Biliteracy, Empowerment, and Transformative Pedagogy

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The continuing concern about preparing students for the technologically sophisticated workplace of the 21st century with its requirement of higher literacy levels among workers has given rise to concerted efforts at school reform in countries around the world. However, in most countries, despite the fact that linguistically and culturally diverse students tend to be strongly over-represented in school failure categories (e.g. dropout rates), few of the prescriptions for school reform specifically address the causes of educational failure among such students. Even fewer contemplate bilingualism and biliteracy as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem.

I argue in this paper that biliteracy must become an essential component of educational reform efforts directed at under-achieving Latino/Latina students. However, literacy or even biliteracy are insufficient as educational goals if they remain at the level of "functional literacy" and fail to promote "critical literacy." In other words, students must learn not only to "read the word," but also to "read the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). I argue that the public focus and apparent political commitment to improving the ability of students (and adults) to "read the word" represents a facade that obscures an underlying societal structure that continues to discourage students from "reading the world." This reality implies that educators who strive to create educational contexts within which culturally-diverse students develop a sense of empowerment, through acquisition of cultural and critical literacy, are of necessity challenging the societal power structure. By "power structure" I am referring to the division of status and resources in the society and also to the ways in which discourse is mobilized through the media to legitimate and preserve the current division of status and resources.

A further distinction relating to the societal power structure is useful to make at this point. Throughout the paper I distinguish between coercive and collaborative relations of power. Coercive relations of power refer to the exercise of power by a dominant group (or individual) to the detriment of a subordinated group (or individual). The assumption is that there is a fixed quantity of power that operates according to a balance effect; in other words, the more power one group has the less is left for other groups.

Collaborative relations of power, on the other hand, operate on the assumption that power is not a fixed pre-determined quantity but rather can be *generated* in interpersonal and intergroup relations, thereby becoming "additive" rather than "subtractive." In other words, participants in the relationship are *empowered* through their collaboration such that each is more affirmed in her or his identity and has a greater sense of efficacy to effect change in her or his life or social situation. Thus, power is created in the relationship and shared among participants. In educational contexts, cooperative learning activities and sister class networks constitute documented examples of the academic and personal benefits that accrue when coercive relations of power shift to collaborative relations of power (e.g. DeVillar & Faltis, 1990; Cummins & Sayers, 1995).

Within this context, *empowerment* refers to the collaborative creation of power. *Transformative pedagogy* refers to interactions between educators and students that foster the collaborative creation of power. These terms will be further elaborated throughout the chapter.

A fundamental argument of the present chapter is that the root causes of academic failure among subordinated group students are to be found in the fact that the interactions between educators and students frequently reflect and reinforce the broader societal pattern of coercive relations of power between dominant and subordinated groups. Reversal of this pattern requires that educators resist and challenge the operation of coercive relations of power and actively seek to establish collaborative relations of power both in the school and in the broader society.

The next section focuses on the issue of biliteracy and examines the public debate on bilingual education in light of the research data. The goal is to demonstrate that biliteracy is a feasible educational outcome for all students and what requires explanation is the public discourse that vehemently denies this reality. I then shift from a focus on "biliteracy" to the broader issue of literacy itself. I suggest that not only are many educational policies dedicated to reducing bilinguals to monolinguals, they are also structured to constrict the possibilities for students' identity formation and to limit the scope of their ability to think, or in Freire's terms, to read the world. Finally, drawing on Ada's (1988a, 1988b) work, I suggest an alternative pedagogical orientation designed to promote critical biliteracy and student empowerment.

The Public Debate on Bilingual Education

In June 1998, California voters reversed almost 25 years of educational policy in that state by passing Proposition 227 by a margin of 61 to 39 percent. Proposition 227 was aimed at eliminating the use of bilingual children's first language (L1) for instructional purposes except in very exceptional circumstances. Despite the considerable impact of Proposition 227 on bilingual education, most dual-language or two-way bilingual immersion programs appear to have emerged relatively unscathed. These programs aim to develop bilingualism and biliteracy among both language minority and language majority students (e.g. Spanish L1 and English L1 speakers). Most of these programs use between 90 percent and 50 percent minority language instruction in the early grades with instructional time equally split in the later elementary grades. These programs have been spreading rapidly in other states such as Texas and thus the potential for developing biliteracy among students is still very much a reality in spite of the strong rhetoric against bilingual education.

 The debate leading up to the Proposition 227 referendum in California crystallized all of the arguments that had been advanced for and against bilingual education in the previous quarter century. Both sides claimed "equity" as their central guiding principle. Opponents of bilingual programs argued that limited English proficient students were being denied access to both English and academic advancement as a result of being instructed for part of the day through their L1. Exposure to English was being diluted and, as a result, it was not surprising that bilingual students continued to experience difficulty in academic aspects of English. Only maximum exposure to English (frequently termed "time-on-task") could remediate children's linguistic difficulties in that language on entry to school.

 Proponents of bilingual education argued that L1 instruction in the early grades was necessary to ensure that students understood content instruction and experienced a successful start to their schooling. Reading and writing skills acquired initially through the L1 provided a foundation upon which strong English language development could be built. Transfer of academic skills and knowledge across languages was evidenced consistently by the research literature on bilingual development. Thus, L1 proficiency could be promoted at no cost to children's academic development in English. Furthermore, the fact that teachers spoke the language of parents increased the likelihood of parental involvement and support for their children's learning. This, together with the reinforcement of children's sense of self as a result of the incorporation of their language and culture in the school program, contributed to long-term academic growth.

 In the context of Proposition 227, bilingual advocates argued that bilingual education itself could not logically be regarded as a cause of continued high levels of academic failure among bilingual students since only 30 percent of limited English proficient students in California were in any form of bilingual education. Less than 18 percent were in classes taught by a certified bilingual teacher, with the other 12 percent in classes most likely taught by a monolingual English teacher and a bilingual aide (Gandara, 1997). Thus, they argued, educational failure among bilingual (particularly Latino/Latina) students is more logically attributed to the absence of genuine bilingual programs than to bilingual education in some absolute sense.

 The arguments on both side of this debate can be articulated as theoretical propositions and examined in relation to the research data.

Theory underlying opposition to bilingual education. Three major propositions underlie many of the pedagogical arguments against bilingual education. These are:

(a)   the claim that "time on task" is the major variable underlying language learning and hence immersion in English is the most effective means to ensure the learning of English;

(b)   the claim that under these conditions of immersion, language minority students will quickly (within 1 year) pick up sufficient English to survive academically without further special support;

(c)   the claim that English immersion should start as early as possible in the student's school career since younger children are better language learners than older children.

Rosalie Pedalino Porter (1990) clearly articulates the first and third principles in stating:

> My personal experience and professional investigations together impel me to conclude that the two overriding conditions that promote the best learning of a second language are (1) starting at an early age, say at five, and (2) having as much exposure and carefully planned instruction in the language as possible. Effective time on task - the amount of time spent learning - is, as educators know, the single greatest predictor of educational achievement; this is at least as true, if not more so, for low-socioeconomic-level, limited-English students. Children learn what they are taught, and if they are taught

mainly in Spanish for several years, their Spanish-language skills will be far better than their English-language ones. (pp. 63-64)

Nathan Glazer (Glazer & Cummins, 1985) has articulated the second principle as follows:

... all our experience shows that the most extended and steady exposure to the spoken language is the best way of learning any language. ... How long? It depends. But one year of intensive immersion seems to be enough to permit most children to transfer to [regular] English-language classes. (p. 48)

Many other examples of these positions could be cited based on both academic and media commentary (see Cummins, 1996). The opposition claims are in direct contrast to those made by academic advocates of bilingual education, as outlined below.

Theory Proposed by Bilingual Education Advocates. It is important first to highlight the fact that most bilingual education theorists have distanced themselves from the popular conception of the rationale for bilingual programs, namely the "linguistic mismatch" hypothesis. This position suggests that a home-school language switch (or linguistic mismatch) will inevitably lead to academic difficulties since children cannot learn through a language they do not understand. While this claim has been persuasive to many policy-makers and educators (and, in fact, underlies the quick-exit transitional focus of most U.S. bilingual education programs), it is seriously flawed. It fails to account either for the success of English background children in second language immersion or dual-language programs or the fact that under certain conditions language minority students can succeed academically in English-only programs (Cummins, 1981a, 1996).

Academic advocates of bilingual education have consistently rejected compensatory (or transitional) bilingual programs and argued for programs that promote biliteracy. Cloud, Genesee and Hamayan (in press) group these programs (second language immersion for majority students, developmental or late-exit programs for minority students, and dual-language programs for both groups) under the label of *Enriched Education.*

Three central psychoeducational principles, supported by empirical research, underlie this emphasis on enrichment or developmental bilingual education:

(a)   continued development of both languages enhances children's educational and cognitive development ;

(b)   literacy-related abilities are interdependent across languages such that knowledge and skills acquired in one language are potentially available in the other (Cummins, 1996; Verhoeven, 1991);

(c)   while conversational abilities may be acquired fairly rapidly in a second language, upwards of five years are usually required for second language learners to attain grade norms in academically-related aspects of the second language (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1981b).

Together, these principles suggest that reinforcing children's conceptual base in their first language throughout elementary school (and beyond) will provide a foundation for long-term growth in English academic skills. The theory also suggests that we should not expect bilingual children to approach grade norms in English academic skills before the later grades of elementary school.

Consistency of the Alternative Positions with the Research Data
There is virtually no disagreement among applied linguists regarding the consistency of bilingual program evaluation results with the theoretical principles advanced by advocates of bilingual education. The data clearly refute the validity of the "time-on-task" proposition and they also refute the "linguistic mismatch" proposition. The distinction between conversational and academic language proficiency is supported, as is the significant relationship of academic proficiency across languages, even languages that are linguistically distant from each other (e.g. Basque-Spanish, Chinese-English) (see Genesee, 1979). The Ramirez report (Ramirez, 1992) shows very clearly, for example, that instruction through Spanish for part of the school day results in no loss in English academic skills. The data are completely inconsistent with the predictions of the time-on-task proposition. Even opponents of bilingual education such as Christine Rossell (1992) acknowledge that the time-on-task hypothesis is refuted by the Ramirez data: "large deficits in English language instruction over several grades apparently make little or no difference in a student's achievement" (p. 183). Expressed more positively, instructional time devoted to promoting bilingual students' L1 literacy entails no adverse consequences for English language or literacy development.

The most clear-cut evidence in relation to the alternative theoretical propositions comes from the outcomes of dual-language or two-way bilingual immersion programs. Evaluations of these programs have consistently shown strong academic performance over the course of elementary school for both language minority and language majority students (Cazabon, Nicoladis, & Lambert, 1998;

Cloud et al., in press; Dolson & Lindholm, 1995) Let us just consider the outcomes of one program, the Oyster Bilingual School in Washington DC to illustrate the pattern.

Oyster Bilingual School (Washington, DC). The bilingual program was started in 1971 and involves instruction in both Spanish and English for about 50% of the time in each language from kindergarten through grade 6. Each class is taught by two teachers, one responsible for English-medium instruction and one for Spanish-medium instruction. This instructional organization is achieved primarily by means of creative management of resources rather than by additional external funds such as Title VII or Title I (personal communication Elena Izquierdo, former principal of Oyster School) although the school fought successfully within the district to avoid cutbacks that were affecting other schools.

Students read in both languages each day so there is simultaneous development of literacy in the two languages. The student body is comprised of approximately 60% Spanish L1 (primarily Salvadorean) and 40% English L1 (about half African-American, half Euro-American).

The academic results of this program have been outstanding. For example, at the grade 3 level Reading, Mathematics, Language and Science scores were 1.6--1.8 median grade equivalents above norms (percentiles 74—81). The grade 6 grade equivalents were 4.4—6.2 above norms (percentiles 85—96) (1991 data reported in Freeman, 1998).

According to Freeman, the school has evolved a *social identities project* that positively evaluates linguistic and cultural diversity and communicates this strongly to students. In the words of one of the teachers: "It's much more than language."

Freeman provides detailed discourse analyses that illustrate how the interactions between educators and students in Oyster bilingual school "refuse" the discourse of subordination that characterizes the treatment of minorities in the wider society and in most conventional school contexts. She points out that the discourse practices in the school "reflect an ideological assumption that linguistic and cultural diversity is a resource to be developed by all students, and not a problem that minority students must overcome in order to participate and achieve at school" (p. 233). Specifically, educators have *choices* in the way they organize discourse practices and these choices entail significant consequences for both language minority and majority students. The school *requires* all students to become bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English, and "to expect, tolerate, and respect diverse ways of interacting" (p. 27).

In other words, the school "aims to promote social change on the local level by socializing children differently from the way children are socialized in mainstream US educational discourse" (p. 27):

> Rather than pressuring language minority students to assimilate to the positively evaluated majority social identity (white middle-class native English-speaking) in order to participate and achieve at school, the Oyster educational discourse is organized to positively evaluate linguistic and cultural diversity. ... this socializing discourse makes possible the emergence of a wide range of positively evaluated social identities, and offers more choices to both language minority and language majority students than are traditionally available in mainstream US schools and society. The Oyster educators argue that students' socialization through this educational discourse is the reason that [limited English proficient], language minority, and language majority students are all participating and achieving more or less equally. (p. 27)

The themes that Freeman emphasizes run through virtually all the programs for language minority students that have proven successful in elevating academic achievement (Cummins, 1996) . Respect for students' language and culture is strongly communicated to students and they are encouraged to see themselves as potentially fully bilingual and biliterate. Programs that are less successful (e.g. many quick-exit transitional programs) tend to see the students' L1 as simply a temporary bridge to English and do not aspire to bilingualism and biliteracy.

The Oyster data clearly show that there is interdependence across languages within well-implemented bilingual programs. Students do not lose out in English despite spending only 50 percent of their instructional time through English. The time-on-task proposition would predict significant underachievement in English as a result of less time through that language. Clearly, the opposite is the case in this particular program.

The success of dual-language programs is not disputed by opponents of bilingual education. Porter (1990), for example, describes dual language education as "particularly appealing because it not only enhances the prestige of the minority language but also offers a rich opportunity for expanding genuine bilingualism to the majority population" (p. 154). She also notes that these programs "are also considered to be the best possible vehicles for integration of language minority students, since these students are grouped with English-speakers for natural and equal exchange of skills" (p. 154).

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Charles Glenn who has also expressed concerns about transitional bilingual education is likewise an enthusiastic supporter of dual-language programs as the following quotations illustrate:

> More than any other model of education for linguistic minority pupils, two-way bilingual programs meet the diverse expectations that we set for our schools. Properly designed and implemented, they offer a language-rich environment with high expectations for every child, in a climate of cross-cultural respect. Linguistic minority pupils are stimulated in their use of English, while being encouraged to value and employ their home language as well. (Glenn, 1990, p. 5) .

> The best setting for educating linguistic minority pupils—and one of the best for educating *any* pupils—is a school in which two languages are used without apology and where becoming proficient in both is considered a significant intellectual and cultural achievement." (Glenn & LaLyre, 1991, p. 43)

What evidence do opponents of bilingual education advance to support their claims. The major evidence they refer to is the report written by Rossell and Baker (1996) which claimed to show that 83 percent of the comparisons they reviewed between structured immersion (essentially English-only) and transitional bilingual education favored structured immersion while there was no difference in 17 percent of comparisons. This literature review has been critiqued in detail elsewhere (e.g. Cummins, in press; Greene, 1998; Krashen, 1999). It is sufficient to note here that nine out of the ten studies that Rossell and Baker claim show the superiority of monolingual structured immersion are in fact bilingual or trilingual programs whose success refutes the time-on-task theory and supports interdependence across languages.

 In summary, the relevant distinction to make in understanding the research data on bilingual education is not between "English-only" and "bilingual education" in some absolute sense that ignores the huge variation in philosophy and implementation across programs. Rather the appropriate distinction is between what Cloud et al. (in press) term *Enriched Education* which aspires to biliteracy and remedial programs that view students' bilingualism as a problem to be overcome and aspire only to monolingualism and monoliteracy. Enriched Education programs have overwhelming evidence of success in the research literature.

 However, it is important to ask whether these programs could be even more successful than they currently are. There is considerable variation in the way literacy is taught in all programs, bilingual and monolingual. In the second part of this chapter, I suggest that optimal outcomes for students and society will accrue to programs that combine an *enriched education* focus on biliteracy with a transformative pedagogical orientation that actively challenges the operation of coercive relations of power in the wider society.

Transformative Pedagogy and Empowerment
 The persistence of "banking" education. One disturbing aspect of the findings of the Ramirez report is that the classroom environment in both bilingual and English immersion programs reflects transmission models of pedagogy or what Paulo Freire (1983) has called a "banking education." As expressed in the report:

> Of major concern is that in over half of the interactions that teachers have with students, students do not produce any language as they are only listening or responding with non-verbal gestures or actions. ... Of equal concern is that when students do respond, typically they provide only simple information recall statements. Rather than being provided with the opportunity to generate original statements, students are asked to provide simple discrete close-ended or patterned (i.e. expected) responses. This pattern of teacher/student interaction not only limits a student's opportunity to create and manipulate language freely, but also limits the student's ability to engage in more complex learning (i.e., higher order thinking skills). In sum ... teachers in all three programs offer a passive language learning environment, limiting student opportunities to produce language and develop more complex language and thinking skills" (Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991, p. 8).}

The predominance of transmission models of pedagogy is not surprising in view of the fact that other large-scale studies of American education have documented the same phenomenon (Goodlad, 1984; Sirotnik, 1983). However, there are additional unfortunate implications of transmission models for culturally-diverse students since the curriculum will typically reflect the values and priorities of the dominant group and effectively suppress the experiences and perspectives of subordinated groups. Thus, transmission models of pedagogy allow few opportunities to validate and amplify student identity. In other words, while the late-exit programs documented in the Ramirez Report appear to create conditions for student empowerment with respect to cultural and linguistic incorporation, and parental involvement, their pedagogical orientation restricts the possibilities for genuine student empowerment.

This suggests that efforts to reverse the pattern of Latino/Latina academic underachievement must examine not only the language of instruction but also the hidden curriculum being communicated to students through that instruction. While improving literacy levels has been a major goal of educational reform reports, few policy-makers have asked the question: "What kinds of literacy and for what purposes?" This question has been answered by Sirotnik (1983) in discussing the implications of Goodlad's major study of American classrooms. He points to the fact that the typical American classroom contains:

> a lot of teacher talk and a lot of student listening ... almost invariably closed and factual questions ... and predominantly total class instructional configurations around traditional activities - all in a virtually affectless environment. It is but a short inferential leap to suggest that we are implicitly teaching dependence upon authority, linear thinking, social apathy, passive involvement, and hands-off learning" (p. 29).

The remainder of this paper focuses on the development of literacy for empowerment. I propose an academic language development framework that incorporates the orientation to critical literacy advocated by Alma Flor Ada (1988a, 1988b).

A Framework for Transformative Pedagogy. The framework outlined in Figure 1 is intended to provide a general guide to the implementation of pedagogy that will effectively promote second language learners' linguistic and cognitive development as well as encourage the growth of critical literacy skills. It assumes that for optimal progress to occur, cognitive challenge and intrinsic motivation must be infused into the interactions between teachers and students.

The starting point is to acknowledge that effective instruction in an L2 must focus initially on meaning or messages. *Virtually all applied linguists agree that access to sufficient comprehensible input in the target language is a necessary condition for language acquisition;* most applied linguists, however, also assign a role to (a) a focus on formal features of the target language, (b) development of effective learning strategies, and (c) actual use of the target language. These components are incorporated in the Focus on Language and Focus on Use components of the framework.

The Focus on Message component argues that the interpretation of *comprehensible input* must go beyond just literal comprehension and extend into critical literacy. This implies a process whereby students relate textual and instructional meanings to their own experience and prior knowledge (i.e. activate their cognitive schemata), critically analyze the information in the text (e.g. evaluate the validity of various arguments or propositions), and use the results of their discussions and analyses in some concrete, intrinsically-motivating activity or project (e.g. making a video or writing a poem or essay on a particular topic). In short, for learning of academic content, the notion of *comprehensible input* must move beyond literal, surface-level comprehension to a deeper level of cognitive and linguistic processing. This perspective is elaborated below in considering Ada's work.

The Focus on Language component attempts to put controversial issues such as the appropriate time and ways to teach L2 grammar under the "umbrella" of *Language Awareness.* The development of language awareness would include not just a focus on formal aspects of the language but also the development of *critical language awareness* which encompasses exploring the relationships between language and power. Students, for example, might carry out research on the status of different varieties of language (e.g. colloquial language versus formal "standard" language) and explore why one form is considered by many educators and the general public to be "better" than the other. They might also research issues such as code-switching and the functions it plays within their own lives and their bilingual communities. Or they might analyze letters to the editor on bilingual education and inquire why certain kinds of letters tend to get published while others do not.

In short, a focus on formal features of the target language should be integrated with critical inquiry into issues of language and power. Also, to be effective, a focus on language must be linked to extensive input in the target language (e.g. through reading) and extensive opportunities for written and oral use of the language.

The Focus on Use component is based on the notion that L2 acquisition will remain abstract and classroom-bound unless students have the opportunity to express themselves–their identities and their intelligence–through that language. Ideally there should be an authentic audience that motivates communication in both oral and written modes. The three examples of language use presented in Figure 1 (*generate new knowledge, create literature and art, act on social realities*) are intended to illustrate important components of critical literacy. Language must be used to amplify students' intellectual, esthetic, and social identities if it is to contribute to student empowerment, understood as the collaborative creation of power. Unless active and authentic language use for these purposes is promoted in the classroom., students' grasp of academic (and conversational) English and Spanish is likely to remain somewhat shallow and passive

FIGURE 1

INSTRUCTION FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

A.　　　**FOCUS ON MESSAGE**

- **Making Input Comprehensible**
- **Developing Critical Literacy**

B.　　　**FOCUS ON LANGUAGE**

- **Awareness of Language Forms and Uses**
- **Critical Analysis of Language Forms and Uses**

C.　　　**FOCUS ON USE**

Using Language to:

- **Generate New Knowledge**
- **Create Literature and Art**
- **Act on Social Realities**
-

Ada's critical literacy framework. One framework which elaborates a critical literacy approach to the education of culturally-diverse students is presented by Ada (1988a, 1988b) on the basis of Paulo Freire's work. Ada's framework outlines how interpersonal spaces can be created between teachers and students that encourage students to share and amplify their experience within a collaborative process of critical inquiry. She distinguishes four phases in what she terms "the creative reading act. Each of the phases distinguished by Ada is characterized by an interactional process (either between the teacher and students or among peers) that progressively opens up possibilities for the articulation and amplification of student voice. The "texts" that are the focus of the interaction can derive from any curricular area or from newspapers or current events. The process is equally applicable to students at any grade level. Ada (1988a, p. 103) stresses that although the phases are discussed separately, "in a creative reading act they may happen concurrently and be interwoven."

Descriptive Phase. In this phase the focus of interaction is on the information contained in the text. Typical questions at this level might be: Where, when, how, did it happen? Who did it? Why? These are the type of questions for which answers can be found in the text itself. Ada points out that these are the usual reading comprehension questions and that "a discussion that stays at this level suggests that reading is a passive, receptive, and in a sense, domesticating process" (1988a, p. 104). When the process is arrested at this level, the focus remains on internalization of inert information and/or the practice of "reading skills" in an experiential and motivational vacuum. Instruction remains at a safe distance from any challenge to the societal power structure. This phase represents a focus on functional literacy isolated from both cultural and critical literacy.

Personal Interpretive Phase. After the basic information in the text has been discussed, students are encouraged to relate it to their own experiences and feelings. Questions that might be asked by the teacher at this phase are: Have you ever seen (felt, experienced) something like this? Have you ever wanted something similar? How did what you read make you feel? Did you like it? Did it make you happy? Frighten you? What about your family? Ada (1988a) points out that this process helps develop children's self-esteem by showing that their experiences and feelings are valued by the teacher and classmates. It also helps children understand that "true learning occurs only when the information received is analyzed in the light of one's own experiences and emotions" (p. 104). An atmosphere of acceptance and trust in the classroom is a prerequisite for students (and teachers) to risk sharing their feelings, emotions, and experiences. It is clear how this process of sharing and critically reflecting on their own and other students'

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experiences opens up identity options for culturally-diverse students. These identity options are typically suppressed within a transmission approach to pedagogy where the interpretation of texts is non-negotiable and reflective of the dominant group's notions of cultural literacy. The personal interpretive phase deepens students' comprehension of the text or issues by grounding the knowledge in the personal and collective narratives that make up students' histories. It is also developing a genuine cultural literacy in that it is integrating students' own experience with "mainstream" curricular content.

Critical Analysis Phase. After children have compared and contrasted what is presented in the text with their personal experiences, they are ready to engage in a more abstract process of critically analyzing the issues or problems that are raised in the text. This process involves drawing inferences and exploring what generalizations can be made. Appropriate questions might be: Is it valid? Always? When? Does it benefit everyone alike? Are there any alternatives to this situation? Would people of different cultures (classes, genders) have acted differently? How? Why? Ada emphasizes that school children of all ages can engage in this type of critical process, although the analysis will always reflect children's experiences and level of maturity. This phase further extends students' comprehension of the text or issues by encouraging them to examine both the internal logical coherence of the information or propositions and their consistency with other knowledge or perspectives. When students pursue guided research and critical reflection, they are clearly engaged in a process of knowledge generation; however, they are equally engaged in a process of self-definition; as they gain the power to think through issues that affect their lives, they simultaneously gain the power to resist external definitions of who they are and to deconstruct the sociopolitical purposes of such external definitions.

Creative Action Phase. This is a stage of translating the results of the previous phases into concrete action. The dialogue is oriented towards discovering what changes individuals can make to improve their lives or resolve the problem that has been presented. Let us suppose that students have been researching (in the local newspaper, in periodicals such as *National Geographic* problems relating to environmental pollution. After relating the issues to their own experience, critically analyzing causes and possible solutions, they might decide to write letters to congressional representatives, highlight the issue in their class/school newsletter in order to sensitize other students, write and circulate a petition in the neighborhood, write and perform a play that analyzes the issue, etc. Once again, this phase can be seen as extending the process of comprehension insofar as when we act to transform aspects of our social realities we gain a deeper understanding of those realities.

Within Ada's framework, the process of making input comprehensible is an active constructive process that can be facilitated or inhibited by those we are interacting with (or by characteristics of texts we are reading). The framework expresses the point that we cannot understand messages without acting on them either internally (through thinking about them) or externally by acting on them in the "real" world. The personal interpretive and critical analysis phases represent internalized action on texts or messages. While this internalized action can be carried out by individuals, the process will usually be enhanced when the action is collaboratively constructed in the context of social interaction. The personal interpretive phase deepens the individual's comprehension by grounding the knowledge in the personal and collective narratives that make up our experience and history. The critical analysis phase further extends the comprehension process by examining both the internal logical coherence of the information or propositions and their consistency with other knowledge or perspectives. Finally, the creative action phase constitutes concrete action that aims to transform aspects of our social realities. This external action to transform reality also serves to deepen our comprehension of the issues.

With respect to expansion of possibilities for identity formation, culturally-diverse students engaging in the critical literacy process outlined in Figure 1 have the possibility of actively voicing their own realities and their analyses of issues rather than being constricted to the identity definitions and constructions of "truth" implicitly or explicitly transmitted in the prescribed curriculum. When classroom interaction progresses beyond the descriptive phase, students engage in a process of *self*-expression; in other words, by sharing and critically reflecting on their experience they collaboratively construct an interpersonal space that expands their options for identity formation.

The operation of this process is evident in Freeman's account of the Oyster School bilingual program where the instruction and interaction in the school actively encourages students to "refuse" the discourse of disempowerment that frequently characterizes dominant group/subordinated group interactions in the wider society. I would concur with Freeman in attributing the outstanding academic results obtained by students in this program primarily to the ways in which identities were being negotiated in the context of teacher-student interactions. For other *Enriched Education* programs to achieve similar results, their focus on promoting biliteracy must be integrated explicitly with a transformative pedagogy that affirms students' identities while simultaneously challenging coercive relations of power.

Conclusion
I have suggested that the debate on the merits or otherwise of bilingual education can be understood only by considering the power relations that are operating in the wider society. The history of the education of culturally-diverse students in the United States and most other countries is a history of thinly-disguised perpetuation of the coercive relations of power that operate in the wider society. The attempt to limit the framework of discourse so that promotion of biliteracy is not even considered as a policy response to the

underachievement of Latino/Latina students illustrates the operation of coercive relations of power. Culturally-diverse students are defined as deficient and confined to remedial programs that frequently act to produce the deficits they were ostensibly intended to reverse. Empirical evidence that points to biliteracy as a feasible (and readily attainable) educational goal for culturally-diverse students has been either ignored or distorted by media and academic opponents of bilingual education. This is evidenced by the fact that most academic opponents of bilingual education are on record as supporting dual-language programs for majority and minority students but yet they persist in claiming that "bilingual education does not work." They also persist in defining bilingualism as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution.

Educators who aspire to challenge the operation of coercive relations of power in the school system must attempt to create conditions of collaborative empowerment. In other words, they must attempt to organize their interactions with students in such a way that power is generated and shared through those interactions. This involves becoming aware of, and actively working to change, the ways in which particular educational structures limit the opportunities that culturally-diverse students might have for educational and social advancement. It also involves attempting to orchestrate their interactions with culturally-diverse students in such a way that students' options for identity formation and critical inquiry are expanded rather than constricted. For Latino/Latina students promotion of critical biliteracy is a necessary part of this empowerment process since, in the absence of critical biliteracy, students are unable to read either the word or the world in their two cultures.

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