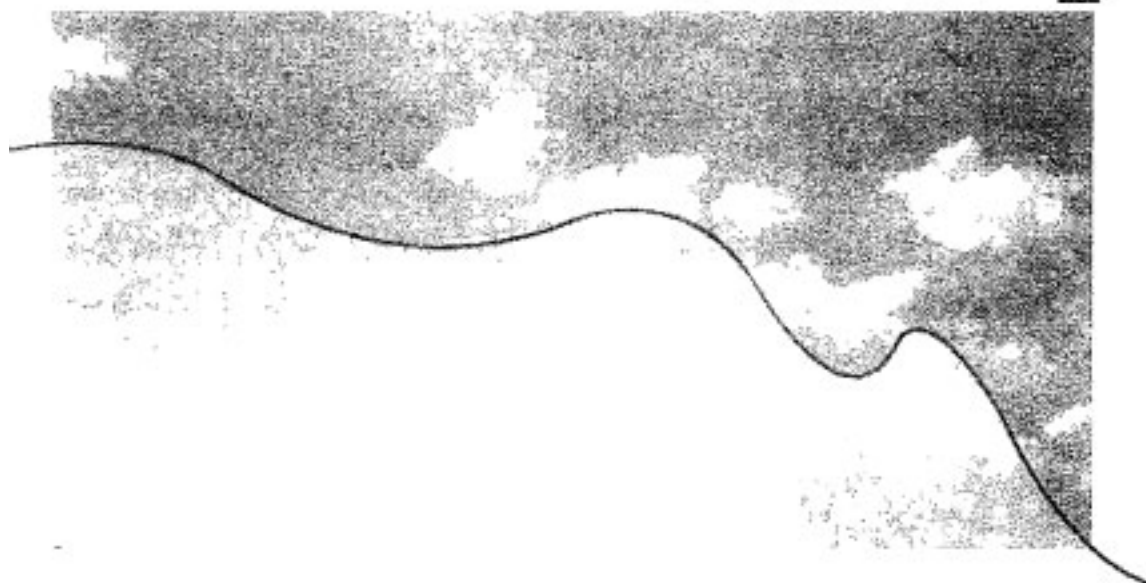


CBER Explorations in Bi-national Education

N u m b e r 2



Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers

M i c h a e l D . G u e r r e r o

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Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers

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Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers

By Michael D. Guerrero

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND PREFACE BY THE SERIES EDITOR CBER EXPLORATIONS IN BI-NATIONAL EDUCATION

Preface to the Series

As we welcome a new century and a new millennium, dire predictions are being heard in education circles about the shortage of teachers that will face U.S. schools in the near future. Over the next few years baby boomer teachers will retire in record numbers. To complicate matters, not enough young people are entering the profession. The pipeline leading from high school to the profession is anemic. This is especially true of language minority youth, many of whom leave school before having the option of entering teaching as a career.

But crises sometimes lead to opportunities. Such is the case of those states with large Spanish speaking populations. Mexico has long been the number one source of Spanish speaking immigrants to the United States. Recently, immigration from Mexico, a phenomenon once limited to unskilled and semi-skilled workers, has begun to change. Mexican immigrants are now markedly diverse. Among recent newcomers there are growing numbers of people from the cities of Mexico where educational opportunities have improved markedly. This change in the demographics of Mexican immigration also means there is an increase in immigrants from the professional and technical classes of Mexico. Fully prepared professionals and technicians who were educated in Mexico (and other Spanish speaking countries) are coming to the United States to live and work. They have much to offer their new country.

A parallel concern for those who work in bilingual education is the lack of attention by teacher educators to the levels of biliteracy that may or may not exist among young teachers who are emerging from teacher preparation programs nationwide. One of the foundational principles of bilingual education is that language minority students are being taught by teachers who speak, read, and write their language. A corollary assumption is that those teachers have state credentials attesting to a range of specified abilities. That dual assumption is put under the microscope in this monograph.

If the findings of this report are even close to accurate, the value of the Mexican *normalista* teachers who are part of *Project Alianza* is great. These teachers may offer at least a partial solution to the problem of inadequate Spanish among some teachers who work hard at their craft but may not have sufficient literacy in Spanish to bring about the full promise of what bilingual education can accomplish for these students.

In difference to previous generations of teachers, the Mexican teacher of today has undergone the equivalent of a formal education at the university level. The obvious difference in Mexican and U.S. teachers is that the former may not have a full command of the English language. They cannot therefore, practice their chosen field in U.S. schools. Michael Guerrero points out in this monograph that there may be critical gaps in the Spanish proficiency and literacy of U.S. teachers who are already credentialed as bilingual education teachers. The growing number of Mexican teachers in our midst—teachers who are fully proficient in Spanish—is welcome news. Here is a new and untapped pool of teaching talent waiting in the wings and eager to prepare for teaching duties in the United States.

Project Alianza, one of the initial sponsors of this monograph series, focuses energy, resources, and attention on this new resource: “normalista” teachers educated in Mexican teacher colleges (normal schools), who reside in the U.S. and who aspire to re-enter the profession in the United States. The alliance, consisting of five universities, a national R&D organization, and a bi-national foundation, has taken on the challenge of reducing the structural, cultural, and linguistic obstacles that have precluded the integration of this new pool of teachers into U.S. classrooms as full professionals. With financial support from the Kellogg Foundation, the members of *Project Alianza* are working to overcome these obstacles. They expect to facilitate the certification and absorption of several hundred teachers who started their education in Mexico and hope to work here, after meeting all the requirements that are met by every other teacher in the states in which they expect to work. By pointing the way to a new form of international collaboration in education, *Project Alianza* will make an important contribution to diminishing the anticipated shortage of well prepared teachers in the United States.'

When the opportunity was extended to the Center for Bilingual Education and Research to become one of the *Project Alianza* partners, we accepted eagerly. Bi-national collaboration in all levels of education between the United States and Mexico is one of our strongest interests. We see no reason why the



problem of educating immigrant youngsters should fall solely on U.S. schools and teachers. We were aware, even before the *Project Alianza* effort began, that important players in the Mexican educational system were willing and able to help reduce the cultural and linguistic barriers to the adequate education of these students. When we reviewed the history of previous bi-national collaborations, we learned that only a few isolated efforts had been made to bring together educators from both sides of the border, to engage in dialogue, and to develop spaces and opportunities in which to explore ideas for educating immigrant children more collaboratively and perhaps more successfully. To the extent that research, collaboration, and innovation have taken place, they have occurred almost exclusively within the United States. It was as if an implicit assumption existed that Mexicans had no cards in the matter and that our respective professional obligation ended on our respective side of the border. Since we live and work along one of the most open borders in the world, it is difficult to explain why educators in the United States have shouldered the difficult task of educating these students without consulting or collaborating with colleagues who worked with them before they immigrated.

These observations and concerns supported the idea of publishing a series of papers aimed at promoting a continuing bi-national conversation concerning this problem. We choose the term "Explorations in Bi-national Education" as the generic name for this collection. With the first two monographs in the series, the Center for Bilingual Education and Research (CBER) hopes to launch a lively dialogue over the nature of education in areas with substantial Hispanic concentrations and on the mutual obligations of sending and receiving schools to collaborate in meeting this challenge. By helping to arrange for the integration of Mexican normalistas into the U.S. teaching force, we hope that other issues will surface, and that researchers and scholars, in both countries, will rise to the challenge.

The first of the monographs in this series is a wide-angle view of the ways in which the United States and Mexico educate and credential teachers for the K-12 sector. This report, *Mexican Normalista Teachers as a Resource for Bilingual Education in the United States: Connecting two Models of Teacher Preparation*, (Petrovic, et al., 1999) reviewed the Mexican system of teacher education and sketched similarities and differences between the Mexican and U.S. models. In the course of gathering and assembling this information we found, to no one's surprise, that the topic is more complex than first meets the eye. The Mexican case is national in scope and offers little variation.

There is little or no variation between each of the Mexican states or regions. *All* teachers in Mexican normal schools follow essentially the same curriculum which is prescribed by the central government through the *Secretaría de Educación Pública*. The U.S. system—in reality a hydra's head of state systems—is as variegated as the American states themselves. The role of colleges and universities is also different in the two countries, and the subjects and experiences stressed in each country vary in major ways. Still, upon completing the task, it was clear that enough similarity exists that there is a solid common base on which to build a unifying structure between the two systems.

The report you are now reading is the second report in the bi-national education series. It focuses on the perplexing question of language proficiency of teachers. We explore whether Spanish speaking bilingual education teachers in the United States are sufficiently proficient and literate in **Spanish** to function in the more demanding—and more promising—program models such as the dual-language or two-way programs of bilingual education. Michael Guerrero of the University of Texas at Austin authored *Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers*, an important probe of a long neglected question in bilingual education. We hope it will lead to a far ranging discussion concerning the level of mastery, in Spanish, needed by bilingual education teachers in order to teach effectively in two languages. The results of his analysis are worrisome. While Guerrero's exploration does not give us a final and conclusive answer, it makes a timely contribution by pointing out major research areas that require attention and policy questions that require discussion. Building on Guerrero's analysis, we can infer that in this area, Mexican teachers who obtained a college level education in Spanish have an important contribution to make to our field.

Editor's Acknowledgments



Many people have contributed to or have encouraged the development of CBER's concept of bi-national education and the concept of a *border pedagogy* crafted expressly for the special needs of the United States/Mexico border. They share our belief that education should not be constrained by borders and that educators must challenge the divisive nature of political borders by working together, across borders, in pursuit of their educative mission. Among those who have encouraged us to develop this idea were David Berliner, Dean of Education at Arizona State University; Margarita Calderón of the CRESPAR organization at Johns Hopkins University; and Graciela Orozco of the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation in Mexico City. All of them have made important contributions to our work in this area.

We invited several colleagues to read our drafts and offer suggestions. They are named and thanked in the authors' acknowledgment page but I take the prerogative, as Series Editor, to acknowledge them as a group, and to acknowledge that we could not have completed the work without their help. We are indebted to Heidi Hagen Pearson and Ashlea Deahl of ASU for assistance in line editing the text.

Among the right brain contributors to the design of the bi-national education series were two impressive graphics artists: Tracy Fernández of Fernández Design in Chicago and Alissa Brostowicz of ASU's College of Education. The staff of the Center for Bilingual Education and Research used both sides of the brain to complete these volumes. They were outstanding in their support of writers, editors, and designers. To Pauline Stark, Administrative Assistant, muchas gracias por todo. Andrea Everette and Adriana Robles plunged into the intricacies of desktop publishing software from the day they walked into the office and never looked up from their screens until the work was done. They are valuable members of the editorial team.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation underwrote a substantial portion of the costs for writing and producing some of the volumes in the series. We greatly appreciate their support. We owe special thanks to Cuca Robledo and Lalo Villarreal of IDRA, the leaders of *Project Alianza*. They exercise leadership with warm support, lots of encouragement, and great humanity. In short, they are architects of this international learning community. Un abrazo para ustedes.

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Finally, my heartfelt thanks to the many colleagues involved in the day-to-day work of ***Project Alianza***. Your views and comments were critically important to us since you were our first clients. I thank you for providing valuable help as the writing unfolded and for helping us ~~fine~~ tune the contents of several of the volumes ~~in~~ this series. *Gracias, han sido muy amables con nosotros.*

With ~~all~~ these friends and supporters we could hardly go wrong ~~in~~ any major way. Still, for those stubborn mistakes of commission and omission that remain, I take ~~full~~ responsibility.

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Biographical Information

Michael D. Guerrero is an assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin in the College of Education. He presently teaches courses on bilingual education and second language acquisition. He earned his doctorate in educational linguistics at the University of New Mexico. He and his wife have raised their two young daughters to be bilingual since birth.

INTRODUCTION

I recall the oral part of the exam, an in-person interview with two Spanish language professors. I was asked to describe the process of making tortillas, a ritual I was familiar with since my mother always made them from scratch. I groped unsuccessfully for the key word, "comal." The moment one of the professors suggested the word, I took it and continued to try to demonstrate that I was ready to take on the responsibility of delivering instruction in Spanish to children in bilingual education programs.

Eventually, I passed the test which meant I was adequately proficient to deliver instruction in Spanish. I also earned a B.A. in Spanish language in the process. The truth, however, was that I was not ready. I decided not to put myself in such a predicament or risk doing harm to the children. This realization landed me in Mexico City for about four years living and learning the language. After this experience, I believed I was ready to take on the professional responsibility of teaching in Spanish.

Upon returning from Mexico, I scored in the 90th percentile on a nationally administered Spanish language proficiency test and then obtained a bilingual credential to teach in a second state. Curiously, there was no oral part to this exam but there was a series of questions about Spanish civilization that I managed to answer correctly. I was led to wonder whether knowing something about culture and civilization was an adequate substitute for fluency.

As I began to teach in bilingual programs, I felt more confident about my ability to teach concepts in Spanish, especially if they dealt with language arts. Teaching math and science in Spanish was a special challenge I was not prepared for. I also began to notice the Spanish language ability of my colleagues. A few had achieved admirable levels of proficiency while others reminded me of an earlier me, groping for a word like "comal." Our linguistic disparities were striking.

Eventually, I became involved in bilingual education teacher training efforts at different universities in the Southwest. There was a common experience at each; the prospective bilingual education teachers were required to take a mandated Spanish language proficiency test to obtain a bilingual endorsement. Many were apprehensive about the test and viewed it both as a hurdle and true validation of their Spanish language ability. Complaints about the fairness of the test were not unusual.

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I also noticed that the bilingual education coursework they took was rarely delivered in Spanish and when it was, resistance often ensued, even on the part of the instructor. My personal attempts to teach courses in Spanish were thwarted due to administrative matters (e.g., ESL and bilingual education students in the same seminar) or outright opposition by department heads. I began to wonder just how "bilingual" bilingual education really is.

Background and Purpose

My interest as a bilingual education teacher and Spanish proficiency has led me down the complex road of testing and language test development. Why was the test in Michigan so different from the test in New Mexico and *both* of these different from the test in Arizona if they were intended to serve a common purpose? These are true **highstakes** tests but they vary wildly from state to state. Developing a valid test is no simple matter, but it is the juncture at which language testing, the teacher's Spanish language training, classroom language use, and language policy all intersect. It is unlikely that teachers in one state need much more (or much less) proficiency than those in another. At the moment, however, that seems to be the **typical** practice in bilingual education.

This monograph will provide a synthesis of information that centers on five fundamental questions within the context of the states with the largest Spanish-speaking populations.

1. What does the research say about the Spanish proficiency of bilingual education teachers?
2. How much Spanish is currently **required** of bilingual education teachers?
3. How is that language measured or assessed in the various states?
4. How do teacher **training** entities approach the development of academic Spanish language proficiency of prospective bilingual education teachers?
5. How much consistency exists among research, policy, tests and training?

While all these questions cannot be answered fully at this point, it is the purpose of this synthesis to provide informed direction for improving the ability of the bilingual education teacher and offer recommendations for changes in existing policies and practices.

I

SPANISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Review of the literature

Existing literature on this topic can be divided into three general categories. First, there are references that assert the bilingual education teacher must be proficient in the Spanish language, yet do not specify to which level. This literature offers some indication of the kinds of language skills the bilingual education teacher should have. Second, there is a small number of references that highlight the relationship between levels of Spanish language proficiency and particular program types which utilize sustained native language instruction (e.g., Two-Way, immersion, and late-exit bilingual programs). What makes this literature important is its link to positive student outcomes. Finally, there are studies focusing on the linguistic shortcomings of teachers with respect to Spanish.

The importance of Spanish language proficiency

There are various references that highlight the centrality of the bilingual education teacher's ability to deliver instruction in the native language of the student. In the references reviewed it is clear that the bilingual education teacher is expected to have a relatively high level of academic Spanish language proficiency.

One of the earliest references, and among the most widely cited, was by the Center for Applied Linguistics (1974) twenty-five years ago. A panel of distinguished experts in bilingual education described the bilingual education teacher's language abilities in the following manner:

According to the experts, the teacher should demonstrate the ability to:

1. Communicate effectively in the languages and within the cultures of both the home and school. The ability will include adequate control of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and regional, stylistic, and nonverbal variants appropriate to the communication context
2. Carry out instruction in **all** areas of the curriculum using a standard variety of both languages. (p. 3)

In a similar vein, Gaarder (1977) succinctly summarized his position on bilingual education teachers' language proficiency:

- a. They must be native speakers of the other language or have acquired equivalent competence as a prerequisite to entering a training program. . . .
- b. They must be literate—able to read and write—in Spanish, at least as well as average American school teachers can do these in English. (p. 84)

Trueba (1989) explained the possible consequences should the bilingual education teacher lack an adequate level of Spanish language proficiency:

In bilingual education, lack of mastery of the language of instruction causes serious problems for the teachers; it affects their classroom management, their clarity in explaining subject matter, and the quality of relationships with native speakers of that language. If a teacher does not know the target language well, children's linguistic and cognitive development also suffers, because they are deprived of guidance and feedback in situations where correct and precise use of the language is required to understand a concept or the logical foundations of reasoning. (p. 113)

More recently, The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) (1992) expressed their expectations of the language abilities of the bilingual education teacher:

Effective bilingual/multilingual teachers have a command of English and a non-English language that allows them to conduct classes in either language with ease and confidence, regardless of the level of instruction. This includes using appropriate and varied language at high levels of accuracy and fluency. Bilingual/multicultural teachers understand and accept dialectic differences in students and their families. Further, these teachers have the ability to serve as translators and interpreters for the students and their families. (p. 19)

Collectively, these descriptions of what the bilingual education teacher should be able to do reflect what one would expect of any teacher. That is, the bilingual education teacher should know the language well enough to be a good language model for the learner, regardless of grade level. They

should be able to deliver instruction across the curriculum and manage all aspects of the classroom (e.g., discipline, and praise) and of the schooling experience (e.g., communication with parents).

Language proficiency, program type and student outcomes

Very little attention has been paid to the relationship between the level of teacher language proficiency and bilingual education program type. Barkin (1981), however, alludes to this relationship. He concludes that if attitudes toward bilingual education are favorable among the community, then a maintenance program may be the desired that would require teachers to have a **higher** level of Spanish proficiency. Conversely, if attitudes are unfavorable toward bilingual education, "proficiency is barely an issue." (p. 218)

A much-cited study by Ramírez et al. (1991) found that teachers' Spanish language proficiency varied depending on the kind of program in which these individuals were teaching. For instance, teachers in the late-exit bilingual programs were "sufficiently fluent in Spanish to teach in it." (p. 17) Recent evidence also suggests that bilingual teachers in Two-Way programs must possess native or near-native proficiency in the non-English language (in this case Spanish).

Christian et al. (1997) set forth three profiles of Two-Way Immersion programs. At one school site, four teachers responsible for Spanish language instruction were native speakers of the language. The two **remaining** teachers had considerable experience living in a Spanish-speaking country. At a second site, some teachers were native speakers of Spanish and had also been educated in the language in their home country. The other teachers at this site were bilingual since childhood or had learned Spanish as adults.

At the third site, with the exception of two school staff members, forty teachers were bilingual. Many of the teachers were native speakers while others either lived in a Spanish-speaking country or were raised bilingually. What is particularly **striking** about these general language profiles is that the majority of the teachers appear to have developed their academic Spanish language proficiency outside the United States or beginning at an early age within the United States.

Molina (1994), in describing considerations for the successful implementation of a Two-Way program, also highlights the need for the teachers to have native or native-like ability in both languages. Reiterating the same message,

Baetens Beardsmore (1995) made clear the standard of language proficiency required to teach in European models of bilingual education. The author stated:

All four models are characterized by highly proficient teachers in the target language. European Schools only use native-speakers as teachers. . . . All the models consider this teacher proficiency a significant feature when high levels of bilingualism are the goal. (p. 148)

While data are limited, it is interesting to note the importance that is placed on the level of non-English language proficiency needed by teachers to deliver instruction in Two-Way bilingual programs or immersion programs. What is also particularly intriguing is the apparent effectiveness of Two-Way bilingual education programs in comparison to other models of bilingual education, especially early-exit transitional programs. In a recent longitudinal study Thomas and Collier (1997) reported that the educational model that appears to generate the most positive academic outcomes for language minority students are Two-Way programs. While the **credibility** of their study has been questioned (see Rossell, 1998), it is interesting to note what these two researchers believe to be the **first** predictor of long-term school success:

...cognitively complex on-grade-level academic instruction through students' first language for as long as possible (at least through grades 5 or 6) and cognitively complex on-grade-level academic instruction through the second language (English) for part of the school day, in each succeeding grade throughout students' schooling. (author's emphasis, p. 15)

Two-Way programs are followed in effectiveness by late-exit (K-5) bilingual education programs; maintenance programs appear to be more effective **than** early-exit (**K-3**) bilingual education program models. It seems that the more the native language of the learner is used, the better the student outcomes are. Other studies such as Christian (1997), Greene (1998), Lindholm (1993), and Ramírez et al. (1991) also support this pattern.

Collectively, these **findings** support the use of the native language of the child for instructional purposes for an extended period of time. In addition, there is evidence that teachers in Two-Way bilingual programs tend to be either native speakers of the Spanish language or at least near-native

speakers. Further, some evidence suggests teachers in late-exit programs may be more proficient in Spanish than teachers in early-exit bilingual programs.

One might expect that some research has explored the relationship between the bilingual education teacher's level of Spanish proficiency and student academic outcomes. Interestingly, there are only three studies, to my knowledge, that explicitly address this relationship. None of these are recent and **all** are either exploratory or modest in scope, hampered by shortcomings in design. Merino, Politzer and Ramírez (1979) explained:

The findings in this study are only suggestive. The student criterion measures were far from ideal and were not directly related to the aims of the Teachers' Spanish Proficiency Test. There was no Spanish reading measure for the pupils among the criterion measures. Moreover, some of the criterion measures may not have been adequate for the grade level of the pupils. (p. 32)

Merino et al. (1979) stated their conclusions and basic findings in the following manner:

It would seem, on the basis of these two studies, that requiring Spanish proficiency of prospective teachers of limited and non English speaking children is a legitimate concern. Indeed, this initial evidence suggests that such proficiency is not only related to achievement in Spanish, but in English as well. These studies are, of course, only a beginning and need to be replicated with larger samples and in a variety of settings. (p. 35)

Garcia and Marin (1979) reached similar conclusions. These researchers used Title VII teachers in eight northern California school districts as their sample (n=68). Upon closer examination of their data, the researchers discovered that the certified bilingual education teachers had a **higher** level of proficiency than the non-certified teachers in the sample. Their level of Spanish proficiency was rated on a five point scale, one being non-Spanish speaking, and five being a native speaker. Supervisors or resource personnel were used as judges. They found that the children taught by certified bilingual education teachers improved in both English and Spanish. The authors stated:

The importance of teacher proficiency in Spanish in contributing to the language development of the Title VII students is supported by the finding that the third grade students with certificated teachers gamed significantly more in Spanish than their counterparts with noncertificated teachers. These certificated teachers had demonstrated native proficiency in Spanish. Thus, fluency in Spanish enables a teacher to help limited English proficiency students learn Spanish better than a teacher who knows little or no Spanish. This in turn may help the student learn English language skills better, a trend evident from the finding that these same students showed greater gains in English also (although not statistically significant). (p. 375)

The status of teacher's Spanish language proficiency

Research exploring the Spanish language proficiency of bilingual education teachers usually represents a state, a national sample, or individual teachers. In each case, the portrait is the same—*many bilingual education teachers have not had an adequate opportunity to reach native or near native proficiency as prescribed earlier.*

Valdés (1989) used the following excerpt from the Albuquerque Journal to set the stage for her article:

BILINGUAL TEACHING EFFORTS UNDER FIRE. Santa Fe (AP)- None of 136 teachers and aides in bilingual programs in New Mexico's schools who were tested could pass a Spanish reading and writing exam at the fourth grade level, the director of bilingual education for the state Department of Education said. Henry Pascual concluded that colleges of education are spending a lot of federal money turning out Spanish-English bilingual teachers who don't know much Spanish. (3 October 1978) (p. 207)

Valdés (1989) goes on to describe the relatively low level of Spanish language proficiency typifying bilingual education teachers in New Mexico. Many could not comprehend written texts at the second or third grade level; many could not write in the language.

Only a few years earlier, Waggoner and O'Malley (1984) conducted what was probably one of the largest studies in terms of generating a profile of the non-English language abilities of teachers serving limited English proficiency students. These data were collected through the administration of the Teachers Language Skills Survey. The teacher sample was approximately 12,000. The researchers arrived at a rather discomfoting, yet vital, conclusion:

. . . approximately four out of five teachers using a non-English language in instruction during 1980-81 did not have the language skills or basic professional preparation to do so. (p. 25)

About ten years later, Fleischman and Hopstock (1993) conducted a large-scale study concerning the services provided to Limited English proficient students. Using a teacher mail survey, researchers collected responses from 415 bilingual education teachers, about 43 percent of their overall sample. The sample is considered nationally representative. Teachers were asked to rate their own Spanish language abilities using the following rating scale:

1. some familiarity with words and phrases
2. conversational ability only
3. conversational ability with some reading and writing ability
4. native/fluently speaker, no reading and writing ability
5. native/fluently speaker with reading and writing ability.

Overall, the average of those responding was 3.5, short of a native/fluently speaker with reading and writing ability. The mean score for elementary teachers was 3.7 or nearly 4 (a native/fluently speaker with no reading and writing ability). For middle school, the average was 3.3 or nearly 3 (a conversational ability with some reading and writing). For high school the average was 3.2, much like the middle school teachers. Note the gradual decline in language ability from elementary through high school.

Although the data suggest a slightly brighter picture than the earlier Waggoner and O'Malley study, it is possible that only those teachers who felt somewhat confident about their Spanish language skills responded to the survey; more than half of the teachers did not respond.

In Texas, the Summit for Bilingual Education and English as Second Language Programs (Ríos and Solís, 1997) was held in order to identify program priorities across the state. The issues were identified as:

- Need more use of Spanish staff development
- Focus on Spanish academic language for bilingual teachers
- Enhancement of training opportunities for teachers to improve their Spanish skills

More recently, Samway and McKeon (1999) address a number of myths in language minority education. Among the several myths these authors included in the section on staffing is the following:

Staffing/Staff Development Myth #2: When hiring bilingual teachers, districts can assume that teachers who possess a bilingual credential are fluent in a language other than English. Reality: There are some teachers who have a bilingual credential, but are not fluent in the target language. (p. 87)

From an ethnographic perspective, Licón Khisty (1995) offers valuable insight into the feelings of linguistic helplessness voiced by a small group of bilingual education teachers with respect to their ability to teach mathematics. Khisty concluded:

All of the teachers in interviews expressed a sense of helplessness about ~~speaking~~ mathematically; they recognized that there were times when they did not have a command of the Spanish vocabulary to explain concepts thoroughly. (p. 289)

It is also noteworthy that the only teacher who did feel comfortable teaching math in Spanish was a teacher who had completed all of her schooling in Mexico.

In describing an effective induction program for first year bilingual education teachers, Wink and Flores (1992) indicated that 'Young professionals who are just beginning their ~~first~~ year are often overwhelmed with the skills it takes to teach all subject matter in the second language' (p. 77).

All of these findings indicate that the opportunities bilingual education teachers received prior to entering the classroom fell short, a point we will revisit in some detail.

Importantly, these varied and somewhat scattered perspectives (e.g., ethnographic, survey findings, and professional judgments) are consistent in their portrayal of the bilingual education teachers' Spanish language proficiency. Early observations about their language ability are congruent with later observations, indicating that the academic Spanish language skills of bilingual education teachers have not improved over the last ~~thirty~~ years. In addition, early assertions regarding the importance of true biliteracy as a requirement for bilingual teachers seem to have been largely ignored by researchers and policy makers alike.

Summary

We can draw three conclusions from this literature. First, although the research is limited, there is little disagreement in the field of bilingual education regarding the importance of teachers who are highly proficient in the Spanish language. Second, there is some empirical evidence that supports the sustained use (e.g., K-6 across the curriculum) of the Spanish language in light of positive student academic outcomes. Moreover, there is some evidence that suggests that bilingual education teachers in Two-Way bilingual programs, the more effective programs, are native or near-native speakers of Spanish. Third, although we cannot claim all data as definite and absolute just yet, there are credible implications that many bilingual education teachers do not command the academic Spanish language at a native or near-native level of proficiency. Furthermore, when they are expected and presumed to be capable, their lack of proficiency may—in conjunction with other factors—negatively impact student outcomes.

STATE LANGUAGE STANDARDS

Language standards and competencies

Having no evidence to the contrary, it seems that the instructional and developmental needs of these students are similar regardless of the state in which they reside. Given this assumption, it can then be presumed that the language skills required of bilingual education teachers in all three states would also be more alike than different. To illustrate, let us **examine** some of these standards.

The four states in Group III represent a shared expectation with regards to the language abilities of the bilingual education teacher. Each of these states use only an oral language proficiency interview **akin** to the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview. Texas, in its state-mandated standards and competencies for bilingual education teachers, indicates that the teacher must pass the Texas Oral Proficiency Test by scoring at the Advanced Level.

The five states in Group IV offer the greatest perspective regarding what kinds of language standards prospective **bilingual** education teachers ought to meet, though these standards are still plagued by variability. These states measure teachers' language ability in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing the Spanish language.

Arizona's language standards for bilingual education teachers offer a global language criteria. The Arizona State Board of Education (1987) indicates the following under language proficiency criteria:

- a. Demonstrates the ability to use the non-English language to provide instruction in **all** areas of the curriculum.
- b. Demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively in the non-English **language** with parents and community members.

While they are general, this criteria is compatible with the criteria set forth by experts in the field of bilingual education such as the Center for Applied Linguistics (1974) and NABE (1992). That is, in each case the ability to deliver instruction in the language is highlighted.

With respect to language standards and competencies bilingual education teachers might be expected to meet in California, there are two possible scenarios. Prospective bilingual education teachers at the pre-service level may meet the **language** criteria established by their respective teacher training institution. However, this criteria is intended to be the same or similar to the language standards mandated by the state. Pre-service teachers may also opt to take the Spanish language exam that is part of the BCLAD requirements. Teachers already holding a teaching credential are permitted to meet the language criteria upheld by passing the Spanish language proficiency test within the BCLAD. In either case, the language standards are intended to be the same for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

In **Illinois**, like California, a prospective bilingual education teacher may take the state mandated exam (e.g., an oral, in-person interview and a reading comprehension test) or meet the language criteria set forth by their respective teacher-training institution. However, each institution of **higher** education must design an examination that meets the state's mandated criteria cited above. It appears that this criteria was established in 1979 (see **Durón**, 1983). Note that no specific reference is made regarding being able to deliver instruction in the language.

In 1989, the New Mexico State Board of Education mandated the following native **language** competencies which prospective bilingual education teachers must demonstrate in order to receive a bilingual endorsement to teach in grades K-8:

- a. demonstrates excellent **skills** of pronunciation and grammar.
- b. utilizes vocabulary appropriate to a broad range of functions, topics, and genres of speech.
- c. demonstrates competency as a participant in ordinary social situations in which the Native language is spoken.
- d. responds adequately to **written** material by exercising the processes of comparing, contrasting, categorizing, summarizing, inferring, analyzing, synthesizing, hypothesizing and evaluating.
- e. reads with comprehension a broad range of literary **forms** (folk, technical, classic, etc.).

- f. writes sentences, paragraphs, essays, utilizing standard language mechanics which express original thought, communicate complete and well-organized ideas, and accomplish a full set of written functions.
- g. demonstrates at least a *minimum* eighth grade level of proficiency in the native language in oral and written language skills where the written form exists and is allowed.

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Carries out instruction in content areas of the curriculum using a standard variety of the Native language.

Note, as in the case of Arizona and the Center for Applied Linguistics criteria, the explicit reference to using the language for instructional purposes across the curriculum. The competencies preceded by an asterisk apply only when a written form of the non-English language exists.

'New York's situation is similar to that of Texas, in that the state department of education has no explicit language standards and only indicates that the prospective bilingual education teacher must pass a specific language proficiency measure in order to obtain a valid bilingual education certificate. The regulation reads:

Language proficiency. The candidate will submit evidence of having achieved a satisfactory level of oral and written proficiency in English and in the target language of instruction on the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations. (1992)

There are no two states in the United States that share a common set of expected skills. The only meaningful commonality among states that do mandate some type of language skill concerns oral language ability. The nine states represented in Groups III and IV share this characteristic.

Only five of the 27 states (Arizona, California, New Mexico, New York, and Massachusetts) offering a bilingual endorsement in the United States have some type of language standard in each of the four language skills areas. New York has no explicit language standards.

The origin and validity of language standards and competencies

It is important to inquire how New Mexico, for example, arrived at the particular language competencies it attempts to uphold. Are they based on expert opinion, teacher surveys, or empirical evidence? Do teachers in New

Mexico possess these competencies and have they been empirically validated or associated with positive student outcomes? It makes sense to begin with professional judgment, but we cannot stop there. The judgments or standards and competencies must eventually be tested or validated. This would allow for meaningful modification and “fine training” of the language standards over time. However, there is no record that such activities have ever taken place in New Mexico or in any other state.

One problem facing the field of bilingual education, as it relates to teacher language proficiency, is that many stakeholders operate on hunches, educated guesses, or professional opinion to establish language standards and competencies for teachers. Rodríguez (1980) detected this problem early on:

Legislative regulations and State Board of Education guidelines press teacher trainers with myriad lists for bilingual teacher competencies. While all such competency lists are said to be synonymous with effective bilingual teachers, they are vulnerable to criticism for several reasons. To begin, there is as yet little or no empirical evidence that existing competencies are valid. Most competencies for bilingual education teachers are generated by experts... (p. 372)

More recently, August and Hakuta (1997) raised the same concern:

... most certification and professional development programs—preservice and inservice—are based on lists of teacher competencies and attributes informed by various sources (e.g., theoretical, basic, or school-based research) or professional judgment. As Grant and Secada (1990:419) argue, teacher certification programs and requirements have not been empirically validated. . . . (p. 266)

There is still a more fundamental problem with respect to language standards. In many cases, their explicitness leaves much to be desired. For example, in Arizona, all that is stated is that the teacher must be able to teach across the curriculum. While this is a critical objective, its interpretation is open. Does it mean that the bilingual education teacher should be able to read and write or only use the Spanish language orally? Does it also mean that the teacher should be able to formulate written questions about a science passage or elaborate orally on a student’s response? Much more troublesome are the vague and elusive standards set forth by states such as Illinois in which there is no explicit reference to any of the four language skills or content areas.

To exacerbate matters, these standards and competencies are generally poorly articulated. This creates a serious problem for the two other essential parts of the overall equation: the development of language learning opportunities and tests. That is, if the standards are vague and not validated, then how can teacher-training institutions know what language abilities to move the teachers toward? Similarly, how is it possible to then design a valid Spanish language proficiency test without a clear set of skills?

Summary

In this section an effort has been made to gauge, in a general way, the kinds of language standards and competencies bilingual education teachers are expected to meet. It is safe to say that there is little consensus nationally or regionally regarding these standards and competencies. The general agreement across states that require some measure of Spanish language proficiency is that the teacher's oral skills are of primary concern. Unfortunately, virtually no research has been conducted to validate these language standards or competencies. They are essentially the product of professional judgment and their worth is still largely unknown. In the absence of even partially validated language standards, Spanish language development opportunities at institutions of higher education and language testing run the risk of becoming an ad hoc activity.

MEASUREMENT OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION TEACHER SKILLS

Spanish language proficiency testing

In this portion of the monograph we present the results of an examination of the Spanish language tests used in various states. How are the oral, listening, reading, and writing skills of bilingual education teachers measured? How closely do the tests match the language standards they purportedly uphold? How reliable and valid are these measures?

Test descriptions

A brief description of proficiency tests used in the Southwest, Florida, Illinois, and New York is provided. The descriptions vary somewhat since each source highlights different points and varies in its origin. For example, the tests used in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas have been described and examined in greater detail by professionals interested in bilingual education. The tests used in California and New York are described based on information drawn from test description booklets provided by the test publisher. The Illinois and Florida test descriptions are drawn from information made available by the state department of education and one local education agency.

Arizona Classroom Teacher Spanish Proficiency Exam (ACTSPE)

According to Grant (1997), the ACTSPE was developed in the mid-1980s and is intended to be a performance-based approach to testing teachers. Further, Grant indicates that the content of the ACTSPE is based on a needs analysis of the language demands of bilingual teachers in Arizona. It should also be mentioned that the oral parts of the test account for 62% of the examinee's total score and the written parts of the exam account for 38% of the final score. Rigelhaupt (1992) described the ACTSPE in this way:

Section 1: Oral comprehension of students. In this section the examinee must demonstrate comprehension of children's speech by answering questions following a videotaped presentation of children's classroom interactions.

- Section 2: Oral reading. The examinee will read aloud and record on tape, with expression, a short literary selection, chosen from a book commonly read aloud to children, using correct pronunciation, intonation, and word groupings.
- Section 3: Oral presentation of an instructional activity. In this section the examinee is asked to present a lesson, as if teaching a group of elementary school children. The lesson to be taught is based on instructions provided in a teacher's guide commonly used in bilingual classrooms.
- Section 4: Question formulation. In this section the examinee is requested to formulate questions relating to a reading selection as if these questions were being posed to a group of elementary school children.
- Section 5: Technical vocabulary. The examinee will translate English vocabulary items into Spanish. Selections include translation of mathematical terms, educational terms, common classroom phrases and terms relating to family members.
- Section 6: Oral communication with parents. In this section the examinee must demonstrate the he/she can communicate orally with parents using a professional and culturally appropriate style to the context and situation.
- Section 7: Translation of an official announcement. The examinee **will** be given an announcement to be translated from English to Spanish.
- Section 8: Reading a professional journal. The examinee **will** read a short selection from a professional journal and write a summary of it.
- Section 9: Reading student compositions. The examinee will be **given** student compositions and **will** rewrite any incorrectly written word or group of words.

California Bilingual Crosscultural Language and Academic Development Examinations (BCLAD)

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Test (6) of the BCLAD encompasses the language of emphasis (e.g., Spanish) in which the bilingual education teacher will be teaching. This test was developed in the mid-1990s and its content is based on a (K-8) teacher survey. The survey was intended to identify which teacher language tasks were most relevant. According to the National Evaluation Systems, Inc., 1997-98 CLAD/BCLAD Registration Bulletin, the language of emphasis component of this testing battery consists of the following language tasks:

1. Listening: Identify the main idea of an oral language sample in which the main idea is either stated or implied.
2. Listening: Identify either the cause of a specified effect or an effect of a specified cause in an oral language sample in which cause and effect relationship is either stated or implied.
3. Listening: Identify a detail stated in an oral language sample.
4. Reading: Identify main idea of a written language sample in which the main idea is either stated or implied.
5. Reading: Identify either the cause of a specified effect or an effect of a specified cause in a written language sample in which the cause and effect relationship is either stated or implied.
6. Reading: Identify a detail stated in a written language sample.
7. Reading: Identify an outcome, a conclusion, or a generalization that is supported by information in a written language sample.
8. Speaking: Speak with clarity and appropriate syntax, pragmatics and organization.
9. Speaking: Speak using a breadth of vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience.
10. Speaking: Speak intelligibly, with fluency, clear pronunciation and appropriate intonation and pacing.

11. Speaking. Read orally intelligibly, with fluency, clear pronunciation, and appropriate intonation and pacing.
12. Writing Create written communication in which a clear purpose is maintained that is consistent with the task and intended audience.
13. Writing: Create written communication that is unified and coherent
14. Writing Create written communication in which ideas are clearly expressed and supported by appropriate and adequate details.
15. Writing Create written communication containing proper usage, mechanics, and appropriate word choice and sentence variety.
16. Writing: Translate a written passage from English, conveying the significant information contained in the English version and employing proper usage, mechanics and appropriate word choice and sentence variety.

Florida Native Proficiency Inventory (NPI)

As previously mentioned, there is no state mandated Spanish language proficiency test in Florida. Each local education agency determines whether or not bilingual education programs will be implemented and which measures will be used to determine the bilingual education teacher's Spanish language proficiency. However, the state must approve whatever measures the district adopts for this purpose. In Dade County Public Schools (Stinson, 1992) this test is the Native Proficiency Inventory for Teachers of Basic Subject Areas in a Language other than English, hereafter the Native Proficiency Inventory (NPI). This oral (and comprehension) measure was approved in 1990. The NPI is described as follows

1. The interviewer will ask questions that are relevant to teaching in the program of Basic Subject Areas in the Home Language. Areas discussed should be:
 - a. Educational background
 - b. Certification

- c. Experience working with children in school or in other settings
- d. Experience with Hispanic, Haitian, or other limited English proficient students
- e. Previous employment situations
- f. Abilities and interests that could be utilized in extra-curricular activities
- g. Language spoken other than English

The examinee's oral ability is judged based on the following criteria: (1) understanding, (2) command of grammatical structure, (3) command of pronunciation and (4) command of vocabulary.

Illinois Language Proficiency Interview (LPI)

The test used in this state is referred to as the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) (Illinois State Board of Education, 1998). The LPI consists of an in-person, one-on-one interview and reading component. The oral part of the test is patterned after the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. State Department interviewing procedure. There are no set questions or topics, but rather, broad areas of conversation are covered such as autobiographical information, work-related topics, educational experiences and current events. The examinee's oral proficiency is rated on pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, fluency and listening comprehension.

The reading portion of the exam consists of three multiple-choice subtests. Part A requires the examinee to select the missing portion of an incomplete sentence. Part B contains several reading passages and are followed by either a series of questions or incomplete sentences to be logically completed. Part C entails the interpretation of short literary selections.

New Mexico Four Skills Exam (FSE)

According to Valdés (1989), the Four Skills Exam was developed in the late 1970s and was formally adopted in 1981. The development of the FSE was based on interviews with bilingual education stakeholders and observations of teacher language use in the classroom. This information was then synthesized and presented in survey form to a cadre of 50 experts on bilingual education. Guerrero (1994) described the FSE in the following manner:

- Part 1 (Aural) is designed to be administered in a language laboratory. This section of the test consists of four separate subtests: Listening Comprehension, Dictation, Informal Words and Formal Equivalents.
- Part 2 (Oral) is also tape-mediated and requires the examinee to produce and record three brief oral speech samples (for a total of **five** minutes) on three designated topics. Examinees are provided with written situational descriptions in English that are intended to guide their oral speech samples. Subjects are **given** a few minutes to plan each response.
- Part 3 (Reading) consists of three multiple-choice sub-sections: (1) Orthography: Accents, (2) **Reading Identifying Concepts**, (3) Reading: Understanding Words in Context; and also one **fill** in the blank type subtest, Orthography: Spelling.
- Part 4 (Composition) consists of a 150 to 200 word composition that the examinee must write on one of two predetermined topics in Spanish.

New York Target Language Proficiency Assessment (TLPA)

Based on information available on the TLPA, also published by National Evaluation Systems, Inc. (New York State Education Department, 1995), this language proficiency assessment consists of the following:

- Sub-area 1 Listening comprehension: Demonstrate literal comprehension of oral messages; infer meaning from oral comprehension; apply skills of critical analysis to oral communications.
- Sub-area 2 Oral expression: In response to a prompt, construct connected oral discourse in the target language that communicates a message effectively and that demonstrates a command of vocabulary and syntax appropriate to an educational **setting**.
- Sub-area 3 Reading comprehension: Understand literal content of a variety of materials written in the target **language**; apply skills of inference and interpretation to a

variety of materials written in the target language;
apply skills of critical analysis to a variety of materials
written in the target language.

- Sub-area 4 Written expression: Write a well-organized passage of moderate length that is syntactically correct and appropriate in style and diction for a given audience, purpose, and occasion and that communicates a message effectively.

Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT)

Stansfield and Kenyon (1991) provide an extensive account of the development of the TOPT, which was developed in the early 1990s. The content of the TOPT is drawn from a job-related survey that was administered to 240 teachers in the first through third grades. The survey was derived from the ACTFL guidelines. According to the National Evaluation Systems, Inc., 1998-99 Registration Bulletin for the TOPT, this measure consists of the following:

Picture-Based Questions: The candidate looks at a picture or series of pictures in the test booklet and responds to verbal questions about the pictures. The tasks include such undertakings as giving direction, describing activities in a familiar setting or telling a story.

Task 1: Give directions

Task 2: Describe a place/activities

Task 3: Narrate in the present time

Task 4: Narrate in past time

Task 5: Narrate in future time

Topic Based Questions: The candidate is given a description of a situation and asked to explain or discuss a topic, such as describing a procedure step by step, presenting advantages and disadvantages, explaining and defending a point of view or imagining a hypothetical situation and commenting on it.

Task 6: Give instructions

Task 7: State advantages/disadvantages

Task 8: Give a brief factual summary

Task 9: Support an opinion

Task 10: Hypothesize on an important topic

Situation Questions: The candidate is given a description of a real-life situation, such as giving advice to a friend, apologizing for having offended someone, or making a formal presentation to a group, and is asked to respond to it. In this section, how the candidate responds is especially Important since these question require the tailoring of language to the situation and the listener.

Task 11: Speak with tact

Task 12: Speak to persuade someone

Task 13: Propose and defend a course of action

Task 14: Give a professional talk

Task 15: Give advice

What is particularly obvious about these seven tests is their diversity. Their development spans three decades, from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s. Two of the tests are based on field observations (Arizona and New Mexico), others on surveys (Texas), and yet others on professional judgment (Florida). The content of the exams ranges from generic situations to "real life" bilingual education language demands. There is a dear emphasis on oral skills but not on Spanish literacy skills; only four of the tests measure writing proficiency and five tests measure reading proficiency.

These tests present two difficult problems for bilingual education policy. First, teacher language skills are unlikely to be consistent either regionally or nationally. How this might influence student outcomes is an important question to the field. With so much variability from state to state, it would be difficult to compare the effectiveness of one state's programs to another's. There appears to be little or no commonality of purpose or approach among these tests.

Second, and returning to the point made earlier by Barkin, these tests reflect the low value placed on biliteracy in the U.S. Preference is on oral language skills and not literacy in the two languages. The influence this might have on the effectiveness of bilingual programs must be taken into consideration. How effective can we expect a bilingual program to be if the bilingual education teachers are not expected to be able to read or write in Spanish? Clearly, much depends on the goals these programs pursue. Overall, these

tests are congruent with a transitional bilingual education philosophy as opposed to an additive program model. As we have previously noted, the skills needed to teach in a Two-Way or dual-language program are likely to be higher than those needed in a transitional bilingual education program.

Matching the language standards

It is important to reiterate that in high-stakes testing used for credentialing purposes one would expect there to be consistency among mandated language standards, associated language measures, and language training. In this section, the relationship between state mandated language standards and the corresponding language test is briefly examined.

Arizona's language standards indicate that the bilingual education teacher should be able to demonstrate the ability to use the non-English language to provide instruction in all areas of the curriculum. The ACTSPE appears to sample the examinee's ability to use the Spanish language in at least some areas of the curriculum. For example, the teacher candidate must read a story aloud and translate mathematical terms. Social studies and science are not used as contexts on the ACTSPE, only the language arts.

In the state of Illinois the language standard is that the applicant is able to use the non-English language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to his or her professional needs. The Illinois exam, however, does not appear to have a strong connection with this standard. The oral interview is of a generic nature and not necessarily linked to "pertinent professional needs" (e.g., teaching content in the Spanish language). The reading portion of the exam also seems more generic than tied to any particular curricular related texts such as science, social studies, or math. There is a literature connection, however.

In New Mexico, a difficult situation exists. The FSE was adopted in 1981, yet the state board of education did not mandate native **language** competencies until 1989. In short, if there is any congruence between the FSE and the language competencies, it is coincidental. Interestingly, Valdés (1989) notes that the FSE was designed to determine whether teachers could deliver instruction in Spanish. I have argued elsewhere (Guerrero, 1994) that no section of the FSE meaningfully addresses this competency. On the other hand, the FSE does use authentic reading materials from science and social studies textbooks in the reading comprehension section of the exam.

Unfortunately, these reading materials are at the fourth grade level (Valdés, 1989) while the language competencies call for proficiency at the eighth grade level.

Again, Florida, New York, and Texas have no explicit state standards which might govern the nature of the tests being used. These states only mandate that the bilingual education teacher pass a designated measure.

Reliability and validity information

Without engaging in a psychometric discussion on the technical properties of these measures, let us at least consider the following information. These tests should be reliable and valid. Evidence that reflects the reliability and validity of these tests should be evident and available for examination by test consumers (e.g., prospective bilingual education teachers, students, parents, administrators, professors, researchers, and policy makers). Moreover, this evidence increases in value when it is set forth by impartial, third party reviewers, with neither the test developer nor the educational agency endorsing its use.

There are at least two academic sources that regularly review psychometric measures or tests. The Buro's Mental Measurement Yearbooks (Buros Institute), Test Critiques (Keyser & Sweetland, editors) and other academic journals such as *Language Testing*. Consider, for example, that English language proficiency tests for students, such as the Language Assessment Scales (De Avila & Duncan, 1990), the Idea Proficiency Test (Dalton, 1991), and the Bilingual Syntax Measure (Burt, Dulay, & Hernández-Chávez, 1976) have long been the subject of intense scrutiny and psychometric review (see for example Del Vecchio & Guerrero, 1995; Guyette, 1994; McCollum, 1983; Ulibarri, Spencer & Rivas, 1981).

In contrast, only two of the Spanish language proficiency tests under consideration in this monograph have been rigorously examined for their psychometric properties by independent and impartial parties. Grant (1997; Norfleet, 1994), in her study of the Arizona Classroom Teacher Spanish Proficiency Exam (ACTSPE), provided one such effort. Guerrero (1994), in his examination of the New Mexico Four Skills Exam, represents the second. Both of these efforts were done as dissertation studies.

According to Grant (1997), the ACTSPE is reliable. The scoring of subjective parts of the exam is relatively consistent. The test is valid. The test-takers judged the test to be of appropriate difficulty and the test

content to be relevant to bilingual education. Also, the test-taker's scores correlated significantly with their language ability self-ratings. Recall that this test was developed and put into use around 1985. It was in use for nearly ten years before it was examined.

Guerrero (1994) found the Four Skills Exam to be seriously lacking in terms of its psychometric properties. Objectively, scored parts of the test were not reasonably reliable; inter-rater reliability of the subjectively scored parts of the exam were exceedingly high. Listening and reading subtests were also highly correlated indicating redundancy in the language skills. Further, those test-takers who reported speaking Spanish as a child and who speak Spanish presently at home scored significantly lower than those individuals who reported the opposite. Hispanic surnamed test-takers scored significantly lower than non-Hispanic surnamed test-takers on the reading and writing parts of the exam. The FSE came into use in 1981 and continues to be used. A new test, "La Prueba," is scheduled to be phased in some time in the near future. In short, researchers in bilingual education and language testing have not directed very much energy to ensuring that the tests being used to make lifelong judgments about bilingual education teachers are reliable and valid.

There is an additional point which must be made regarding the validity of these tests. There is little disagreement in the field of transitional bilingual education regarding its primary purpose—to transition English language learners into all English instruction as quickly as possible (August & Hakuta, 1997). The important point is that each of these tests was developed within an educational context driven primarily by this transitional objective. Consequently, the expert judgment, field observations, survey data, language standards, and scoring criteria underlying the development of these tests are likely to be skewed toward low-end proficiency since the context for bilingual education is primarily subtractive and minimalist.

In Texas, for example, the prospective bilingual education teacher needs only to pass the Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT) which only measures oral proficiency in Spanish. Consequently, the use of oral Spanish is focused on the early grades, about the point when Spanish-speaking children are expected to be ready to transition to all English instruction.

The New Mexico test, like the Texas measure, was developed within the context of elementary bilingual education teachers up to about grade four (Valdés, 1989), or about the grade when many English language learners are expected to exit bilingual programs. Also, a prospective bilingual education

teacher can *miss* the written *portion* of the test, a letter to parents, with *up* to twenty errors. Clearly *a* high level of Spanish literacy is not the goal in New Mexico.

Even *as* promising as the ACTSPE (Arizona) *might* appear, it too reflects the subtractive and *transitional* nature of bilingual *education* in the U.S.

Riegelhaupt (1994) touts the ACTSPE as “. . . a model for the nation and *even* today, over 10 years following its initiation, it *remains* the most sociolinguistic and reality-based proficiency examination in the United States.” (p. 82) If the ACTSPE is *reality-based*, it should *conform* to transitional bilingual education, which it does. Field observations were conducted only at the elementary grade level. More *importantly*, the oral portion of the exam *is* given substantially more *weight* than the written portion in *scoring* the exam, 62% and 38% *respectively*. What *source* *is* expectations support this scoring procedure? Certainly not from the mandated state standards that *indicate* *a* bilingual education teacher should *be* able to deliver instruction across the curriculum in Spanish. Perhaps the *true* “source” is the subtractive sociolinguistic milieu in which bilingual education operates. In Arizona, *as* in other states, the primary goal of bilingual education *is* *almost* always student competence in English and not Spanish.

ACQUIRING ACADEMIC SPANISH IN U.S. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Spanish language proficiency development

In this section we will examine the general context for acquiring academic Spanish in U.S. public education (K-12) and during pre-service training. The K-12 examination is necessary since it may reveal linguistic conditions that must be taken into consideration at the post-secondary level. If there is evidence that strongly supports the valuing of academic Spanish language proficiency during the K-12 years, we can then assume that language development efforts are not adequate for the purpose of preparing teachers. Of course, if the evidence is to the contrary, then these institutions may be unable to make up the lost linguistic ground.

According to a survey conducted by AACTE (1994), the majority of prospective bilingual education teachers are Hispanic and female. The second largest percentage in that survey was comprised of White (non-Hispanic) females. A corollary assumption is that the majority of the bilingual education teaching force is native born, although there is no recent evidence to support this.

The point is that prospective bilingual education teachers ~~will~~ be subjected to whatever social and educational language policies and practices permeate the life and schooling experiences of Hispanics in this country. In some cases these experiences may be direct by actual participation in bilingual programs; in other cases the experience may be more tangential by attending a school with a bilingual program but not being served by the program. Let us briefly examine the experiences that may precede their post-secondary stage of life.

Before They Become Bilingual Teachers

Even before schooling begins, Spanish-speaking parents struggle with the decision of whether or not to teach their children Spanish. Grosjean (1982) maintains, “. . . in the United States, there are innumerable examples of immigrant parents encouraging, if not forcing, their children to learn English, with the potential consequence that some may become rootless and alienated from their native language group.” (p. 124)

An often-cited reason why Spanish-speaking immigrants do not transmit the Spanish language to their children is rooted in the parents' belief that if their children learn English well and quickly—by passing Spanish—they will secure good jobs and prosper. Peñalosa (1980) and Zentella (1990) argue that this is more a myth than reality. Chicanos and Puerto Ricans continue to be economically marginalized even after acquiring English.

Spanish-speaking parents receive numerous messages from different sectors of society indicating that their children should be taught only English. The present movement to make English the official language of the U.S. is a case in point. Arizona, California, Florida, and Illinois voters have passed English-only legislation. New Mexico, New York, and Texas voters have not (Crawford, 1998). The recent judicial case in which a judge equated a mother's speaking Spanish to her young daughter with child abuse is yet another example (Morales, 1995) of the sociolinguistic milieu in which prospective bilingual education teachers are cultivated.

On the other hand, and based on general observations, the Spanish language origin community also receives messages that their language does have a place in certain domains such as politics and advertising. Politicians tend to polish their Spanish language skills to attract more Latino voters. Similarly, the use of Spanish language media, primarily television and radio, provide ample opportunities for the Spanish speaking community to enjoy programming in the language.

Schooling is clearly the most central of social institutions for promoting language development, including literacy. However, as young children from the Spanish language community enter schooling, the message to abandon the Spanish language is often reinforced. Wong Fillmore (1991), in a compelling study of preschool programs designed to serve language minority children, concludes that many of these children lose their primary language as they learn English. The researcher explains:

Consider what happens when young children find themselves in the attractive new world of the American school. What do they do when they discover that the only language that is spoken there is one that they do not know? How do they respond when they realize that the only language they know has no function or value in that new social world, and that in fact, it constitutes a barrier to their participation in the social life of the school? They do just as the

promoters of early education for language minority students hope they will. They learn English, and too often, they drop their primary languages as they do. In time, many of these children lose their first languages. (p. 20)

Unfortunately, there are also few opportunities offered through the K-12 educational system to promote the maintenance and development of non-English languages among school age children. In a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (1993) a number of findings relevant to this discussion were reported. The authors of the study found that only 17% of schools providing services to language minority students used a significant degree of primary language instruction. They also reported that ESL is the predominant instructional approach. Further, of the 363,000 teachers providing services to Limited English Proficient students, only 10% are certified bilingual teachers.

- . It appears that few students find their way into a bilingual program where a significant amount of native language instruction is taking place. Further, the richness and quality of the language is open to question. In short, many students who might later be candidates to become bilingual education teachers (e.g., Hispanic and White females) cannot count on having the kind of linguistic access they need to begin developing their Spanish language academic proficiency early on.

Interestingly, even in elementary bilingual programs where bilingualism is the goal, Spanish earns only a secondary status. Escamilla (1992) studied various features of 25 elementary bilingual maintenance programs over a 2 year period. With regard to the uses to which Spanish and English were applied, the researcher reports that in some classrooms Spanish was used primarily for direction giving and discipline. English, in contrast, was used for academic instruction and conversation.

In a second study by Escamilla (1994), the researcher examined the sociolinguistic environment of a bilingual school in a large urban school district in California. She specifically observes the uses of both Spanish and English in the school. Her conclusion:

The data seems to indicate that there is a discrepancy between the status of each of the languages used at the school, the quality of use of each language, and the attitudes of the bilingual school personnel toward each of the languages. English appears to be the

status language, the preferred language and the language spoken with the greatest frequency and fluency. Further, English is the language used to give students awards and rewards and English is the language used between adults, even adult bilinguals. (p. 40)

McCollum (1994), also doing research in a Two-Way bilingual program but at the middle school level, makes the following observations regarding the use and status of English and Spanish. She concludes, "Instead of fostering bilingualism and biliteracy in Spanish and English, the Two-Way program studied unwittingly devalued the minority language and taught students that English was the language of power" (p. 11). She illustrates this point:

Stronger clues regarding linguistic power relations in the school were contained in practices surrounding the end of the year external assessments done with the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in English and La Prueba Riverside in Spanish. In interviews, students stated that the ITBS had to count more than La Prueba because it was in English. (p. 10)

Constantino and Faltis (1998) provide insight into the role of Spanish and English in the high school settings they examined. These researchers report:

Students in secondary bilingual programs rarely have the opportunity to read literature and other authentic materials in Spanish (Constantino, 1994). Furthermore, when Spanish language materials are available to older students they tend to focus on drill and practice exercises rather than for pleasure or as learning resources. . . . (p. 118)

With each successive year of K-12 schooling, opportunities for prospective bilingual education teachers to develop academic Spanish are diminished. Most prospective bilingual education teachers cannot develop their academic Spanish language skills, oral or written, over time using public education as the vehicle. Instead, prospective bilingual education teachers must individually maintain and develop their Spanish language abilities by other means. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect that most prospective bilingual education teachers will have gained an age-appropriate level of academic Spanish language proficiency prior to their teacher preparation experience. This implies that their Spanish language training should be redesigned to create more and better development opportunities at the post-secondary level.

Teacher training entities

Unfortunately, and as already illustrated, there is evidence that prospective bilingual education teachers are not provided enough meaningful opportunities to develop their academic Spanish language proficiency prior to their pre-service training.

Let us examine in a general way what transpires during their pre-service training. In terms of experiences designed to develop the academic Spanish language proficiency of bilingual education teachers, we know very little. Further, what we claim to know about academic Spanish language development for the population in question is based more on professional judgment than on sound theory or research.

Seidner (1981) appears to be one of the few researchers in the field of bilingual education who directed early attention to bilingual teacher language-related issues at institutions of higher education. Seidner found that there was a lack of consensus among the colleges and universities in his data set regarding language criteria and assessment practices. He further notes that while students were expected to be fluent in a target language, "no definitions were established in regard to the nature of fluency." (p. 373) The only consistency found among the universities and colleges surveyed was an oral interview format for language assessment purposes.

It makes sense that teacher training institutions know what kinds of academic language skills and levels of proficiency prospective teachers need, how to promote the achievement of these skills and levels of proficiency, and how much time might be needed to do so by those students. In addition, these institutions should periodically evaluate the effectiveness of their language development opportunities and make changes as needed.

Teacher-training entities, for the most part, are not dealing with a homogeneous group of prospective bilingual education teachers in terms of their Spanish language abilities. A one-size-fits-all approach, which rests primarily on professional opinion, is simply not the most effective or equitable approach to use for developing this population's Spanish academic language proficiency.

In my own research (Guerrero, 1994), I conducted a series of statistical analyses to determine whether or not the test scores on the Four Skills Exam of prospective bilingual education teachers in New Mexico varied as a function of their inferred institutional affiliation. I wanted to know if some prospective bilingual education teachers were doing better on the Four Skills

Exam than others based on their institutional affiliation. I assumed that there would be no significant differences since each of the five sites are all within New Mexico and each of these sites is expected to move the teacher candidate toward the same set of mandated language competencies.

In brief, significant differences in test performance were indeed found among the five sites. These differences were significant on parts of the test and on the test as a whole. Examinees affiliated with three of the test sites scored significantly **higher** than those affiliated with two other sites on the test as a whole. Based on these findings, and clearly much more research is warranted, not all language development efforts on the part of bilingual education teacher training institutions, are equally effective. I must add that only 20% of those test-takers (n=217) who took the Four Skills Exam between 1991-92 passed all parts of the exam on the first attempt. As a whole, there would appear to be shortcomings in terms of the Spanish language development opportunities teachers receive in New Mexico.

It is instructive to note that the test scores of these prospective bilingual education teachers in New Mexico also varied as a function of their inferred ethnicity. The non-Hispanic surnamed test-taker scored significantly higher on the literacy parts of the test and the test in general, and those who reported speaking Spanish presently and as they grew up scored significantly lower on the reading part **than** those reporting neither of these two practices. These findings suggest that the kind of Spanish language development opportunities prospective bilingual education teachers need may vary depending on their ethnic and language background.

Although research is limited, researchers in the field of bilingual education paint a worrisome picture of the kinds of Spanish language development opportunities prospective **bilingual** education teachers receive and the adequacy of diagnostic/prescriptive measures. For example, Calderón and Díaz (1993) state

Professors in a teacher preparation program must possess or *gain* the skills to teach bilingual teachers in Spanish. Most teachers report that their university course work was *rarely delivered in* Spanish, even when taught by tenured bilingual professors. (author's emphasis, p. 66)

Perhaps the most disturbing part of the Calderón and Díaz citation is the observation that even tenured bilingual education professors are reluctant to give instruction in Spanish. The reasons for this are not known. Do the professors feel linguistically inadequate? Do they believe that it is not necessary or perhaps too difficult for their students? Are the courses open to other students from outside of bilingual education (e.g., ESL) with no proficiency in Spanish? Is it an absence of language policy that governs the use of teaching these courses in Spanish or the sense that this responsibility belongs to someone else (e.g., the Spanish Department)?

Not surprisingly, academic writing in Spanish on bilingual education topics is also scant. In a cursory review of the *Bilingual Research Journal*, formerly the *National Association for Bilingual Education Journal*, and the *Journal of Issues on Language Minority Education*, only a very small percentage of the published articles are in Spanish and most of these date back to the earliest years of publication. Until quite recently, the *Bilingual Research Journal* did not announce the fact that articles are accepted in Spanish as well as in English.

A cursory review of some recent job descriptions for bilingual educators posted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (1998-99) indicated that Spanish language proficiency is desirable. The job descriptions included wording such as: "ability to teach in Spanish (desirable)", "literacy in Spanish is highly desirable", and "competence in Spanish". However, little is known about what procedures are actually used to determine how proficient professors in bilingual education are in Spanish.

Wink and Flores (1992) cited earlier in this monograph, reinforce a previous point. That is, if a bilingual education teacher does achieve a high level of academic Spanish language proficiency, this person probably did so through individual effort and outside of the United States. The authors state:

Many professionals may not understand how long it actually takes to become truly proficient in a second language. . . . Young professionals who are just beginning their first year are often overwhelmed with the skills it takes to teach all subject matter in the second language. . . . We cannot assume that native speakers have the proficiency to teach in the target language, especially those who received the majority of their education in the United States. (author's emphasis, p. 77)

There are three parts to this statement that merit attention. First, how much time and effort does it take for the average bilingual education teacher to become “truly proficient” in Spanish? The amount of time needed may depend on what prospective teacher brings with them and how much opportunity they have to develop Spanish academic proficiency through the teacher education experience. Evidently, many of these individuals need more time and opportunity than they are generally afforded to develop high levels of academic Spanish language proficiency.

Second, Wink and Flores raise the issue of teaching all subject matter in Spanish. Of course many first year bilingual education teachers are overwhelmed with this responsibility. They have little access to the academic registers and too little time to acquire them. Is it reasonable to assume that prospective teachers **will** acquire the math register in Spanish through the courses they are routinely required to take? Or is the expectation that they **will** “pick it up” in some other way?

Wink and Flores also reinforce another crucial point. The sociolinguistic environment of U.S. society, in and out of schools, does not encourage the use of Spanish. Consequently, under present conditions, the majority of prospective bilingual education teachers that have been schooled primarily or exclusively in the United States, perhaps including college professors, will find teaching their subject matter in Spanish a difficult challenge.

Summary

Based on this review, it may be difficult for teacher training efforts to **make** up the lost linguistic ground of many of the prospective and practicing bilingual education teachers **from** the Spanish language **origin** community in the U.S. On the other hand, teacher-training entities appear to be operating almost exclusively on professional judgment when it comes to meeting the academic Spanish language needs of prospective bilingual education teachers. Sometimes, however, this sound judgment gives way to language practices and policies that undermine this vital linguistic goal. English is used for academic purposes almost exclusively. Academic use of Spanish is very limited. One factor seems plausible: the opportunities these institutions provide fall short of the needs of the prospective bilingual education teachers and these possible consequences for the school age children who will receive instruction from these teachers. It is difficult to assess the gravity of this situation for the future of bilingual education, whether it affects some varieties of bilingual education more than others do, or

whether it has any negative impact at **all**. The fact that this topic has such low priority on the collective research agenda may be the most serious problem at this point.

There is a high level of consistency with respect to the low Spanish proficiency of many bilingual education teachers. Experts agree that these professionals should be able to teach in the language and should have a high level of proficiency in the language. Interestingly, no state mandates such language standards or upholds them through the administration of the Spanish language proficiency tests they have developed or adopted. The tests also are designed from the vantage point of transitional bilingual education. Bilingual education teacher training institutions appear to be acting in accordance with societal expectations. On this issue they have overlooked expert opinion in the formulation of policy.

Schools, in turn, are hard pressed to staff their classrooms with native or near-native speakers and writers of academic Spanish. Many show little hesitation to place teachers who are limited Spanish proficient, and few programs use teachers who only speak Spanish.

Teacher training efforts are under growing pressure to produce more bilingual education teachers. Lowering the language standards for this group of professionals in order to keep up with the demand for bilingual education teachers is surely self-defeating. School districts, state departments of education and policy-makers must realize that **staffing** programs with **bilingual** education teachers that are severely limited in academic Spanish has helped create the very problem they seek to address.

Plan of Action and Policy Recommendations

As many bilingual education teachers enter the classroom, they are in no better position to help their students develop age and grade appropriate academic Spanish language proficiency than were the teachers who taught them as children. The transitions of bilingual education in the United States that a student must endure throughout his or her **schooling** fail to adequately accommodate their needs. This, in turn, creates a seemingly endless cycle of poor language proficiency.

Demographics, geographic proximity to Latin America, economics, and the ample and already present use of the Spanish language (outside of schooling) all contribute to the need for U.S. society to seriously reconsider the role of the Spanish language now and in the future. The United States is in an

advantageous position to produce a segment of its citizenry that is academically bilingual and biliterate in two of the world's top languages of wider communication. In short, there is no legitimate reason, beyond xenophobic politics, why the bilingual education teachers of the future should not be highly competent in Spanish and why they represent such a scarce commodity. The linguistic raw material is available in abundance. What is missing is the will to act.

The educational infrastructure that spans the entire educational experience of Spanish speaking students must be modified. This means promoting strategically situated, additive bilingual education from kindergarten through pre-service training at colleges and universities where only transitional bilingual education programs have prevailed. The objective must be no less than the systematic production of teachers, writers, artists, lawyers, doctors, scientists, business people, etc. that are proficient in both languages within particular communities. Minimal English competencies to enable Hispanic youngsters to struggle through the K-12 educational experience are not sufficient. Much more is needed.

González (1994) makes a compelling case for casting the Spanish language in a new educational light. He proposes the addition of Spanish as a second school language and calls for a redefinition of the role of the Spanish language in the school curriculum. As González makes clear, the situation of the Spanish speaking and Latino population in the United States is a unique situation, one which merits a different set of language and education policies unlike those governing other language groups in the United States.

The goal is for the community to transmit the Spanish language (and knowledge) early and effectively to their children. They should be influenced by positive messages about bilingualism from schools and society.

Consider, however, that there already a few school districts (e.g., Ysleta Independent School District in Texas) that have established bilingualism and biliteracy as a goal for all students upon graduation from high school. In another instance, the New Mexico State Department of Education has recently adopted a policy whereby high school diplomas may be embossed with a "Sello Bilingüe" (e.g., Bilingual Seal). The significance of the seal is formal recognition of the student's Spanish language proficiency upon meeting certain Spanish language requirements during high school.

Further, a few school districts in the United States. (e.g., Edison Language Academy in the Santa Monica-Malibu District) have implemented K-12 dual language programs. This type of educational experience allows for the sustained development of academic Spanish. Lastly, there is some isolated activity within higher education in which prospective bilingual education teachers receive substantial access to Spanish language development opportunities. It is to the benefit of students, teachers, and the community to implement policies such as these.

As we envision these possibilities, it is also necessary to improve upon the grossly neglected research agenda by attaining the following:

A better understanding of the kind and level of academic Spanish language skills that teachers and professors possess that are teaching within an additive (K-16) bilingual education environment.

New and more explicit language standards, with some empirical foundation, for Spanish-English bilingual education teachers and professors.

A better understanding of the kinds of language learning experiences that move the prospective bilingual education teacher toward these new standards.

A better understanding of the relationship between teacher language proficiency and student outcomes.

The development of a national data base containing language ~~skill profiles—drawn from actual practice—~~of bilingual education teachers.

Careful psychometric review of all tests used to determine the academic Spanish language proficiency of prospective bilingual education teachers.

A careful and critical examination of local, state and national educational language policies linked to issues of teacher language proficiency.

For immediate action, the following represent critical points of departure for those of us in a position to do so:

An effort must be made on the part of every bilingual education stakeholder to counter the lowering of ~~language~~ standards of bilingual education teachers.

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- *All* bilingual education stakeholders must use the Spanish language much more often, especially those with a solid command of the language. Others, who are not as proficient, can benefit from this modeling and input.
- There is no end point to language development. Bilingual education stakeholders must make a commitment to upgrade their academic Spanish language skills.
- A concerted effort must be made on the part of bilingual educators, *primarily* at the university level, to produce knowledge about bilingual education in the Spanish medium. Without a written academic tradition, change may never come.
- Schools must make a much greater effort to value the Spanish language by encouraging the children and youth to use the language for valued purposes in and out of the classroom. These children hold untapped linguistic potential.
- The media must begin to send the message to the Spanish language speaking community that their language is an asset (not only a marketing tool) and they need not lose it in order to learn English.
- Monolingual Spanish *speaking* personnel and other proficient speakers such as *normalista* teachers should be brought into the schools to serve as Spanish language models for teachers and students alike.

Conclusion

In closing, this paper is intended as a preliminary review of many issues. My objective in writing this document has not been to set forth the definitive word on the matter, but merely to open the discussion on the Spanish language proficiency of *bilingual* education teachers.

Finally, I invite the readers to scrutinize the ideas and suggestions in this document. We can only begin to give this area of bilingual education the attention it merits through a collective effort and a long overdue serious discussion linked to action. The present situation exists because of an educational system that is subtractive and *linguistic* and not because bilingualism and biliteracy are beyond our reach.

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About CBER

The Center for Bilingual Education and Research (CBER) is part of the College of Education, Arizona State University. CBER was founded in 1980. It is one of several university units that promote scholarship and discourse on issues and opportunities related to language, race, and ethnicity. During its early history, CBER served ~~mainly~~ as a technical assistance unit providing training and assistance to schools in the Southwest. In 1998, CBER shifted its focus and is now concerned with policy analysis and scholarship in bilingual and dual-language education.

We will collaborate with others who share our interest in **contextualizing** bilingual and dual-language education in a broader framework of needs involving school restructuring and modernization to better serve **all** children. CBER's vision is to inform bi-national pedagogy uniquely suited to education in the borderlands.

About IDRA

Intercultural Development Research Association is a vanguard leadership development and research team working with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower *all* children, families and communities. It is an independent, non-profit organization that advocates the right of every child to a quality education. For more than 25 years, IDRA has worked for excellence and equity in education in Texas and across the United States. **IDRA** conducts research and development activities; creates, implements and administers innovative education programs; provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance; and develops leadership in communities to result in **enlightened** educational policies that work for *all* children.

About Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation (Fundación Solidaridad México Americana)

The Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation was created to encourage closer ties between Mexicans and the Mexican American and Hispanic community in the United States, as well as to foster collaboration and improve relations between the United States and Mexico. It is a binational, private, non-profit, nonpartisan organization.

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