BILINGUALISM: A BRIDGE TO COSMOPOLITANISM?

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Abstract

The literature in English education has discussed at length the proposed goals of English as a tool for international communication, diversity, and the mutual sharing of cultures. In Colombia, different policies have aimed at making "bilingualism" a policy and educational priority that wants to help Colombian students turn these goals about communication and diversity into a reality. However, a more critical view of bilingual education and its larger role within culture questions what bilingualism really fosters. Specifically, there is a concern about the larger question of whether or not being "bilingual" does indeed make one more "cosmopolitan" or simply perpetuates certain cultural views to the detriment of others. Based on the presenters' positions as researchers in the fields of teacher education and literacy (Dr. Mora) and history and international relations (Dr. Golovátina-Mora), this presentation wants to offer a starting point for what the presenters hope will be a much larger conversation beyond this seminar. The seminar will comprise three parts: In the first part, there will be a discussion of different views about bilingualism and cosmopolitanism as social, linguistic, and cultural constructs. In the second part, the presenters will address how bilingualism may (or may not) contribute to a more cosmopolitan worldview. Finally, the presenters will discuss some possible implications for education of a more comprehensive view of bilingualism as a construct that may really promote a larger understanding of culture.

Historically, bilingualism has always been a hot topic (Heller, 2008a; Tabouret-Keller, 2008). Discussions about bilingualism are part of the everyday discourse in educational settings, the media, and political circles. Why promote bilingualism, what languages to learn and teach, and how to include them in the curriculum are questions that bring together teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, as is the case of an event like this year's ELT Conference. However, larger issues and questions still loom in the horizon. Ideas about the values we should promote through bilingualism, the role of bilingualism in today's world scenarios (Baker, 2001; Lo Bianco, 2008), what kind of human beings we are educating (Pattayanak, 2000), and the goals for becoming bilingual (Baker, 2001; Heller, 2008a) are turning up the heat in this conversation. Ultimately the larger question that we must continue to address is what 'bilingualism' is (Heller, 2008b; Wei, 2000) and what kind of player a bilingual person might be in today's global and glocal contexts.

These are preoccupations that permeate our ideas during this presentation. Using an interdisciplinary approach (Lo Bianco, 2008; Luke, 2004) that enable us, as Allan Luke (2004) implored, "to reassemble the field from a host of disciplinary knowledges and epistemological stances" (p. 87), we want to contribute to the conversation that has already started and the larger discussions that should go beyond this ELT Conference. In this presentation, we want to (re)frame bilingualism from a socio-political context that discusses the historical and social dimensions of a counter-view of bilingualism in this new millennium. We also want to (re)think why and how we should promote bilingualism in the context of ELT in Colombia and other parts of the world. Our approach combines a number of fields in which Polina and I have worked as scholars in the last ten years, including cultural studies (Golovatina, 2006, 2008), education (Mora, 2011c), ELT (Mora, 2001, 2006), history (Golovatina, 2009a, 2009b), international relations (Golovátina-Mora, forthcoming), and literacy (Mora Vélez, 2010; Mora, 2011a, 2011d). We are genuinely invested in this issue thanks to personal reasons and experiences (McKinney & Giorgis, 2009) as well. We both share a commitment to social justice and human rights, as well as an interest in a better world. Our

research interests, even before we joined forces in life and scholarship, had discussed issues of bilingual education (Mora, 2004) and cosmopolitanism (Golovatina, 2006). Finally, we would be remiss not to bring up the fact that being a multilingual and multicultural couple (de Mejía, 2002; Myers-Scotton, 2006) provides an added incentive to engage in these topics. Our views of bilingualism and culture, some of which are a big ingredient of this presentation, not only represent a statement of our research and academic advocacy. They also become a statement of the kind of world where we would like to raise a family in the future.

This plenary session will feature three parts. In the first part, I will go over some ideas regarding the agreements and complicating factors in establishing what bilingualism is. In the second part, Polina will explain why ideas about cosmopolitanism are a viable choice in today's socio-political and linguistic context. Finally, we will discuss a proposal to link bilingualism and cosmopolitanism that invites all of us to reassess how we envision bilingualism today while reconsidering the different goals that we as individuals and societies have set for it.

We iterate the idea that this session intends to be the beginning of a long, healthy conversation about bilingualism and how we can turn it into a true instrument of empowerment and emancipation for different members of a society, not just a tool that might benefit a few to the detriment of others.

Contextualizing Bilingualism and Cosmopolitanism

Bilingualism and cosmopolitanism are two important elements within fields like education and cultural studies. Each of these fields has a well-developed body of literature to describe different trends, past and present, about how people and institutions have defined them. One would assume, therefore, that it would be a matter of time until these two ideas would come together to strengthen their fields through mutual discussion. A look at the existing literature through databases, on the other hand, tells a completely different story. As the table in our next slide (Table 1) will show, the intersections across fields are rather scarce, leaving the discussion of bilingualism

and cosmopolitanism mostly as uncharted territory. For this exercise, we looked at five major databases (ERIC, EBSCO, Science Direct, SCOPUS, and JSTOR) using the keywords bilingualism, ELT, ESL, EFL, and cosmopolitanism and kept track of the results, as follows:

Table 1 – Articles on bilingualism and cosmopolitanism according to databases

Topic	ERIC	EBSCO	Sci Direct	SCOPUS	JSTOR
Bilingualism	7062	3534	3326	1803	9944
ELT	1193	1596	333	5062	4778
ESL	7250	3265	793	5957	9354
EFL	1891	1866	540	3847	3924
Cosmopolitanism	122	321	913	1176	8565
Bilingualism and Cosmopolitanism	3	3	9	5	135
ELT and Cosmopolitanism	0	0	0	8	17
ESL and Cosmopolitanism	0	0	0	13	32
EFL and Cosmopolitanism	0	1	0	9	19

The databases show that the connections among these topics are very incipient. This became, therefore, a further motivation to lead this conversation that we intend to begin today. We believe that having this conversation is crucial if we want to rethink what teaching English implies as this new millennium is well under way. This is just one of several interrogations that the field of English education (to which ELT ascribes), needs to address. As Allan Luke (2004) wondered,

> What is the future of English education in the new millennium? How has English education responded to realities of new and culturally diverse student populations, new texts, and communication media, changing job markets and life pathways? What might it mean to

teach and to profess English in a multilingual and multimediated world where it is alternatively seen as threat and promise, deficit and capital? (p. 85)

We will then delve into this conversation by looking at some ideas that define what bilingualism and cosmopolitanism mean and what defining them clearly and thoroughly may require.

An Approach to Understanding Bilingualism

In their discussion about key terms in bilingual education, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Teresa McCarty (2008) argued that "terminological choices shape and are shaped by broader ideological, historical, and socio-political forces" (p. 15). This consideration becomes the building block of this portion of our presentation. Terms are not neutral; they are always value-laden and their use in different contexts has consequences. Bilingualism is one of those terms with different definitions and values. In this portion, we will look at the underlying consensus around this term, as well as some of the different factors that complicate the conversation.

No matter whose work you read (e.g. Baker, 2001; Heller, 2008a; Lo Bianco, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008; Wei, 2000), there is a sense of agreement that bilingualism (or being bilingual for that matter) implies that an individual is able to use two languages for multiple communicative purposes. Granted, it is an agreement that may be rather shallow after a closer look, but one cannot deny that this initial idea is what drives many bilingual initiatives at the school and government levels. So, in this view, an ultimate, ideal goal of bilingualism is the mastery of two languages. In this regard, it is not difficult to argue that bilingualism has very lofty yet altruistic goals. These goals operate under the assumption that speaking two languages makes for a better human being, one able to grow in his/her profession and life, one that will be a contributor to society's overall improvement. But, as we said before, this is an agreement that treads on thin ice. After all, a more critical look at this definition discovers a series of complicating factors about what

bilingualism *really* entails and how it actually affects (both positively and negatively) human beings (Heller, 2008a). We will describe some problematizing factors below.

The languages we speak. There is an almost irrefutable truth today: Not all languages are equally important (Lo Bianco, 2008). European languages are considered, for example, more important than indigenous languages from South America, Central America and Africa (in fact, some linguists might describe these as *dialects*, furthering the gap between these and the majority languages). Some Asian languages (e.g. Korean, Japanese, or Mandarin) seem to be more prestigious than others (e.g. Laotian, Mongolian, or Cambodian) for reasons that sometimes include economics and politics. English is the de facto *lingua franca* in today's market economy. Therefore, there are multiple degrees of bilingualism, which are tied to which languages one speaks. In some cases, 'bilingualism' has been reduced to "English +/- one's mother tongue[1]" as the most widespread form of bilingualism today, one that affects national education standards and instructional choices in many countries.

The reasons for learning. There are as many reasons to learn a second language as there are bilingual speakers. Some individuals are learning for their own growth; others take a second language because it is a prerequisite for graduation in their academic institutions (many of which have clear "bilingualism policies" that require students to take a standardized proficiency test such as the TOEFL or IELTS in order to obtain their degrees). Others take up a second language because that is a requirement to access advanced education abroad (certified, again, through a standardized proficiency test). Second language proficiency can open doors to promotions and raises in companies, access to travel opportunities, and other benefits that are usually linked to ideas within élite bilingualism (de Mejía, 2002). Nevertheless, others need to learn a second language in order to fully assimilate into another society, as is the case with immigrants. Whether they learned that

[1] The =+/- is not deliberate. We will return to this at the end of this presentation.

second language *in addition to* or *instead of* their mother tongue also depends on factors such as country of origin and socio-economic status.

The place where we learn. *Why* we learn this second language is inextricably linked to *where.* Where includes two main categories: locations and institutions. In fact, the traditional ESL/EFL dichotomy stems from these categorizations. Immersion programs where children in an EFL environment go to an English-speaking country for a small period of time also operate under this assumption that location is the main, if not only, factor that matters when it comes to becoming fully bilingual[2].

The kind of bilingualism we are talking about. The idea of "using two languages" as the starting point of a definition of bilingualism is only the beginning of a much larger taxonomy. In this regard, the actual command of either language begins to unpack different kinds of bilingualism. Li Wei (2000), for example, listed 36 categories of bilingualism, ranging from full command of both languages (balanced bilingualism) to loss of one of the languages (subtractive bilingualism) or from beginning age (early or late bilingualism) to levels of command (initial, minimal, or maximal bilingualism), to name a few. Others, such as Nancy Hornberger (2008) suggest talking about *biliteracy*, the ability to read and write in both languages accurately and efficiently, as opposed to bilingualism. A full-fledged discussion about bilingualism, therefore, needs to consider the different elements surrounding bilingualism as one sets goals for bilingualism in educational or societal contexts.

The people behind the 'bilingual' initiative. Historically, many language initiatives have begun as large government initiatives (Mora Vélez, 2010). Bilingualism, as part of language, is not the exception. Therefore, it is not surprising, for example, that both UNESCO and the European Union have been some of the largest promoters of efforts to promote bilingualism in recent years. In other cases, as is the case of the U.S. (Mora, 2004), some bilingual initiatives promote subtractive

[2] Mora (2011b) has begun to propose a different view about the existing dichotomy, arguing that ESL/EFL can no longer be linked to geography, needing a much larger socio-cultural framework to define them.

bilingualism (through legislations or funding cuts) in order to force immigrants to assimilate. In our local case, the National Ministry of Education is invested in "Plan Nacional de Bilingüismo" as one of their capstone policies, with the aim of increasing bilingualism in our country in this next decade.

Bilingualism: A Gateway to Nationalism?

I argued in a previous study (Mora Vélez, 2010) that a discussion of literacy paradigms needs to explore very carefully the kind of human each paradigm intends to promote. We believe that this caveat is also necessary in a conversation about bilingualism. Joseph Lo Bianco (2008) explained that "Bilingual education arises mostly in multilingual societies in which various languages are ranked socio-politically and economically" (p. 35). Lo Bianco also mentioned that, for example, in the Sri Lankan context, "language education contributed to 'division between ethnic and class groups'…" (p. 43). Monica Heller (2008b) also added that in a discussion of bilingualism, "the state, state agencies and large numbers of actors have a major stake" (p. 340). Once we move the discussion about bilingualism from linguistics to the larger socio-political arena, we have learned in our readings and reflections is that from this socio-political view, some bilingualism models have traditionally made part of nation-state and nationalist models. In these models, the goal of learning a second language is either that of empowering (in theory) the members of that nation (while in practice it is usually the intellectual or economic élites who only benefit from learning a second language) or that of helping (sometimes making [Mora, 2004]) linguistic minorities assimilate into their new culture (even if the price these immigrants must pay is mortgaging the cultural heritage of their children and grand-children). Leaving the discussion of bilingualism at a linguistic level, as Andrée Tabouret-Keller (2008) claimed, would be naïve at best and disingenuous at worst. We believe that it is imperative that we continue unearthing these links between the different models and proposals for bilingualism at the state levels and the preservation of a specific model of nation-state.

It is based on the recognition of this link between bilingualism and nationalism that we move on to the discussion of what we believe is a useful counter-narrative in the field of bilingual education: That of the concept of *cosmopolitanism*

Understanding Cosmopolitanism

The idea of cosmopolitanism is quite old. This concept as, for example, culture or nationalism, using Michael Billig's (1995) words, became common knowledge, which does not contribute to its better understanding. In everyday speech, being a cosmopolitan person can mean that one is open-minded and values and embraces diversity. It means that one would be happy to meet the foreign Others. At the same time, it can give an indifferent, self-concentrated, rootless impression, as is the case when one says that "a city is very cosmopolitan". We will discuss cosmopolitanism here from three perspectives: (a) cosmopolitanism as opposed to nationalism; (b) a definition of cosmopolitanism and a look at some concerns; and (c) the role of language in these debates.

Cosmopolitanism and its conceptual relation to nationalism. The main discussion and concerns regarding cosmopolitanism circle around the relations between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. The main issue is whether they are mutually exclusive or not. Nationalism, as a state of mind and form of organizing and managing a society, is considered present and active in the contemporary world. Therefore it remains a central pillar of the argument. Moreover, many scholars or political activists who are known as advocates of cosmopolitan ideas, actually, either unintentionally or deliberately, do not transcend the nationalism paradigm (Nussbaum, 1994; Billig, 1995; Mitchell, 2007).

In the context of the debates, two fundamental statements regarding nationalism are the most important, (a) nationalism is not going anywhere and is still the most appropriate form of social organization; or (b) nationalism was a construct of the modernity and needs serious reconsideration. Continuing global development made nationalism an obstacle on the way of

developing a sustainable and just society. If we believe nationalism is not going anywhere, we will either reject cosmopolitanism by assuming nationalism and cosmopolitanism are mutually exclusive or we will consider cosmopolitanism as a tool for reproduction of the nation-state and of its modernization under the conditions of globalization. Cosmopolitanism then will acquire more realistic forms through nationalism. The scholars advocating this position develop an idea of cosmopolitan nationalism (Nielsen, 1999), cosmopolitan patriotism and rooted cosmopolitanism (Appiah), liberal nationalism as the closest to a cosmopolitan form of nationalism (Tamir, 1993), vernacular cosmopolitanism (Werbner, 2006), and strategic cosmopolitanism (Mitchell, 2003), to name a few.

If we believe nationalism needs to be reconsidered, cosmopolitanism then becomes a new form of organizing and managing societies and a makes way for their reorganization in accordance with the requirements and challenges of the time. If we give credence to the argument that nationalism and cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive and can and maybe even should complement each other, a transition to cosmopolitanism cannot and should not be a sudden change but rather a graduate forward transformation of the contemporary state system and set of mind. In this context, the hybrid forms of nationalism mentioned above can be considered transitional forms rather than the ultimate goal.

Definitions and concerns surrounding cosmopolitanism. Briefly described, cosmopolitanism can be characterized as consciousness that, according to the empirical analysis of the World Values Surveys between 1995 and 1997, "tend[s] to be less patriotic, more positive about immigrants, more politically active, more environmentalist, slightly more highly educated, and a bit younger" (Shueth & O'Loughlin 2008, p. 939).

A look at the etymology of the word "cosmopolitan" shows us its two Greek roots, *cosmos* , or the Universe, and *polis*, or the city, city-state, or citizenship. The broad meaning of the original terms makes then room for a broader interpretation of the term cosmopolitanism. Quite often being

cosmopolitan is interpreted and referred to as being a "citizen of the universe." But, critics of cosmopolitanism have also argued that being cosmopolitan can mean being utopian and elitist, especially when taken from the perspective of a nationalism paradigm. Universalism is another possible characteristic of cosmopolitanism that is a source of opposition from political, cultural or psychological perspectives.

Let us look at these concerns from the position of the understanding of cosmopolitanism that we share. It is not a view of one particular scholar, whose views we share completely. Rather, it is a reflection on the nature of cosmopolitanism based on various philosophical works in the areas of cosmopolitanism (such as Nussbaum, Sen, Appiah, Hollinger, Beitz, or Eckersley), philosophy of the dialogue and the Other (including the work Lévinas, Buber, Bakhtin, Tischner, or Kapuscinski), and humanistic psychology (such as Rogers, Maslow, Fromm, or Jung).

Is cosmopolitanism universal? Individuality, individual identity, individual development and interest are at the center of attention of cosmopolitanism and not a group. Self was a central concept for the cosmopolitan world view in its original version, developed by Stoics (Nussbaum 1994). However, individualism does not mean rootlessness or utter selfishness. Individuality for Stoics consisted of several circles: Self - a central one, immediate family, countrymen, etc. The circle of humanity should strive to the center, going through all of these circles (Nussbaum 1994). Cosmopolitanism shares this statement with humanistic psychology and the philosophy of dialogue. For them, individuality cannot develop its complete Self without the Other. They are part of one whole (Levinas, Buber, Tischner). Encountering the Other is important for the individual development, and belonging, in humanistic psychology, is one of the needs of a healthy individual, but an ability to develop of a certain individual autonomy is crucial. Cosmopolitanism argues that the Self is only important in relation to his/her connections and recognition of the Other (Golovátina-Mora, 2011).

With this in mind, it is easier to see that the universalism of cosmopolitanism does not mean unification. Cosmopolitanism recognizes that certain universal values exist and are collectively shared (Nussbaum 1997; Harrison & Huntington, 2000), but it still emphasizes the Self. It embraces cultural diversity in the same way as it embraces and respects individual diversity. Diversity is a source of enrichment, self-development and knowledge. Universalism, thus, is a universe of functioning Selves, different in many ways from each other.

Knowledge is essential for Self-development, and consequently the development of the world (see also Nietzsche) and so is the most valued (Robbins 2001; Nussbaum 1994). Thanks to globalization and the development of mass media (which in today's world also include technology and social networks), encountering the Other is becoming much easier. In this regard, multiple languages may become an important element of this connection between the Self and the Other

Is cosmopolitanism elitist? Regarding the criticism that cosmopolitanism is elitist, we can say that, as any ideology or movement in what Hroch (2000) calls a "scholarly interest" phase, when activists are building a foundation - theoretical and empirical - for the new identity, it may very well be. Depending on the conditions in which the new identity is formed, it can stay at this stage or move through the next stages acquiring a form of mass movement and broadly accepted identity, as in the case of nationalism. A nation-state may advocate the idea of distributive justice but only within the confines of a particular nation-state, which creates a significantly more elitist system in the world-wide perspective. Cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, advocates for the idea of equal opportunities among individuals of the similar talents and will (Caney 2001). This means that no matter how elitist critics of cosmopolitanism may try to picture it, the proposal of a nation-state is a much larger source of inequality, specifically in the distribution of social, cultural, and linguistic capital (of which languages and bilingualism also make part).

Is cosmopolitanism too utopic? Let us finally look at the utopianism of cosmopolitan ideas. Is it utopian without an actual existence of a universal government or universal federation? This is

the question of the same nature as the chicken-and-the-egg question: what comes first, ideas or practice? If we accept the premise that without the creation of a universal government, a peaceful and just world will be difficult to maintain, the idea of its emergence is important and can be viewed as a future goal. It does not mean, however, there should be no states. Rather, it acknowledges the possibility of their future configurations. Quite likely, they would naturally be made if everybody accepted the benefit of a world based on the principles of justice. Some states could keep their contemporary form if it is effective enough. In fact, it is wise to keep some of the already existing organizational forms, on the basis of experience and certain allegiances people have.

Is it utopian because it is difficult to develop solidarity among very different people and cultures? However, it is commonly accepted that states in their present form of a nation-state are capable of development a sense of solidarity despite the individual differences of their members. The same argument concerns the ability of medieval strata or a social class to develop solidarity among their members, even though they consist of different individuals. Any social group consists of individuals who differ from each other, and very often differences among members within it may be bigger than differences among members of different groups. Moreover, a sense of identity, belonging and solidarity differs within time and depending on the circumstances. This whole argument loses its sense when we shift our attention from the group to the individual.

In this context, solidarity is defined not by mere belonging. Moreover, the simple fact of belonging by birth to a nation state or ethnicity (i.e. a *forced belonging*), may develop feelings of cosmopolitanism, based on negative identity – as, for instance, in case with Russia or some other ex-Soviet republics (Schueth & O'Loughlin, 2008). This, we argue, is not true cosmopolitanism. It mostly resembles the stage of "reversal defense" in Bennett's model of development of cultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993; Bennett & Bennett, 2004). It is originally based on the feeling of being neglected by the state - or government (de Tocqueville 2004 [1835]), while protection from the state in exchange of certain freedoms is a condition of the social contract and an essence of any state

organization (Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes). The feeling of being neglected develops feelings of indifference of an individual towards the state it belongs to and thus renders the individual incapable of feeling of solidarity. The situation when neither your body nor the products of your labor belong to you, which is quite typical for the totalitarian societies, can result in the same indifference (Neumann 1999). Forced belonging is the basis for the so called global apartheid (Caney 2001), or the system of selected distributive justice, maintained by the nation state system, as we mentioned earlier. A forced belonging as described above will always result in the feeling of injustice and envy and, so, be a source of conflicts and war. True solidarity, on the other hand, should be based on feelings of responsibility (for the other), empathy (sympathy), knowledge, desire to learn, Self respect and creativity (dialogue philosophers, humanist psychologists).

Finally, is it utopian because there are no obvious signs of it coming? However, there is no real need of those. It is good enough to understand it is just and more appropriate, especially within developing globalization. It is the role of education to explain and promote the ideas.

The role of language. Language, as traditionally the most obvious characteristic and attribute of the nation, should play an important role in this process as well. From a cosmopolitan perspective, we should stop looking at language as the protector of a nation-state. Instead, we should focus on using language as a tool to develop awareness and learning about the Other and the Self as a first step toward understanding (Golovátina-Mora, 2011).

Discussion: Back to Our Presentation Title

Co-authoring presentations or papers is a very interesting endeavor: The sequence in which the paper appears is not necessarily the way in which you wrote it. Polina and I actually intertwined the discussion that will follow with conversations about the definitions we described in the previous section. This section is, in part, the result of conversations we had while having coffee or while on a cab to go somewhere (I am pretty sure one of them was on our way to watch the last

Harry Potter movie). All conversations were a mutual listening exercise, since at the beginning of our conversation, we were both neophytes in each other's fields and we are still learning from one another.

The first conclusion from our conversations is that there is something inherently wrong with a view of bilingualism that is completely tied to the idea of nation-state. We agree with Monica Heller's (2008b) assessment,

> What we have been studying all these years is perhaps less bilingualism than 'bilingualism', that is, our work has oriented to a concept which makes sense only within the discursive regime of the nation-state, with its homogenization and equation of language, culture, nation, territory and state. (p. 341)

From a Cosmopolitanism point of view, certain views of bilingualism do not really make sense. In this case, there are two viable options: One, to find a unified language that is not linked to any hegemonies or nation-states, such as Esperanto (which attempted to become that unified language without any major successes). The other option is to open the door to learning not just two, but as many languages as possible.

Li Wei (2000) argued that "to penetrate different cultures requires the language of that culture. To participate and become involved in the core of a culture requires a knowledge of the language of that culture" (p. 20). This quote resonates quite well with a Czech proverb that Polina mentioned once, *Kolik jazyků znáš, tolikrát jsi člověkem* (in English that would mean, "you have as many lives as however many languages you speak"). Both Li Wei's quote and the Czech proverb serve as good examples to explain the main argument that answers the question that we used as our title. So, let us return to that question: If conceived within a reductionist framework that

- favors subtractive bilingual practices that force immigrants and their children (heritage language learners) to sever their ties to their home culture in order to speak another language and assimilate into another culture,

- favors dominant languages over the detriment of regional or indigenous languages[3],
- operates under binary oppositions such as "second : foreign" or "dominant : minority", just to mention two; binaries that Mora Vélez (2010) has argued are detrimental for a deeper reflection about education,

Then bilingualism cannot be a bridge to cosmopolitanism, as it ignores the realities of a world where "bi-lingualism" is not enough to understand the realities of a "multilingual pluricultural" (Pattanayak, 2000, p. 47) world that surrounds us. This view of bilingualism that we mentioned above is counter-productive, as it stifles learners and societies. If Bilingualism, as is seen in policies today, leads to an overhyped nationalism, we need to reconsider how we are defining it because this form of bilingualism is dialectically opposed to the idea of cosmopolitanism. This view of bilingualism does not acknowledge that languages are fluid and in constant state of evolution (Heller, 2008b) or that bilingualism is not monolithic but changes because languages change according to people and cultures (Wei, 2000).

A better view of bilingualism is one, as we propose, that sees learning two languages not as an ultimate goal of education. A better, healthier view of bilingualism, we argue, is one where learning *the* second language is not the ultimate goal, but learning *a* second language is the harbinger for learning a third language as a starting point, and then adding more languages to one's overall repertoire. Thus, being bilingual alone does not make one cosmopolitan. We need to see bilingualism as a *precursor* to cosmopolitanism. We propose a view of bilingualism that, combined with the idea of cosmopolitanism, promotes social change and realizes that it itself is not *the only door* towards multiculturalism, but *one door.* We are calling for a view of bilingualism that becomes a means, where learning two languages means exactly that, learning two without having to sacrifice one, for instance. In a more comprehensive view of cosmopolitanism, the world is indeed multicultural and multilingual, it is a space in the world that

[3] As we said earlier, some linguists may classify these as dialects, but as a matter of principle, we refuse to use this categorization due to its linguicist (as Skutnabb-Kangas would say) undertones.

> Operates on an inclusive state of Both : And. This includes We, You and Me; and Here, There and Yonder. In this world there is neither centre nor periphery, core nor margin, but a network of relationships. Social and communication relationships can be understood properly when seen in networks and not through polarisation. (Pattanayak, year, p. 47)

We see bilingualism as a source of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, year) that opens room to more forms of learning, one where we do not need to make a distinction between it and diglossia, because we are striving to give all languages a similar value. Bilingualism as a door to more languages becomes then an opportunity and not just the end of the road. It accepts the fact that many societies are multilingual, not bilingual, by default and does not force them to have to relinquish one out of several languages in order to "blend in." A view of bilingualism within cosmopolitanism as we have discussed it here shows a concern for human rights (Mora, 2004) at different levels. While still providing opportunities for economic growth and self-improvement, this view of languages recognizes that experiencing more cultures is necessary for open dialog and understanding.

Coda

In this plenary session today, we have proposed a different alternative to some views of bilingualism that are tied to ideas of nationalism and that ultimately seem to place the state above the individual. We believe that the promotion of multiple languages and not just pushing everybody towards speaking a *lingua franca* is a better way to understand ourselves and the other. There is still a long way to go in this effort. We still need to think about how to operationalize this in the curricula of English, as well as other second languages. There is a much larger agenda about how we give indigenous languages a more relevant place in our societies and we need to reconsider bilingual policies to be more inclusive toward these languages (McCarty, 2009). We need to continue researching and advocating for linguistic human rights across the globe. As we said at the

beginning of this presentation, this is just the first step of a much larger journey, a much bigger conversation that we have begun during this conference and that we must continue once this ELT Conference is over. As Pattanayak argued, "Only acceptance of multilingualism and pluriculturalism as a point of departure can save the world from self-destruction" (p. 47). In the context of ELT, we also need to heed the call of Allan Luke, who wrote,

> What is needed is a renewed sense of the purposes and consequences, powers, and practices of English, of the intellectual, ideological, and moral force of all forms of representation and, equally, a strong sense of "English" as a language, as mode of information, as a multi-faceted and ambivalent cultural force within and across the practices and technologies of economic and cultural globalization. Without this we risk descending into politically driven and historically naïve arguments over methods, competencies, and approaches – arguments that masquerade as debates over science and discipline, when in fact they always have been and always will be about field and capital.

Earlier in the presentation I mentioned that Polina and I are concerned about the kind of world our children (when we decide it is time to raise a family) will have and how they will become users of English and other languages in a pluricultural, cosmopolitan society. We are deeply concerned about this world and what we can do to make a difference from our research and academic work. In fact, I am certain that all of us, from our positions of school teachers, teacher educators, administrators, even publishers, owe all our future generations this much: That they live in a world where languages will not hold them back but where they will set them free.

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