

## Linguistic Human Rights: A New Perspective on Bilingual Education

By Eliana D. Rojas & Timothy Reagan

*Everybody, not just privileged elites or poor minorities, needs to be fluent and literate in at least two languages, preferably more. Everybody, not just minorities, needs to become aware of and acknowledge the importance of their ethnic and linguistic roots, in order to be able to develop, analyze, criticize, and reflect. Language rights for all are part of human rights. Language rights are prerequisite to many other human rights. Linguistic human rights in education are a prerequisite for the maintenance of diversity in the world that we are all responsible for.*

— Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1999, p. 58)

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Bilingual education has been an extremely controversial and contentious topic in recent years among both educators and the general public in the United States. Long a bastion of what some writers have called “ideological monolingualism,” the United States has not demonstrated either great sensitivity to or tolerance of linguistic diversity historically (see Hymes, 1996, pp. 84-85; Reagan & Osborn, 2002). Although there are legitimate debates about certain empirical

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matters related to bilingual education, the public debates about bilingual education are generally grounded less in such empirical evidence than in personal beliefs and experiences, misunderstandings about the nature of language in general and bilingual education in particular, and in political and ideological biases. Language is at the heart of the educational experience, as well as at the heart of social life. Thus, the debate about bilingual education is one that has been and should be of considerable concern to those involved in the study of educational policy and critical approaches to and understandings of education. However, as María Brisk argued,

Much of the debate on bilingual education is politically motivated, more suitable for talk shows than for improving schools. The United States can create quality bilingual education for the increasingly diverse student population, but only if we observe what really happens in our schools. If we continue to deal with bilingual education as a label, the sterile debate on how abruptly language minority students should be Americanized and Anglicized will continue to isolate many of our students. (1998, p. xv)

The realities of bilingual education in the United States are actually quite complex, and overly simplistic presentations of the issues surrounding bilingual education programs probably do far more harm than good as we try to meet the needs of an important and growing part of the society's school-age population (see Baker, 2001; Corson, 1999, 2001; Cummins, 1996, 2000; García & Baker, 1995). In this article, we wish to discuss the case for bilingual education programs. We want to do so, though, from a somewhat different perspective than that generally offered by supporters and advocates of bilingual schooling in the United States. Most of the arguments in favor of bilingual education are grounded in defenses of the *effectiveness* of bilingual education programs — that is, in arguing that bilingual education is a good thing because it works. Although we believe this to be true, and will briefly review the arguments and evidence for this claim, what we want to suggest here is that there is a far more powerful, and relevant, argument for bilingual education programs. Arguments of the sort generally offered presuppose that what is at stake is ultimately a matter of pedagogical effectiveness — what works best for the children involved. There are, though, constraints on effectiveness as a criterion for educational practice. Not everything that “works” is acceptable; no matter how effective it might be to use electrical shocks to increase student motivation to learn, for instance, no reasonably sane educator or policymaker is likely to advocate it. Similarly, there are certain fundamental rights (including linguistic human rights) that must be observed in the educational process. It is in this sphere, we want to argue, rather than in the sphere of pedagogical effectiveness alone, that the real case for bilingual education needs to be made.

There are, we believe, some common, core assumptions shared by virtually all educators, policy-makers, and indeed, by most individuals in the general public that relate to the issues that we will be addressing in this article. Specifically, there appears to be a general (albeit not universal) consensus in our society that every child:

- ◆ needs to acquire competence in Standard English;
- ◆ needs to master not only language skills, but other subject matter as well;
- ◆ deserves to feel loved, cared for and respected;
- ◆ needs to be held to high but attainable standards of performance;
- ◆ needs to feel safe and secure in the school environment;
- ◆ needs to be exposed to a curriculum and school experience that will empower him or her to change his or her own world.

What is interesting about these assumptions is that none really dictates particular classroom practices, nor do any of these assumptions actually prescribe specific educational policies. In part because of this, these core assumptions are not particularly controversial, and most educators would see them simply as conditions for “good education.”

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### **Bilingual Education in the U.S.: An Overview**

Bilingual education in the U.S. context is concerned with providing minority language students with a schooling experience that prepares them for life in U.S. society (see Baker, 2001; García & Baker, 1995). It is important to begin with this statement, since much of the debate about contemporary bilingual education programs in the U.S. might lead one to think or suspect otherwise. Bilingual education programs are not programs that ignore the need for acquisition of English; indeed, the acquisition of English is one of the most important outcomes of effective bilingual education programs. In fact, bilingual education programs seek to accomplish three broad goals:

- ◆ knowledge of the subject matter being taught in the classroom, including mathematics, science, social studies, art and music, language arts, and any other content in the curriculum;
- ◆ literacy skills, initially in the child’s first language which then transfer to the second language (English);
- ◆ communicative language skills in both English and the native language.

Each of these broad goals is a significant and core aspect of bilingual education, and the research base for each is quite strong (see Li Wei, 2000). As for the first, we know that under the best of circumstances, second language learning takes time and effort. While the language minority child is acquiring English, she or he is, for the most part, not learning whatever else is being taught. In most cases, this means that for several years the child is potentially cut off from the standard curriculum. The purpose of providing content area instruction in the child’s native language is, then,

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quite simple: to ensure that while English is being learned, the child is not losing or falling behind with respect to subject area content. Given the socioeconomic background of large numbers of language minority students, such instruction is essential if the schooling experience is to be a positive one. This argument is particularly strong when we are talking about initial literacy skills. Learning to read is the foundation of the elementary schooling experience, and, as Stephen Krashen notes,

If we learn to read by reading, it will be much easier to learn to read in a language we already understand . . . Once you can read, you can read. The ability to read transfers across languages . . . This characterization helps us understand what the advantages are in providing first language support: Knowledge gained through the first language makes English input more comprehensible and literacy gained through the first language transfers to the second. (1996, p. 4)

Finally, bilingual education has as its ultimate goal a functioning bilingual individual. In other words, while some programs in the U.S. and elsewhere are subtractive in nature (that is, have as their objective the replacement of the native language with the socially dominant language), good programs are additive in nature, building on the child's existing language competence. In a sense, of course, what this means is that we view the minority language child as one who comes to school not with a deficit (that is, not being able to speak English), but rather, as one who comes with important language skills in a language other than English which can be used as a foundation for both English language learning *and* for the development of further language skills in the native language (see Zentella, 1997). There is an interesting, and telling, paradox involved in the debates about bilingual education:

The paradox of bilingual education is that when it is employed in private schools for the children of elites throughout the world it is accepted as educationally valid . . . However, when public schools implemented bilingual education for language minority students over the past 50 years, bilingual education became highly controversial. (Brisk, 1998, p. 1)

In other words, the debate about bilingual education in the U.S. context has a great deal more to do with politics, ideology and issues of social class than it does with education or educational approaches *per se*.

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### **Bilingual Education: What Does The Research *Really* Say?**

One of the common features of discussions and debates about bilingual education in the United States is the claim that such programs, although perhaps well-intentioned, simply do not work, that they are “failed experiments” — or, at the very least, that the research on the effectiveness of bilingual education programs is inconclusive. As Rosalie Porter, a leading critic of bilingual education programs, articulates this view:

The bilingual education establishment is fighting to maintain its primacy and prerogatives unchallenged, even though bilingual programs have, in the majority of cases, proven unsuccessful . . . If there were convincing evidence that children learn their school subjects better if they are taught in their native language, then we could continue to approve the temporary segregation [of students in bilingual education programs]; but that case has not been substantiated. (1990, pp. 6-7)

We are often presented with rather sweeping generalizations about bilingual education, not only in terms of the effectiveness of such programs, but also making a number of other claims about language minority students and their education. The issues involved are certainly controversial; as Stephen Krashen has commented,

Bilingual education is under attack. Letters to the editor, editorials, and talk show hosts repeat the same arguments nearly daily. Bilingual education, they say, doesn't work. Students in bilingual programs do not learn English and those who have never had bilingual education appear to do very well without it. Also, they claim that most parents and teachers don't want it. In addition, there is also the feeling that English is in trouble and that programs such as bilingual education contribute to the erosion of English in the United States. (1996, p. 1)

Such generalizations about and critiques of bilingual education programs are undoubtedly common and popular, and clearly represent the views of a substantial part of the population. To some extent, such views are understandable, especially when they coincide with other beliefs about language and language acquisition. Many of these beliefs are actually examples of language mythology (see Bauer & Trudgill, 1998; McLaughlin, 1992; Reagan, 2002) — and, as we shall see, many of the common beliefs about the facts in the debate about bilingual education turn out to be inaccurate, to say the least. How, then, have such beliefs about bilingual education been able to gain such popularity and credence?

The answer to this question is one grounded in the nature of bilingual education programs, as well as in the nature of educational research itself. As Katherine Samway and Denise McKeon have observed, “attempts to compare bilingual education programs with other programs serving L2 students have produced seemingly conflicting answers” (1999, p. 70). This is the case, though, to a large extent because of the incredible diversity of programs that are labeled “bilingual.” More often than not, comparative studies of bilingual education programs are not really comparative at all; they involve very different models, approaches and curricula, all of which are subsumed under the general (and misleading) label of “bilingual education.” As Hakuta and Gould argue,

Much of the research evaluating programs for L2 students appears to suffer from three serious shortcomings: (1) It obscures the striking diversity of programs in design and quality (including the availability of resources, materials, and trained staff), (2) it obscures the way in which language is actually used for instructional purposes, and (3) it obscures the linguistic, social, and academic characteristics of students. (1987, pp. 38-45)

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This does not mean, however, that no conclusions at all can be drawn from all of the research that has been conducted. Although much of the research is indeed flawed, much of it is also quite good. In fact, the research literature is quite clear with respect to the general indicators that characterize effective programs for meeting the needs of language minority students (see Samway & McKeon, 1999, pp, 75-79; Tse, 2001). The indicators that are most strongly supported by the research evidence are:

- ◆ high expectations need to be held for all language minority students.
- ◆ there is integration of language development with subject matter development.
- ◆ there is support for content development through the students' first language.
- ◆ comprehensive staff development and training is provided for all faculty and staff.
- ◆ there is active and meaningful support for school leaders and administrators.
- ◆ the entire school environment is supportive of the learning of minority language students.

Nor is this all that can be learned from the existing research base on bilingual education. Stephen Krashen has compellingly argued that programs that successfully meet the needs of language minority students are characterized by four elements: (1) comprehensible input is English is provided (in ESL, sheltered subject-matter teaching), (2) subject matter knowledge is presented in classes taught in the students' first language, (3) literacy development takes place initially in the students' primary language, and (4) there is continued development of the students' primary language (1996, p. 65). The case for the use of the language minority student's native language as a bridge to English is strongly supported by the research base, and is in fact almost universally accepted among those researchers who have actually studied second language acquisition.

What is interesting about the debate about the research base on bilingual education has been its ideological and political nature rather than what the actual studies themselves would appear to suggest. Jim Cummins, for instance, has commented that:

The academic debate on bilingual education in the United States contrasts markedly with the treatment of the issue in the media. Media articles on bilingual education have tended to be overwhelmingly negative in their assessment of the merits of bilingual programs . . . By contrast, the academic debate lines up virtually all North American applied linguists who have carried out research on language learning as advocates of bilingual programs against only a handful of academic commentators who oppose

bilingual education. These opponents tend to come from academic backgrounds other than applied linguists. (2000, p. 201)

It is, in short, in the political sphere, rather than in the academic sphere, that the real controversy about bilingual education swirls, and it is in that sphere that we must look if we really want to understand the debate about bilingual education in contemporary U.S. society (see Gonzalez & Melis, 2001a, 2001b). Educational is always profoundly political and ideological in nature (see Osborn, 2000); in the case of bilingual education in the United States, it is simply impossible to ignore or overlook this.

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### **Linguistic Human Rights and Bilingual Education**

We have examined bilingual education thus far in terms of pragmatic matters — that is, in terms of the extent to which the research would seem to indicate that it is an effective way of teaching language minority students English, while at the same time ensuring that they learn other content matter. Although the evidence does strongly support good bilingual education programs, at this point we would like to suggest that there are in fact broader and more important reasons for supporting such programs — reasons that are only tangentially concerned with pragmatic matters. Specifically, what we want to argue here is that on the international level there has been a growing interest in and concern with the linguistic human rights of the individual in recent years (see, for instance, Kontra, Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas & Várady, 1999; Phillipson, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000a, 2000b; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995; Spring, 2001), and that this attention to issues of linguistic human rights has direct and important implications for the education of language minority children in the United States. As Joel Spring has explained,

The [United Nations'] Convention Against Discrimination in Education and the concerns of indigenous peoples highlighted the importance of language rights. As exemplified by Singapore, Mauritius, the United States, and other postcolonial nations, language rights are a potential source of conflict in multicultural societies. It is generally recognized that there is an inseparable relation between language and culture. Particular words often embody cognitive and affective meanings that defy translation into other languages. In addition, literary and oral traditions depend on the preservation of language. In other words, the right to one's culture requires the right to one's language. (2000, p. 30)

The discourse on human rights has evolved in significant ways in the past century. As the British philosopher Brenda Almond has noted,

The Second World War involved violations of human rights on an unprecedented scale but its ending saw the dawn of a new era for rights. Following their heyday in the seventeenth century . . . rights played a crucial role in the revolutions of the late eighteenth century. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, appeal to rights was eclipsed by movements such as utilitarianism and Marxism which could

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not, or would not, accommodate them . . . . The contemporary period has seen a further shift in their fortunes and today they provide an accepted international currency for moral and political debate. In many parts of the world, irrespective of cultural or religious traditions, when issues of torture or terrorism, poverty or power are debated, the argument is very often conducted in terms of rights and their violation. (1993, p. 259)

Discussions and debates about rights impact legislation, social policy, and, ultimately, the quality of life of both groups and individuals. Robert Phillipson, Mart Rannut, and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas argue that, “The history of human rights shows that the concept of human rights is not static. It is constantly evolving in response to changed perceptions of how humans have their fundamental freedoms restricted, and the challenge to the international community to counteract injustice” (1995, p. 16). The past century, then, has witnessed not only challenges to and abrogations of human rights, but also growing awareness and articulation of such rights. One area in which such awareness has been relatively late to develop, in spite of on-going and often egregious violations of group and individual rights, is that of language. As recently as the mid-1980s, Gomes de Matos could write that, “Although ours has been said to be ‘the age of rights’ . . . there has not yet been a thorough, well-documented, carefully thought out discussion of the crucial problem of the human being’s linguistic rights” (1985, pp. 1-2). Given the centrality of language to self-identification and to our sense of who we are, and where we fit in the broader world, it is interesting that a concern with linguistic human rights has taken so long to emerge. And yet, such concern *has* emerged in recent decades, and the scholarly and political literature dealing with issues of linguistic human rights has increased dramatically (see, for instance, Annamalai, 1986; Herriman & Burnaby, 1996; Kontra, Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas & Várady, 1999; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000a, 2000b; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995). Although it is clear that there is a long way to go in terms of raising consciousness about linguistic human rights, and while such rights are far from universally recognized let alone observed, the fact that the issue itself has been put on the table for discussion and debate itself constitutes a promising development.

The fundamental challenge presented by debates about language and language policy is essentially one of achieving balance between the competing goods of social unity and access on the one hand, and respect for and toleration of diversity on the other. Basically, the question that policymakers are faced with addressing in debates of this sort is the extent to which pluralism, as a necessary condition for a democratic social order, applies to the issue of language. At the heart of this discussion, of course, is the issue of linguistic human rights. In other words, to what extent, and in what ways, are *language* rights *human* rights? Also relevant here is the related question of whether linguistic human rights apply only to the individual, or whether there are rights which are “group rights” (that is, rights which apply to a community rather than solely to the members of that community by virtue of some common, shared feature of the individuals in the community) (see Coulombe, 1993;



Tollefson, 1991, 1995). This is actually a far more complex matter than it might at first seem, since linguistic human rights are “preeminently *social*, in that they are only comprehensible in relation to a group of other human beings with whom the language is shared and from which personal and cultural identity is achieved” (MacMillan, 1982, p. 420). In other words, debates about linguistic human rights are unique in that, as Kenneth McRae argued, “societies characterized by linguistic pluralism differ from those characterized by racial, religious, class or ideological divisions in one essential respect, which stems from the pervasive nature of language as a general vehicle of communication” (1978, p. 331). This having been said, the concept of group rights is itself somewhat problematic, potentially leading to an apartheid-style mandate of ethnic obligation, even as the alternative of linguistic imperialism looms large (see Durand, 2001; Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 1995, 2000; Tonkin & Reagan, 2003). This tension is one of the areas which requires considerable thoughtful reflection and discussion among policymakers and educators alike, in order to ensure that the protection of linguistic human rights does not run the risk, as articulated by Brian Bullivant about multicultural education programs, of becoming “ideal methods of controlling knowledge/power, while appearing through symbolic political language to be acting solely from the best of motives in the interests of the ethnic groups themselves” (1981, p. 291).

In working toward a conception of linguistic human rights, a good place to begin is with *The U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* (18 December 1992), in which representatives of the international community attempted to articulate the nature of the human and civil rights which ought to be accorded members of minority groups (see Skutnabb-Kangas, 1994). This *Declaration* was a follow-up to *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, necessitated by the widespread violation of the second article of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which prohibits discrimination against individuals based on language. Specifically, three articles of the *Declaration* are relevant for our purposes here. First, Article 2.1 prohibits active or explicit discrimination against members of minority groups:

Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination. (Article 2.1, our emphasis)

This, in a sense, is the negative force of the *Declaration*, in that it focuses on simply prohibiting actions and policies that unfairly target minority groups. The *Declaration* goes far beyond this negative constraint, however, and in Articles 4.2 and 4.3 specifies what are binding positive linguistic human rights:

States shall take measures to create favorable conditions to enable persons belonging

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to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national and contrary to international standards. (Article 4.2)

States should take appropriate measures so that, whenever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue. (Article 4.3)

These explicit statements of both negative and positive aspects of linguistic human rights differ in significant ways, of course, from the constitutional provisions governing the issue of linguistic human rights in the United States, and, indeed, of those in many (perhaps most) countries. They are even further, in many instances, from actual government policies and practices, especially (although by no means exclusively) with respect to the rights of indigenous peoples (see Huebner & Davis, 1999). In fact, a central feature of the draft *Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Human Rights*, which was developed by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in the 1990s (see Spring, 2000, pp. 35-37), focused on the issue of linguistic human rights in education:

Indigenous children have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State. All indigenous peoples also have this right and the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. (Article 15)

In the “Preface” to her powerful and compelling book *Linguistic Genocide in Education — or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?*, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas emphasizes both the ties between linguistic diversity and linguistic human rights and the relatively weak treatment of language rights in contemporary global society:

Linguistic human rights are a necessary (but not sufficient) prerequisite for the maintenance of linguistic diversity. Violations of linguistic human rights, especially in education, lead to a reduction of linguistic and cultural diversity on our planet... language in education systematically gets a poorer treatment than other basic human characteristics. Very few international or regional human rights instruments grant binding educational linguistic human rights, despite pious phrases. The present binding linguistic human rights in education clauses are completely insufficient for protecting and maintaining linguistic diversity on our globe... (2000a, p. xii)

Not only are linguistic human rights in the educational context insufficiently protected, though; they are routinely ignored and violated around the world (see Grenoble & Whaley, 1998; Nettle & Romaine, 2000). In the United States, the proponents of the U.S. English Movement and their allies are correct in noting that there is no official language in the United States, and that the nation’s language policies have emerged in a somewhat chaotic and inconsistent fashion. More to the point, though, language policies and language practices at all levels of U.S. society have historically involved extensive violation of individual linguistic human

rights, and in fact continue to do so. There is, to put it mildly, absolutely no reason whatever to believe that the sorts of changes advocated by the supporters of the U.S. English Movement are likely to change this situation. If anything, the rhetoric of such groups suggests just the opposite (see Baron, 1990; Crawford, 1992a, 1992b, 2000; Macedo, 2000). The right of the child to an education in his or her native language is violated on a daily basis throughout the United States, of course, but even beyond this, the denigration and exclusion of languages in both school and society constitutes an on-going assault on meaningful linguistic human rights (see Corson, 2001; Hernández-Chávez, 1995; Lippi-Green, 1997; Reagan, 1997a, 1997b). In addition, at least insofar as the case of Spanish speakers in the southwest are concerned, given the stipulations agreed to by the United States and Mexico in the “Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo” in 1848, one could certainly argue (as have some *chicano* civil rights advocates) that common practice remains to some extent a treaty violation. Indeed, the history of U.S. language policy has been accurately summarized as follows:

Except for very brief periods during which private language rights have been tolerated and certain limited public rights have been permitted, the history of language policy in the United States has generally been one of the imposition of English for an ever wider range of purposes and the restriction of the rights of other languages. (Hernández-Chávez, 1995, p. 141)

If we look at the history not only of immigrant languages, but even more, the history of indigenous languages in North America, what we find is not merely a history of neglect, but in fact what is arguably a history of deliberate cultural and linguistic genocide (see Boseker, 1994; Hernández-Chávez, 1995). It is a history shared, unfortunately, with the treatment of indigenous peoples and their languages both in Canada (Fettes, 1992, 1994, 1998) and in Latin America (see Hamel, 1995a, 1995b). Using a term like “linguistic genocide” may strike some as too polemical, but it is in fact a relatively accurate description, in our view, of what has taken place historically.

Ultimately, questions of linguistic human rights are questions of language policy, and reflect underlying assumptions about the nature of language as well as issues of power, equality, and access in society. As James Tollefson noted,

The policy of requiring everyone to learn a single dominant language is widely seen as a common-sense solution to the communication problems of multilingual societies. The appeal of this assumption is such that monolingualism is seen as a solution to linguistic inequality. If linguistic minorities learn the dominant languages, so the argument goes, then they will not suffer economic and social inequality. The assumption is an example of an ideology which refers to normally unconscious assumptions that come to be seen as common sense . . . such assumptions justify exclusionary policies and sustain inequality. (1991, p. 10)

The desire for simple solutions to complex problems and challenges is perhaps understandable, but it is also dangerous and shortsighted. The tendency to address

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rights issues as pragmatic or empirical matters, as is often the case, is also both misleading and wrong. The question, in short, is *not* whether instruction in the mother tongue is pedagogically most effective (although the evidence would suggest that it is), any more than whether capital punishment reduces crime B in both cases, fundamental human rights must be understood to remove the question from the empirical realm and move it to the normative realm. Only by placing the questions in the right discourse context can we hope to come to reasonable and justifiable solutions — and, at least in the case of linguistic human rights, we have a long way to go before this becomes a reality.

### Conclusion

Bilingual education is controversial because it touches issues of language, culture and identity — issues which are at the heart of who and what each of us is. These issues are not only personal, though — they also involve matters of politics, and, as we have tried to argue here, matters of fundamental human rights. For far too long, we have allowed the debate about bilingual education in the United States to focus publicly on empirical matters, even as the opponents of such programs have utilized rhetoric and distortion to color public opinion. The core issue in the debate about bilingual education is not whether or not such programs work — any reasonably objective review of the research literature makes it quite clear that they do work. This is not, though, the real question, nor has it ever been. The real question is one of how our society addresses difference — that is, the extent to which we truly honor the rights of those whose language, culture, politics, lifestyle, or whatever, differs from the dominant norm in our society.

We began this article with a quote from Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, and we want to return to her now. Over a decade ago, Skutnabb-Kangas perceptively argued that, “One of the most successful means of destroying or retarding languages has been, and remains, education” (1990, p. 6). She was correct, just as Mark Twain was right when he suggested that “soap and education are not as sudden as a massacre, but they are more deadly in the long run.” It is time for us to recognize the risk that education poses, as well as its ameliorative possibilities. Recognizing that children have rights, and that these rights include linguistic human rights, is a good place to begin.

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