Foundations for Multilingualism in Education
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Preface

Foundations for Multilingualism in Education: from Principles to Practice explores linguistic and cultural diversity in education policy, practice, and research. This foundational text is grounded in theoretical understandings about bi/multilingual individuals and their linguistic and cultural development. An important premise is that decisions about languages and language use shape the educational experiences afforded students in significant ways, especially for children who negotiate multilingual and multicultural realities. Foundations equips educators with the knowledge and skills they need to make principled decisions about language education in their schools. The book also explores multiple pathways for advocacy through classroom and school practices and policy-making and sets an agenda for research from a multilingual perspective.

Foundations for Multilingualism in Education is written for practicing teachers and administrators working in bilingual or multilingual school settings, for those preparing to work in these settings, and for those interested in conducting research on multilingual issues. The book takes a comprehensive, pluralistic approach to research, theory, policy, and practice, and introduces four core principles that are applicable across a wide range of educational contexts including bilingual, multilingual, and English-medium types of programs. Foundations is international in scope and includes examples of multilingual educational practices in the United States as well as in other countries around the world.

Pluralist Perspectives on Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice

Foundations for Multilingualism in Education: from Principles to Practice takes a holistic, context-sensitive approach to bi/multilingualism. It presents bi/multilingualism as a phenomenon to be understood and valued on its own terms, rather than in opposition to or derived from our understandings of monolingual realities. Research, policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, as well as other educational practices, are considered explicitly through this lens. The book examines what pluralistic discourses look and sound like and compares this pluralist perspective with assimilationist discourses that have dominated the education field. Students identify critical questions that teachers, administrators, researchers, and policy makers can ask from this perspective and learn to align practice (policy, program choices, instruction,
A Principled Approach

In linking theory to policy, practice, and research, Foundations for Multilingualism in Education moves way from traditional dichotomies found in the field of bilingual education. The dichotomous choice between bilingual or English-only instruction, for instance, has led to a preoccupation with finding the one “best model” to work with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Sensitivity to specific local contexts and student populations is often not reflected in this debate.

Instead, this book focuses on four core principles that educators can use to make informed decisions about the schooling of multilingual children.

Principle 1: Striving for Educational Equity

Principle 2: Affirming Identities

Principle 3: Promoting Additive Bi/Multilingualism

Principle 4: Structuring for Integration

These four principles transcend traditional English-medium, bilingual, and multilingual models, and are applicable across a wide range of multilingual contexts.

PRINCIPLE 1: STRIVING FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The first principle is an overarching principle. Educators who apply the Principle of Striving for Educational Equity create school environments where each individual feels valued and respected. They work together to ensure that formal and informal language policies and practices at the school, program, and classroom level fairly represent the diversity in the school and do not discriminate systematically against certain groups of students.

PRINCIPLE 2: AFFIRMING IDENTITIES

The second principle, Affirming Identities, draws attention to how languages and cultural experiences are represented in schools. Educators who value this principle demonstrate respect for students’ linguistic and cultural identities in school policies and classroom practices. These educators validate students’ linguistic and cultural experiences and purposefully create spaces for diverse student voices.
PRINCIPLE 3: PROMOTING ADDITIVE BI/MULTILINGUALISM

The third principle, Promoting Additive Bi/Multilingualism, highlights languages as resources to draw on and nurture. Educators who promote additive bi/multilingualism understand the role that students’ existing linguistic repertoires play in language and literacy development and in content learning. They create opportunities for using, developing, displaying, and engaging in multiple languages by building on and extending students’ existing linguistic repertoires. They make knowing multiple languages an integral part of their curriculum and instructional decisions.

PRINCIPLE 4: STRUCTURING FOR INTEGRATION

The fourth principle, Structuring for Integration, recognizes schools as systems where diverse parts are interconnected and can work together to create an environment of mutual respect and equity. Educators who structure for integration promote representative involvement of constituents with diverse perspectives and expertise in decision making, including language policy, program structure, curriculum and materials, classroom structures, assessment practices, and extracurricular activities. These educators reject the notion that language minority groups (students, parents, teachers) must unilaterally assimilate to fit into the existing system. Instead, educators who structure for integration work to build a linguistically and culturally responsive system for all of their constituents.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Foundations for Multilingualism in Education: from Principles to Practice includes special features within the text to structure learning, teaching, and research.

Guiding Questions. Each chapter opens with a series of questions that preview the main ideas and concepts of the chapter. Guiding Questions encourage students to set a purpose for reading and to summarize and synthesize major concepts. Guiding Questions also prepare students to apply what they learn in the chapter to practice.

Key Terms. Key Terms are listed at the beginning of each chapter. Key Terms are highlighted and clearly defined in the text when first used. Key Terms can also be found in the Glossary for quick reference.

Critical Issues. Critical Issues questions at the end of each chapter invite students to review and critically analyze the main ideas discussed in the chapter. Critical Issues questions can be used to guide group discussion or responded to individually.
Application & Reflection Activities. Application and Reflection Activities help readers link what they have read to their own context. These activities also challenge readers to consider the implications of pluralist and assimilationist perspectives for research and scholarship. Students and professors can take these activities and develop them into more comprehensive research or application projects.

Recommended Readings. Each chapter concludes with a list of books and articles recommended by the author. The annotated list encourages readers to further explore key issues.

Glossary. The Glossary provides a quick reference to the vocabulary used in the field and to the Key Terms highlighted in the book.

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of ongoing interactions and conversations with many people, and I am grateful for all of the mentors and teachers that I have had the honor of meeting and who have helped with the writing of this book. María Estela Brisk and Susan McGilvray-Rivet deserve special mention as they planted the seeds for the book as I began working in the United States.

During my doctoral work at Boston University, María Estela Brisk introduced me to the notion that we must look at bilinguals ‘as bilinguals’ and not as deficient monolinguals. She pushed me to think about what a bilingual perspective entails. One important theme in this book is exactly this question—what research questions, what policies, and what instructional practices characterize a multilingual perspective? This book would not have been the same without her continued mentorship and on-going willingness to engage in many conversations about teaching, teachers, and multilingual children.

Working for the Framingham Public Schools with Susan McGilvray-Rivet (then Director for Bilingual Education) was an equally valuable learning experience. Sue helped me see the importance of guiding administrators and teachers to understand how theory translates into practice and how to approach implementation with integrity. She and the many bilingual and English as a Second Language teachers in the district that I had the honor of working with gave me the opportunity to engage in this translation process. Based on these experiences, this book considers specifically how the question of quality education plays out in different classroom and school contexts.

Finally, a special thanks is due to my editor, Rebecca Freeman Field. Her faith in the book, her expertise in this field, her enthusiasm, feedback, and
constant support were contagious and of tremendous help. Her encouragement and patience allowed me to find my voice and this book to find its own path. Publisher Charles Field's guidance and organization have also been a great source of support. The final draft benefited greatly from copy editor Debby Smith’s eye for detail and consistency.
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Guiding Questions

- In what ways does the statement “Multilingualism is the norm around the world” need to be qualified?
- In what ways do educators advocate through their language decisions?
- What role do language ideologies play in influencing these decisions?

Key Terms

- Advocacy
- Bilingual learners
- Emergent bilingual
- English language learner (ELL)
- Regional minority languages
- Official language
- Vernacular language
- Language ideology
- Pluralist discourses
- Assimilation
- Assimilationist discourses
- Native language
- Second language
- Societal or dominant language
- Minority or dominated language

Majula Datta grew up learning Bengali, Punjabi, Hindi, and English, which he used for different purposes: communication with his family and community and learning in school. He did not become aware of his multilingualism until he moved to England. He notes, “I must say I found it hard to relate to the term, because not only did I think multilingualism was the norm, but until then I had not thought of my languages as different or separate entities” (Datta, 2000, p. 1). He was also surprised to observe how many primary school students who spoke languages other than British English at home did not use these languages in school. Probing further, he found that the languages other than English were devalued in the classroom; these languages were invisible and not used as resources for teaching and learning. As a result,
students were ashamed of their cultures and of speaking and using their native languages.

Datta’s vignette introduces themes and lines of inquiry that are outlined in this chapter and repeated throughout the book as we examine the extent to which multilingualism is the norm around the world, the position of and response to linguistic and cultural diversity in society and particularly in schools, and the role that teachers play in making decisions about language in their own contexts.

Broadening Our View of Advocacy

Cohen, de la Vega, and Watson (2001, pp. 6–8) argue that advocacy is about visualizing change for a better society. They define advocacy as consisting of organized efforts and actions based on the reality of “what is” so that visions of “what should be” in a just, decent society become a reality. Advocacy efforts are directed at highlighting critical issues that have been ignored and submerged, at influencing public attitudes, and at enacting and implementing laws and public policies. For many educators, organized advocacy primarily involves working with politicians to design and pass or fight against bills. In this view, things that advocates do include writing letters to the editor and visiting the legislature or calling state or local representatives to let them know how they want them to vote.

While formal state- and national-level political advocacy is important (legislative bills, when passed, will affect many individuals), it is only one of many possible sites of advocacy (i.e., where advocacy takes place) and acts of advocacy (i.e., what counts as advocacy). Even though we tend not to label their actions as “advocacy,” educators (including teachers, administrators, and teacher educators) are engaged in many different acts of advocacy at the classroom, program, school, and district levels.

For example, Helen was a middle school social studies teacher in the United States, working with primarily African American students in a largely urban district. She was told she had to use the district’s adopted social studies textbook. When she analyzed the new social studies series, Helen saw that it did a poor job of representing the history and experiences of her students and preferred not to use it, knowing her students would have a difficult time connecting to the content. But she was under a mandate from the district. This is what Helen decided to do. Instead of teaching directly from the book, she engaged her students in a critical analysis of how the textbook (mis)represented minorities and provided supplementary materials that illustrated alternative interpretations of historical events. Helen’s example illustrates that advocacy is more than what happens in the legislature and
involves more than actions related to formal laws or bills. Helen’s initial analysis of the text, her pedagogical approach, and her subsequent selection of supplemental material aimed at providing her students with access to instruction that was meaningful for them can be seen as acts of advocacy.

This broader definition of advocacy includes teachers’ making decisions in their own classrooms, as well as educators’ implementing policies and practices at the school and district levels. As Nieto (2002) observes, “As educators, all decisions we make, no matter how neutral they may seem, have an impact on the lives and experiences of our students” (Nieto, 2002, p. 43). Through their daily actions, administrators and teachers negotiate a myriad of choices related to teaching and learning, making decisions about programs, curriculum (what to teach), pedagogy (how to teach), and accountability and assessment practices.

The Centrality of Language in Schools

Language is an integral part of these processes as it shapes the ways in which teachers’ decisions are put into practice. Language is the medium through which teachers directly and indirectly communicate to students what is valued by the school, that is, what is considered important and worthy of knowing and learning, and, by extension, also what is devalued. For Helen, including discussions about minority representation in history textbooks expressed her valuing of diversity. Teachers also make more specific linguistic decisions, that is, they make choices about which languages are permitted and where and how can they be used. In many schools, nonstandard varieties or languages other than the official, standard school languages are allowed for social purposes in the cafeteria or on the playground but not for academic learning or in the classroom.

Because of the centrality of language in school, formal and informal decisions about language choice and language use will have an important impact on the kind of learning environment that is created for students (Corson, 1999, 2001). A theme that runs through this book is that educators are language policy makers. Pennycook (2001), who has analyzed different postcolonial language policies, argues:

For many of us, language policy seems to be something that other people do. . . . But actually, language policies and language politics are part of what each of us use every day. When we fight in support of a community-based language program, when we allow or disallow the use of one language or another in our classrooms, when we choose which language to use in Congress, conversations, conferences, or curricula, we are making language policy. (p. 215)
Taking into consideration all we know about multilingualism, biliteracy development, and high-quality schooling for multilingual learners, we ask throughout this book, What policies and practices support linguistically and culturally diverse students, students who speak languages other than the national language at home? This question is particularly important for those who enter school with little or no proficiency in the standard language of school and requires that we return to an examination of the centrality of language and language decisions at different policy levels (federal, state, district, school, and the classroom). But first we look at two examples that illustrate the implications of how educators label students and how their decisions affect student classroom participation.

LABELING STUDENTS

The field of second language teaching and bilingual education has generated many terms, acronyms, and abbreviations to refer to students and program types (more on this in Chapter 5). The choices we make, however, are never neutral. The terminology we use to describe bilingual learners, or children growing up in multilingual environments, reflects our thinking about the value of bilingualism and our expectations for students who speak languages other than the school language. García (2008), for example, has argued for the term emergent bilinguals to capture the bilingual potential of each child and the bilingual practices that will characterize a bilingual child’s life. The term acknowledges that, regardless of what schools do, the children live in and daily negotiate bilingual environments. García’s terminology aims to position multilingual learners and their experiences as a whole (i.e., within and across languages) and to validate and legitimate all their experiences. In the United Kingdom, English as an additional language (EAL) refers to a student who speaks a language other than English at home and who is limited in English proficiency. This term attempts to include the fact that students come to school with other language skills. These word choices focus our attention on both (or multiple) languages and keeps bilingualism at the forefront of our thinking as educators.

The terms English language learner (ELL) or, the older term limited English proficient (LEP) student, are used in the United States. These terms tend to shift the focus to one language, English (only). U.S. federal policy initially used limited English speaker, but it was subsequently replaced by LEP in recognition that literacy skills should also be considered for program planning. Although LEP has been severely criticized for its deficit orientation, it is still frequently used. The most recent label, ELL, also does not incorporate the bilingual experiences of the students it refers to. Some have reduced it even further to English learner, making bilingual learners virtually indistinguishable from any other learner in school.
As educators, it is important that we be aware of how we talk about linguistically and culturally diverse students. Teachers sometimes say that their bilingual learners are “nonspeakers” (meaning they do not yet speak English) or that their homes are places “where English is not spoken” (meaning the parents use the native language at home). When these phrases are used, the accompanying view focuses on English (or lack thereof) and what the child or parents do not know rather than what they do know. This orientation, in turn, leads to questions about how best to teach the students English and support achievement in English. These ways of framing the issue easily ignore the role of the child’s native language in his or her life and in teaching and learning. They position multilingual learners as having a deficit compared with fluent English speakers and they tip the balance in favor of valuing those learners’ experiences that are only in English. Stressing the bilingual and often multilingual experiences of linguistically and culturally diverse students at home, in the community, and at school through our labeling practices reminds educators to pay attention to what is occurring in and through those languages.

STRUCTURING CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Teachers establish classroom participation structures by defining how their students are expected to participate in the classroom and what constitutes appropriate interaction among students and between the teacher and the student. They also establish classroom norms that reflect who has the authority to initiate a topic or to change topics and who decides who is allowed to speak. In many North American classrooms, individualism is an important value and interaction patterns reflect this value. Teachers, for example, encourage the practice of having one person speak at a time by insisting that students raise their hands. They call on each student individually, highlighting his or her contribution, and they take charge of directing the flow of interaction. Teachers can also encourage overlapping conversations in which different students add to the development of a particular topic.

These classroom participation structures and expectations for interaction are culture specific, not universal (Peréz, 1998). Research with indigenous students has revealed important cultural differences in the expectations of classroom participation. In a well-known study by Philips (1972) with the Warm Springs Indian Reservation, Anglo teachers complained about their students’ lack of participation and responsiveness to teachers’ efforts to initiate conversations. They interpreted this behavior as indicative of laziness, lack of motivation, and low academic ability, and as a consequence, their expectations for the academic achievement of their students were low. Subsequent observations and interviews showed that in their homes and community, Native American students freely talked and communicated their
ideas. An important difference was that in their homes the students were not expected to individually and publicly display their knowledge. Native American cultural norms emphasize cooperation and collective action. Once the teachers restructured their classrooms to incorporate more cooperative learning and to build a shared knowledge base, the students felt more comfortable participating in the classroom and responding to teachers’ questions.

Philips’s study stresses the importance of applying alternative cultural frames to help understand the behavior of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Her study also demonstrates the impact that teachers have on students’ learning, for example, through their verbal and nonverbal feedback about what is linguistically and culturally accepted and not accepted and through the practices they implement in their classrooms. If classroom practices are consistently at odds with the linguistic and cultural experiences of minority students, these students can be systematically excluded from classroom activities that could be as meaningful to them as mainstream-oriented activities are to majority students. Without teacher mediation, this unequal access disadvantages minority students and privileges those students already familiar with the classroom practices that have become the (only) accepted norm in school (Cazden, 2001).

Linguistic Diversity Around the World

The view that educators can advocate for their students through the many linguistic decisions they make is particularly important because linguistic and cultural diversity is more likely to be the norm than the exception in schools. With more than 6,000 identified languages and around 200 nations officially recognized by the United Nations, few countries today can call themselves “monolingual” or “monocultural.” International migration has contributed significantly to increased diversity in many societies (Table 1.1). Moreover, recent technological advances, including in the Internet and cable television, allow international migrants to remain connected with their families and communities across linguistic and cultural borders. These connections and communications encourage multilingual practices and result in the on-going engagement in multiple cultural practices. Even Japan, long considered a monolingual and monocultural country except for a very small indigenous group of Ainu speakers (Grosjean, 1982), is facing increased linguistic and cultural diversity through the arrival of workers and their families from Brazil and a growing Korean presence through international business and in higher education (Okano, 2006).

Counting languages, however, is a challenging exercise. Many languages have not yet been officially identified. Also, it is difficult to agree on the
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<td>More developed regions</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>105.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less developed regions</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least developed countries</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

criteria that identify a language as separate from all others. Speakers may perceive their language as being separate from the language spoken by another group even though linguistic criteria suggest that the two languages are the same. Finally, it is difficult to establish when a language is a separate language and not a dialect or variety of a language. While mutual intelligibility is a common criterion to distinguish languages, this distinction is not universally applicable. Danes and Norwegians can understand each other but would certainly claim they speak different languages. Many languages in China (despite a common script) are mutually unintelligible, yet are considered dialects of the same language spoken in China. New varieties of British English have emerged in postcolonial settings (such as India, Singapore, and Nigeria). Are these linguistic varieties to be considered separate languages or varieties of English, similar to dialects of English as spoken in the United Kingdom? These examples illustrate why it is difficult to count languages definitively, as well as why it is necessary to consider factors such as political boundaries and power, in addition to linguistic criteria, when identifying languages. The actual numbers reported can therefore differ widely, depending on the criteria used to distinguish different languages.

If we keep this caveat in mind, several patterns emerge when we take a global view of linguistic diversity. For example, the ratio of the estimated number of languages to the total number of nations makes clear that linguistic diversity is the global norm. There is, however, tremendous variation in how languages are distributed geographically, numerically, and politically in terms of the status they are given within and across nations.

Some countries house significantly more languages than others (Figure 1.1; Table 1.2). On one extreme are nations such as Papua New Guinea (820 living languages), Nigeria (516), and India (427). On the opposite extreme are South Korea (2 living languages), Madagascar (15), and New Zealand (21). Though western European countries are often thought of as monolingual, France houses 29 living languages and the United Kingdom 18. Even Denmark, a small northern European country, counts more than five languages. Looking at the five continents as a whole, Europe and the North America comprise only 7% of the total number of the world’s identified languages. Asia and Africa, with about 64% of the world’s languages, are the most linguistically and culturally enriched continents.

Some languages are numerically and geographically more dominant than others. Eleven languages are spoken as first languages by 70% of the world’s population. The top ten languages spoken by the most first language speakers are (in numerical order): Chinese, Spanish, English, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, and (Standard) German (Table 1.3). The 100 most-used languages are spoken by 90% of the world’s population, which leaves over 6,000 languages spoken by about 10% of the world’s population.
Linguistic Diversity Around the World (Nettle & Romaine, 2000). The geographical distribution of languages also varies widely. Thus, French is spoken in France and Canada, as well as in several North and West African countries as a result of French colonialism in the 19th century (e.g., Niger, Senegal, and Morocco). Occitan, in contrast, is spoken only in a small region in southern France. Such regional minority languages have a long history within a specific geographical region where the language is spoken. They encounter little recognition outside their geographical area, making it often difficult to advocate for their use.

Finally, languages have different functions within and across nations. Some languages enjoy a higher status than others as a result of sociopolitical

![Figure 1.1 Distribution of languages around the world. Each dot represents the geographic center of the 6,909 living languages in the Ethnologue database. (used by permission, © 2009 by SIL International, Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 16th Edition)](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Living languages</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>726,453,403</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>344,291</td>
<td>25,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,496,321</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,852</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,622,771,264</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,560,194</td>
<td>11,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,553,360,941</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,638,295</td>
<td>201,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,429,788</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,144</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6,909</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,959,511,717</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>862,572</td>
<td>7,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and economic developments. Languages that have been declared, constitutionally, the official language of a particular country are formally supported in important societal institutions, such as schools, government agencies, and businesses. Proficiency in the standard variety of that language is seen as a precondition for access to schools and higher-paying jobs. International migrants fluent in the official language or languages of their country (e.g., Turkish speakers) often find that these languages have a low status with little formal recognition as an immigrant language in another country (e.g., Turkish speakers in the Netherlands). Many local languages in African nations are used only for daily interactions at home and in the community. A vernacular language, the language used informally at home and the community, is often not recognized in schools as a legitimate medium for learning.

Similar trends can be observed in the United States. Ethnologue, a database of living languages owned by SIL International, a faith-based nonprofit organization, reports 245 living languages for the United States (Figure 1.2). The 2007 American Community Survey reported 55.4 million individuals 5 years and older who speak a language other than English at home (20% of the total population and up from 8% in 1979). California, New Mexico, Texas (more than 30%), followed by Arizona, Florida, Hawai‘i, Nevada, New York, and New Jersey (25–30%) continue to attract most multilinguals (García & Cuellar, 2006). The geographical settlement pattern has become more diverse, however, as immigrants have begun to move to new destinations, such as Nevada, North Carolina, and Georgia (Figure 1.3). No language has been declared the official language of the United States, although more than 20 states have declared English as their official state language. New Mexico

### Table 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Primary country</th>
<th>Total countries</th>
<th>Speakers (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>German, Standard</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

has two official languages, English and Spanish. The legal status of indigenous languages differs from that of other minority languages in the United States. Although the individual rights of speakers of all languages are protected through the Constitution and civil rights legislation, indigenous peoples also have a legal right to maintain and develop their native languages in their communities (including using their language as a medium of instruction).

- Of the 55.4 million individuals 5 years old and older who speak a language other than English at home, the majority are Spanish-speaking (62%). The fastest growing language group is Vietnamese, according to the 2007 American Community Survey.
- The following states have the largest percentages of residents who are multilingual: California (43%), New Mexico (36%), Texas (34%), New York (29%), Arizona (29%), Nevada (27%), Florida (26%), Hawai‘i (26%), and New Jersey (26%).
- The following states saw the largest percentage increases in the number of speakers of languages other than English over the past decade: Nevada (193%), Georgia (164%), North Carolina (151%), Utah (110%), Arkansas (104%), and Oregon (103%).
- About 8% of emergent multilinguals over the age of 5 were reported as speaking no English in 2007 (up from 5% in 1980).
- Many ELLs are U.S. born (about 60% at the elementary level; about 30% at the secondary level).
Discourses of Multilingualism

How societies respond to the challenges and opportunities of increased diversity resulting from globalization, technological advances, and continual migration (as well as the loss of human resources as people move away) has been a topic of conversation worldwide. Educators often find themselves at the center of these debates because of their role in the process of socializing students for (future) shared participation in society. The more diverse the student population (Figure 1.4), the more schools are challenged to respond more purposefully to a range of differences, including those of race, gender, language, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. As schools try to meet these challenges, differences of opinion emerge about diversity in society and about the role of schooling, particularly with respect to students who speak a language other than the official school language at home and who have been socialized in different cultural practices than those assumed in school. This group includes children from indigenous language backgrounds, immigrant children, and children of immigrants. Their language expertise in their language(s) of their home and community will vary as will their proficiency in the standard language used in school. Those who come to school with limited or no proficiency in the school language are often identified (e.g., as ELL or EAL) and eligible for special language services. In addition to immigrant languages, linguistic diversity in classrooms around the world include speakers of local languages in post colonial settings where the European colonial language still dominates in schools (e.g., Touareq in French-language schools in Niger), regional language speakers (e.g., Frisian speakers in the Netherlands), and speakers of nonstandard varieties of the official school language (e.g., Appalachian speakers in the eastern United States).

This diverse group of students challenges educators to provide every student with access to high-quality schooling and equal educational opportunities. Nieto’s qualifying phrase, “no matter how neutral they may seem,” reminds us that our responses to this challenge and our policy decisions are not neutral but will be informed by certain values, beliefs, and convictions about how best to respond to linguistic and cultural diversity. A language ideology refers to the “shared bodies of commonsense notions” about lan-

- 44% of PreK–12 (aged 3–17) students were minority students (up from 24% in 1976).
- 22% of PreK–12 students were Hispanic.
- 5% of PreK–12 students were Asian.

Figure 1.4 Enrollment date of Linguistic and cultural diversity in U.S. schools in 2009. Source: http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/education/cb11 -tps04.html
languages (Rumsey, 1990; cited in Woolard, 1998, p. 4). They reflect views on what is and is not acceptable language and language use and they play an important role in shaping educational practices.

Language ideologies are constructed and sustained by different constituents in all areas of society, including businesses, the media, and government. Our focus in this book is on language ideologies in schools and how these ideologies may influence which policies and practices are considered appropriate (legitimate) and which are valued within a particular context. For example, governments can officially declare and support more than one language as vehicles for learning in schools, thus expressing the value of multilingualism. If the standard language is considered the only “real” language of learning, schools can also elect to condone the use of the standard version of the school language and punish the use of nonstandard varieties (dialects) of the language. In their classrooms, teachers can encourage, tolerate, or prohibit the use of languages other than the official school language. These choices will depend on their beliefs about diversity in general and the role of the native language for bilingual learners in particular. Heath (1982, 1983) compared literacy practices in two different communities, one African American and one white, and noted distinctly different patterns in how language was used between parents and children, including language around books. She subsequently observed that the schools’ response, however, was to uniformly value only those literacy practices that corresponded with middle class literate behaviors. This policy placed the African American students at a disadvantage in school because their practices and resources were not acknowledged.

Educational practices are shaped by personal beliefs and ideologies but do not occur in isolation from broader communal and societal notions about languages in society. Most nation-states have developed “grand narratives” about what it means to be a member of a particular community. Speaking a particular language has traditionally been an important part of the definition of such national identities. Since the early 1900s when large numbers of immigrants came to the United States, one of the most powerful narratives that has defined the country’s national identity is that of the immigrant who, simply by learning English, working hard, and leaving his native language and culture behind, achieves educational and economic success (Olneck, 1989; Wodak, deCecilia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 1999). This narrative of American identity is still visible in language policies in schools through the emphasis on teaching English and the invisibility of languages other than English. It also frequently emerges in the media, for example, when concerns are raised about recent arrivals’ not wanting to learn English or not assimilating in the same manner as earlier immigrant groups. When Judge Samuel Kaiser in Texas ordered the mother of a 5-year-old girl to stop speaking Spanish at home so that the child would do well in school and not later be relegated to

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the job of a maid, his judgment reflected this long-standing language ideology about the relationship between native language use, second language learning, and economic success (Baron, n.d.).

Even though some discourses may be more dominant and visible than others at certain historical junctures, they are rarely uniform and universal. Individuals at different policy levels try to make sense of policies and practices for their own context, and this process of interpretation will be shaped by their personal ideologies as well as those portrayed by their institutions (such as a department of education, a school district, or a school). Being the actual implementers of educational policies, teachers often find themselves negotiating multiple discourses at the same time. For example, Massachusetts voters passed Question 2 in 2002, a law that mandates that all school districts in the state implement programs for students with limited proficiency in English that have English as the main instructional language and allow only limited use of the students’ native language. The new law replaced a 20-year-old requirement that instruction be provided in the students’ native language and English (bilingual education). For the bilingual teachers in the state who had to become English-only teachers, the change reflected a shift in discourse and practices: from thinking and acting bilingually to thinking and acting monolingually in English.

Teachers who believed that bilingualism is an asset and that bilingual education works found this shift to an English-only program troublesome. For them, a conflict arose between the official discourse (as represented by the law) and their personal discourse about the role of native language use for ELLs in school. In addition, they also had to take the school and district interpretations of the law into account. Districts with a strong pro-bilingual-education orientation and discourse tended to encourage the use of the native language whenever possible. Districts that had been more ambivalent about bilingual education or did not support it tended to interpret the law more strictly, telling teachers not to use the native language (unless absolutely needed). The district’s discourse was another level that teachers had to negotiate as they made decisions about language in their classroom. Thus, the extent to which teachers felt safe to implement what they believed in was influenced by the districtwide response to the law and district administrators’ interpretation of what limited use of the native language meant. Many teachers negotiated their belief in the importance of bilingualism and the English-only stricture by continuing to stress the use of the native language in their classrooms and explicitly communicating the value of bilingualism to their students and their parents (de Jong, 2008; Gort, de Jong, & Cobb, 2008; Sanchez, 2006). In other words, by maintaining a bilingual discourse within their classroom, they tried to counter the monolingual ideology of the law that devalued the students’ native languages for learning.
Their actions remind us that decisions about language in school are based on “characteristic patterns of discourse, reflecting goals, values, and institutional or personal identities” and that these discourses are “never neutral” but are “always structured by ideologies” (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 409).

Although educational discourses are multiple and diverse, this book explores two broadly defined discourses related to the schooling of bilingual learners: pluralistic discourses and assimilationist discourses (Schmid, 2000), which we also refer to as multilingual and monolingual discourses, or diversifying and homogenizing discourses. These discourses are not simply each other’s opposites, that is, we should not view a pluralist solution as the simple opposite of one that is assimilationist-driven. Instead, it is more useful to think of these discourses as two quite different societal conversations guided by distinct foci, values, and questions. Each perspective frames the schooling issues related to linguistic and cultural diversity differently and hence seeks different solutions in the form of policies and decision making about practices at the school, program, and classroom level. We return to the main tenants of these discourses throughout the book and illustrate their implications for bilingual learners. A brief description of the main premises of these discourses follows.

PLURALIST DISCOURSES

Within pluralist discourses diversity is accepted as a basic part of an increasingly mobile, global, and diverse world. Linguistic and cultural diversity is a force that, when capitalized on, can play a positive role in society. The pluralist perspective stresses the need to negotiate this diversity with respect and fairness to all. Though this process may be difficult, building on diversity can help to bridge differences, encouraging communication across group or national boundaries and leading to innovative solutions. In contrast, denying a rightful place and nondiscriminatory treatment to individuals and groups who speak different languages and come from different cultural backgrounds can lead to disunity or fragmentation.

In pluralist discourses, bilingualism and multilingualism are valued for the individual, the group, and society. According to this discourse, language is an important symbolic tool for making sense of the world around us; it is not merely a tool for communication or a linguistic system that consists of sounds and ways to put words together into grammatically correct sentences. We use language to express who we are, to describe and understand the world, and to develop and sustain relationships with one another. Through language, parents and community members socialize children into a group’s values and norms and create in them a sense of belonging and identity. Thus, denying a child access to his or her native language devalues the experiences encoded in and through that particular language.
Educators who accept multilingualism as the norm and as a desirable outcome of schooling view the two or more languages of a multilingual student as interconnected (holistically) and consider them an integral part of the person. Their educational language policies treat proficiency in languages other than the school language as a resource that contributes to and enriches the learning experience.

An example of such a pluralist approach can be found in the Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe (Beacco & Byram, 2003). Arguing for the equal worth of speakers of different languages and linguistic varieties, the authors promote awareness of language varieties and multilingualism and the development of individuals’ linguistic repertoires within and across languages. They advocate for a holistic approach that stresses the importance of coordinating efforts of teaching multiple languages to exploit the full range of linguistic and cultural resources that students have.

Within pluralist discourses we ask ourselves, “How can linguistic diversity be employed in solving social, environmental and technological problems?” (Martí, Ortega, Idiazabal, & others, 2005, p. 11). The issue is not whether bilingualism is good or bad but how multilingual competence can be maintained, sustained, and expanded for the well-being of individuals, groups, and societies.

ASSIMILATIONIST DISCOURSES

The notion of assimilation is associated with immigrants coming to a new country and becoming part of that new country in a way that makes them indistinguishable from those who were already living there. They have conformed to the cultural and linguistic norms in that particular society. Within assimilationist discourses, monolingualism is the ideal that groups or a particular nation should strive for. The existence of linguistic and cultural diversity is not denied but it is seen as a problem to be addressed because it interferes with certain desired outcomes, such as economic success or academic achievement. A core value is national unity, and a common language is considered an important condition for achieving such unity. The continued presence of multiple languages and cultural diversity will too readily lead to a divided society, inefficiency, chaos, and conflict.

In assimilationist discourses, restricting linguistic and cultural diversity is advocated for cultural, political, and economic reasons. Proponents of assimilationist discourses argue that social cohesion among diverse groups of people requires a shared language and common cultural norms (Silverstein, 1996; Wiley, 2000). Language standardization leads to the delineation of what is and what is not to be considered part of the “standard” or linguistic norm and
hence what components of language (vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar) need to be mastered for efficient communication within and among groups.

Shaping decisions from a monolingual discourse perspective outcome has important implications for schools. Educational policies tend to promote competence in the societal language and cultural practices first; proficiency in another language is less important or may be something to be promoted only after competence in the standard language has been demonstrated. Assimilationist discourses take a more fractional view of bilinguales’ language systems: students’ native language systems are considered to be in competition with the language of school and to interfere with learning that language. Diverse linguistic practices (including signing, speaking more than one language, and speaking nonstandard varieties) that differ from the school norm are therefore problematic because they are seen as hindering educational, economic, and political progress. Emphasis is placed on socializing students from different backgrounds to the cultural norms of the mainstream.

Recent literacy reforms in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States exemplify such efforts to standardize literacy instruction with a focus on the official or national language. These countries have recently passed legislation that has resulted in prescribed, presequenced curricula that are expected to be implemented uniformly across widely different contexts. In the United States, this process of homogenization, or the streamlining of diversity into a common norm or structure, has taken the form of Reading First, implemented in the wake of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Reading First divides reading instruction into five relatively autonomous components (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehensions) and scripts a sequence of activities for teachers to follow, often without modifications for specific populations, such as ELLs.

The assimilationist discourse asks, “How can we achieve greater efficiencies through the reduction and streamlining of diversity?” (Martí et al., 2005, p.11). Within these concerns with ensuring a certain level of homogeneity and shared cultural experiences, it becomes important that multilingual individuals measure up against the desired monolingual norm set by native speakers of the standard language.

A Note on Terminology

In this book, the terms multilingual, multilingualism, and multilingual repertoires are used to capture the complexity of multilingual settings and to acknowledge that languages and literacies are always influenced by the context in which they are used (Hall, Cheng, & Carlson, 2006; Martin Jones & Jones, 2000).
Most research has focused on two-language learners and bilingualism and hence bilingualism and multilingualism are used interchangeably to refer to competence in more than one language.

Bilingual learner is the term used to identify children who are growing up in multi-language environments, including school. This term will be the main term used in this book to refer to students developing multiple linguistic repertoires at home and at school. It is important to recognize that this term reflects a wide range of language skills across the two languages. The subgroup of bilingual learners who have limited skills in the school language and who are entitled to specialized support often have specific labels. In English-dominant societies, these terms include English language learner (ELL), English as additional language speakers or learners (EAL), and limited English proficient (LEP) students.

Native language refers to the language the child has grown up speaking. A second language is a language learned at a later stage than the native language, often outside the home through school or the media. In multilingual environments this can be more than one language and may not always be the standard language taught in school. In these settings, the distinction between native language and second language is not very meaningful and sets up an artificial contrast between two languages that are intimately connected. Heritage language is the language used by a particular ethnic group.

The societal or dominant language is the language used for communication in the public domain (media, government, educational institutions). It often is formally declared the official language of the country and typically a high-status, standard language variety that is used and taught in schools. The minority or dominated language is that used by a language group that is politically and socially placed in a minority situation but may not necessarily be numerically in the minority. In many school districts in the United States, Spanish is a minority language even though Spanish-speaking students may constitute the largest student group. Majority language speakers are speakers of the dominant, or societal, language. They are increasingly a numerical minority, however, particularly in urban schools.

Outline of the Book

The book has three parts, and we use the assimilationist and pluralist discourses as critical lenses to examine linguistic diversity in schools throughout each part. Part I considers the causes of linguistic and cultural diversity and whether linguistic diversity is a global norm (Chapter 1). It goes on to define multilingual competence and present the main arguments for and against supporting bi- and multilingualism (Chapter 2). The discussion of multiling-
gual repertoires continues in Chapter 3, which takes a closer look at bilingual language acquisition at home, biliteracy development in school, and the factors that affect bilingual or multilingual development. While most theoretical foundations are laid out in this part, these concepts are expanded and reinforced in subsequent chapters to make the link between theory and practice clear throughout the book.

Part II explores language in education policies, especially those involving elementary (primary) and secondary schools. Chapter 4 considers the role of globalization and diversity and the position of English in the world. Chapter 5 focuses on language, policy, and education and revisits the important role that teachers play in making language decisions in schools. It also presents program models that support multilingualism and those that emphasize monolingualism in the dominant language. Chapter 6 takes a more specific look at language policy in the United States, presenting the major legal and historical developments that have shaped how policies have defined the schooling of bilingual children in this country. Chapter 7 examines a long-standing debate about which model is “the best” and discusses the limits of this debate. It also illustrates the current shift toward the features that characterize effective schools for diverse learners.

Part III looks at how educators can arrive at informed policies and practices. It translates the foundational understandings of Parts I and II into four principles to guide decision making, with a particular focus on the school and classroom level. Chapter 8 lays out these four general principles, which involve educational equity, affirming identities, additive multilingualism, and integration. The three chapters that follow illustrate each of these principles, outlining the various language decisions that emerge from each one. Chapter 9 stresses affirming identities of linguistically and culturally diverse students, in school, Chapter 10 focuses on creating additive bilingual learning environments for all students, and Chapter 11 examines the complex relationship between integration and equity. In the concluding chapter, we return to the dominant discourses that have framed the schooling of bilingual learners and highlight how we as educators can contribute to the reframing of our policies and practices.
CHAPTER 1
Discussion & Activities

Critical Issues

1. Crawford (2008) argues that individual activism for ELLs has little chance of being effective given the general public opinion and federal and state policies against bilingual education in United States. How does this view compare with the view of advocacy presented in this chapter? In what areas do teachers have more or less agency or control to shape their classroom practices?

2. Discuss the statement in the chapter that pluralist and assimilationist views of linguistic and cultural diversity are not simple opposites but different discourses. What does it mean? Can you think of some implications for how you might advocate in favor of policies within one discourse or the other?

3. A school board in District A approved a plan to teach Chinese as a foreign language to native English speakers but rejected a proposal for a program for its Russian-speaking ELLs in Russian and English. How might you explain the co-existence of these policies that, at the surface, appear contradictory, using the two discursive lenses discussed in this chapter?

Application and Reflection

4. Consider Nieto’s observation that “all decisions [educators] make, no matter how neutral they may seem, have an impact on the lives and experiences of our students.” Make a list of the different decisions teachers make about language in the classroom.

5. What are your beliefs about multilingualism? Which aspects of the pluralist discourse and of the assimilationist discourse do you agree with? Give one or two examples of decisions that are made that are reflective of each discourse.

6. Consider the following origin stories about linguistic diversity. The Tower of Babel is often referred to in the debate about linguistic diversity; it originates in the Old Testament story that is quoted from in the first passage. The other two stories are from Native American cultures. Identify the discourse on multilingualism that each one represents. Illustrate your response with examples from the text.

- Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. . . .
  Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower
that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, that the men were building. The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language, so they will not understand each other.” So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth: and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel; because there the Lord did confuse the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth. (Genesis 11:1, 4–9)

- [Iatiku,] the mother goddess of the Acoma tribe of New Mexico, . . . caused people to speak different languages so that it would not be so easy for them to quarrel. (Cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, p. 215).

- In the beginning . . . Elder Brother and Younger Brother were instructed through visions by the breath-giver to teach . . . the newly created people [how] to live. All the instructions were in the native language. The people lived happily for many years. . . . Something bad happened and there was a battle among the peaceful people. The head chief then commanded that there would be many languages. . . . The people migrated and divided into different language groups. . . . It is said that when the languages were created, language identified the people—who we are, where we came from, and where we are going.” (From Lucille J. Watahomigie, The Native Language Is a Gift [1998]; cited in McCarty et al., 2006, p. 1.)

Recommended Readings

In this classic work, Cazden and colleagues, taking a multicultural perspective, explore the many roles that language plays in the classroom. The book illustrates how language use shapes teaching and learning and hence the important role that teachers play in making language decisions.

This book defines advocacy and lays out practical implications for organizations that want to engage in advocacy.

This article illustrates the different layers of language policy from the international and national or state level to the institutional level and into the classroom, where teachers interpret policies and make decisions about language choices.


The authors have explored how national identities are constructed through text, oral and written. Here they illustrate how certain groups in society are positioned as belonging (and, by extension, other groups as not belonging), thus defining the boundaries of the community.