The Impact of Immigration on Bilingualism among Indigenous American Peoples

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Abstract

Early federal government policies for American indigenous people alternated between extermination and assimilation. Imposing the colonists' and immigrants' language on indigenous people was important for achieving the latter. In the 1970-90's, federally funded grants for bilingual education for indigenous schools were offered to accommodate Native American pressures to reverse the tragic results of those former policies. The stated bilingual goals were to teach them Standard English and to revitalize indigenous languages. Many of these Native American students speak "Indian English" (W. Leap, 1993), a dialect resulting from sociolinguistic interference (see theory, D. Hymes, 1971). Few know any of their Native language. The "Indian English" dialect is ignored, even denigrated as a substandard communication form in these programs. This paper's purpose is to trace the evolution of bilingual education programs and their impact on Native American bilingualism and language revitalization for selected communities in the Northern Plains. Thirty years of evaluating these programs with ethnographic methods have resulted in these conclusions: 1) the local English dialect must be recognized as viable for Standard English to be acquired, 2) indigenous language revitalization requires infinitely more effort than what was provided, and 3) the government's covert goal remained assimilationist, not truly bilingual.

Introduction

Unlike the immigrant to a new country who faces learning the dominant language of that country and potentially becoming bilingual, the indigenous people[1] of America have faced the imposition of the language of the initial immigrants to their lands. Throughout the early centuries of the immigrant expansion there was a vacillation in the federal government policies between assimilation and extermination of indigenous peoples. In the 1970's-1990's there was a feeble U. S. government attempt to accommodate pressures from indigenous people to reverse the tragic results of those former policies and to revitalize their traditional cultures and languages. This accommodation was manifested in federally funded grants for bilingual education programs for indigenous community schools. The purpose of this paper is to trace the evolution of the "bilingual education" programs and their impact on Native American bilingualism and Native language revitalization for selected Native American communities in the Northern Plains. This examination is limited to those Native American communities where the researcher has conducted evaluation research for the past thirty and more years.

[1] "Indigenous people," "Native American," "American Indian," "Indian" are used interchangeably as they are in the resources

Relationships between the U. S. Government and Native Americans

The relationship between the European-influenced U. S. Federal Government and the indigenous people of America has always been and remains unique. From the initial colonization and immigration, Europeans regarded the indigenous people as less than human, their cultures less than civilized, and at best, their many oral languages as simplistic. The federal government policies toward them began oppressively by removing them farther and farther westward or when they resisted this removal, the policy favored removal from the face of the earth, extermination.

In the later part of the 19th century, the federal government offered the remaining indigenous people treaties that included tracts of land (reservations), educational inducements/requirements, and some health provisions. These treaties and the fact that in 1924 the U. S. Congress conveyed U. S. citizenship on Native Americans (Reyhner, J. and J. Eder, 2004, p. 84) constitute a perpetual paradox for Native American status and identity. On the one hand, they are members of sovereign nations recognized by treaty, and they are also U. S. citizens with all rights and privileges. Unfortunately, there have been many and unrelenting U.S. government attempts and successes through time at abrogating all or parts of some of those treaties.

Concurrently in the last half of the 19th century, some Euroamericans recognized the possibility that education could allow Native Americans to become assimilated into the general population. This idea came to fruition in Col. Richard Pratt's sponsorship of the first of many boarding schools for Native Americans (Reyhner, J. and J. Eder, 2004, p. 134). The boarding schools were designed to enforce the separation of Native students from their families and

communities; in essence, from their Native cultures and languages. The curricula of such schools consisted of Euroamerican culture, Christianity, and English along with vocational skill development. Students were severely punished for speaking their Native languages.[2] Despite some policy modifications through time, this practice continued through the 1950's, resulting in whole generations of Native Americans losing their own languages.

Assimilation has been the overwhelming policy by the U. S. government toward Native Americans for more than a century and a half with only brief periodic exceptions. In the 1930's under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Indian New Deal," a few Native language textbooks were produced with the assistance of anthropologists and linguists and through the support of Progressive education principles recommended in the Meriam Report of 1928 (Reyhner, J. and J. Eder, 2004, pp. 207-219). The other exception occurred as a result of the Kennedy Report of 1969 which formed the basis of the "Indian Self-Determination" legislation designed to allow Native Americans more control over their destinies (Reyhner, J. and J. Eder, 2004, pp. 252-255).

The Federal Bilingual Education and Native American Language Programs

Although bilingual programs were not new in the U. S., the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968 ushered in a new era. The BEA was enacted as a supplemental grant program to provide funding to local school districts to encourage the use of Native language instruction approaches for students who did not know English (Osorio-O'Dea, P., 2001). Prior to its passage, opposition to it came from the years of exclusion of Native languages in federal Indian education policy as one Commissioner of Indian Affairs stated that the goal had been to remove "the stumbling blocks of hereditary customs and manners," and particularly, "*language is one of the most important…*" (quoted in Medicine, B., 1982, p. 399; emphasis added). Since then, the

[2]The capital 'N' in 'Native' is used in reference to Native American languages and cultures.

BEA was reauthorized and continued by Congress several times: In 1974, 1978, 1984, 1988, and 1994 under the "Improving America's School Act." The 1974 reauthorization made a distinction between the goals of transitioning students to English-only as soon as possible and of developing high levels of proficiency in both English and the home language (Wright, W., 2005, pp. 5-7). In 1994, the differences between transitional and developmental bilingual programs were abandoned in favor of a broader definition which included for Native Americans the following: "may also develop the native language skills of limited English proficient students, or ancestral languages of American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians and native residents of the outlying areas.." (Wright, W., 2005, p. 16). The 1974 *Lau vs. Nichols* decision impacted the bilingual education programs by finding that schools are obliged to provide appropriate instruction for students who are limited in English. Where BEA Title VII applied only to federally funded programs, *Lau vs. Nichols* applied to all school districts (Wright, W., 2005, p. 9).

A return to an overt and complete assimilationist policy occurred early in the administration of President George W. Bush with passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title VII, Public Law 107-110). The Title VII Bilingual Education Act was replaced with the Title III Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students. References to "bilingual education" were obliterated from policy and from the names of the federal offices that administered the former BEA Title VII programs. Limited English Proficient (LEP) "student issues are also featured prominently in changes to Title I which addresses issues of accountability and high-stakes testing" (Wright, W., 2005, p. 20). Crawford (2002, 2004) wrote an "obituary" for the BEA Title VII Act in which he admits that the "death" was expected due to years of attacks, and he laments the lack of support

in Congress for keeping the BEA alive. He also predicted that the "accountability" facet under the new legislation would inhibit the use of Native language instruction (Crawford, J., 2004, p. xvi, pp. 362-363). Nevertheless, under the No Child Left Behind "Title VII—Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native" section, there exists specific reference to bilingual and bicultural program eligibility grants for Indian students (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002, p. 1907).

The most crucial legislation that pertained to Native Americans is the Native American Languages Act of 1990 which recognized their "right to use their own languages and that it is U. S. government policy to preserve, protect, and promote the development of Native American languages" (Arnold, R., 1996, p.43). It was not until the Native American Languages Act of 1992 that the law established a grants program "to tribes and other Native American organizations to support a wide range of activities aimed at ensuring the survival and continued vitality of Native American Languages" (p. 43). It may seem that these federal programs for Native American students were promising, but in terms of actual funding, the picture is less than adequate. Most of these programs were poorly funded, and those few resources were limited to only a few schools. Native American schools did not automatically receive funding for these programs. They were required to write and submit proposals for their potential programs. The number and types of programs selected for funding from the many that were submitted became fewer and fewer over the years.

The goals of the bilingual education programs for Indigenous students generally have been to teach them to speak and write Standard or academic English and to revitalize the indigenous language of the community. Garcia (1982) identifies two types of bilingual education which apply to the indigenous situation: "Vernacularization" refers to models whose

intent is to restore or revive an indigenous language to common usage and "assimilation" types of programs intended for everyone to accept the dominant language and culture of the nation (Garcia, R., 1982, pp. 128-130). In reality, the interest of the federal government was to promote Standard English and to allow the teaching of a Native language as a tangential feature. This is evident in the consistent government requirement that testing in the program only encompassed Standard English. The movement from a quasi-vernacularization model to a totally assimilation model was a *fait accompli* with the No Child Left Behind legislation. By definition the federally funded bilingual education programs for many Native American students were not "bilingual" at all. Garcia (1982) defines bilingual instruction as "using the student's strongest language as a medium of instruction to teach all school subjects as well as the English language (in the United States) along with the student's culture" (Garcia, R., 1982, p. 126). An additional feature of the bilingual grant requirements was the inclusion of computer skill learning which was intended as a primary means for implementing the Standard English and Native language learning.

Research and Evaluation Methods

Anthropologists generally employ ethnographic research techniques that fall into a larger class of techniques labeled qualitative research methods. Much of this type of qualitative inquiry is inductive rather than deductive in nature. The inductive approach is strengthened by an emphasis on the "emic," or insiders' perspectives, in which, according to R. Bee (1974, p. 18), "the subjects' own perceptions, motivations, and so forth become the basis for analytical conclusions." By contrast, the outsider's or researcher's perspective is referred to as the "etic."

Anthropologists primarily utilize participant-observation and in-depth interview techniques for collecting data which lead to *description* of a cultural domain, answering the

broad question, “What is going on here?” (Wolcott, H., 1994, p. 12). The orientation of *analysis* is to identify the salient features and how these relate to each other, “in short, how things work.” Wolcott also suggests that in evaluation analysis that the researcher may address the question “how it might be made to work ‘better’.” Finally, in the *interpretation* stage, the researcher addresses meanings: the question “what is to be made of it all” (p. 12). With some variation, M. Patton (1990) counters *description* with a combined *analysis* and *interpretation* activity. This research approach is especially well-suited to the “study of classroom dynamics in bilingual situations” (Mehan, H., 1981, p. 46). The linguist D. Hymes (1981, p. 68) promotes this approach “to document and interpret the social meaning of success and failure in bilingual education.”

Both formative and summative elements have been applied in the studies referred to in this paper. It has been formative in yearly reports and summative at the end of the granting periods (usually after 3 years). At times collaboration with members of the bilingual and Native language education programs in the evaluation process was necessary and beneficial. M. Weismantel and S. Fradd (1989, p. 150) stress that “effective evaluation depends on the collaborative efforts of school personnel from the collection of data to the discussion of information revealed by the evaluation.” M. Saravia-Shore (1992, p. 285) promotes the term “participant evaluation, which acknowledges the importance of the program participants as evaluators.” The role of the evaluator then becomes more of a research manager rather than an external expert. In addition, program participants are more likely to accept recommendations for improvement if they come from within their own group rather than from an external evaluator (Ahler, J., 1994).

The data utilized for this paper derive from more than 30 years of evaluation research on bilingual and Native language education programs in several Native American reservation schools and communities in the Northern Plains. While some examples are taken from a broad array of experiences, the most focused and enduring involvement was spent in three such schools. Those three schools/communities will be referred to here as "Red Feather," "Trails End," and "Woodland Hills."[3] Documents have also been utilized to enhance the context for broader understanding of the contemporary circumstances of bilingual and Native language education for Native Americans.

The Bilingual, Native Language, and "Indian English" Communities

Many authors (Fishman, J., 1991; Crawford, J., 1998; McCarty, T. and G. Dick, 1996) report the critical condition of Native American language loss. Beginning with the involvement with Native language and bilingual education in the 1970's in Red Feather, there were nearly 20 fluent speakers among the elders. Currently, the bilingual education staff "jokes" about the fact that the only truly fluent speaker of their Native language is the anthropological linguist who studied and learned the language in the 1970's. In Trails End, there are today only three or four fluent speakers of their Native language among the elders. At Woodland Hills, there is a larger population and a greater number of elders who speak their hybrid language (a viable French and Native language combination). On only a few other reservations, there are some isolated communities where a handful of children are raised by grandparents to speak their Native language. Overall, pitifully few children and young people on Northern Plains reservations are

[3] "Red Feather," "Trails End," and "Woodland Hills." are pseudonyms used to protect the identity of specific communities evaluated over the years.

able to converse in their Native languages despite the 20 or more years of some form of bilingual and Native language education programs in their schools.

Bilingualism, even trilingualism, was not new to some of these communities. While many elders and those of middle-age were forced to learn only English in their boarding and other schools, some of them recall learning some facility in the languages of the fellow indigenous neighbors and of their immigrant neighbors as well. Trade and intermarriage brought diverse groups in close contact. Many elders in Trails End recollect that they needed to learn English, German, and another Native language of their reservation neighbors in order to survive in the early half of the 20th century. To this day, mixed among the Native words and phrases expressed by elders, some are in German. At Woodland Hills, some elders claim to speak French, the hybrid language, the Native language, and English. In one Woodland Hills family, there had been intermarriage with a Lebanese immigrant which resulted in Arabic spoken in the extended family. These examples indicate that Native Americans are certainly capable of acquiring more than one language.

One must recognize first and foremost that the most commonly spoken language in most Northern Plains reservation communities is a dialect of English. This dialect is the result of what Hymes (1971) refers to as sociolinguistic interference, a theory which deals with the issues of understanding, perception, and "acquisition of habits that result from perception of the manifestations of one system in terms of the structures of another" (Hymes, D., 1971, p. 56). In other words, their English dialect emerged from influences of the Native languages and cultures. Many Native Americans have learned a dialect English within the context of their own cultures and the structures of their own languages even if they do not know that language. Leap (1993) has labeled this dialect "Indian English." He asserts that it "is the first language learned by two-

thirds of today's American Indian youth. For more than two-thirds of them, Indian English is the only Indian-related language that they know" (Leap, W., 1993, p. 282). There is also evidence that many Native Americans ascribe their own cultural meanings to English terms (Ahler, J., 1985). Native American communication is complicated by the high value that they often place on silent gestures (Philips, S., 1972). These complex linguistic circumstances complicate a simple implementation of bilingual education and Native language revitalization programs in these Native American communities.

Attitudes toward the Bilingual and Native Language Programs

For the most part, Native students in the bilingual programs have expressed a desire to learn the Native languages. What follows are some selected quotes from students from a variety of Northern Plains reservation schools:

"*I know it's important that we keep our language and culture.*"

"*[The Native language teacher] does a good job teaching us the language.*"

"*I speak [the Native language] with my grandmother sometimes. That makes her happy.*"

"*[The Native language teacher] has fun games for us to learn the language*"

"*I try to speak it at home. I have a grandma who speaks it.* "

"*I practice sentences with my dad and two brothers. I hope to keep up learning the language.*"

However, problems in the bilingual education and Native language programs were sometimes compounded by the presence of a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. In Red

Feather, a 13-year-old boy stated that *"My parents are from [another reservation community], and they don't speak [the Native language here]. I'd like to be able to learn my parents' language."* A third grade female student once said, *"I want to learn Spanish. I don't live with anyone who speaks [the Native language]."* Sometimes when queried about their bilingual or Native language program experiences, students would appear confused. It was not until a reference was made to "computer lab" experiences that the student would indicate an understanding and then respond.

Parents and elders in the reservation communities have been supportive of the Native language programs in their schools. Parent and elder comments include:

"We're really lucky to have [the Native language teacher]. We would lose the [the Native] language if he didn't teach it here"

"We wouldn't have anything left of [the Native language] if the school didn't teach some of it."

"I speak some with my grandchildren. We were punished for speaking it when we were in school. Now the school teaches them the language."

"My son now speaks some [of the Native language] with my mother. It's really good that he learns it at school. I can't speak it."

"We have some really good elders who're teaching our children about the culture and language. Pretty soon there won't be any left to speak it if it isn't taught in school."

Many parents and elders have been encouraged to and have a record of attending various Native language activities sponsored by the schools which also indicates that they value the programs' existence and its goals.

Both Native and non-Native classroom teachers and school administrators are represented in these schools although in some schools the non-Native teachers and administrators outnumber the Natives, especially in the upper grades. Statements by classroom teachers, staff, and administrators include the following:

> *"The [Native] language is important for these students to learn so the language won't disappear."*
>
> *"We need this language program for our students. It gives them a sense of identity."*
>
> *"I include the [Native] language in the classroom and have the words up in the classroom. I participate in the classes."*
>
> *"I know that the students value learning the language and the culture here at school."*
>
> *"[The Native language teacher] has kept the language alive here. Without her, we probably wouldn't have this program."*

Although classroom teachers, staff, and administrators will eagerly verbalize their support for the bilingual and Native language programs, they seldom actually participate in furthering the goals of the programs. Precious few of the classroom teachers integrate Native language learning into their own curricula. Administrators infrequently acknowledge the unique Native cultures and languages of the communities where they work.

Bilingual and Native Language Teachers, Strategies, Curricula, and Materials

The qualifications and characteristics of the bilingual and Native language teachers are diverse. In some schools, the Native language teacher is a fully certified teacher, while in other

schools, they may have a credential that requires them to be fluent in the Native language with only a limited amount of training in teaching methods. In one school, the Native language teacher develops his own lessons and materials while ignoring the existence in his school of sophisticated, linguist-developed print lessons and materials. There is also a CD-ROM containing the Native language although teachers reportedly have had difficulty getting the software to work properly. Instead, the Native language teacher's teaching strategy relies heavily on playing games such as bingo and using flash cards for students to learn words and phrases in the Native language. There has been no evidence of learning Native language grammar or conversation exchanges.

In another school, the Native language teacher began as an aid in the Native language program and through the years, acquired a functional knowledge of the language, claiming that she is not fluent partly because she has no one else with whom she can regularly practice it. She eventually became a certified teacher through a university degree program. She makes use of the vast array of teaching and learning strategies and materials at her disposal. As early as the 1970's, an anthropological linguist and a professional curriculum developer created a series of print lessons and materials in this Native language. Through time, multimedia materials and sophisticated computer software were developed. Currently, a university team headed by the original linguist has produced a complex, interactive computer-based curriculum in this Native language. The Native language teacher is now the director of the program and offers her students and the community a substantial assortment of Native language learning activities. Her primary support for continuing her dedication to this Native language program stems from this linguist and his university team (See Parks D., et al., 1999). In addition, the Native language teacher has in turn provided bilingual program funds over the years for classroom teachers to

purchase Standard English language print materials and to attend numerous teacher workshops and conferences for enhancing Standard English literacy in their school.

An additional school has not fostered such a consistency in its bilingual and Native language programs through time, partly because of internal conflicts within the community and school over which Native language should be promoted. Instead, they have relied on collecting for their students published books and materials on Native Americans representative of those that are more familiar around the country (e.g. the Navajo or the "Sioux") rather than concentrating on creating materials on their own cultures and languages. There has been some intermittent use of a CD-ROM that contains lessons on one of their languages. The bilingual and Native language staff there has also directed their efforts toward promoting Standard English literacy through gathering learning materials and providing workshops for teachers.

In assessing the diversity of teacher qualifications and characteristics, strategies, curricula, and materials, it is easy to conclude that each school has embraced the bilingual and Native language programs differently, according to their needs, expectations, resources, and understandings. It is important to note that regardless of the programs' assets that in most of these Northern Plains reservation schools, the administration has allowed for their students' bilingual and Native language learning to occur for an average of 15 to 20 minutes per week. Few would agree that this meager timeframe investment would result in either Native language or Standard English proficiency in the most devoted students. This situation reflects the low priority and minimal value that the chief decision-makers have placed on these programs.

That the majority of students in these schools seldom know much, if any, of their community's Native language must be underscored. In the federally funded bilingual and Native language programs, the students are expected to learn two new communication styles, the

Standard English dialect and a Native language, while there is an absence of their primary language, dialect or "Indian English," from the programs' curricula, strategies, and materials. The teachers fail to inform the students that the dialect English is a feasible communication style in their communities but that Standard English will be useful for them in dealing with the broader society. In fact, the federal programs actually denigrate the dialect or "Indian English" by identifying the students who speak the dialect as "**Limited** English Proficient" (*emphasis added*). The result is that the school personnel, the community members, and the students tend to accept the idea that their dialect is a substandard or inferior form of communication. Ironically, there is ample evidence that their teachers commonly use dialect English in their classrooms and that the teachers seem to be unconscious about doing so. The use of Standard English is rarely modeled by the teachers and other school personnel. A barrier to achieving an acceptable level of Standard English usage among students might be situated in their Native and non-Native classroom teachers' failure to illustrate deliberately distinctions between Standard English and the dialect English during instructional discourse.

Native American Responses to "No Child Left Behind"

Native American testimonies were gathered in hearings from across the country in eleven locations in 2005 to assess their reactions to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in terms of its impact on Native American education. One issue stressed by the witnesses was their concern about the inappropriateness of standardized testing required by NCLB. They expressed how unfair it was "to measure education accomplishments given the cultural linguistic purposes of some school programs and the cultural linguistic diversity of Native students" (*National Indian Education Association*, 2005, p. 11). A witness specifically expressed that, "*This past*

year, at my school, we spent every waking moment and resources just to make AYP [standards] *at the expense of other things in our school, which is culture and language; and I think that's totally wrong"* (p. 11). Another had this to say, *"They don't start doing any instruction in English until the fourth grade. Well, in the third grade they're required to take a benchmark exam in English. They should be, you know, if they're teaching it in the language, then the testing should be in that language"* (p. 12).

Other testimony centered on issues related to particular Native language instruction. A witness related that *"One of our major support programs for Indian Ed. in Title VII has also been affected by NCLB. And we use that program in our schools to help promote our language and our culture, because those are what some of the needs that our children have. We consider it to be very important that our children maintain their culture, their traditions, their language, and you can't separate those"* (*National Indian Education Association*, 2005, p. 15). Confusing policy information was reported by another witness: *"The Title VII Program Director and the Superintendent in a number of school districts have been required to join conference calls with program officers in the Office of Indian Education and told they can not offer their Native language program using Title VII funds"* (p. 22). NCLB tends to restrict and is somewhat in conflict with some of the guarantees set forth in Native American Language Act (M. Little and T. McCarty, 2006, p. 28), a situation that contributes to confusion. It is clear that NCLB is not benefiting Native Americans in their quest to revive and/or maintain their Native languages to the extent that they had under previous bilingual education and Native language programs. It remains to be seen whether or not pressures from Native Americans will bring to fruition the changes in NCLB that are needed to reinstate the hard-fought for support for bilingual and Native language programs. Just recently, support has come from four members of the U. S.

House of Representatives in a letter to the Education Secretary, pointing out to her that using Title VII funds for anything other than what the law specifies (for Native language and culture) is unlawful (Miller et al., 2006).

Findings

Over the period of more than thirty years of conducting qualitative evaluation research in bilingual education and Native language programs in indigenous reservation schools in the Northern Plains, very little progress was discovered in revitalizing the Native languages and in achieving a higher level of Standard English usage. The least progress was realized in schools where although the Native language teacher was fluent in the language, there had been little exposure to professional learning theories and teaching methods. In that situation, a great deal of time and effort was directed toward offering Native culture classes (mostly crafts) and computer skills learning. A moderate amount of progress was achieved in another school's bilingual program where the Native language had been recorded and analyzed by an anthropological linguist; and the lessons had been created on interactive CD-ROMs with professional curriculum developers in conjunction with a college-educated Native language teacher in the program. Linkages with the community were a salient aspect of that program as well. In both types of these bilingual programs and in others, regular classroom teachers and administrators furnished a negligible investment in the promotion of the Native languages.

If, in those many years, the expectation had been to engender a new generation of fluent speakers of the Native languages, the results fell far short of that goal. Given the emphasis that the federal government placed on learning Standard English and fostering computer skills, there is no wonder that the Native language learning was pathetically less than stellar. The goal for

attaining a high level of Standard English proficiency among Native American students was also unmet. Most of these reservation schools have been and continue to be on probation for their low test scores determined by the No Child Left Behind standard measures (*Bismarck Tribune*, 2002). The final irony is that a demonstrable example of success attained through these programs has been manifested in the computer skills learning that had been intended as a medium for success rather than a goal.

Discussion

Causes for the bilingual and Native language programs' shortcomings to attain reasonable accomplishments are probably legion; but in this modest paper, only a few of these can be addressed. Congress was unwilling to supply the necessary funding for realistic success. This resulted in an inability to fund enough programs to meet a demand and to fund more enduring programs rather than some short-lived programs. There was also inconsistent and intermittent awarding of funds that would have allowed a school to enjoy a coherent program instead of one that was obliged to be adjusted with each new reauthorization according to the changing demands of the U. S. Government. According to Studi (2005), "We face a crisis not because we lack ideas, information, or technology, but because we lack the funds to implement them" (Studi, W., 2005, p. 3). The government authors of the various bilingual and Native language acts failed to acknowledge and respect the value of the dialect or "Indian English." The governments' commitment to the revitalization of Native languages was feeble at best, and a deliberately superficial artifice, at worst. One might speculate that some lawmakers supported a federal bilingual and Native language program purposely designed for failure. In fact, Native language use and revival was in reality proposed as a means to an end instead of as a goal in the

BEA Title VII proposed transitional model where the Native language was intended only to be a 'transition' to learning Standard English. Substantial change in the federal policy on Standard English learning and Native language will not occur until there is a "shift away from the compensatory, deficit-view orientation" (McCarty, T., 1993, p. 29) that has existed for more than 30 years and persists in current programs. Federal assimilationist policy is alive and well in an English-only, xenophobic America. It perseveres in a misguided and misinformed principle that bilingualism and diversity are harmful to the nation.

With the passage of No Child Left Behind, the bilingual Potemkin Village has vanished. There is no veiled attempt to lure unsuspecting Native Americans into believing that the government values anything other than Standard English learning. Regarding the latter, for many in Congress the priority for most of their education programs is not the best possible learning models. It is for accountability for the funds that they allocated, and the expression of that accountability is through standardized testing, a practice that is well-known through research to be problematic for Native Americans (Shields, C., 1997). The classroom teachers, administrators, and other reservation school personnel must also shoulder the culpability for the low achievement in Standard English learning as long as they are reluctant to model for Native American students its usage and exhibit its distinction from dialect or "Indian English" as two different communication styles that are appropriate in different settings. Of course, Native Americans increase their ability to operate successfully in the American Mainstream culture with a facility in Standard English, but this can be accomplished without losing their own language and culture.

Conclusion

In sum, indigenous schools and communities will never be truly successful in becoming bilingual, in revitalizing the Native language, and in reaching a high level of Standard English usage until there is unconditional support from a linguist, from professional curriculum developers, from all members of a school's administration, faculty, and staff, from the community, and from the federal government. Finally, it is undeniable that early immigration or colonization disastrously impacted the cultures and languages of indigenous people of America. Colonial hegemony endures. Even a governmental support for them to embrace a bilingual and bicultural existence has been and ultimately continues to be denied them.

While some have questioned the value of saving indigenous languages as an exercise in futility for Native Americans, the now defunct *National Council for Bilingual Education* (October 1996) stressed how vital it is for a community's salvation. "When the native language is *not* maintained, important links to family and other community members may be lost" (p. 1). In addition, Crawford's (1997) assertion regarding the importance of revitalizing indigenous languages cannot be emphasized enough:

> "Along with the accompanying loss of culture, language loss can destroy a sense of self-worth, limiting human potential and complicating efforts to solve other problems, such as poverty, family breakdown, school failure, and substance abuse. After all, language death does not happen in privileged communities. It happens to the dispossessed and the disempowered, peoples who most need their cultural resources to survive" (Crawford, J., 1997, p. 15).

To many Mainstream Americans, the consequence or significance of any language loss other than an unthinkable threat to English may be elusive today, but we must consider what

innovative ideas, what unique perceptions, and what solutions to social and environmental problems would also be lost with the demise of any language, including an indigenous language. Those ideas, perceptions, and solutions might ultimately have helped to save humankind from its apparently self-destructive path.

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