

A Tale of Two Visions: Hegemonic Whiteness and Bilingual Education

Educational Policy
2016, Vol. 30(1) 13–38
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sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0895904815616482
epx.sagepub.com


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Abstract

In this article, I examine two visions of bilingual education that emerged during the Civil Rights Movement: race radicalism and liberal multiculturalism. I argue that although proponents of both visions believed that bilingual education was necessary for empowering language-minoritized populations, race radicalism conceptualized this empowerment as liberation from hegemonic Whiteness while liberal multiculturalism conceptualized this empowerment as assimilation into hegemonic Whiteness. I then examine the ways that the institutionalization of bilingual education erased race radicalism through reframing the debate around whether these programs should be subtractive or additive. I conclude by arguing that this dominant framing of bilingual education debates continues to reproduce hegemonic Whiteness in ways that marginalize language-minoritized students.

Keywords

bilingual education, racism, Latino, Whiteness, multiculturalism

Since the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement, bilingual education has been positioned as fundamental to the struggle for equality for the Latino community. The original call for bilingual education by Latino activists positioned bilingual education within a larger political struggle against societal oppression. As bilingual

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education became institutionalized, it gradually became disconnected from this larger political struggle in ways that have inadvertently reinforced White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist relations of power—or what I call *hegemonic Whiteness*. Specifically, I argue that the widespread institutionalization of subtractive forms of bilingual education can be understood as the continuation of a long history of *monolingual hegemonic Whiteness*, in that the home language of language-minoritized students is used solely to develop Standardized American English. In addition, the less-prevalent institutionalization of additive forms of bilingual education can be understood as the reconfiguration of hegemonic Whiteness into *bilingual hegemonic Whiteness*, in that students are expected to become bilingual in Standardized American English and another standardized national language. Although framed as oppositional to subtractive forms of bilingual education, these additive forms of bilingual education continue to reinforce hegemonic Whiteness in ways that continue to marginalize language-minoritized students.

To support this claim, I first situate the origins of hegemonic Whiteness within the rise of nation-states and colonization. Both developments were integral to the material spread of global capitalism and the discursive production of a hegemonic White subject in opposition to racialized Others, who were positioned as threats to national unity and colonial power. I specifically examine the role of language in this racialization process, focusing on the ways that it played out in the U.S. context. I then use this historical analysis of hegemonic Whiteness as a point of reference for analyzing two visions of bilingual education that emerged in the 1960s in the United States. Following the lead of Melamed (2011), I refer to these two visions of bilingual education as *race radicalism* and *liberal multiculturalism*. Race radicalism positioned bilingual education for Latinos within a larger political struggle against the White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist relations of power associated with hegemonic Whiteness. Liberal multiculturalism, however, positioned bilingual education for Latino students within a larger project of assimilation into these relations of power. After describing representative samples of each of these two traditions, I examine how the institutionalization of bilingual education undermined race radicalism by shifting the debate to whether bilingual education should be subtractive or additive. This shift reformulated bilingual education as an official antiracism—that is, a form of antiracism that does little to challenge the White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist status quo (Melamed, 2011).

The Raciolinguistics of Hegemonic Whiteness

Hegemonic Whiteness can be succinctly defined as the “common sense ideal of what white identity should be” (Hughey, 2012, p. 14). It represents an

idealized White subject—what the ideal White person should be and act like in terms of his or her look, demeanor, sexual behaviors, gender identity, language practices, and so on. Although White individuals are all different from one another, hegemonic Whiteness “is singular and consistent in its search to create the world after its own image” (Leonardo & Zemblyas, 2013, p. 153). In short, hegemonic Whiteness is inherently imperialist in that it is simply understood as the way people are or should be—despite the fact that at its roots are changing notions of a racialized Other who is positioned in opposition to the idealized hegemonic White subject.

The rise of hegemonic Whiteness was both a material and discursive process. Specifically, the material shift from feudalism and its privilege of nobility to capitalism and its privilege of the bourgeoisie produced a discursive shift from “we have to defend ourselves against society [to] we have to defend society against all the biological threats posed by the other race, the subrace, the counterrace that we are despite ourselves, bringing into existence” (Foucault, 2003, pp. 61-62). This discursive shift produced two overlapping racialized Others that needed to be defended against: the lower classes and colonized populations. In short, the material shift to capitalism occurred alongside a process of hegemonic White racial formation that sought to provide political legitimacy for the emerging bourgeoisie by discursively producing a normalized White-bourgeois class in opposition to the lower classes and the racialized Other (Foucault, 2003; Stoler, 1995).

Language was integral to the production of this idealized hegemonic White racial subject. This relationship can also be understood both materially and discursively. Materially, the invention of the printing press allowed for a gradual shift away from the exclusive use of Latin in writing texts to favoring the use of vernacular languages. Framing this shift in terms of the capitalist economic system that was also beginning to emerge at this time, Anderson (1991) argued that “the logic of capitalism thus meant that once the elite Latin market was saturated, the potentially huge markets represented by the monoglot masses would beckon” (p. 38). Discursively, the creation of these new markets entailed codifying the idealized language practices of the emerging bourgeoisie and molding the linguistically heterogeneous speakers of various language varieties into a homogeneous linguistic group. These codified vernaculars were named “a national language” that represented “a people,” with rights to “a land” (Gal, 2006). This codification of national languages was part of the formation of raciolinguistic ideologies that produced an idealized hegemonic White subject in opposition to racialized Others, who were represented as engaging in language practices that were a threat to the integrity of the national polity (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Orelus, 2013).

Bonfiglio (2002) describes the development of Standardized American English as a raciolinguistic project that sought to discursively produce the American bourgeoisie in opposition to the racialized Other. He notes how by the 1920s Midwestern speech patterns were recognized as Standardized American English as a result of the xenophobic and racist movements of the early 20th century that saw New York and other large urban areas on the east coast as polluted with undesirable immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. One way that the Whiteness of individuals and communities was then determined was through their ability to linguistically discipline themselves by engaging in these idealized language practices, which in turn justified their access to, or exclusion from, the material benefits of hegemonic Whiteness (Roth-Gordon, 2011). Some ethnic communities were eventually able to develop this linguistic discipline and use this ability as a way of assimilating into hegemonic Whiteness, while other communities were racialized in ways that excluded them from ever attaining this ideal (Brodin, 1998; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 2006).

But racialized communities did not passively accept their marginalization. On the contrary, throughout U.S. history, these communities have strived to develop alternative spaces outside of hegemonic Whiteness. For example, Latinos in the Southwest advocated for bilingual education after the region was conquered by the United States (Blanton, 2004), Native Americans created their own educational systems in response to the assimilative policies of boarding schools (Spring, 2009), and African Americans insisted on their right to literacy even when it was prohibited by law (Williams, 2009). These acts of resistance would eventually culminate in the Civil Rights Movement—a social movement that fundamentally challenged the hegemonic Whiteness that lies at the foundation of U.S. society (Winant, 2004). However, as I argue in the next section, rather than breaking with hegemonic Whiteness, policies developed in response to the Civil Rights Movement ultimately reconfigured hegemonic Whiteness in ways that continued to perpetuate White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist relations of power.

Hegemonic Whiteness and the Civil Rights Movement

An oft-overlooked aspect of the Civil Rights Movement was the larger socio-political context of worldwide revolution in which it developed. These worldwide revolutionary movements sought to instill racialized communities with a “different view of themselves and their world; different, that is, from the world-view and self-concepts offered by the established social order” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 99). Melamed (2011) refers to the ideologies of these revolutionary

struggles as *race radicalism*, which she defines as an attempt to “to reconsolidate race as a sign with the cultural, ideological, political, and material forces of worldly radical antiracist movements, which have crucially analyzed race within the genealogy of global capitalism” (Melamed, 2011, p. 49). In short, race radicalism sought to produce new subjectivities outside of the purview of hegemonic Whiteness and to develop new forms of sociality outside of White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist relations of power.

The revolutionary possibilities offered by these new subjectivities were eventually undermined through a process of political incorporation that “insulated the racial state from revolutionary transformation and absorbed antiracist movements in a reform-oriented transition” (Winant, 2004, p. 112). As the demands of the Civil Rights Movement became institutionalized through such measures as the Civil Rights Act, the Bilingual Education Act, and the War on Poverty, they became official forms of antiracism that “stabilized political limits, interpretive tendencies, and economic forces that readjusted and inevitably extended U.S. and transnational capitalist structures of racial domination” (Melamed, 2011, p. 26). In short, the revolutionary potential of the subjectivities produced by Civil Rights Movement struggles was incorporated into a newly reconfigured hegemonic Whiteness that perpetuated White supremacy, imperialism, and capitalism using the antiracist and social justice discourses of the Civil Rights Movement (Ferguson, 2012; Melamed, 2011; Omi & Winant, 1994; Winant, 2004).

Melamed (2011) refers to the official antiracism that emerged from this political incorporation as *liberal multiculturalism*, which she defines as providing “weak terms of social solidarity, enjoining Americans to affirm a positive cultural pluralism by recognizing that ‘we are the world’” (p. 35). Liberal multiculturalism produces idealized multicultural subjects who “see themselves as good antiracists by virtue of their antiracist feeling and desire for diversity, even as [they] continued to accrue unearned benefits from material and social arrangements that favored them” (Melamed, 2011, p. 37). Regarding education, liberal multiculturalism begins with the premise that prejudice is a problem of individuals that can be counteracted through education that focuses on the positive attributes of all groups (Hurd, 2008; Sleeter, 1995). By focusing on individual-level prejudice, liberal multiculturalism leaves unaddressed the ways that schooling practices have historically and continue to be structured in ways that reinforce hegemonic Whiteness.

Although scholars have examined some of the ways that the race radicalism of the Civil Rights Movement was incorporated into forms of official antiracism both inside and outside of education, there has not been a systematic analysis of the transformation that bilingual education underwent. In the remainder of this article, I undertake this analysis. I first examine the race

radical vision of bilingual education of the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican nationalist organization based in the United States. I have chosen the Young Lords both because of their impact in the Puerto Rican/Latino community during the 1960s and 1970s (Melendez, 2003) and because of the clearly articulated vision they offered for an alternative society (Nelson, 2001). They are by no means the only radical Latino group that discussed bilingual education in these terms, but they are an illustrative example. After analyzing the race radicalism of the Young Lords, I examine the liberal multicultural vision of bilingual education of educational psychologists whose work emerged in the same time period. As was the case with the race radical vision, I chose this body of work as an illustrative example—certainly not the only example—of liberal multiculturalism.

A Race Radical Vision of Bilingual Education

One of the major battle cries of Latinos during the Civil Rights Movement was bilingual education. In the Southwest, Chicano activists advocated for the establishment of bilingual education as a way of counteracting the White supremacist mainstream curriculum. In contrast to the accommodationist policies that sought to gain access to hegemonic Whiteness that characterized previous generations of work (Blanton, 2006), the Civil Rights Era witnessed Chicano activists situating calls for bilingual education within a larger political project that sought to create revolutionary Chicano subjectivities who would rebuild Aztlán—the lands that had been taken from Mexico as part of the Mexican American war (Trujillo, 1996). That is, calls for bilingual education among Chicano activists were embedded within a larger political struggle to overthrow hegemonic Whiteness.

It is within this larger context of race radical activism within the Latino community that the Young Lords, a U.S.-based Puerto Rican nationalist organization, rose to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. Although Chicano activists situated their race radicalism within calls for rebuilding Aztlán, the Young Lords situated their work within the decolonial struggle of Puerto Rico. They opposed the imposition of English-only schooling and “an American-style curriculum that glorified mainland history and institutions while ignoring the island’s cultural heritage” (Vélez, 2000, p. 9) that had characterized much of the colonial history between the United States and Puerto Rico. They positioned themselves as continuing the long history of revolutionary resistance to U.S. imperial control of Puerto Rico and as working in solidarity with the Puerto Rican independence struggle that reached a peak in the 1960s (Torres & Velásquez, 1998). Yet their primary focus was on mainland Puerto Ricans who were forced to migrate to the U.S. mainland due

in large part to the implementation of Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico—an economic modernization project that led to the displacement of many small farmers while failing to offer sufficient numbers of industrial jobs for the newly displaced population (Whalen, 2001).

The Young Lords emerged as a political organization in Chicago in 1968. This was followed in 1969 with a branch in New York City. Although their primary bases of action were Chicago and New York City, the Young Lords developed branches in Puerto Rican communities around the United States, including Philadelphia and Hartford (Marquez & Jennings, 2000) and in mainland Puerto Rico (Melendez, 2003). As part of their attempt to develop new revolutionary Puerto Rican subjectivities, the Young Lords participated in many direct action campaigns, including taking over a hospital and a church and converting them to community-run organizations. They also engaged in seemingly less radical work, such as developing breakfast programs and day care centers to serve their communities (Enck-Wanzer, 2010; Melendez, 2003). All of this work was done in the spirit of organizing the community to rise up in revolution against hegemonic Whiteness.

The best way to illustrate the Young Lords' race radical vision of the role of bilingual education is to demonstrate where it fit with their 13-Point Program and Platform released in 1970:

1. We want self-determination for Puerto Ricans. Liberation on the island and inside the United States.
2. We want self-determination for all Latinos.
3. We want liberation of all Third World People.
4. We are revolutionary nationalists and oppose racism.
5. We want equality for women. Down with machismo and male chauvinism.
6. We want community control of our institutions and land.
7. We want a true education of our Afro-Indio culture and Spanish language.
8. We oppose capitalists and alliances with traitors.
9. We oppose the American military.
10. We want freedom for all political prisoners and prisoners of war.
11. We are internationalists.
12. We believe armed self-defense and armed struggle are the only means to liberation.
13. We want a socialist society.

Point 7 of this platform, which calls for a “true education of our Afro-Indio culture and Spanish language,” situates the call for bilingual education within

a larger struggle against White supremacy, imperialism, and capitalism. For the Young Lords, bilingual education was not an end in and of itself, but rather a means for developing new revolutionary Puerto Rican subjectivities who would decolonize their community by resisting hegemonic Whiteness.

The Young Lords' advocacy of bilingual education was situated within a larger critique of dominant educational programs, which they argued were counterrevolutionary in their embrace of hegemonic Whiteness. A major position of the Young Lords was that the current educational system was dominated by White supremacist ideologies that served to silence the perspective of the Puerto Rican community:

When the amerikkkan army landed in Guanica in 1898 they brought with them not only soldiers, but teachers, administrators, geologists, biologists, etc. When they got there, they threw away history books written by Puerto Ricans and had gringos rewrite our history. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 125)

The Young Lords argued that this “gringo history” caused psychological damage and self-hate among many in the Puerto Rican community:

Colonialism has messed our minds so badly that psychologically we don't even know who we are nor where we come from. We reject our cultural values and basic human values by imitating that which is not natural to us and by stomping on our own reflections. We've been systematically taught to hate ourselves while being reminded constantly by racist America that we ain't her kind of people either. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 134)

According to the Young Lords, the psychological damage caused by White supremacist educational programs served to miseducate Puerto Ricans into docilely accepting the status quo of hegemonic Whiteness:

This country has embedded its teachings and its laws into our people's heads. They have taken the chains off our hands and put them on our minds . . . Amerikkka makes sure that though we have eyes, we don't see; and though we have ears, we don't hear; and though we have tongues and minds, we don't think or speak about the cruelties and injustices we go through every day on the job, in school, in the army, or on the streets. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 139)

The result of this colonizing education is that rather than resist oppression, Puerto Ricans and other marginalized groups internalized this oppression and engaged in violence toward one another:

Not only Puerto Ricans, but all oppressed people, have been taught in racist schools to be non-violent to the oppressor—the landlord, the doctor, the big

supermarket, the generals, and the government—and violent toward themselves and their neighbors. It's okay to fire a gun and murder Asians in Vietnam and Cambodia, but not the government when you come home and find yourself without a job or a decent place to live. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 150)

In short, the miseducation of Puerto Rican students was seen as part of a larger racial project that sought to enforce hegemonic Whiteness worldwide.

In response to this racist miseducation, the Young Lords encouraged Puerto Ricans and other students of color to resist their schooling:

To all our brothers and sisters in school—if your school is messed up, if the administration and the teachers don't care and don't teach—don't let them force you to drop out. Throw them out. The schools belong to us, not to them. Take all that anger and put it to work for our people. Make revolution inside the school. If the schools don't function for us, they shouldn't function at all! (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 128)

They positioned this resistance to the oppressive school system in solidarity with other Third World people:

Inefficient administrators + racist uncaring teachers + overcrowded classrooms + irrelevant curriculums + old, lying textbooks + an attitude of “don't ask too many questions” + a prison atmosphere = genocide (the mass killing of people). But students and parents everywhere are rising up against these conditions. We understand that by herding us into these brainwashing centers, our enemy is trying to kill our desire to learn, to destroy our ability to get the skills and knowledges we need to fight a society that needs us only for cheap labor and manpower for its racist wars against other Third World people. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 127)

Their call for bilingual education was part of a larger struggle to create an alternative vision of the world outside of the framework of hegemonic Whiteness. The Young Lords referred to their alternative vision of the world as *revolutionary nationalism*. As they defined it,

Revolutionary nationalism is the coming together of Puerto Ricans because of similar culture, life style, and a similar political reality, oppression for the purposes of forming a mass-oriented organization to implement a common ideology which will struggle for liberation of our people through armed struggle. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 135)

An alternative, revolutionary education was seen as integral to the decolonizing education deemed necessary to develop this revolutionary consciousness:

The Young Lords Organization is a revolutionary nationalist party because we see that the politics of the Puerto Rican colony evolves from a common cultural and common political oppression and therefore, must be defined by those within it. As Puerto Ricans, we must, then, find and develop ways of educating our people to wage righteous struggle against imperialism here and abroad. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 136)

At the core of this alternative revolutionary approach to education was bilingual education. The Young Lords' vision of bilingual education advocated placing the history and language of Puerto Ricans at the center of instruction:

To combat psychological imperialism we could begin by teaching our people pride in being boricueños, that Puerto Rican Spanish is not a bastard knowledge, and that we should all attempt to learn it, that our women and men are warriors and are to be respected and that we are proud of our Indio-Afro heritage (the Spaniards contributed nothing but racism, rape, venereal disease and genocide). (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, p. 134)

The Young Lords conducted many educational sessions that sought to implement this alternative language and race-conscious revolutionary educational vision. Below is a description of sessions that they proposed as part of their community education programs:

The sessions will educate and prepare our brothers and sisters to deal with the society in which we live. That society is racist and capitalistic and has as its desire a world empire (imperialism) built on the backs of Puerto Ricans and other Third World people. Our children must relearn Spanish, our young brothers and sisters must learn of our history and culture, and our warriors, men and women, must learn of the greatness of the Puerto Rican nation. (Cited in Enck-Wanzer, 2010, pp. 125-126)

Education in general—and bilingual education specifically—was integral to the creation of the revolutionary subjectivities that the Young Lords hoped to produce. These subjectivities provided a fundamental challenge to the White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist relations of power that lie at the core of hegemonic Whiteness. That is, they viewed bilingual education as part of a project that sought the complete overthrow of the current order of things and its replacement with a new, more just, social order.

By the mid-1970s, The Young Lords had disbanded. Although the primary immediate cause of their disbandment was extreme government repression (Jeffries, 2003), another cause was the incorporation of their radical vision into an official antiracism—that is, as a tool for the perpetuation, rather than

the undermining, of hegemonic Whiteness (Melamed, 2011). It is to this alternative vision to bilingual education that I now turn.

A Liberal Multicultural Approach to Bilingual Education

While the Young Lords and others were advocating a race radical vision of bilingual education as part of the complete overthrow of hegemonic Whiteness, a contrasting vision of bilingual education—the liberal multicultural perspective—was also emerging. This view of bilingual education conceptualized bilingual education as a tool to provide Latinos access to the idealized language practices of a reconfigured bilingual vision of hegemonic Whiteness. This liberal multicultural vision of bilingual education challenged the idealized monolingualism of pre-Civil Rights U.S. society, but it did so through the production of an idealized bilingualism that continued to marginalize the language practices of Latino students.

The liberal multicultural tradition of bilingual education has its roots in the seminal, and still widely cited, research finding that bilingual students have a cognitive advantage over their monolingual counterparts (Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Peal & Lambert, 1962). Unlike the Young Lords, who saw bilingualism as integral to the fight against hegemonic Whiteness, this body of work began with the premise that the effects of bilingualism were unknown and could be measured by standardized assessments. Also, unlike the Young Lords, who developed their analysis from the perspective of a racialized community, this body of work emerged from a context of privilege—a group of French monolinguals and French–English bilinguals from middle-class backgrounds in Canada negotiating two languages of relative privilege. In other words, while race radicalism’s conceptualization of bilingualism had its origins among the oppressed and sought to challenge hegemonic Whiteness, the liberal multicultural conceptualization emerged within a context of privilege and sought to reconfigure hegemonic Whiteness to adapt to changing sociopolitical circumstances.

The seeds of this newly reconfigured hegemonic Whiteness can be seen in the seminal study that discovered a cognitive advantage of bilingualism. Specifically, the researchers used a very narrow definition of bilingualism that excluded a large portion of the original research participants. As Peal and Lambert (1962) described it,

On the basis of these tests, the entire sample of 364 subjects originally contacted was divided into three groups: one group composed of monolinguals, a second group composed of bilinguals, and a third group which could not be

unambiguously classified as either monolingual or bilingual. Only the first two of these groups were further tested. The third group was not used again. (p. 8)

The authors noted that the final sample was 164 subjects. This means that 200 subjects were deemed not appropriately monolingual or bilingual to be included in the study. In other words, at the core of their framework is an idealized bilingualism that parallels the idealized monolingualism of previous iterations of hegemonic Whiteness. That is, liberal multiculturalism theorized bilingualism in ways that reconfigures hegemonic Whiteness away from an idealized monolingualism and toward an idealized bilingualism.

This idealized bilingualism would prove a challenge for supporters of the liberal multicultural vision of bilingual education when they sought to apply their framework to the U.S. context. The challenge that these advocates confronted was that although the idealized bilingualism at the core of their research seemed to improve cognitive skills for White middle- and upper-class Canadian students, they did not discover the same cognitive advantages for lower-class bilingual Latinos in the United States. As Cummins (1979/2001) put it,

Why does a home-school language switch result in high levels of functional bilingualism and academic achievement in middle class majority language children, yet lead to inadequate command of both first (L1) and second (L2) languages and poor academic achievement in many minority language children? (p. 63)

While race radicalism sought to answer the question of what role the actual bilingualism of Puerto Ricans/Latinos could play in undermining hegemonic Whiteness, proponents of liberal multiculturalism sought to answer the question of why Latinos did not conform to the expectations of idealized bilingualism as determined by standardized assessments. In other words, race radicalism celebrated the bilingualism of U.S. Latinos, while liberal multiculturalism framed their bilingualism as deficient in comparison with the bilingualism of White middle- and upper-class students.

In response to the apparent contradiction between research demonstrating cognitive advantages of bilingualism for White middle- and upper-class Canadian students and cognitive deficit of bilingualism for lower-class Latinos in the United States, Cummins (1979/2001) developed the threshold hypothesis, which he described as follows:

The threshold hypothesis makes two theoretical assumptions regarding the relation of bilingualism and cognition. The first assumption is that failure to resolve difficulties in coping with two languages over a prolonged period of

time can negatively influence an individual's rate of cognitive development. Secondly, the threshold hypothesis assumes that when a certain level of competence in two languages has been attained, there are aspects either of a bilingual's present access to two languages or of his bilingual learning experiences which can positively influence his cognitive functioning. (p. 45)

In a nutshell, Cummins argued that to prevent cognitive deficits associated with bilingualism, speakers needed to attain a certain threshold of mastery over both languages. Moreover, to reap cognitive advantages associated with bilingualism, bilingual speakers must attain an even higher threshold. Cummins (1976/2001) used his theoretical framework to provide a coherent picture of what up to that point appeared to be contradictory data about the effect of bilingualism on cognitive development:

In summary, the results of a large number of studies indicate that, under some conditions, bilingualism, or rather the attempt to become bilingual, can adversely affect some cognitive processes. Negative effects have been reported most frequently in the areas of verbal and scholastic achievement and it thus seems reasonable to infer that many of the bilingual subjects in these studies failed to overcome difficulties in coping with two languages. It will be argued later that the positive cognitive consequences reported in many recent studies are a reflection of the fact that the bilingual subjects in these studies are likely to have overcome difficulties in coping with two languages. (Cummins, 1976/2001, p. 28)

Studies that demonstrated cognitive deficits associated with bilingualism, and studies that demonstrated cognitive benefits associated with bilingualism could now be explained using a coherent framework. Cognitive deficits were found if students had not reached the first threshold of language competence, whereas cognitive benefits were reaped by students who had reached the second threshold.

This threshold hypothesis is the origin of the hegemonic Whiteness that lies at the core of the liberal multicultural vision of bilingual education. It parallels the otherizing process found in the raciolinguistic project of monolingual hegemonic Whiteness and can perhaps be thought of as bilingual hegemonic Whiteness. Whereas monolingual hegemonic Whiteness positions a monolingual speaker of the standardized national language as the ideal national subject, bilingual hegemonic Whiteness produces a hierarchy of bilingualism, with those coming from White middle-class households deemed more aligned with an idealized bilingualism that produces cognitive benefits and the racialized Others seen as cognitively deficient in ways that have prevented them from mastering either of their two languages.

Cummins would eventually come to call the language practices necessary for avoiding cognitive deficit *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP). The concept of CALP has been at the core of the liberal multicultural vision of bilingual education since Cummins first introduced the concept in the 1980s, and it continues to be enormously influential in the field of bilingual education in the United States (Baker, 2011; Baker & Hornberger, 2001). Cummins defined CALP as the decontextualized language of school. However, despite arguing that CALP is decontextualized language, Cummins noted that CALP is prominent in the home of language-majoritized populations when he argued that “the prerequisites for acquiring literacy skills are instilled in most middle-class majority language children by their linguistic experience in the home” (Cummins, 1979/2001, p. 76). This description of the home language practices of middle-class language-majoritized students is a sharp contrast to the way he described the home language practices of language-minoritized White students:

The child’s L1 abilities (i.e. the development of concepts and thinking skills in L1) may be poorly developed on entry to school. This leaves children without a conceptual basis for learning L2 in an L2-only school situation and consequently they may achieve only low levels of proficiency (e.g. reading skills) in both languages. (Cummins, 1982/2001, p. 128)

In short, at the core of the liberal multicultural vision of bilingual education is the assumption that the language practices of language-majoritized White populations are more conceptually rich than the language practices of language-minoritized Latinos. Describing CALP as decontextualized language normalizes the idealized language practices of hegemonic Whiteness and positions these language practices as the language practices that Latinos must master (MacSwan, 2000; Petrovic, 2012). In contrast to race radicalism, which sought to use bilingual education as a tool for the development of subjectivities outside of hegemonic Whiteness, liberal multiculturalism sought to use bilingual education as a tool for the molding of the bilingualism of Latinos into a form that would be recognizable by and useful to hegemonic Whiteness.

CALP and the cognitive advantages that it is purported to offer students have been integral to liberal multicultural support for bilingual education. The result of this focus on CALP has been a focus on the ways that bilingual education can support language-minoritized students in mastering the language practices of hegemonic Whiteness. As bilingual education became institutionalized, it was this limited view of antiracism that was embraced as the way forward in empowering language-minoritized students through

increasing their access to hegemonic Whiteness—a discursive shift that has been complicit in a renewed marginalization of these students under the guise of antiracism.

The Institutionalization of Bilingual Education

The institutionalization of bilingual education began with the passage of the Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1968. The original legislation was ambiguous as to what constituted bilingual education. Because of the ambiguity, it was left to the Office of Education to decide what types of programs qualified for federal funding and to local communities to determine the nature of the bilingual education programs that they would implement (Crawford, 2000). Within this context, race radical Chicanos in the Southwest and Puerto Ricans on the East Coast sought to use bilingual education programs to create revolutionary subjectivities outside of hegemonic Whiteness. For example, in response to the student walkouts in Crystal City, Texas that demanded bilingual education programs for Chicano students, race radical Chicano activists created bilingual education programs that not only sought to develop biliteracy skills but also had an “explicit political role in preparing future leaders to build Aztlán” (Trujillo, 1996, p. 136). In addition, the first bilingual programs to open in New York City emerged during the local community control experiment in Ocean Hill–Brownsville that sought to empower racialized communities to control their local institutions (Nieto, 2000).

This race radicalism was eventually undermined by a debate that focused exclusively on whether bilingual education should be subtractive or additive. Specifically, advocates for subtractive forms of bilingual education promoted the use of Spanish for the sole purpose of developing Standardized American English. In New York City, this subtractive form of bilingual education was institutionalized with the ASPIRA Consent Decree, a legal agreement made by New York City and ASPIRA of New York represented by the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund in 1974. In contrast to a race radical vision of bilingual education that would be used as part of a resocialization process for all Latino students, the ASPIRA Consent Decree established transitional bilingual education programs that would be offered only to students who scored below a certain threshold on an English-language proficiency exam (Del Valle, 1998; Reyes, 2006). Similar processes occurred in the Southwest, with the race radicalism of Chicano activists undermined by a move toward transitional and remedial models (Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000).

This institutionalization of transitional forms of bilingual education made these programs vulnerable to attack as evaluations of these programs began

to criticize them for keeping students in bilingual classes even after their English proficiency was deemed sufficient to place them in mainstream classes. This criticism was exacerbated when the first national study of Title VII determined that students in bilingual education programs scored lower in English and comparable in Math than their peers in monolingual programs (Hacsi, 2002). In reaction to this criticism, Congress voted in 1978, in the reauthorization of the ESEA, to restrict federal support to transitional bilingual education programs where students would be mainstreamed as quickly as possible (Crawford, 2000). Henceforth, to receive federal funding, a program had to have the explicit goal of transitioning students to English as quickly as possible—that is, monolingual hegemonic Whiteness.

Many liberal multicultural supporters of bilingual education were critical of the monolingual hegemonic Whiteness of transitional bilingual education because they worried that students would not reach the bilingual “threshold” necessary to ensure full cognitive development. These advocates argued for additive forms of bilingual education that supported language-minoritized students in developing “balanced bilingualism” through mastery of academic language in their “L1” and “L2” (Cummins, 1986/2001). As was the case with proponent of subtractive forms of bilingual education, proponents of additive forms of bilingual education relied on student performance on standardized assessments as justification for their position with a plethora of studies conducted that illustrated the benefits of additive forms of bilingual education (Greene, 1997; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Collier & Thomas, 2002; Willig, 1985). Based on these findings, the common narrative in defense of additive forms of bilingual education became that transitional bilingual education programs were “turning out students whose CALP-dimension proficiency in both the mother tongue and English is inadequate for participation in English-only classrooms” and that “maintenance bilingual programs or two-way enrichment programs of longer duration (at least 6 years) would be far superior to transitional bilingual programs” (Spencer, 1988, pp. 149-151). In short, proponents of additive forms of bilingual education did not challenge the premise that Latino students were linguistically and cognitively deficient. Instead, their argument was that these students needed more time in bilingual education to ensure that they successfully acquired the idealized language practices of hegemonic Whiteness as determined by standardized assessments.

In summary, as bilingual education became institutionalized, it became reincorporated into hegemonic Whiteness. On the one end of the debate were proponents of monolingual hegemonic Whiteness who thought that the role of Spanish should be minimized to ensure that students made sufficient progress in English as determined by standardized assessments. On the other end

of the debate were proponents of bilingual hegemonic Whiteness who thought that providing students with CALP in Spanish was necessary to ensure that they would make sufficient progress in English as determined by standardized assessments. This debate erased race radicalism that sought to question the legitimacy of mainstream educational tools such as standardized assessments and expose the hegemonic Whiteness that lied at their core. Instead, both sides of the debate located the root of the problem in the language practices of Latino students and legitimized standardized assessments as a tool for assessing the bilingualism (or lack thereof) of these students and ensuring that they were provided with access to the idealized language practices of hegemonic Whiteness.

Some might argue that the reincorporation of bilingual education into hegemonic Whiteness was a question of political tactic and was necessary to ensure at least some form of bilingual support for Latino students. Yet this reincorporation into hegemonic Whiteness was not successful at developing strong institutional support for additive forms of bilingual education, nor was it successful at protecting institutional support for subtractive forms of bilingual education. Indeed, by the late 1990s, bilingual education was under attack in a campaign spearheaded by millionaire Ron Unz, which culminated in the outlawing of bilingual education in several states. This began with the passage of Proposition 227 in California in 1998, followed by similar initiatives in Arizona and Massachusetts in 2002. Unz also experienced his first defeat in 2002 in Colorado. Ironically, one major reason for this defeat was a US\$3 million contribution to the opposition campaign made by another millionaire, whose daughter was attending a two-way immersion program (Hubler, 2002). Perhaps even more ironically, opponents of the ban on bilingual education used this money to pay for commercials that were condemned by Unz as playing on the racist sentiments of the White population of Colorado. He described one of the commercials as

intended to play on the unsubtle fears of white conservative voters, running visually-gripping ads featuring throbbing doomsday music while an announcer claims “We know that Amendment 31 will knowingly force children who can barely speak English into regular classrooms, creating chaos and disrupting learning.” (Unz, 2002)

A campaign in support of bilingual education that plays on the racist fears of White constituencies stands in sharp contrast to the race radicalism of the Young Lords and other race radical Latinos who positioned bilingual education as part of a process of undoing hegemonic Whiteness. Again, some might argue that this was a question of political tactic—that the only way to save

any form of bilingual education in Colorado was to exploit the racist fears of White communities. Yet, although relying on these questionable political tactics may, in the short term, seem to benefit these students, in the long run, its collusion with hegemonic Whiteness will inevitably reinforce racial inequality. In the case of Colorado, this reinforcing of racial inequality is fairly obvious in that support for bilingual education reinforces deficit perspectives of Latino children by depicting them as threats to the education of White children. However, there are also more insidious ways that support for bilingual education colludes with hegemonic Whiteness. In the next section, I examine the shift to the language-as-resource orientation that has gained wide acceptance among liberal multicultural supporters of bilingual education in recent years and identify the ways that this seemingly race-neutral support of bilingual education continues to reinforce hegemonic Whiteness.

Hegemonic Whiteness and the Language-as-Resource Orientation

In response to the institutionalization of transitional forms of bilingual education and its attack by conservative activists, liberal multicultural proponents of bilingual education began to shift their focus away from the bilingualism of language-minoritized students and began to emphasize how bilingualism could be a resource for all students. This shift can be traced to Ruiz (1984), who argued for a language-as-resource orientation to language policy that positions bilingualism as an asset in an increasingly globalized world. Despite important criticisms of the language-as-resource orientation (Petrovic, 2005; Ricento, 2005), it has gained increasing prominence among liberal multicultural supporters of bilingual education. Specifically, the idea that language is a resource has led to a call in the field for “bilingualism for all” (Christian, Howard, & Loeb, 2000). This bilingualism for all mantra has coalesced around almost unanimous support among bilingual education advocates for dual-language (also known as “two-way immersion”) programs, which place language-majoritized and language-minoritized students together to develop bilingualism in the idealized hegemonic White language practices of English and the home languages of the language-minoritized students.

Justification for dual-language programs is most often framed within this language-as-resource orientation. Lindholm-Leary (2000), in a report written for the U.S. Department of Education, provides an example of this framing of dual-language programs:

Dual language education is a program that has the potential to promote the multilingual and multicultural competencies necessary for the new global

business job market while eradicating the significant achievement gap between language minority and language majority students. The appeal of dual language programs is that they combine successful education models in an integrated classroom composed of both language majority and language minority students with the goals of full bilingualism and biliteracy, academic excellence for both groups, and multicultural competencies. (p. 5)

In the same report, descriptions of the success of these dual-language programs are framed within this same orientation:

Results demonstrate that the dual language education model can be successful. Students learn the communication skills and multicultural competencies to work on multicultural teams. Further, research reveals that students develop the types of competencies required by the global economy job market:

- Bilingual proficiency;
- Biliteracy;
- Achievement in content areas; and
- Multicultural competencies. (Lindholm-Leary, 2000, p. 35)

Whereas the race radicalism of the Civil Rights Movement positioned bilingual education as a tool for overthrowing the White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist relations of power of hegemonic Whiteness, the liberal multiculturalism of the language-as-resource orientation positions bilingual education within the expansion of global capitalism (Petrovic, 2005; Ricento, 2005).

Although there has been almost unanimous support for these programs among liberal multicultural supporters of bilingual education, some scholars have raised concerns about their uncritical acceptance. Valdés (1997) positions her concerns about these programs directly within the language-as-resource orientation that lies at their core:

While it is tempting to bill dual-language immersion programs as examples of implementations in which language is a resource rather than a problem it is important to note the arguments . . . within the critical language awareness perspective, which contend that educators need to carefully examine who the main beneficiaries of these language “resources” will be. (p. 419)

In other words, in a society with hierarchies created by hegemonic Whiteness, language as a resource for all is likely to benefit those who most closely fit the ideals of hegemonic Whiteness—namely, White middle- and upper-class

students and their families. Valdés elaborates on her point explicitly in terms of the economic justifications often used to defend these programs:

Being bilingual has given members of the Mexican American community, for example, access to certain jobs for which language skills were important. Taken to its logical conclusion, if dual-language immersion programs are successful, when there are large numbers of majority persons who are also bilingual, this special advantage will be lost . . . At this moment in time, given strong anti-immigrant sentiments, it is not difficult to imagine that an Anglo, middle-class owner of a neighborhood Taco Bell might choose to hire people like himself who can also talk effectively to the hired help instead of hiring members of the minority bilingual population. (Valdés, 1997, pp. 419-420)

Thinking about her argument in terms of education, Latinos were first able to enter the teaching workforce in large numbers because of the need for bilingual teachers (Reyes, 2006). As more White middle- and upper-class students, who more closely fit the ideals of hegemonic Whiteness, are educated within these dual-language programs and develop bilingual linguistic resources, they will be in competition with Latinos for bilingual positions and will likely take many of these positions.

A hypothetical scenario based on research illustrates this point. Imagine Ms. Stryker's daughter (the millionaire who funded the campaign supporting bilingual education in Colorado) and a Latino student both enter the same dual-language program. Ms. Stryker's daughter enters with home language practices more closely aligned with the idealized language practices of hegemonic Whiteness, and she excels. The Latino student is labeled as struggling to develop CALP in either English or Spanish because of his constant habit of "codeswitching"—a language practice that is explicitly prohibited in most dual-language programs (Fitts, 2006). In high school, Ms. Stryker's daughter continues to study Spanish and is applauded for her efforts to use Spanish whenever she can—praise that is not given to the Latino who is sanctioned for using too much Spanish in school—a common phenomenon for Latino students across the United States (Roth-Gordon, 2011). Ms. Stryker's daughter attends an elite private university and has the opportunity to travel and study abroad—a privilege that has been shown to lead to White students' Spanish being seen as superior to the Spanish of U.S. Latinos by Spanish teachers in higher education (Valdés, González, López García, & Márquez, 2003). The Latino student attends the local public university and is advised by his Spanish teacher to study abroad so that he can unlearn his "Spanglish" and replace it with "proper academic Spanish"—a continuation of a long history of stigmatization of the Spanish-language practices of U.S. Latinos

(Otheguy & Stern, 2011). Unfortunately, he is working his way through school and cannot afford to study abroad. Which of these students will most likely benefit from the language-as-resource orientation?

Advocates of liberal multiculturalism might object to my question, saying that it misses the point—namely, that all students should have access to the same educational experiences as the hypothetical White middle-class student and that all students should have the opportunity to develop CALP in two or more languages. The implicit message of this argument is that all students should have access to the idealized language practices of hegemonic Whiteness. This is a far cry from the race radicalism of the Young Lords, who sought to develop revolutionary subjectivities outside of hegemonic Whiteness. Perhaps it behooves those of us interested in empowering Latinos to revisit this race radicalism to develop alternatives to the assimilatory narrative of liberal multiculturalism that inadvertently reproduces White supremacist, imperialist, and capitalist relations of power both through the expectation that all people should master the idealized language practices of hegemonic Whiteness and through the otherizing of people who are unable or unwilling to fit this ideal.

Re-Centering Race Radicalism in Bilingual Education

In this article, I have attempted to examine the transformation of the vision of bilingual education from one that challenged hegemonic Whiteness to one that reproduces the power relations that lie at its core. By pointing out these power relations, I am not in any way arguing that we abandon the struggle for bilingual education. After all, liberal multicultural framings of bilingual education that position language as a resource provide an important counter to the monolingual hegemonic Whiteness of the English-only movement and other xenophobic movements that have arisen since the Civil Rights Movement as well as to subtractive framings of bilingual education (Crawford, 2000). Yet, at the same time, even though liberal multicultural framings of bilingual education are positioned as antiracist, they offer a limited vision for the possibilities of social transformation—one embedded in hegemonic Whiteness through the privileging of the idealized language practices of the White middle class and the otherizing of the language practices of Latinos.

As this article has demonstrated, this is not the only possible role that bilingual education can play in our society. Although the Young Lords and other radical movements of the Civil Rights era may have been destroyed,

elements of their radical vision remain in racialized communities nationwide. Developing a new, alternative vision of bilingual education does not only entail simply studying history but also “connecting to the social and institutional bases of new race radicalisms . . . the activism that cannot be incorporated, and the day to day practices of resistance that politicize its conditions of existence” (Melamed, 2011, p. 230). In short, developing a new race radical vision of bilingual education entails engaging in community struggles that position Latinos as “agents rather than the silent objects of knowledge formations and institutional practices” (Ferguson, 2012, p. 232). We can no longer uncritically accept the goal of bilingual education to be the molding of Latinos into the idealized language practices of bilingual hegemonic Whiteness. Instead, we must resituate the battle for bilingual education within contemporary struggles that seek to develop new subjectivities outside of hegemonic Whiteness. It is only by challenging hegemonic Whiteness that we can begin the process of reinventing bilingual education in ways that are socially transformative as opposed to socially reproductive.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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