

MULTILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

Sociolinguistic and Pedagogical Perspectives
from Commonwealth Countries

Edited by **Androula Yiakoumetti**



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Ofelia García and Sarah Hesson (City University of New York, USA)

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, language-in-education policies in schools have insisted on the use of the standardised variety of the language or languages of instruction. As a result, many language-minoritised students, speakers of different varieties of the language(s) used in schools, have high rates of academic failure. Educators are simply not doing enough to leverage the complex and dynamic languaging that students bring into classrooms.

In this chapter we take up the theoretical framework of *translanguaging* – ways of thinking about, and acting upon, the dynamic and complex language practices of speakers themselves, and especially of language-minoritised students (García 2009; García and Li Wei 2014). A translanguaging framework ensures that the students' different home language practices are not only validated, but also used and leveraged for academic purposes – to think critically and creatively; to produce authentic work, to analyse language use, to better understand what are traditionally known as students' own bidialectal and bilingual practices. The translanguaging framework has been applied mostly to study the language practices, and the teaching and learning, of bilingual and multilingual students. Although in this chapter we continue with this tradition given our work with bilingual students in the US, this framework has deep and widespread implications for the education of speakers of different dominant-language varieties, and certainly for speakers of different varieties of English in Commonwealth contexts.

This chapter also takes up the distinction in the field of language policy between macro- and micro-level language use, specifically with regard to language management. We discuss below the theoretical framework of *language management*, focusing on the difference and interrelationships between the *organised language management* of an institution such as school (macro-level), and the *discourse-based management* of teachers in classrooms (micro-level).

Taking up the theoretical frameworks of language management and translanguaging, and acknowledging the failure of most schools to meaningfully educate bilingual students, this chapter develops an alternative view of what schools, teachers and students can do by focusing on the following questions:

- How can schools manage language practices in ways that recognise and leverage *all* the language practices of bilingual children as resources in teaching and learning?
 - What are some ways of transforming the *schools' organised language management* at the *macro-level*?
 - What are some ways of transforming the *teachers' discourse-based management* at the *micro-level*?

We start by briefly discussing the theory of language management, especially as applied to schools, and reviewing the language management policies of US education. We then discuss alternatives to managing language practices for both schools and teachers through the use of translanguaging.

LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT

The scholarly field of language policy and language planning emerged in the 1960s and coincided with the collapse of colonial systems. Its explicit objective was to change the structure and use of language(s). Those changes were said to be in the hands of governmental experts in institutions established for such purposes; that is, they were said to be *top-down* processes and 'macro' in nature. But as the field developed, scholars also began to understand the very important work of individuals in changing language use and started referring to this as *bottom-up* 'micro' processes (Hornberger 1996). To bring these two perspectives together, *Language Management Theory* (Jernudd and Neustupný 1987) developed ways of studying the interaction between these two dimensions – the macro and the micro. Language Management is thus not just about institutional policies, but also about the 'everyday linguistic

behavior accompanying the ordinary use of language in concrete interactions' (Nekpavil and Sherman, forthcoming). As such, two types of language management can be identified:

- *Organised management*, performed by institutions with specific ideologies and aimed at changing language as a system
- *Discourse-based management*, performed by speakers through ordinary use of language.

Although we will address these two types of language management separately, it is important to remember that there are tight links between the language management of institutions such as schools and the language management of teachers and even students. This chapter discusses how to break the vicious cycle in which language policies in schools and those enacted by teachers and performed by students have led to the continued failure of language-minoritised students. Even schools that have been traditionally organised to serve these students, such as the English as a Second Language and bilingual education programmes in the US, have not always served language-minoritised students well. Using examples from the education of language-minoritised bilingual students in the US, we present here alternatives to the present language-management policies of schools, teachers and students. But before we do that, we discuss how US schools have traditionally managed ways of using language.

TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT IN US SCHOOLS

Throughout the world, educational institutions manage and 'police' the use of a standardised form of the dominant language of the nation-state. Despite the very different language practices of students throughout the world – what Vertovec (2007) has called a superdiversity – schools exist precisely to impose one artificial way of using language.

The US has a long tradition of *implicit*, and not explicit, language policy. For example, unlike many other countries, the US does not have a *de jure* official language policy of English. This is perhaps the legacy of Founding Fathers who believed that attracting others to settle and work in the US was beneficial and that the economic power of English would be enough to work the magic of complete linguistic assimilation (Heath 1977). But this less explicit language policy was accompanied with other elements of force. Early on, enslaved African Americans were separated from others who spoke their

languages, as masters insisted on their language shift to English while forbidding their literacy development. From the nineteenth century, Native Americans were sent to boarding schools where they were immersed in English and deprived of contact with families and thus of their languages and cultures. For enslaved and conquered groups, the language policy was implicit, but forceful, robbing them of the humanity that enables people to succeed. For immigrants who have been the core of US national formation since its inception, 'Americanisation' was carried out through schooling in ways that achieved the language shift in three generations (Fishman 1966) – the hallmark of the US 'melting pot',

The twentieth century

The US did not have explicit policies to educate the children of immigrants and those considered 'others' until the mid-twentieth century. Until then, immigrants, Native Americans, African Americans and 'others' were simply immersed in using specific forms of English. The explicit purpose of this practice was to belittle their language and cultural practices, and to restrict entry only to the lower echelons of American society. But in the twentieth century and in the wake of the civil rights era, US society started to think about how to educate the children of those who spoke languages other than English, in some cases immigrants, but in most cases people absorbed into the US through policies of 'Manifest Destiny' and American imperialism. Among the latter group were not only Native Americans, but also children of Mexican descent, some of whom had crossed the border, but others of whom had been born in territory that had been Mexico before the end of the Mexican American War. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 ceded to the US the 500 000 square miles of territory that today encompasses California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming. Yet other children were Puerto Ricans, US citizens since 1917 as a result of the colonial relationship maintained with the island since the end of the Spanish American War in 1898.

In 1968, the Bilingual Education Act was passed, with the US Congress authorising federal funds for schools to establish bilingual education programmes where children were taught in English and their home languages. In the beginning many *Developmental Maintenance Bilingual Education* programmes were established by educators who shared the language identity of the children. In those programmes, the language other than English, as well as English, were used to educate the group for self-realisation. But by 1974, bilingual education policy restricted the use of languages other than

English only as a temporary measure and as a way to further accelerate the shift to English, in what became known as *transitional bilingual education*.

The political opposition to the inclusion of languages other than English in schools started almost immediately. Alongside these bilingual education programmes, *English as a Second Language* programmes were developed, in which only English was used.

As the twentieth century came to a close, yet another type of bilingual education came into being – developmental bilingual education. However, with increased opposition to 'bilingual' programmes and the word 'bilingual' itself being associated with political contention, these new bilingual programmes were labeled 'dual-language' and included two groups of children – those who spoke English and wanted to learn the other language and those who spoke another language but were said to be 'Limited English Proficient'. Developmental bilingual education then became restricted to programmes in which half of the children spoke English and half not. Based on the traditional scholarship of immersion programmes in Canada, and of foreign language programmes around the world, these 'dual-language' programmes separated the two languages strictly through language allocation policies that relied on various arrangements – different spaces, times, subjects or teachers for each language. Today in 'dual-language' programmes, sometimes there are two teachers who teach in different classrooms and in different languages, in what are called 'side-by-side' models. In other cases one language is used one day or one week or during certain times of the day, whereas the other language is used the other day or the other week or during other times of the day. That is, the two languages are used in *complementary* fashion in ways that Cummins (2007) has described as 'bilingual solitudes'.

The twenty-first century

As the twenty-first century rolled in, other ways of using and viewing language emerged, the product of an increasingly globalised world with its accompanying technologies that created dynamic movements of people, information, goods and services. Traditional conceptions of language, bilingualism and bilingual education were challenged by a multilingual world where plurilingualism, in the sense given by the Council of Europe as the potential to use various languages to different degrees and for many purposes (Beacco and Byram 2003), was increasingly seen as a resource.

The US has responded to the emerging global multilingual arrangement by instituting language management policies that preserve the hegemony of English without disturbing its ability to attract the world's best professional