DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 523 FL 025 695

AUTHOR Guerrero, Michael D.
TITLE Current Issues in the Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers.
ISSN ISSN-0898-8471
PUB DATE 1998-00-00
NOTE 17p.; For the complete volume of working papers, see FL 025 687.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education; v3 n3 p135-49 Fall 1998
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; *Bilingual Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Language Proficiency; Language Research; *Native Language Instruction; *Spanish; Teacher Education; *Teacher Qualifications

ABSTRACT

The paper examines some critical issues regarding the Spanish language proficiency of bilingual education teachers, primarily those from the Spanish-language-origin community. Recent longitudinal studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between sustained native language instruction and student achievement. Because this finding is encouraging, it is suggested that it is time to take a closer look at the context in which bilingual education teachers develop their Spanish language proficiency. This examination reveals that given the present subtractive sociolinguistic context in the United States, the likelihood of bilingual teachers developing native-like Spanish language proficiency is low. Further, the Spanish language preparation bilingual education teachers receive at higher education institutions is not commensurate with the task of developing a high level of Spanish proficiency. Finally, the Spanish language proficiency measures used to gauge the proficiency of bilingual education teachers have some problems. It is concluded that under present circumstances, bilingual education teachers with the ability to sustained native language instruction will be the exception. Contains 36 references. (MSE)

Current Issues in the Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers

MICHAEL D. GUERRERO, The University of Texas at Austin

Current Issues in the Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers

MICHAEL D. GUERRERO, The University of Texas at Austin

The purpose of this paper is to examine some critical issues regarding the Spanish language proficiency of bilingual education teachers, primarily those teachers from the Spanish language-origin community. Recent longitudinal studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between sustained native-language instruction and student achievement. Because this finding is encouraging, it is time to take a closer look at the context in which bilingual education teachers develop their Spanish language proficiency. This examination reveals that given the present subtractive sociolinguistic context in the U.S., the likelihood of bilingual teachers developing native-like Spanish language proficiency is an uphill battle. Further, the Spanish language preparation bilingual education teachers receive at institutions of higher education is not commensurate with the task of developing a high level of Spanish language proficiency. Finally, the Spanish language proficiency measures used to gauge the Spanish language proficiency of bilingual education teachers are not without their problems. Under the present circumstances, bilingual education teachers with the ability to provide sustained native-language instruction will continue to be the exception.

INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that the longitudinal findings of both the Ramirez, Yuen, and Ramey (1991) and Thomas and Collier (1997) studies provided sorely needed empirical evidence that the sustained use of the English learner's native language, in this instance Spanish, is a key variable positively associated with student achievement. Clearly, there are other variables that probably contribute to the success of the learner, such as program design, parental involvement, a shared vision among staff, appropriate assessment practices and strong leadership provided by the principals. The use of the native language, however, arguably assumes a more central role in the success of the learner. Language issues must be considered while the school staff designs the program. Similarly, language issues are probably considered as the staff engages in developing and implementing parental involvement activities, assessment policies, and vision building. Principals probably work diligently to recruit and hire highly qualified staff, especially staff with solid Spanish language skills.

The most central of all the language decisions made in a bilingual program relate to the classroom teacher's use of the Spanish language for instructional purposes and the ability of the teacher to use the language for academic purposes. This centrality hinges on the fact that it is the classroom teacher who spends the majority of the school day with the learners in attempting to implement the bilingual program.

The conscious and deliberate consideration of the role of the non-English language in successful bilingual education programs is symptomatic of the implementation of such programs in a society that has a strong subtractive (Lambert, 1977) and linguicist orientation (Phillipson, 1988). This subtractive orientation is best exemplified by the fact that few schools aim to maintain and continue developing the learner's first language. These programs are generally referred to as transitional bilingual education programs as they aim to transition the learner from Spanish language instruction to English language instruction as quickly as possible and with no long term commitment to native language development.

Regarding the notion of linguicism, Phillipson (1988, p. 341) states

> The *forms* that linguicism takes are many. For instance, structural linguicism may be *overt*, e.g. use of a given language is prohibited in institutional settings such as schools. Or linguicism may be *covert*, e.g. certain languages are *de facto* not used in teacher training, or as languages of instruction, or in aid activities, even if use of the languages is not explicitly forbidden. The prevailing ideology may be *consciously* linguicist, e.g. teachers instruct pupils not to use their mother tongue, because they are under the delusion that a ban of this kind will help the learning of another language.

The point is that bilingual education teachers are not immune to the subtractive and linguicist orientation of U.S. society. The majority of these teachers and their families were schooled in the U.S. and hence subjected to the array of language practices that perpetuate language shift and loss among speakers of Spanish language origin. In short, the implementation of a bilingual education program that includes sustained native-language instruction goes against the linguistic grain of this country and will require much conscious and deliberate planning on the part of the school staff.

Providing sustained native language instruction logically entails the availability of bilingual education teachers with the facility to do so. The development of this facility, however, is contingent upon meaningful language development opportunities, which may be hard to come by through mandatory (K-12) public schooling in the U.S. Consequently, most bilingual education teachers will rely on the required language related course work at a teacher training institution to develop this skill. Unfortunately, universities and colleges are part of the same subtractive sociolinguistic milieu. Spanish language development requires

time, more time than most post-secondary institutions are able or willing to offer prospective bilingual education teachers.

The irony of the situation resides in the fact that well intentioned state departments of education require bilingual education teachers to pass a formal Spanish language examination. The nature of the tests, however, varies greatly (Grant, 1995), and this author believes that their construct validity is open to question. More importantly, the language standards inherent to these measures may not be adequate for making a judgment about an individual's ability to deliver sustained native-language instruction. The social consequences generated by using these tests must be carefully examined.

Sustained native-language instruction is desirable, but the social conditions for providing bilingual education teachers the opportunities they need to develop native-like proficiency in Spanish are not widely available. It is the intent of this paper to begin placing these issues into proper perspective.

SUSTAINED NATIVE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Collier (1995, p. 3) makes the statement that

> To assure cognitive and academic success in a second language, a student's first language system, oral and written, must be developed to a high cognitive level at least through the elementary school years.

One can assume that, in order for learners to develop their first language to a high cognitive level, the learners must also have access to this level of language or to target-language speakers, especially teachers (Wong Fillmore, 1989). It is the teacher who carries the responsibility of modeling spoken and written Spanish that will provide even native Spanish-speaking children the opportunity to develop further their oral and literacy skills.

Collier also maintains that in order for a learner to develop academically, in an efficient manner, the student must receive instruction in the native language. Academic development includes growth in each of the content areas such as math, science, and social studies. The implication is that the classroom teacher will also serve as a key target-language speaker from whom the learner should be able to acquire academic language proficiency in the non-English language.

Stated differently, the bilingual education teacher should be able to deliver instruction in the non-English language across the curriculum as well as the mainstream classroom teacher does in English (Gaarder, 1977). This ability will likely transcend a simple knowledge of technical vocabulary in the content areas. It will require the ability to comprehend (listen and read) and produce (speak and write) the non-English language with appropriate syntax, cohesive markers, rhetorical organization, functions, gestures, figures of speech, and cultural references, all of which may vary depending on the subject matter taught. Trueba (1989, p. 113) adds:

> In bilingual education, lack of mastery of the language of instruction causes serious problems for the teachers; it affects their classroom management, their clarity in explaining subject matter, and the quality of relationships with native speakers of that language. If a teacher does not know the target language well, children's linguistic and cognitive development also suffers, because they are deprived of guidance and feedback in situations where correct and precise use of the language is required to understand a concept or the logical foundations of reasoning.

Again, there are other factors, such as program design, methodology, assessment, and educational policies, that can influence the academic success of English-language learners. Nonetheless, no one can deny that each classroom teacher occupies a critical role in the academic success of English learners. Moreover, it is not the language ability of each teacher in isolation that matters, but rather the collective, consistent, and sustained use of the native language over several years that will determine student outcomes as Thomas and Collier's research suggests (1997).

BEFORE THEY BECOME BILINGUAL TEACHERS

The main position of this paper is that prospective bilingual education teachers from the Spanish-language-origin community often do not reach expected levels of proficiency in the Spanish language due to a variety of factors. Basically, prospective bilingual education teachers are members of the wider society and are subjected to the same subtractive and linguicist practices and policies as everybody else. These practices, unfortunately, begin to impact the prospective bilingual education teacher negatively at a very early age and continue to do so throughout their public education experience.

Even before schooling begins, Spanish-speaking parents struggle with the decision as to whether or not they should teach their children Spanish. Grosjean (1982, p. 124) states, "in the United States, there are innumerable examples of immigrant parents encouraging, if not forcing, their children to learn English, with the potential consequence that some may become rootless and alienated from their native language group."

From a linguistic perspective, and to the degree to which Spanish-speaking parents withhold linguistic input from their young children, it is at this point that the lion's share of the damage may occur. According to the model of communicative language ability set forth by Bachman (1990), linguistic input that begins to shape the organizational and pragmatic competence of the young child may be withheld. The linguistic and social consequences, as Hernández-Chávez (1993, p. 58) states, are that

> Large numbers of Chicano children and young people from Spanish speaking families either no longer learn the language or acquire but a limited facility in it. As a result, patterns of communication are disrupted, cultural and social structures break down and youth become alienated from their communities.

A frequently cited reason that Spanish-speaking immigrants do not transmit the Spanish language to their children is rooted in the parents' belief that if their children learn English, they will secure good jobs and prosper. Peñalosa (1980) and Zentella (1990) argue that this belief is more a myth than reality. Chicanos and Puerto Ricans continue to be economically marginalized even after acquiring English.

The economic argument aside, Spanish-speaking immigrant parents also receive numerous messages from different components of society indicating that their children should be taught only English. The present movement to make English the official language of the U.S. is a case in point. The recent judicial case in which a judge equated a mother's speaking Spanish to her young daughter with child abuse is yet another (Morales, 1995). Further, the parents themselves may have been victimized for using Spanish at school.

As young children from the Spanish language community enter schooling, the message to abandon the Spanish language is further reinforced. Wong Fillmore (1991, p. 20), in a compelling study of preschool programs designed to serve language minority children, concludes that many of these children lose their primary language as they learn English. The researcher explains

> Consider what happens when young children find themselves in the attractive new world of the American school. What do they do when they discover that the only language that is spoken there is one that they do not know? How do they respond when they realize that the only language they know has no function or value in that new social world, and that in fact, it constitutes a barrier to their participation in the social life of the school? They do just as the promoters of early education for language minority students hope they will. They learn English, and too often, they drop their primary languages as they do. In time, many of these children lose their first languages.

Unfortunately, there are also few opportunities offered through the K-12 educational system in this country to promote the maintenance and development of non-English languages among school age children. In a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (1993), a number of findings relevant to this discussion were reported. The study found that

1. Only 17% of schools provide a significant degree of primary language instruction.

2. ESL is the predominant instructional approach.

3. Of the 363,000 teachers providing services to Limited English Proficient students, only 10% are certified bilingual teachers.

4. The majority of teachers serving Spanish-speaking pupils have no proficiency in Spanish.

With regard to the finding that the majority of teachers that serve Spanish-speaking pupils lack profi-

ciency in the language, even those few students that do find their way into a bilingual program cannot count on having the kind of access they need to continue developing their Spanish language academic proficiency. Escamilla (1992) studied various features of 25 elementary bilingual maintenance programs over a 2-year period. With regard to the uses to which Spanish and English were put, the researcher reports that in some classrooms Spanish was used primarily for direction giving and discipline. English was used for academic instruction and conversation.

It should also be noted that bilingual education in the U.S. is most readily associated with elementary school programs as opposed to secondary education programs (Faltis & Arias, 1993). Not only are there proportionately fewer bilingual education programs at the secondary level, but there are also fewer programs that are aimed at continued development of the learner's Spanish language skills.

Consequently, with each successive year of schooling, the likelihood of opportunities for prospective bilingual education teachers to develop academic Spanish language proficiency is further reduced. The result of such an educational experience for the majority of members from a Spanish-language-origin community is language shift that generally results in language loss. A number of studies using U.S. Census data support the trend of language shift and loss among Spanish-language-origin people in the U.S. (Bills, 1989; Veltman, 1988; Hernández-Chávez, 1996).

These findings are especially important since it is youth of Spanish language origin who will probably become bilingual teachers. Fewer and fewer members of this group will raise their children to speak Spanish, and those that do may pass on a model of Spanish-language proficiency unlike that of native speakers. This trend is facilitated by the lack of high-quality bilingual education programs in the U.S. In short, the pool from which to draw proficient speakers and writers of Spanish is continuously dwindling.

Merino and Faltis (1993) indicate that sustained native-language instruction appears to be contingent upon two factors, teacher language proficiency and the implementation of a well-articulated, late-exit (K-6) bilingual education program. In short, with so few exemplary, developmental bilingual education programs, it is unlikely that the pressing demand for prospective bilingual education teachers that are proficient in Spanish will be met through education. Moreover, with continuously decreasing numbers of individuals proficient in the Spanish language, it is unlikely that any meaningful number of programs designed to use sustained native language-instruction could ever be implemented at any given point in time.

This discussion would be incomplete if some thought was not given as to why there are so few exemplary bilingual programs in the U.S. and why there is a dire need for well-trained bilingual education teachers with native-like academic proficiency in Spanish. The reason is arguably intimately related to the societal value placed on bilingualism

in this country. Kjolseth (1983, p. 48) maintains

> We are not bumpkins but quite ordinary and normal humans who develop language skills when they are effectively called for, and do not when they are not. And although easily made the scapegoat, our schools are not to blame, because schools reflect the cultural policies —i.e., values of our dominant groups—and are merely the places where our main cultural myths are translated into curriculum.

The language values of the dominant groups in this society are, as Kjolseth (1983) has described, schizophrenic. On the one hand, in this society it is admirable when native speakers of English learn non-English languages through foreign language study, even as imperfect as their mastery of the languages will be. On the other hand, before members of a non-English-language-speaking group can perfect their native language through schooling, they must postpone, perhaps abandon, this endeavor and first (or only) acquire English. The point is that, if the dominant groups in our society truly value bilingualism, it must be supported in a manner that is logical and that generates the best results. Lyons (1990, p. 79) explains,

> [C]onsider that an undergraduate student preparing to be a teacher would receive in four years only 600 hours, at five hours per week, of foreign language instruction. The average graduate of such a teacher-training program lacks the skills to use properly, much less teach, a foreign language to children. Only rarely would he or she possess foreign-language skills suitable for the "imitative capacities of young children."
>
> Time could be turned to our advantage, however, if we were to conserve, develop, and capitalize on the language skills of the language minority students in our schools. These skills, developed through tens of thousands of hours of mother tongue instruction, offer both a quick fix and a long term solution to the problem of American monolingualism.
>
> The average language minority child entering kindergarten has a higher level of language mastery than the average graduate of the intensive and expensive 47 week Defense Language Institute program.

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to examine closely why such language policies are firmly rooted in U.S. society. Is it out of nationalism, compassion, ignorance, linguicism, or simply the need to sustain a steady supply of individuals to fill undesirable and low-status jobs (Spener, 1988)? Perhaps a case could be made for each rationale. Regardless of the motivation, it is clear that when it comes to cultivating language resources in the U.S., the orientation is subtractive and linguicist.

In sum, prospective bilingual education teachers must survive the sociolinguistic forces that gradually and predictably deteriorate the Spanish language abilities of the general Spanish-language-origin community even before schooling begins. Schooling, bilingual education programs, and foreign language training in particular do little to enhance the Spanish language abilities of prospective bilingual education teach-

ers, because they are predicated upon illogical premises, ideologies that over the decades have only proven how ineffective they are. Consequently, it is unreasonable to expect prospective bilingual education teachers to have gained an age-appropriate level of academic Spanish language proficiency prior to teacher training.

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Virtually no research has been dedicated to the design of bilingual education teacher training programs, including the language training component of these programs; that is, little research has been conducted that might provide empirical evidence for the effectiveness of such programs. Rodriguez (1980, p. 372) states,

> Legislative regulations and State Board of Education guidelines press teacher trainers with myriad lists for bilingual teacher competencies. While all such competency lists are said to be synonymous with effective bilingual teachers, they are vulnerable to criticism for several reasons. To begin, there is as yet little or no empirical evidence that existing competencies are valid. Most competencies for bilingual education teachers are generated by experts.

Little appears to have changed since Rodriguez made this statement. Grant (1992, p. 431) observes that

> While the lack of a substantial body of solid research is a serious problem in teacher education in general, it is a doubly serious problem when it comes to research on the preparation of teachers to work in culturally diverse schools, especially when that preparation includes working with limited English proficient (LEP) students.

Dalton and Moir (1992, p. 416) speak more specifically to the paucity of research on the effectiveness of bilingual education teacher-training programs. These authors state,

> It appears that in practice little program evaluation is specifically designed for internal use in program improvement or to increase understanding about developmental processes. This means that the suitability of teacher education curricula for the communities served, the effect of the program on professional and LEP student consumers, and experiences of program participants remain largely unexplored.

What can be inferred from these observations is that little is also known about the effectiveness of different approaches on developing the prospective bilingual education teacher's Spanish language proficiency. As previously stated, many teachers instructing Spanish-speaking students have no proficiency in Spanish (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). Assuming the teachers to which this finding applies have already taken the required course work to instruct in a bilingual setting, it is also safe to assume that the Spanish language training they received did not fully meet their needs. This trend is not new. A decade earlier, Waggoner and O'Malley

(1984, p. 25) reached a similar conclusion:

> [A]pproximately four out of five teachers using a non-English language in instruction during 1980-81 did not have the language skills or basic professional preparation to do so.

The fact of the matter is that there are many fundamental empirical questions that must be explored if this situation is to begin changing. Consider, for example, the number of courses required of prospective bilingual education teachers that are taught in Spanish. Is there an empirical rationale for establishing a set number (e.g., two or three) of language-related courses? What evidence is there that the amount of course work offered in Spanish is commensurate with the language goals of the bilingual education teacher training program?

The content of the courses offered in Spanish is an equally important and related question. Prospective bilingual education teachers need to have opportunities to develop their Spanish language academic proficiency. How to assist prospective bilingual education teachers with the development of their academic proficiency in Spanish is yet another fundamental empirical question.

Regarding the quality of the courses generally offered in Spanish, at least one related issue should be raised. Faculty who offer courses taught in Spanish must assume the role of a language model in much the same way K-12 bilingual education teachers must for their students. Whether or not the faculty possess the requisite language skills also remains an important question. Assuming that the majority of bilingual education faculty were schooled in the same subtractive sociolinguistic milieu, it may well be that faculty are also in need of further opportunities to develop their own academic Spanish language proficiency.

The bilingual education teacher training practice of requiring prospective bilingual education teachers to take Spanish language courses through a Foreign Language Department must also be carefully examined. Empirical evidence is needed that can shed light on the effectiveness of this long-standing practice. In what ways does this kind of course work aid prospective bilingual education teachers to meet the linguistic demands of a bilingual education setting? Overall, are the Spanish language learning opportunities provided to the prospective bilingual education student teacher sufficient to meet this demand?

The culminating experience for a prospective bilingual education teacher is student teaching within a bilingual setting. Assuming that the student teacher is placed in a bilingual education program that uses sustained Spanish language instruction, perhaps the most critical empirical question could be addressed. What kinds of language skills are needed in order to provide sustained native language instruction?

In sum, available data (U.S. Department of Education, 1993; Waggoner & O'Malley, 1984) indicate that the Spanish language development opportunities offered through bilingual education teacher training programs are less than adequate given

the needs of the participants. Part of the reason for this dilemma stems from the use of pre-service language development opportunities that have not been empirically substantiated. The professional judgment of college and university faculty is a reasonable starting point for setting up the language component of a bilingual teacher training program, but this judgment must also be tested for its validity.

SPANISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTS

There are a number of states that have implemented a Spanish language testing policy for prospective bilingual education teachers (Grant, 1995). The assumption is that the prospective bilingual education teacher will have been prepared to meet the language demands of the test during their teacher-training experience. One can also assume that the intent of such a policy is to ensure that a bilingual education teacher is proficient enough in the Spanish language to fulfill the linguistic demands associated with a bilingual education classroom or program. Nonetheless, it is the validity of the test used on which the value of these kinds of policies depends.

It is safe to say that the social consequences (Messick, 1989) associated with the use of these kinds of tests, for the learners and for society in general, are considerable. If the tests are valid and measure what they purport to, then the social consequences associated with their use will be positive in most cases. Only those teachers who are able to teach across the curriculum will find their way into the classroom. By extension, learners will be more likely to achieve academically.

Unfortunately, these tests do not appear to be fulfilling their function. Recall that over the last two decades empirical findings suggest that bilingual education teachers generally have a less than adequate command of the Spanish language (U.S. Department of Education, 1993; Waggoner & O'Malley, 1984). How could this be if tests are in place, at least in some states, to ensure that the bilingual education teacher is proficient in the Spanish language? The obvious explanation is that the tests are of questionable validity.

It is beyond the scope of this short paper to report on the psychometric properties of each of the tests currently used in the U.S. The point to be made here is a general one, but a critical one. These high-stakes tests must possess construct validity, and this test quality is intimately linked to instances of its use in the appropriate setting. The vast majority of bilingual education programs in the U.S., however, are transitional bilingual programs at grades K-3. The goal of this type of program is to transition the learner into all English instruction as soon as possible. Further, and as stated many times in this paper, many practicing bilingual education teachers lack proficiency in the language. Consequently, as these tests are developed, and bilingual teachers are observed by the test developers to examine which language abilities are used, how they are used, and the level of proficiency modeled by the teacher, the construct validity of the test is shaped. The end result is a test with construct validity based on

weak language models operating within an educational context with English, not bilingualism, as the ultimate goal.

Guerrero (1994) examined the unified validity (Messick, 1989) of the Spanish language proficiency test designed for bilingual education teachers in New Mexico. In terms of this measure's subtractive orientation, an examinee can pass the written part of the test, a letter to parents consisting of at least 150 words, with as many as 20 errors. As another example, excerpts used to measure the reading ability of teachers were taken from no higher than fourth grade text books (Valdés, 1989). The test is presently used to endorse teachers at all grade levels (K-12). One of the more disturbing findings is that approximately 80% of the examinees (n= 217) taking the test for the first time did not pass the test. Stated differently, the majority of this sample were not amply prepared to meet the relatively low level demands of this test.

Norfleet (1994) examined the reliability and validity of the Spanish language proficiency test used for bilingual endorsement purposes in Arizona public schools. The general conclusion reached by the researcher is that the test, developed in 1981, continues to serve its intended purpose. Norfleet (1994, p. 238) explains,

> Although some of the results indicate that the test appears to be accomplishing its main objective, the measurement of the ability to use Spanish in the bilingual classroom, major revisions for the ACTSPE [Arizona Classroom Teacher Spanish Proficiency Exam] are essential in other areas.

The same subtractive orientation can be detected in this test as well. For example, the test was designed for the elementary grades (Barkin-Riegelhaupt, 1985), but the same test is also used to measure the Spanish language proficiency of prospective bilingual education teachers at all levels (K-12). Further, the oral parts of the test are weighted more heavily in scoring the test than the parts involving literacy. The message conveyed is that the ability to speak the Spanish language is more important than the ability to write it. In the present context of transitional bilingual education in the U.S., this message is accurate.

Grant (1995) indicates that 28 states across the country offer either certification or endorsement in bilingual education. Unfortunately, twelve of these states do not test for teacher language proficiency, and three states measure only oral language proficiency. Seven states allow the bilingual education teacher preparation institutions to establish their own language testing procedures and criteria. These practices, however, do not mean that each institution within a given state adheres to the same procedures and criteria. Only six states have adopted tests that entail more than one language measure (e.g., for speaking, reading, writing, or culture). Grant (1995, p. 5) seems to suggest that only two states, Arizona and California, have developed tests that target "the proficiency needed by bilingual teachers for teaching." New Mexico is currently using a test that was also

intended to be linked to the classroom uses of Spanish (Valdés, 1989).

Throughout this country, the Spanish language proficiency of bilingual teachers seems to equate with only oral proficiency. Further, based on the variety of language measures used, there is little consensus, regionally or nationally, regarding what this ability entails. In the few cases where Spanish literacy skills are required, there appears to be a propensity for the standards to be lower than what might be expected of an English-speaking teacher and to assign less value to the literacy skills than to oral skills. Last, in the cases of states with no language testing policy at all, the whole issue of Spanish language proficiency is simply disregarded.

In sum, there are a number of states that have implemented language testing policies for prospective bilingual education teachers. While the spirit of these policies is well-intentioned, the policies reflect the subtractive orientation of bilingual education programs in the U.S. In effect, these tests help perpetuate less than adequate Spanish language abilities not only among prospective and practicing bilingual education teachers, but also among the students they will teach. Ada (1986, p. 390) speaks to this dilemma when she states,

> Bilingual teachers may feel inadequate in their language ability because of several factors. Those teachers whose mother tongue is English may not have had the opportunity to acquire full mastery of a second language—a sad reflection on our limited and deficient foreign language teaching. Members of language minorities who chose to become bilingual teachers may also have been victims of language oppression as children, when they were scolded or punished in school for using their home language. Therefore, it should not be surprising that many bilingual teachers lack confidence in their literacy skills. Yet if these individuals can acknowledge that the language inadequacy stems from deeply rooted institutionalized oppression. . ., they will be better able to understand what their students may be going through.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to examine some of the critical issues related to the Spanish language proficiency of bilingual teachers. For the majority of bilingual education teachers, and within the present subtractive sociolinguistic context, the development of advanced level, teacher-like proficiency in Spanish is an ambitious goal. U.S. society, and schooling in particular, make it especially difficult for bilingual education teachers to develop the ability to provide sustained native-language instruction.

The burden of developing this ability is presently placed on bilingual education teacher training programs. Unfortunately, these programs attempt to meet the language needs of prospective bilingual education teachers based on language practices with little or no demonstrated empirical support. This language practice is much in line with those used for children of limited English proficiency in the majority of school programs; that is, in both cases, edu-

cators assume that the learners will acquire academic proficiency in the target language quickly or can forego native language instruction altogether.

With regard to the policy of mandating Spanish language testing for bilingual education teachers, the policy can only be as valid as the instrument used. Presently, the professional language norm upheld through the use of these tests is subtractively oriented, much in keeping with the majority of existing bilingual education programs. Nonetheless, if an individual manages to meet the prescribed expectations, the perception is that this individual is able to fulfill the language demands of a bilingual setting. In effect, this individual probably can fulfill these demands since the majority of bilingual education programs are early elementary programs and seek to transition the learner to all English instruction as quickly as possible.

The promise of sustained native-language instruction is great, too great to ignore or neglect. Before more children can benefit from bilingual education programs with an additive orientation, however, many fundamental linguistic changes must take place in the experiences, practices, and policies that affect prospective bilingual education teachers in this country.

REFERENCES

Ada, A. (1986). Creative education for bilingual teachers. *Harvard Education Review, 56* (4), 386-394.

Bachman, L. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Reading, MA: Oxford University Press.

Barkin-Riegelhaupt, F. (1985). Testing bilingual language proficiency: An applied approach. In L. Elias-Olivares (Ed.), *Spanish language use and public life in the U.S.A.* (pp. 165-180). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Bills, G. (1989). The U.S. Census of 1980 and Spanish in the Southwest. *International Journal on the Sociology of Language, 79*, 11-28.

Collier, V. (1995). Acquiring a second language for school. *Directions in Language & Education, 1* (4). Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Dalton, S., & Moir, E. (1992). Evaluating limited English proficient (LEP) teacher training and in-service programs. *Second National Research Symposium on limited English proficient student issues: Focus on evaluation and measurement*. (Vol. 1, pp. 415-453). Washington, D.C.: Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs.

Escamilla, K. (1992). Theory to practice: A look at maintenance bilingual classrooms. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students, 11*, 1-25. Boise, ID: Boise State University.

Faltis, C., & Arias, M. (1993). Speakers of languages other than English in the secondary school: Accomplishments and struggles. *Peabody Journal of Education, 69* (1), 6-29.

Gaarder, B. (1977). *Bilingual schooling and the survival of Spanish in the United States*. Rowley: MA: Newbury House.

Grant, C. (1992). Educational research and teacher training for successfully teaching limited English proficient students. *Proceedings of the Second National Research Symposium on limited English proficient student issues: Focus on evaluation and measurement* (Vol. 2, pp. 431-473). Washington, D.C.: Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs.

Grant, L. (1995). Testing bilingual teacher's language proficiency: The case of Arizona. (Educational Resource Information Center) ED 384 222.

Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages. An introduction to bilingualism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Guerrero, M. (1994). *A critical analysis of the validity of the Four Skills Exam*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N. Mex.

Hernández-Chávez, E. (1993). Native language loss and its implications for revitalization of Spanish in Chicano communities. In B. Merino, H. Trueba, & F. Samaniego (Eds.), *Language and culture in learning: Teaching Spanish to native speakers of Spanish* (pp. 58-74). Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press.

Hernández-Chávez, E. (1996). La pérdida del español entre los chicanos. Paper presented at the Annual New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education. Albuquerque, NM.

Kjolseth, R. (1983). Cultural politics of bilingualism. *Transaction Social Science and Modern Society, 20* (4), 40-48.

Lambert, W. (1977). The effects of bilingualism on the individual: Cognitive and sociocultural consequences. In P.A. Hornby (Ed.), *Bilingualism: Psychological, social and educational implications* (pp. 15-27). New York: Academic Press.

Lyons, J. (1990). The past and future directions of federal bilingual education policy. *ANNALS, AAPSS, 508*, 66-80.

Merino, B., & Faltis, C. (1993). Language and culture in the preparation of bilingual teachers. In M.B. Arias & U. Casanova (Eds.), *Bilingual education: Politics, practice, research* (pp. 171-198). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Messick, S. (1989). Meaning and values in test validation: The science and ethics of assessment. *Educational Researcher, 18* (2), 5-11.

Morales, A. (1995, August 30). Lawmaker blasts judge's comments on language. *Austin American Statesman*, p. B1.

Norfleet, L. (1994). *The reliability and validity of the Arizona Classroom Teacher Spanish Proficiency Exam*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ.

Peñalosa, F. (1980). Chicano bilingualism and the world system. In R. Padilla (Ed.), *Theory in bilingual education. Ethnoperspectives in bilingual education research* (Vol. II, pp. 3-17). Ypsilanti, MI: Eastern Michigan University Press.

Phillipson, R. (1988). Linguicism: Structures and ideologies in linguistic imperialism. In T. Skut-

nabb-Kangas (Ed.), *Minority education: From shame to struggle* (pp. 339-358). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Ramírez, D., Yuen, S., & Ramey, D. (1991). *Final report: Longitudinal study of structured English immersion strategy, early-exit and late-exit transitional bilingual education programs for language minority children*. San Mateo, CA: Aguirre International.

Rodríguez, A. (1980). Empirically defining competencies for effective bilingual teachers: A preliminary study. In R. Padilla (Ed.), *Theory in bilingual education. Ethnoperspectives in bilingual education research.* (Vol. II, pp. 372-387). Ypsilanti, MI: Eastern Michigan University Press.

Spener, D. (1988). Transitional bilingual education and the socialization of immigrants. *Harvard Education Review, 58* (2), 133-153.

Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (1997). *School effectiveness for language minority students*. Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Trueba, H. (1989). *Raising silent voices: Educating the linguistic minorities for the twenty-first century*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

U.S. Department of Education. (1993). *Descriptive study of services to limited English proficient students*. Washington, D.C.

Valdéz, G. (1989). Testing bilingual proficiency for specialized occupations: Issues and implications. In B.R. Gifford (Ed.), *Test policy and test performance: Education, language and culture*, (pp. 207-229). Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic.

Veltman, C. (1988). *The future of the Spanish language in the United States*. New York City & Washington, D.C.: Hispanic Policy Development Project.

Waggoner, D., & O'Malley, J. (1984). Teachers of limited English proficient children in the United States. *Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education, 9* (3), 25-42.

Wong Fillmore,L. (1989). Language learning in social context. The view from research in second language learning. In R. Dietrich & C. Graumann (Eds.), *Language processing in social context*, (277-302). North Holland: Elsevier Science Publishers.

Wong Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Quarterly, 6*, 323-346.

Zentella, A. (1990). El impacto de la realidad socio-económica en las comunidades hispanoparlantes de los Estados Unidos: Reto a la teoría y metodología lingüística. In J. Bergen (Ed.), *Spanish in the United States: Sociolinguistic Issues* (152-166). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

☑ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket) form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").