

NAVIGATING BILINGUAL TEACHER PREPARATION EN LA FRONTERA: A TEACHER EDUCATOR'S JOURNEY

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Critical Conversations with Colleagues

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Let's Start With Me

- Born and raised a simultaneous bilingual with transnational experiences.
- English-dominant PK-12, undergraduate and graduate education
- Spanish-English bilingual teacher
- Bilingual teacher educator



The Context of My Work as a Bilingual Teacher Educator

- Frontera communities are bilingual, biliterate, bicultural and transnational.
- Historically, schools in la frontera have been **culturally and linguistically subtractive** (Gonzalez, 1999; Richardson & Pisani, 2017; San Miguel & Valencia, 1998).
- Many of my bilingual teacher candidates, were raised in these realities and will return to them as teachers.



The Pervasiveness of a Deslenguada Ideology

“Deslenguadas: Somos los del español deficiente. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic mestizaje, the subject of your burla” (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 80).

Pocho



Pocho means americanized Mexican, or Mexican who has lost their culture. (Which largely refers to losing the Spanish.) It is a derogatory term can be someone who's trying to "act white" but it has been largely embraced by Chicanos with a sense of defeatist humor - We're pochos, y que? - so that it's

No sabo kid



Has a Spanish speaking **parent**(s) but never uses the right **word in** Spanish or just straight up doesn't know the right word when **explaining** something.

The Political and Ideological Realities of Bilingual Teacher Preparation

The State of Texas tests Spanish language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and oral expression using the Bilingual Teacher Language Proficiency Test (BTLPT).

Low passing rates have contributed to a bilingual teacher shortage (Arroyo-Romano, 2016).

Bilingual teacher candidates often have doubts regarding whether their Spanish language proficiency is enough to teach in Spanish (Ek et al., 2013; Guerrero & Guerrero, 2003).

Linguistic Realities of the Bilingual Classroom

- Language mediates teaching and learning (Vygotsky, 1962).
- Teachers and students perform functional-active language tasks through interaction and as part of course and program design.
- To build on the language and literacy strengths of their students, teachers must be able to **facilitate** learning by **leveraging** complex multilingual repertoires **within, across and between languages**.



What then is the role of the bilingual teacher educator?

Communicative & Linguistic Competencies

- **Pedagogical Spanish:** Situated “language for specific purposes” in the Spanish-English classroom (Aquino-Sterling, 2016)
- **Metalinguistic Awareness:** Think and talk about language, including cross-language connections (Escamilla et al., 2014; Rodríguez & Musanti, 2014).

Ideological Clarity (Bartolomé, 2004)

- Unlearning oppressive discourses around language (Saavedra & Salazar-Pérez, 2012).
- Critique, unpack and heal from the internalization of hegemonic discourses (Murillo, 2017; Sarmiento-Arribalzaga & Murrillo, 2009).

Bilingual Teacher Educator

- Be reflective and conscientious of our choices around language use, materials, curriculum design and even our own Spanish language proficiencies (Guerrero & Guerrero, 2009).

Examining the Linguistic Landscape to Interrogate Ideology



TAQUERIA DE JALISCO
Pasale Chato!
#3
TACO PIRATA

ORDEN DE LONCHES
4 LONCHES
CON REPOLLO
TOMATE Y AGUACATE
1 FRIJOLE A LA CHARRA
BISTEK, TROMPO, MOLLEJA, MIXTO O POLLO.....\$6.00
FAJITA.....\$6.40
TRIPA.....\$6.80
CON QUESO.....+50¢

COMBO LONCHES
2 LONCHES
CON REPOLLO,
TOMATE Y AGUACATE
1 PAPA ASADA
1 FRIJOLE A LA CHARRA
1 REFRESCO DE LATA
BISTEK, TROMPO, MOLLEJA, MIXTO O POLLO.....\$6.40
FAJITA.....\$6.80
TRIPA.....\$6.80
CON QUESO.....+50¢

Linguistic Landscape

The study of of writing on display in the public sphere.

- “Choice of language in public signs in bilingual & multilingual urban space” (p. 25).
- A social fact – a reality pertaining to, and marking, social life (p. 43)
- Political and linguistically ideological

Goal 1: Emphasize Home Pedagogies and Community Wealth

- A great deal of power stems from re-discovering the cultural and linguistic wealth of our homes and communities.
- Students bring a host of artifacts related to print, cultural practice, religious affiliations, and their families' domains of knowledge.
- Allows for metalinguistic conversations about language choices and linguistic variety.

Goal 2: Introduce bilingual teachers to the pedagogical Spanish they will need to teach in and about Spanish/English.



The artifacts are a representation of language(s) in use.



Bilingual teacher candidates must use class terminology to discuss the artifacts. Example: diptongo, hiato, cognado, acento diacrítico, afijos flexivos y derrivativos



Engage teacher candidates in metalinguistic conversations so they can do these in the classroom.

An Example

- Phonology: el hiato (hiatus)
- Morphology: afijo derivativo (derivative)
- Semantics: Cognados (cognates)
- Syntax: Orden de palabras (Word order) – Compared to English



What does this mean
for me?

I have had to see Spanish as not only the
vehicle of instruction, but the object of
instruction.

(Re) learn these terms myself.

Admit that I don't know everything!

Learn alongside my students.

Watch them grow!

Final Thoughts

Hegemonic ideologies have stunted opportunities for many to fully experience bilingual development. Yet, they are holding on to their cultural and linguistic heritage against all odds.

Bilingual teacher preparation should support their continued bilingual development in the process of building a professional identity as a bilingual teacher.

It is also true that our bilingual children need teachers who effectively understand and can use two languages (or more!) to offer enriching instruction.

As teacher educators, we need to be reflective of our selves and part of a larger community of practice.