, challenge, and resist injustices. Bilingual practices such as translanguaging (the use of the student's entire linguistic repertoire in order to leverage making academic and social meaning) become resources for bilingual young people to overcome the changes generated by neoliberal social and educational policies that classify them as deficient. By analyzing a specific case in a local public community park, Cortez and Gutierrez describe how some bilingual young people use their linguistic repertoire to defend and maintain their cultural customs in the face of new city-made rules.

Taking a new look at transcultural pedagogy in their contribution in Chapter 8 (Transforming Teaching in Multilingual Communities: Towards a Transcultural Pedagogy of Heart and Mind), Faulstich Orellana, Martinez, Franco, Rodríguez, Johnson, Rodríguez-Minkoff, and Rodríguez share a pedagogy of the heart: six principles that form a foundation for a "transcultural pedagogy of heart and mind" in a program with immigrant, multilingual students. Their ultimate focus is to adapt the use of various languages by EBs in order to give them a position of sociocultural impetus with fellow students, families, and communities. This particular take on pedagogy stands in contrast to the marginalization experienced nation-wide by numerous diverse linguistic learning groups..



TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES

In the final section, translanguaging is the focus of this observation of a learning space with EBs: disrupting barriers of monolingual, limiting constructs. In Chapter 10 (Translanguaging and the Transformation of Classroom Space: On the Affordances of Disrupting Linguistic Boundaries), Martínez, Hikida, and Durán include narratives about the deficit-oriented perspective of bilingualism and policies that reflect monoglossic views of language. However, when translanguaging practices are adopted in the school, they share that learning opportunities and support networks become more available to bilingual students.

Taking a similar approach in Chapter 11 (Bilingual Youth and Networks of Support: Designing a Formula for Success on the Path to College), Hamilton and Pacheco describe how bilingual students construct support networks in and out-of-school contexts to achieve academic success. Those networks of supporters provide students opportunities and resources needed to continue their post-secondary education. Cultural approaches, such as Mother-daughter pedagogy, describe how mothers empower their children to overcome deficit-oriented discourses, in this way the bilingual youth can design their academic and social futures.

In Chapter 12 (Biliteracy as Emotional Practice: Latina/o Children Building Relationship Through Digital Literacy at an Afterschool Technology Program), Ek, Garza, and García open the discussion of how biliteracy is a factor in promoting relationships between students. The use of authentic language practices such as dichos [sayings], refranes [proverbs], and adivinanzas [riddles], allows students to communicate and use their linguistic resources in such ways as code-switching and translanguaging in order to leverage their culture and language. This section highlights the importance of the social dimensions of schooling and illustrates how practitioners can understand that language, literacy, and socialization can be promoted through the use of authentic language practices.

CONCLUSION

The text analyzes current educational trends affecting EBs' language and literacy practices in the United States. This analysis aims to reframe or "transform" educational practices for minority students by understanding second language acquisition, social, and cultural theories. Most of the concepts are based on a critical pedagogical stance to explain and comprehend factors influencing youth bilingual learners. Connections between bilingual students' language identities and literacy practices in and out of schools indicate the need to recognize language as a resource and a right. The strength in this text lies in the breadth and depth of the subject matter: in many different spaces in our country, transformation is taking place as a result of a conscious awareness of the need for change.

This text also will be a useful resource for international communities to have as a reference. The concepts presented in each section could help guide policy, curriculum, and schooling practice with the complexity and rigor of the theories and approaches described. This book is an excellent



resource for any educator who is engaged in understanding and affecting change in the multilingual landscape of our nation or even the world.

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