

# MULTILINGUALISM-AS-RESOURCE AND THE ECOLOGY OF LANGUAGE: THREE CASES OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION REFORM

Nancy H. Hornberger,  
University of Pennsylvania

## Abstract

*Language and education policies which recognize multilingualism as a resource for their speakers and for the nation are increasingly in evidence around the world. Many of the policies envision implementation through bilingual intercultural education, opening up new worlds of possibility for oppressed indigenous and immigrant languages and their speakers, transforming former homogenizing and assimilationist policy discourse into discourses about diversity, emancipation, and pluralism. This paper offers the metaphor of ecology of language for understanding these new ideologies and discourses, and an ecological heuristic for implementing them. I go on to apply the heuristic to two broad sets of challenges inherent in implementing these new ideologies, as they are evident in three nations which undertook these transformations in the early 1990s: post-apartheid South Africa and its Constitution of 1993, Bolivia and its Education Reform of 1994, and post-dictatorship Paraguay and its 1992 Constitution and 1994 Education Reform. Throughout, I make connections from the cases being discussed to the Maori case in Aotearoa/New Zealand, as I know it. I conclude with brief comments on the importance of opening up ideological and implementational space for multilingualism in our schools and classrooms.*

**Allin p'unchay qankunapaq kachun. Anchatapuni kusikuni kaypi kashaspa qankunawan.  
Ichapis yachachinakusunyá kay p'unchaykunapi**

*Muy buenos dias a todos. ¡ Que disfrutemos mutuamente de las conversaciones y diálogos que vamos a compartir.*

Good morning one and all. I greet you in Quechua, Spanish, and my native English, the languages through which I learned firsthand about the value of multilingualism, cultural pluralism, and what Gregory Fortuin last night called "harmonized diversity" (Fortuin, 2002).

It is my great honour and privilege to be here and I thank Averil Coxhead, Jonathan Newton, and the Organizing Committee for inviting me, the Fulbright Senior Specialist program for sponsoring my visit, and all of you who have provided such a warm welcome and hospitality on this my first visit to Aotearoa/New Zealand. I am especially happy that, while here in ANZ, I have been able to visit some schools offering bilingual, multicultural, and indigenous education programs, including the marvellous *kura kaupapa Maori*, which stand as a beacon of hope and success for those involved in indigenous language revitalization and language minority education around the world. I understand, from conversations I've had over the past few weeks, that Maori education is facing a new set of challenges

as it comes of age, challenges which I hope my comments today might help to address; but the very fact that Maori education has survived its birth and childhood to confront the challenges of adolescence and adulthood is a huge achievement already, one we should never lose sight of (see e.g. May 1999; Spolsky 1989, 1996).

I am also especially pleased to address a conference whose very title, CLESOL, standing for Community Languages and ESOL, symbolizes the recognition of multilingualism as a resource, according attention to the rich and varied language resources that live and thrive in indigenous, immigrant, and ethnic communities in ANZ as elsewhere, while at the same time addressing the role of English as the global language of power that it increasingly is. My topic today is about how to implement educational policy and practice from just such a multilingualism-as-a-resource perspective.

### *Three cases of language education reform*

The examples I will present, from my own work in Bolivia, Paraguay, and South Africa, share with the ANZ case the effort to recognize and incorporate indigenous languages and their speakers within an educational system that is traditionally and tenaciously monolingual and standardizing. I will begin by pointing to the ideological shifts implicit in these efforts; I will then highlight two broad sets of implementational challenges facing them, and offer a heuristic to assist in that implementation. Throughout, I will share my thoughts on how all this relates to Maori education here in ANZ, but I do so in full awareness that I am the novice and many of you the authorities on that topic. It is my hope that what I have to say will find resonance with those of you who, in your own professional and personal lives, seek to contribute to the twin goals of revitalizing Maori and other indigenous, immigrant, ethnic, heritage community languages in ANZ and of improving the educational achievement of Maori and other indigenous and language minority children in ANZ schools.

The other day, as I perused the brochures at the Wellington Visitor Center, imagine my delight to find, in the July edition of the *Arts and Entertainment* brochure, an item entitled "A Language Revolution," where I went on to read that "International Languages Week 2002 will open in Wellington with a colourful celebration of multilingualism." How appropriate, I thought! Here is an event just coinciding with our CLESOL conference, also celebrating multilingualism. As I read on, however, I began to wonder if this celebration had in mind community languages at all: "There will be prizes and encouragement for all who can manage a few words in other languages or are open to the idea of

learning them. As it is Bastille Day, the guillotine will cast its shadow too and there may even be a beheading of the odd staunch monolingual.” Suddenly, it felt like this was to be a celebration of foreign language learning, rather than of community, ethnic languages.

I mention this example to highlight the terminology we use when speaking of diverse language resources in our societal repertoires. Fishman (1966b) has always drawn our attention to how we privilege the *foreign languages* that come in the front door while denigrating the *ethnic languages* in our own back yards. Many of us, including Stephen May and I, use the terms *majority* and *minority languages*, drawing attention to power differences which often, but not always, coincide with numerical differences. In recent years, we have on the one hand the rise of *global languages* such as English, and on the other, in the United States, for example, increasing use of the terms *heritage languages* or *world languages*, as umbrella terms intended to bridge the foreign-ethnic language gap referred to above. In what follows, I will use the terms community, ethnic, heritage, and minority languages more or less interchangeably, since their referent is essentially the same, despite differing connotations.

### **Introduction: Setting the scenes**

I begin with three scenes from my own visits and work with multilingual language education reform efforts in the past few years:

*18 July 2000, Johannesburg, South Africa.* In the course of my two-week visit at Rand Afrikaans University, I meet early this Tuesday morning (7:30 am) with a group of young pre-service teachers enrolled in a one-year Diploma in Education program. The university has been bilingual from its founding, offering instruction in Afrikaans and English in a parallel dual medium format; in the post-apartheid period, rapidly expanding numbers of speakers of diverse African languages have enrolled.

About 20 students attend this English Language Pedagogy class where I have been invited to speak about bilingual education. Their teacher Judy is present, as is my host Elizabeth. At one point, I mention my dissertation research which documented "classroom success but policy failure" for an experimental bilingual education program in indigenous Quechua speaking communities of Puno, Peru (Hornberger 1987). The policy failure, I suggest, was at least

partly due to some community members' resistance to the use of Quechua in school, which they had always regarded as a Spanish domain. Taking off from this, Judy asks what one can do about negative community attitudes which impede top-down language planning, citing the case of Black African parental demands for English-medium instruction in the face of South Africa's new multilingual language policy.

Later, when the discussion turns to the importance of the teacher's recognizing and valuing students' languages and cultures even if they're not the teacher's own, Professor Elizabeth takes the opportunity to demonstrate one such practice. Students are instructed to break into small groups to talk to each other about bilingual education for two-three minutes in their own languages. The result: four Nguni speakers (one Zulu, one Xhosa, two Swati), two Gujarati speaking women, three Afrikaans speakers, and one Portuguese speaker (who talks with me) form groups, while the rest of the class members chat to each other in small groups in English. The students clearly enjoy this activity and it generates lively whole class discussion.

*17 August 2000, La Paz, Bolivia.* On the first day of a three-day *Taller de reflexión y análisis sobre la enseñanza de castellano como segunda lengua* (Workshop of reflection and analysis on the teaching of Spanish as a second language), the Vice-Minister of Education welcomes workshop participants, emphasizing to us that the key to the Bolivian Education Reform is Bilingual Intercultural Education, and the key to *that* is Spanish as a Second Language. In recent months, she tells us, questions have been raised about the Reform's attention to indigenous languages, and indigenous parents have begun to demand that their children be taught Spanish. Perhaps the Reform erred, she says, in emphasizing the indigenous languages to such a degree that bilingual education appeared to the public to be monolingual indigenous language education.

There are approximately 45 participants in the workshop; many of us had participated five years earlier in a similar workshop on the curriculum and materials for the teaching of the indigenous languages, principally the three largest languages Quechua, Aymara, and Guaraní. The materials we reviewed then have been under implementation in the schools for a couple of years now. Our charge this time is to review the Spanish as a Second Language curriculum



and materials developed by the Curricular Development Unit and to make recommendations for improvement in design and implementation.

In the ensuing three days of intensive work across long hours, discussions are remarkable for the honesty and integrity with which the Curricular Development Unit experts welcome critical scrutiny of their work. These experts worry about how best to teach Spanish to a school population which in many cases has little to no exposure to oral Spanish or to print media outside of the classroom; and so have opted for a richly communicative and literature-based curriculum design. Some of the international second language experts are concerned that there is not enough explicit grammatical and lexical instruction and that the syllabus is not sufficiently incremental. Concerns from those who have seen the materials in use in the field are of a different nature. They ask questions like: what are the implications for second language learning of teachers' frequent code-mixing in class, code-mixing prompted by the desire to communicate with the students in a language they understand?; by the same token, what are the implications for maintaining and strengthening the indigenous languages if one and the same teacher teaches in both the indigenous language and Spanish?

**4 October 2001, Asunción, Paraguay.** I spend one morning with members of the Curriculum team at the Ministry of Education and their consultants Delicia Villagra and Nelson Aguilera, who are brainstorming the design for Guaraní and Spanish language and literature curriculum for the secondary level. Paraguay's Bilingual Education Reform introduced Guaraní as language of instruction alongside Spanish, beginning in 1<sup>st</sup> grade in 1993 and progressively adding one grade each year; 2001 completes the primary cycle (grades 1-9) and Guaraní instruction at the secondary level will be introduced for the first time in February 2002.

The complexity of issues needing to be addressed are staggering; not only is this the first time in South America (to our knowledge) that an indigenous language with relatively little tradition of technical, scientific, or literary use will be introduced into the secondary curriculum, but there are also unresolved issues lingering from the past nine years of primary bilingual education in Paraguay, including a lack of bilingual teacher preparation, inadequate language teaching methodology, lack of consensus on which Guaraní to use in the schools, and negative attitudes towards the use of Guaraní in

the schools from some parents and communities. None of these challenges is unique to Guaraní; in fact these "problems in the socio-educational legitimization of languages/varieties" regularly attend the introduction of vernacular languages into education worldwide, historically and in the present (cf. Fishman 1982: 4-6; Hornberger 1988). Nevertheless, they are very real challenges which the Curriculum Department must address in order to advance the use of Guaraní in secondary education.

For the time being, as a pragmatic measure, the team has opted to require the teaching of Guaraní literature through the medium of Guaraní, while leaving the medium of instruction for the teaching of other curricular areas at the secondary level – such as math, science, and social studies – up to the decision of each school. As a strategy toward the promotion of Guaraní, the team plans to orient the Guaraní language and literature curriculum strongly toward the production of texts in a variety of genres, the goal being to create a generation of confident and prolific Guaraní writers who will in turn develop and intellectualize the language, so that it can subsequently be introduced into all areas of the secondary curriculum.

As these scenes readily show, the one language - one nation ideology of language policy and national identity is no longer the only available one worldwide (if it ever was). Multilingual language and education policies which recognize ethnic and linguistic pluralism as resources for nation-building are increasingly in evidence. Many of the policies, like these three, envision implementation through bilingual intercultural education, opening up new worlds of possibility for oppressed indigenous and immigrant languages and their speakers, transforming former homogenizing and assimilationist policy discourse into discourses about diversity, emancipation, and pluralism. This paper offers the metaphor of ecology of language for understanding these new ideologies and discourses, and an ecological heuristic for implementing them. It goes on to apply the heuristic to two broad sets of challenges inherent in implementing these new ideologies, as they are evident in three nations which undertook these transformations in the early 1990s.

Post-apartheid South Africa's Constitution of 1993 embraces language as a basic human right and multilingualism as a national resource, raising nine major African languages to national official status alongside English and Afrikaans;<sup>i</sup> this, along with the dismantling of the apartheid educational system,

has led to the burgeoning of multilingual, multicultural student populations in classrooms, schools, and universities nationwide (Alexander 2000; Heugh et al. 1995). The Bolivian National Education Reform of 1994 envisions a comprehensive transformation of Bolivia's educational system, including the introduction of all thirty of Bolivia's indigenous languages alongside Spanish as subjects and media of instruction in all Bolivian schools (Albó 1995, 1997; Hornberger & López 1998). Paraguay's post-dictatorship Constitution and Educational Reform make Guaraní co-official with Spanish and call for it to be a language of instruction throughout K-12 education (Corvalán 1998; Gynan 2001 a, b).

These policies fly in the face of the one nation – one language ideology, the idea that a nation-state should be unified by one common language, an ideology which has held sway in recent Western history from the rise of the European and American nation-states in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries on through the formation of independent African and Asian nation-states in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and up to the present. This ideology is undergoing pressure in our day, twin pressures of globalization and ethnic fragmentation and their linguistic corollaries: the rise of English and other global languages, hence infringing on national languages; and the reclaiming of endangered indigenous, immigrant, and ethnic languages at local and national levels, hence undermining the ascendancy of national languages.

### **Multilingualism-as-resource and the ecology of language**

As the one language-one nation ideology breaks apart, the language planning field seeks models and metaphors that reflect a multilingual rather than monolingual approach to language planning and policy. One such model is the continua of biliteracy (to be taken up below) and one such metaphor is the ecology of language; both are premised on a view of multilingualism as a resource. Ruiz (1984), like Fishman (1966a) before him, drew our attention to the potential of a language-as-resource ideology as an alternative to the dominant language-as-problem and language-as-right ideological orientations in language planning and it is that sense of resource I am using here.

Einar Haugen is generally credited for introducing the ecology of language (Haugen 1972). He emphasizes the reciprocity between language and environment, noting that what is needed is not only a description of the social and psychological situation of each language, but also the effect of this situation on the language (1972: 334). Haugen invokes the tradition of research in human ecology as a

metaphor for an approach which would comprise not just the science of language description, but also concern for language cultivation and preservation (1972: 326-329).

For my purposes here, I am primarily interested in three themes of the ecology metaphor which are salient to me in writings on the ecology of language, all of them present in Haugen's original formulation and in more recent writings by Mühlhäusler 1996, Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas 1996, Kaplan & Baldauf 1997, and Ricento 2000. These are: that languages, like living species, evolve, grow, change, live, and die in relation to other languages and also in relation to their environment; I call these the *language evolution* and *language environment* themes. A third theme is the notion that some languages, like some species and environments, may be endangered and that the ecology movement is about not only studying and describing those potential losses, but also counteracting them; this I call the *language endangerment* theme.

Kaplan and Baldauf's work elaborates on the *language evolution* and *language environment* themes. They emphasize that language planning activity cannot be limited to one language in isolation from all the other languages in the environment (1997: 271). Their model representing the various forces at work in a linguistic eco-system introduces the notion of "language modification constructs" (1997: 289) or "language change elements" (1997: 296) such as language death, survival, change, revival, shift and spread, amalgamation, contact, pidgin and creole development, and literacy development, all processes of what I am here calling *language evolution*. For Kaplan and Baldauf, "Language planning ... is a question of trying to manage the language ecology of a particular language to support it within the vast cultural, educational, historical, demographic, political, social structure in which language policy formulation occurs every day" (1997: 13), i.e. within the *language environment*.

Recent work by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) highlights the *language endangerment* theme of the ecology metaphor. They contrast two language policy options with regard to English worldwide: the diffusion of English paradigm characterized by a "monolingual view of modernization and internationalization" and the ecology of language paradigm which involves "building on linguistic diversity worldwide, promoting multilingualism and foreign language learning, and granting linguistic human rights to speakers of all languages" (1996: 429). The juxtaposition of the linguistic imperialism of English over against multilingualism and linguistic human rights is clearly founded on a concern for

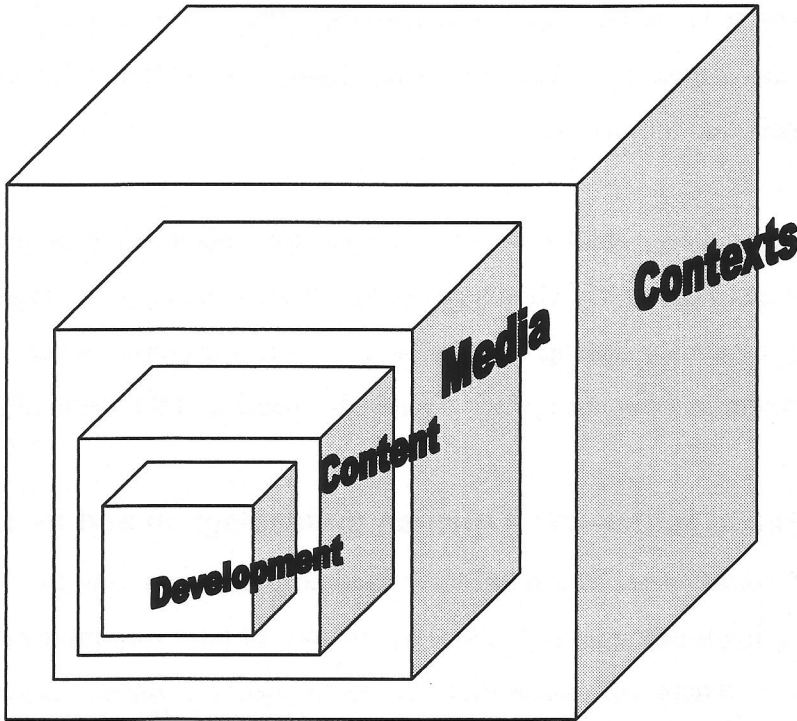
the ongoing endangerment of many languages, displaced by one or a select few, and the need to counteract that endangerment and displacement. Pakir (1991) uses the term “killer languages” in reference to the displacing effect of imperial English as well as other languages such as Mandarin, Spanish, French, and Indonesian.

An ecology of language ideological stance, then, recognizes that planning for any one language in a particular context necessarily entails planning for all languages impinging on that one. The power relations and dynamics among languages and their speakers cannot be ignored. Herein lie the challenges present in the scenes which opened this paper and the value of a heuristic to address them.

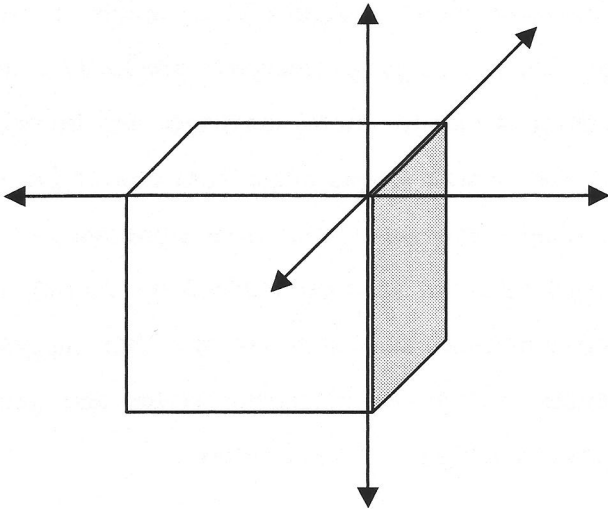
### **The continua of biliteracy: Opening up ideological and implementational space**

The *continua of biliteracy* is a heuristic I have proposed as a way to situate research, teaching, and policy-making in multilingual settings. The continua of biliteracy model defines *biliteracy* as “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing” (Hornberger 1990: 213) and describes it in terms of four nested sets of intersecting continua characterizing the contexts, media, content, and development of biliteracy (Hornberger 1989; Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester 2000). Specifically, it depicts the development of biliteracy along intersecting first language - second language, receptive-productive, and oral-written language skills continua; through the medium of two (or more) languages and literacies whose linguistic structures vary from similar to dissimilar, whose scripts range from convergent to divergent, and to which the developing biliterate individual’s exposure varies from simultaneous to successive; in contexts that encompass micro to macro levels and are characterized by varying mixes along the monolingual-bilingual and oral-literate continua; and with content that ranges from majority to minority perspectives and experiences, literary to vernacular styles and genres, and decontextualized to contextualized language texts (See Figures 1 and 2 below).





Nested Relationships among the continua of biliteracy  
Figure 1



Intersection relationships among the continua of biliteracy  
Figure 2

The continua are drawn from a review of research in bilingualism, second/foreign language teaching, literacy, and the teaching of reading/writing, much of which sets out a series of oppositions (e.g. oral-literate, L1-L2, monolingual-bilingual, productive-receptive, etc.), which upon closer scrutiny are shown to be false dichotomies. The notion of continuum is intended to disrupt those dichotomies, by emphasizing that all points on a particular continuum are interrelated and that learning very often occurs in spurts or with backtracking. The continua model suggests that the more their learning contexts and contexts of use allow learners and users to draw from across the whole of each and every continuum, the greater are the chances for their full biliterate development and expression (Hornberger 1989: 289). Implicit in that suggestion is a recognition that there has usually *not* been attention to all points. In educational policy and practice regarding biliteracy, there tends to be an implicit privileging of one end of the continua over the other such that one end of each continuum is associated with more power than the other, for example written development over oral development (Figure 3 below depicts the traditional power weighting assigned to the different continua). There is a need to contest the traditional power weighting of the continua by paying attention to and granting agency and voice to actors and practices at what have traditionally been the less powerful ends of the continua (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester 2000).

The continua of biliteracy model, like the ecology of language metaphor, is premised on a view of multilingualism as a resource. Further, the continua of biliteracy model also incorporates the language evolution, language environment, and language endangerment themes of the ecology of language metaphor. The very notion of bi (or multi)-literacy assumes that one language and literacy is developing in relation to one or more other languages and literacies (*language evolution*).

## Power relations in the continua of biliteracy

traditionally less powerful <-----> traditionally more powerful

### Contexts of biliteracy

micro <-----> macro  
oral <-----> literate  
bi(multi)lingual <-----> monolingual

### Development of biliteracy

reception <-----> production  
oral <-----> written  
L1 <-----> L2

### Content of biliteracy

minority <-----> majority  
vernacular <-----> literary  
contextualized <-----> decontextualized

### Media of biliteracy

simultaneous exposure <-----> successive exposure  
dissimilar structures <-----> similar structures  
divergent scripts <-----> convergent scripts

**Figure 3**

The model situates biliteracy development (whether in the individual, classroom, community, or society) in relation to the contexts, media, and content in and through which it develops (i.e. *language environment*); and it provides a heuristic for addressing the unequal balance of power across languages and literacies (i.e. for both studying and counteracting *language endangerment*).

## Opening up ideological space: Biliteracy contexts and development

With this view of biliteracy development in mind, then, we return to the implementational challenges depicted in our three opening scenes. In the South African pedagogy class, Teacher Judy asked what

one can do about negative community attitudes toward South Africa's multilingual language policy, referring specifically to Zulu, Xhosa or other Black African parental demands for English-medium instruction for their children. In the Spanish as a Second Language materials workshop, the Bolivian Vice-Minister of Education suggested that the National Education Reform might have erred in placing too much emphasis on indigenous language instruction at the outset, while neglecting instruction in Spanish as a second language. In Paraguay, one of the challenges the Guaraní curricular team at the Ministry had to contend with was the exponentially escalating demand for and market in English language education in the schools. In these cases, the zeal of educators and policy makers for teaching children literacy on the foundation of a language they speak and feel confident in appears to be at odds with a popular demand for the language of power. As I understand it, Maori educators are also confronting an increased concern for the adequate teaching of English literacy in Maori immersion schools.

The challenge of popular demand for the societal language of power is a very real one in contexts all over the world, one not to be lightly dismissed. In terms of the continua model, case after case shows that societal power relationships tend to favor the macro, literate, and monolingual ends of the *context* continua; and national policy and school curricula tend to focus primarily on second language, written, productive skills in biliterate *development*. Hence, the paradox that even when policies start to open up implementational space for use of indigenous, immigrant, ethnic community languages in schools, wholesale ideological shift to a multilingualism-as-resource view does not always immediately follow.

Interestingly, both Bolivia and South Africa explicitly opened up implementational space for popular participation in establishing school language policies, South Africa via the School Governing Boards and Bolivia via the Comités which are part of the Popular Participation provisions of the Education Reform. The goal is to empower parents to make their own decisions about what languages will be medium and subject of instruction in their children's schools. Yet, ironically, it would appear that the implementational space for popular participation is of little avail in advancing a multilingual language policy if it is not accompanied by popular participation in the ideological space as well (for whatever reason).

There is some evidence, though, that a multilingual language policy is in itself a way to start opening up that ideological space. Consider the South African case. In a study carried out in six newly integrated schools in Durban in Kwazulu-Natal Province, Chick and McKay found a pervasive English-only discourse evident for example in principals' and teachers' rejection of the use of Zulu in classes other than in Zulu lessons, a practice for which they cited as reasons that students needed to improve their English, that students needed English for economic advancement, and that the African National Congress itself uses English as a means of reconciling rival ethnic groups (at odds with the ANC's publicly stated position) (Chick 2001). Yet, the same study also found evidence of counter discourses, including a multicultural discourse in which "[a] number of teachers, primarily younger teachers, stated that they have discovered that the judicious use of Zulu in classrooms can be beneficial and are permitting the use of Zulu even when it runs counter to school policy" (2001: 36). Chick attributes the emergence of this new discourse among teachers to the ideological space which South Africa's new language policies opened up (2001: 43; see also McKay & Chick 2001).

Similarly, working in Capetown, Bloch and Alexander make clear that what is at stake with the new South African multilingual language policy is the "gradual shift of power towards the languages of the majority of the people, who continue in linguistic terms to be treated as a social minority" (forthcoming); and they see the work of their PRAESA<sup>ii</sup> group at Battswood Primary School in Cape Town, where they are developing, trying out, and demonstrating "workable strategies for teaching and learning, using additive bilingualism approaches," as working at the "less powerful micro, oral, and multilingual ends [of the context continua] as [they] develop ways to challenge the power relations that exist at macro, literate, and monolingual English levels of the continua in the school and the wider society" (forthcoming).

This work is consistent with the argument from the continua model that what is needed is attention to oral, multilingual interaction at the micro level of context and to learners' first language, oral, and receptive language skills development (that is, to the traditionally less powerful ends of the continua of context and development). I want to note here that this is, to a large degree, precisely what Maori immersion has succeeded so well in doing. That is, in terms of the context continua, Maori immersion places heavy emphasis on microlevel, oral, Maori language interaction in the classroom as a way of



countering the dominant English presence in the wider society, but it must be recognized that this explicitly favours only one end of the monolingual-bilingual continuum.

Likewise, in terms of the development continua, the emphasis on oral traditions such as the *powhiri*, chants, and Maori legends, and on receptive listening and reading skills that enable the productive speaking and writing ones while not insisting on them, is consistent with the goal of empowering the traditionally less powerful ends of the continua; but again it must be suggested that the emphasis on Maori-only, the children's L2, may be to the detriment of their L1, English, and of their biliterate development overall. In other words, what is needed, in the Maori case as with the others, is to find as many ways as possible to open up ideological spaces for the implementation of multiple languages and literacies in classroom, community, and society, while never overlooking the ecological relations among the languages involved. The continua model is a heuristic to assist in that ecological endeavour.

### **Opening up implementational space: Biliteracy media and content**

South African Professor Elizabeth encouraged the young pre-service teachers to speak and use their languages to discuss their own educational experiences and views in the classroom, thereby modelling a practice they might use with their own multilingual, multicultural students in the future. The Bolivian Curricular Development Unit experts sought to provide richly communicative and literature-based curriculum and materials for indigenous language speakers to learn Spanish, and raised questions about the implications of code-mixing practices in classroom interaction. In Paraguay, the Curricular Team took a pragmatic approach to decisions about allocating curricular areas to Guaraní and Spanish, respectively. In all three cases, the negotiation of multiple languages, cultures, and identities among learners (and teachers) who bring different resources to the classroom, is at issue. As I understand it, Maori educators are also confronting challenges with respect to allocating media and subjects of instruction, in particular the question of whether total immersion is the only viable or appropriate bilingual education strategy for contributing to Maori language revitalization and to Maori student achievement (cf. May 2002).

The challenge of negotiating across multiple languages, cultures, and identities is a very real one in classrooms all over the world, one not to be lightly dismissed. Yet, on the whole, educational policy

and practice continues blithely to disregard the presence of multiple languages, cultures, and identities in today's classrooms. Putting it in terms of the continua model, case after case shows that majority, literary, decontextualised *contents* and similar, convergent, standard language varieties as successively acquired *media* of instruction, are the established and expected norms in educational systems everywhere.

Yet examples abound of classrooms where minority, vernacular, contextualised contents and identities are introduced and a range of media – including dissimilar, divergent, nonstandard varieties as well as visual and other communicative modes – are employed simultaneously in instruction, with stunning results for learners. Andean teachers in a course I taught on bilingual intercultural education wrote narratives about some of their experiences along these lines. One Bolivian teacher opened up a Mother's Day celebration to a child's recitation of a Quechua poem and her Peruvian colleague opened up her language class to the dramatisation of a local story, using local materials and local music. In each case, the results were an impressive display of the learners' talents, accompanied by greater intercultural understanding of all those involved. These teachers made use of media and content that have historically been excluded from the school, and by so doing, they subverted the power imbalance among the languages and literacies in the school environment (Hornberger 2000: 191-192).

In Paraguay, the *Cerro Real* school similarly makes use of content and media traditionally excluded from the school, as revealed in the following excerpts from my fieldnotes:

*5 October 2001, Cerro Real School, Caacupé, Paraguay...* Nelson Aguilera (Academic Director of FALEVI, *Universidad Evangélica del Paraguay*) took me to visit *Escuela #485 - Cerro Real* - just outside the town of Caacupé, about an hour and half's drive from Asunción. We arrived at the school shortly after 9 am and were warmly greeted by Director Lucia Villalba, a former student of Nelson's who had completed her *Licenciatura* in Bilingual Education at UEP a few years earlier.

Although our visit was unexpected, Lucia was eager to show us around the school, in which she rightly takes much pride. In the course of our visit, we toured the preschool classroom, school kitchen, school vegetable garden, tree and flower plantations, seedling hothouse, and the

rest of the grounds, all beautifully landscaped and maintained. Students cultivate and sell the vegetables, trees, flowers, and ornamental plants raised at the school, both as a means of self-sufficiency and also in order to supplement the school's resources and supplies. We learned of many innovations Lucia has introduced in the school since she arrived in 1989 to a school with 2 classrooms, 3 teachers and 45 children. Now there are 43 teachers, 455 students and a full pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade program, including an innovative environmental technology secondary program, as well as evening vocational classes in hairdressing and electricity. Just this year, Lucia competed for and won a new computer and 3 years free access to the internet for the school. Everywhere we visited in the school, students were eagerly and happily at work and teachers were attentive and busy with their students. We observed a 6<sup>th</sup> grade Guarani lesson, in which students worked from their Guarani texts, writing in Guarani in their notebooks and interacting with their group in Guarani. We also briefly visited the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom where one 2<sup>nd</sup> grader read aloud, fluently, in both Guarani and Spanish. Children and learning were clearly thriving at this school.

What was striking to me, in my brief visit, was the Director's ecological approach to education, not only in the literal sense of providing her students opportunity to develop technical agricultural and environmental skills for their own sustenance and self-sufficiency, but also in the metaphorical sense of providing a climate of support for academic instruction in their own Guarani language as well as Spanish, the language of wider communication

In this case, ecological content and technological media clearly complement the use of Guarani in very productive ways.

In their work at Battswood Primary School with 30 Xhosa and 19 English/Afrikaans bilingual children, the PRAESA group are explicitly using the continua of biliteracy as heuristic in their efforts: "Regarding the media of biliteracy, we encourage simultaneous exposure for the Xhosa and English speaking children to both languages with an emphasis on the children's first language... we are concentrating mainly on Xhosa and English, while at the same time not excluding Afrikaans. Our ongoing challenge, in terms of Xhosa language learning for the English/Afrikaans speakers is to try and inspire them enough, and teach the language in ways that motivate them to learn 'against the odds' of any real incentives which promote Xhosa as either necessary or even desirable in the wider society"

(forthcoming). As regards the content of biliteracy, “the teachers have had to move from the safety of the decontextualised content of a rigid phonics-based part-to-whole skills programme to face the real evidence of what their pupils actually know and can do, thereby drawing on contextualised, vernacular, minority (i.e. majority) knowledge” (forthcoming).

To carry out these goals, they encourage oral, mother tongue and bilingual interaction; in Grade One, the teachers sing many songs and do rhymes with the whole class, typing up the Xhosa rhymes and songs and putting them in plastic sleeves with an English one on one side and Xhosa on the other so that the children can serve as readers to each other. They use interactive writing and journal writing, with the English and Xhosa speaking teachers and PRAESA staff members writing back to the children in their respective languages, a strategy which has proved to provide powerful motivation for the children’s use of both languages in their writing. The teachers read daily stories in both Xhosa and English, and have collected an adequate selection of Xhosa and English picture storybooks, which they encourage the children to read in bilingual pairs. The PRAESA group has begun to identify numerous strengths which such practices develop in the children, while simultaneously confronting the fact that most scholastic assessment tools do not measure the kinds of metalinguistic and interpretive skills which particularly stand out in these children.

This work is consistent with the argument from the continua model that what is needed is attention to the diversity of standard and nonstandard language varieties, orthographies, and communicative modes, and the range of contextualized, vernacular, minority knowledge resources that learners bring to the classroom (that is, to the traditionally less powerful ends of the continua of media and content). Here again, many of these are strategies that Maori immersion education has already succeeded so well in implementing. That is, in terms of the content continua, Maori immersion schools place heavy emphasis on minority identities (e.g. Maori legends and myths), vernacular genres and styles (e.g. powhiri and chants), contextualized texts (e.g. drama, skits, and other performances); after all, Maori immersion is not just about Maori language, but about Maori philosophy and the Maori way of life.

Perhaps, however, the success of the *kura kaupapa Maori* in providing for maximum academic achievement of Maori students is more ambiguous in terms of the media continua. Maori immersion, for good reasons previously mentioned, follows a successive strategy with regard to language

exposure, but this leaves largely unanswered, or inadequately answered, the question of the role of English. Maori immersion also emphasizes one standard, written Maori, but this leaves unanswered questions about how to handle dissimilar or divergent varieties of Maori, such as the varieties spoken by community elders, as compared to the school standard. In other words, what is needed, in the Maori case as with the others, is to find as many ways as possible to open up and fill implementational spaces for the widest possible gamut of multiple languages, literacies, and identities in classroom, community, and society, while never overlooking the ecological relations among the languages involved.

### **Concluding comments**

I've spoken in terms of opening up and filling up implementational and ideological spaces. In like vein, May (2000), analyzing the Welsh case, writes that minority language policy must overcome both institutional and attitudinal difficulties in order to be successfully implemented at state level. That is, the minority language must be institutionalized in the public realm and it must gain support from majority language speakers. Whether we refer to institutional and attitudinal difficulties or implementational and ideological spaces, and whether we call them minority languages, heritage languages, community languages, ethnic languages, indigenous and immigrant languages, or what Joshua Fishman has called "the little languages," I am suggesting here that the continua model is a heuristic to assist in the ecological endeavour of making space for them alongside of, and in harmony with, those other languages, whether they be other "little" languages, or foreign languages, second languages, international languages, official languages, and global languages.

Bloch and Alexander express the hope that "the window of opportunity [afforded by South Africa's new language policy] will remain open for another few years and that the multiplication of ... projects [like theirs] in different areas of South Africa involving all the different languages ... will shift the balance of power in favour of those for whom ostensibly the democratic transition was initiated" (forthcoming). I share their optimism and their sense of urgency that we linguists and language educators must work hard alongside policy makers and language users, as educators to fill the ideological and implementational spaces opened up by multilingual language and education policies wherever they exist, as researchers to document these new multilingualism-as-resource discourses in action, and as advocates to keep those ecological spaces open into the future.



## References

- Albó, Xavier. (1995). Educar para una Bolivia plurilingüe. *Cuarto Intermedio*, 35, 3-69.
- Albó, Xavier. (1997). Causas sociales de la desaparición y del mantenimiento de la lengua: Desafíos de la Bolivia plurilingüe. *Pueblos Indígenas y Educación*, 39-40, 73-102.
- Alexander, N. (2000). *English unassailable but unattainable: The dilemma of language policy in South African education* (Occasional Papers 3). Cape Town, South Africa: PRAESA.
- Bloch, C. & Alexander N. (forthcoming). A luta continua!: The relevance of the continua of biliteracy to South African multilingual schools. In N. Hornberger (Ed.), *Continua of biliteracy: An ecological framework for educational policy, research, and practice in multilingual settings*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Chick, K. (2001). Constructing a multicultural national identity: South African classrooms as sites of struggle between competing discourses. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 17, 1-2, 27-45.
- Corvalán, G. (1998). La educación escolar bilingüe del Paraguay: Avances y desafíos. *Revista Paraguaya de Sociología*, 35, 103, 101-118.
- Fishman, J.A. (1966a). Planned reinforcement of language maintenance in the United States; Suggestions for the conservation of a neglected national resource. In J. A. Fishman (Ed.), *Language loyalty in the United States: The maintenance and perpetuation of non-English mother tongues by American ethnic and religious groups* (pp. 369-411). The Hague: Mouton.
- Fishman, J.A. (Ed.). (1966b). *Language loyalty in the United States: The maintenance and perpetuation of non-English mother tongues by American ethnic and religious groups*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Fishman, J.A. (1982). Sociolinguistic foundations of bilingual education. *The Bilingual review/ La revista bilingüe*, 9, 1, 1-35.
- Fortuin, G. (2002). *You are only equal if you look like me and agree with me*. Plenary paper, 8th National Conference on Community Languages and ESOL, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Gynan, S. N. (2001a). Language planning and policy in Paraguay. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 2, 1, 53-118.
- Gynan, S. N. (2001b). Paraguayan language policy and the future of Guaraní. *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*, 20, 1, 151-165.
- Haugen, E. (1972). *The ecology of language*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Heugh, K., A. Siegruhn & Plüddemann P. (Eds) (1995). *Multilingual education for South Africa*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Hornberger, N.H. (1987). Bilingual education success, but policy failure. *Language in Society*, 16, 2, 205-226.
- Hornberger, N.H. (1988). *Bilingual education and language maintenance: A southern Peruvian Quechua case*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Hornberger, N. H. (1989). Continua of biliteracy. *Review of Educational Research*, 59, 3, 271-296.
- Hornberger, N.H. (1990). Creating successful learning contexts for bilingual literacy. *Teachers College Record*, 92, 2, 212-229.
- Hornberger, N.H. (2000). Bilingual education policy and practice in the Andes: Ideological paradox and intercultural possibility. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 31, 2, 173-201.
- Hornberger, N.H. (2002). Multilingual language policies and the continua of biliteracy: An ecological approach. *Language Policy*, 1, 1, 27-51.

- Hornberger, N.H., & López L.E. (1998). Policy, possibility and paradox: Indigenous multilingualism and education in Peru and Bolivia. In J. Cenoz & F. Genesee (Eds.), *Beyond bilingualism: Multilingualism and multilingual education* (pp. 206-242). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Hornberger, N.H. & Skilton-Sylvester, E. (2000). Revisiting the continua of biliteracy: International and critical perspectives. *Language and Education: An International Journal*, 14, 2, 96-122.
- Huss, L., Camilleri Grima, A., & King K. (Eds.). (forthcoming). *Transcending monolingualism: Linguistic revitalisation in education*. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.
- Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R.B. (1997). *Language planning from practice to theory*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Liddicoat, A.J., & Bryant P. (Eds) (2001). Language planning and language ecology: A current issue in language planning. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 1, 3, Entire issue.
- Maffi, L. (2001). *On biocultural diversity: Linking language, knowledge, and the environment*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- May, S. (1999). Language and education rights for indigenous peoples. In S. May (Ed.), *Indigenous community-based education* (pp. 42-66). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- May, S. (2000). Accommodating and resisting minority language policy: The case of Wales. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 3, 2, 101-128.
- May, S. (2002). *Accommodating multiculturalism and biculturalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Implications for language education*. Professorial Inaugural Address, University of Waikato, June.
- McKay, S L., & Chick J.K. (2001). Positioning learners in post apartheid South African schools: A case study of selected multicultural Durban schools. *Linguistics and Education*, 12, 4, 393-408.
- Mühlhäusler, P. (1996). *Linguistic ecology: Language change and linguistic imperialism in the Pacific region*. London: Routledge.
- Nettle, D., & Romaine, S. (2000). *Vanishing voices: The extinction of the world's languages*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pakir, A. (1991) Contribution to workshop on endangered languages, International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics, Hawaii (cited in Mühlhäusler, 1996)
- Phillipson, R., & Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1996). English only worldwide or language ecology? *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 3, 429-452.
- Ricento, T. (2000). Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4, 2, 196-213.
- Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal*, 8, 2, 15-34.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic genocide in education - or worldwide diversity and human rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Spolsky, B. (1989). Maori bilingual education and language revitalisation. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 10, 2, 89-106.
- Spolsky, B. (1996). Conditions for language revitalization: A comparison of the cases of Hebrew and Maori. In S. Wright (Ed.). *Language and the state: Revitalization and revival in Israel and Eire* (pp. 5-29). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.