No child left monolingual: Best practices in teaching heritage speakers.

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Thank you

Saturday April 26, 2014
University of Illinois at Chicago:
- Hispanic & Italian Studies
- Latin American & Latino Studies
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Inter-American Magnet School
- Talcott!

- K-8 vs. 9-12?
- Spanish vs. other languages?
“No Child Left Monolingual”

- Multilingualism in the world vs. in the U.S.
- Advantages of multilingualism
- Ways to promote multilingualism

What are some principled approaches to teaching heritage languages?

Average around the world:

50% (or slightly more) of people are bilingual or multilingual.
What % of the U.S. population speaks a language other than English?

- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%

U.S. Census 2007 (ACS)

Speak a language other than English: 19.7%
Impact in our schools

In 2002, 20% of all school-aged children spoke a LOTE at home. This figure has more than doubled since 1979 (National Center for Educational Statistics 2002).

Latinos are 16% of U.S. population....

Hispanic children = 23% of U.S. public school population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>72%</td>
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</tbody>
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The arguments I will present:

- Linguistic diversity is a resource, not a problem.
- There are good ways (and not so good ways) of promoting English language learning.
- People have a right to maintain their heritage language and not be accused of rejecting mainstream U.S. society.

Is English the official language of the U.S.?

No  Hapana
Yelem  Nyet
Non  Nein
Although the great majority of Americans today (80%) speak English as their only language, there is no law or constitutional amendment establishing a national language. As noted by Heath (1977), the founding fathers:

[...] recognized that decisions on language choice and change would be made at the local and regional levels by citizens responding to communicative needs and goals they themselves identified.

Moreover, early political leaders recognized the close connection between language and religious/cultural freedoms, and they preferred to refrain from proposing legislation which might be construed as a restriction of these freedoms (Heath 1977: 270).

“Why don’t they just learn English?”

- They do. Research has shown that immigrant communities shift entirely to English very quickly, typically within three generations.

- In fact, when examining 35 different nations in the world, in no other country was the rate of mother tongue shift toward monolingualism in the national dominant language as fast as in the United States (Lieberson, Dalto, & Johnston 1975).
Top 10 non-English languages spoken in U.S. homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Speak English “well” or “very well”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Spanish</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chinese</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tagalog</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. French</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Vietnamese</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. German</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Korean</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Russian</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Italian</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Arabic</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shortage of ESL classes

In 2006, 60% of the free ESL programs in 12 states had waiting lists ranging from a few months in Colorado and Nevada to as long as two years in New Mexico and Massachusetts (Tucker 2006).
Is “English Only” legislation a good idea?

- As of 2010, 28 states have declared English their official language.
- Only three states have any kind of protected bilingualism: Hawaii, Louisiana, and New Mexico.
- According to the Institute for Language and Education Policy (Crawford 2006), “official English” policies are:

(1) “Official English” is unnecessary

The overwhelming dominance of English in the United States is not threatened in any way. Newcomers to this country are learning it more rapidly than ever before. Our language does not need “legal protection.”
(2) “Official English” is punitive

Restricting government’s ability to communicate in other languages would threaten the rights and welfare of millions of people, including many U.S. citizens, who are not fully proficient in English.

(3) “Official English” is useless

Official-English legislation offers no practical assistance to anyone trying to learn English. In fact, it is likely to frustrate that goal by outlawing programs designed to bring immigrants into the mainstream of our society.
(4) “Official English” is divisive

The campaign to declare English the official language often serves as a proxy for hostility toward minority groups, Latinos and Asians in particular. It is exacerbating ethnic tensions in a growing number of communities.

(5) “Official English” is inconsistent with American values

Official-English laws have been declared unconstitutional in several state and federal courts, because they violate guarantees of freedom of speech and equal protection of the laws.
(6) “Official English” is **self-defeating**

English Only policies are foolish in an era of globalization, when multilingual skills are essential to economic prosperity and national security. Language resources should be conserved and developed, not suppressed.

Punitive & divisive

- U.S. “linguistic climate” is staunchly monolingual
1995, Amarillo, TX

State District Judge Samuel C. Kiser to Martha Laureano, mother of 5-year-old girl:

"If she starts first grade with the other children and cannot even speak the language that the teachers and the other children speak and she's a full-blood American citizen, you're abusing that child and you're relegateing her to the position of housemaid. Get this straight. You start speaking English to this child because if she doesn't do good in school, then I can remove her because it's not in her best interest to be ignorant. The child will only hear English."

East Phoenix, 2003:

- Eight children told police that their teacher hit or slapped them for speaking Spanish; some said their arms or hands were sore afterward.
- The teacher was fired in 2004.
Manhattan, 2003

- 4 women filed a lawsuit against the makeup chain Sephora, who barred them from speaking Spanish even during lunch breaks (Usborne 2003).
- Claim that they were ridiculed by managers, and when the branch closed in 2002, they were not offered jobs at other outlets.

Kansas City, MO, 2003

Principal suspended middle-school student Zach Rubio after a teacher heard him say "no problema" in a school hallway. The school has no policy prohibiting Spanish.

His father complained to the superintendent. “You're suspending my kid not for fighting or being disruptive -- just for speaking Spanish?” Response: “Yes, that's correct, just speaking Spanish, I don't want it here.”

The suspension was later reversed, and the principal apologized to Rubio.

Rubio filed a lawsuit: “The same principal that suspended me, she's still there, the same teacher who sent me to the office, she's still there, like nothing happened. I don't feel that there was justice and that's what I want.”
Dallas, TX, 2009:

“Driving while Spanish-speaking”:

Between 2006-2009, at least 6 police officers gave tickets (of $204 each) to at least 39 Spanish-speaking drivers for “not speaking English” (Baron 2009).

One woman went to court to protest; while driving her granddaughter to school, she was given 3 tickets: for not having her license with her, for making an illegal u-turn, and for not speaking English.

Authorities were unable to explain why there's a statutory fine for a law that isn't on the books. Now the city has to track down the offenders to clean up their driving records and return their money.

A different approach:

In July 2008, the Mayor of New York City required every city agency that has direct interaction with customers to provide language assistance in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Italian and French Creole.

Telephone-based service linked to interpreters who speak Urdu, Hindi, Arabic and dozens of other languages.
Some people may ask:

“If 80% of our citizens are monolingual English speakers, why should we provide services like voting, driver’s licenses, etc. in non-English languages? Doesn’t this take away all incentive for immigrants to learn English?”

According to Mayor Bloomberg:

“The fundamental basis of government is its interaction with its citizens. If people don’t know what we do, don’t know what they should do, what the law requires them to do, don’t know how to get services, all the money that we’re spending providing those services, providing those laws, is meaningless.”
“My grandparents” … the myth.

“When my grandparents immigrated from [name of country], they did not need bilingual education or special services in their language. They simply worked hard and learned the language. Today’s immigrants want everything handed to them.”

Life in the 1800s and early 1900s required very little knowledge of English to make a decent wage. Literacy or a high school diploma were not necessary. It is very likely that this person’s grandparents would be at a much greater disadvantage in the 21st century as immigrants to the U.S. without English abilities.

Instead of legislating English, help people learn it

Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, where the immigrant population has tripled since 1990, sponsored a bill in 2006 that would have given legal immigrants $500 vouchers to pay for English classes since so many of the free ones were full. He claimed:

“Most education policy is the prerogative of state and local governments, but I would argue that the prerogative to help people learn our common language is a federal responsibility.” (Santos 2007).
Heritage language maintenance

- We have just examined evidence that immigrants shift very quickly to English.
- Let’s now turn to the maintenance of heritage languages among their U.S.-born descendents.

Our “linguistic climate” or “linguistic culture”

The dominant "linguistic culture" (Schiffman 1996) in this country aims to erase non-English languages.
Have you ever heard…

- “You’re in the United States. Speak English.”
- “Why should I have to press 1 to hear English?”
- “It’s rude to speak a non-English language in public. People think you’re talking about them.”

Coke commercial, Superbowl 2014
“Coca-Cola has America the Beautiful being sung in different languages in a #SuperBowl commercial? We speak ENGLISH here, IDIOTS.”

“Still confused as to why they were singing about America in all those foreign languages in the Coke commercial. We speak English...”

“So was Coca-Cola saying America is beautiful because new immigrants don't learn to speak English?”

“Nice to see that coke likes to sing an AMERICAN song in the terrorist’s language. Way to go coke. You can leave America.”

P.S. Positive responses

“25 proud bilingual children”
Since the 19th century…. and continues today

Veltman (2000): After 0-5 years in the U.S., 20% of immigrants aged 0 to 14 had already adopted English as their preferred, usual language. After 5 additional years, the number rose to 40%.
Immigrant families today are shifting to English more quickly than in the past.

Heritage language loss

In 2006, Rumbaut, Massey and Bean studied the “life expectancy” of five languages in southern California:

Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean

These languages lasted no more than two generations.
The U.S. is a “linguistic graveyard”

“Shift happens”
We’re also not so great at learning foreign languages.

“What do you call a person who speaks three languages?”

“Trilingual.”

“What do you call a person who speaks two languages?”

“Bilingual.”

“What do you call a person who speaks one language?”

“American.”

"Instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English -- they’ll learn English -- you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish."
Time it takes to learn various languages

**Category I:** Closely related to English. 575-600 class hours required for proficiency.
- Romance languages (French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian).
- Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish). Dutch, Afrikaans. German (750 class hours), Indonesian (900 class hours)

**Category II:** “Significantly different” from English. 1,100 hours.
- Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Turkish, Hebrew, Croatian

**Category III:** “Difficult.” 2,200 hours.
- Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic

What if people in the U.S. retained their heritage languages in addition to learning English?

- Given the time and resources the nation invests in foreign language instruction, we shouldn’t squander the heritage language resources we have right here.
- Heritage speakers already have linguistic and cultural knowledge that takes years for non-natives to acquire.
Two myths

“Multilingualism is damaging to society.”

“Multilingualism is damaging to individuals.”

Multilingualism is not damaging to society
Myth #2

“Multilingualism is damaging to individuals.”

Multilingualism bestows educational and cognitive advantages.
Code-switching

- Rule-governed behavior
- Requires strong levels of syntax
- Proud declaration of bilingual identity

Schools

- K-8th grade: English, English, English
- 9th grade: “Now you can study a ‘foreign language’.”
- The more quality instruction in the home language, the greater the English acquisition and overall academic achievement in the long run.
Language learning before age 8-10:

“Organic” memory

- Truly bilingual programs in K-12 schools.
- Offer courses for heritage speakers at the high school and university levels.
- Community efforts: Saturday heritage schools, sponsored trips abroad, local libraries, etc.
Programs for children learning English

1) English Only
   - 100% English

2) “Bilingual” education
   - 75% English
   - 25% Spanish
   - Grades K-3

3) Two-way immersion
   - Grades K-4
     - 40% English
     - 60% Spanish
   - Grades 5-8
     - 50% English
     - 50% Spanish

English reading achievement

Children who were learning English, now in 11th grade

(Thomas & Collier, 2009)
English-speaking children

English reading achievement  
(Lindholm, 2001)

Grade Level

Two-way immersion  
State Average

Plus they also learn Spanish!

Offer **courses for heritage speakers** at the high school and university levels

- 40% of U.S. colleges & universities offer Spanish for heritage speakers.
- Spanish for heritage speakers offered in many places; Tagalog for heritage speakers at University of Hawai’i; “Arabic Without Walls” at University of California; etc.
- National Heritage Language Resource Center has data on other heritage programs around the nation.
Community efforts

- Saturday heritage schools: In Connecticut, Polish Saturday school attendance can earn high school foreign language credit. Also in NJ, CA, other states.
Community efforts

• Sponsor trips abroad

• Local libraries: books in the heritage language; community members volunteer to do public readings for children.

Bilingualism for all: How?

If you know a non-English language:

✦ SPEAK it to the children in your family.
✦ READ it to them.
✦ MEDIA.
✦ SEND/BRING THEM to monolingual country.
✦ TWO-WAY IMMERSION
If you are monolingual in English:

✦ CLASS, TUTOR.
✦ MEDIA.
✦ TWO-WAY IMMERSION.

**Teachers**

✦ When teaching a language to heritage speakers of that language: Use a **language arts** approach.

✦ Language arts: What does it consist of?

✦ **Teach about** the value of bilingualism; language loss; faults in the “English Only” arguments.

✦ Question the concept of “incorrect” in their language
Beach vs. wedding

Meet the students where they are

- Linguistically, academically, and affectively.
- Choose materials relevant for their linguistic level and their lives.
- **Language arts** more than foreign language.
- **Respect** the language they bring to class.
SPANISH 440
“THEORY AND METHODS IN TEACHING HERITAGE SPEAKERS”

Tuesdays, 5:00-7:45 pm, Fall 2014
The University of Illinois at Chicago
Department of Hispanic & Italian studies

In this course, we review theories in bilingual development, sociolinguistics, and language teaching in order to understand best practices in, and develop coherent materials for, teaching heritage language learners. The main focus will be on the teaching of Spanish, but teachers of all languages are welcome.

For more information, including the textbook, table of contents, and course goals, see:
http://potowski.org/teaching-heritage-speakers

Credit: 3 undergraduate/4 graduate credits.
Prerequisite(s): Junior standing or above; consent of the instructor.
Recommended background: Credit or concurrent registration in SPAN 363, SPAN 448 or SPAN 449.

If you are currently a certified IL teacher: You may be eligible to take the course as a NON-DEGREE student. We encourage you to apply for our Master of Arts in Teaching (http://www.uic.edu/gcat/LASPAN.shtml). You could then request to have the credit transfer into the program, where it would also count for a Certification in Heritage Language Teaching.

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Thank you
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“Profesora Potowski”