

A Post-Monolingual Education

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In a colonial context education reproduces the power of the colonizers and is designed to serve their needs. The colonizer purposefully ignores the culture and history of subjugated groups nor are they consulted. Subjugated children are never educated to become leaders of society except when it serves the needs of the colonizer (Altbach & Kelly 1978; Zweigenhalf & Domhoff, 1991). The colonizer imposes his culture upon subjugated groups and seeks out their cooperation by pacifying their minds. This pacification limits the creativity of vision of the subjugated and destroys their ability to act in their own interest. In the United States, African, Native and Latino Americans who have been historically subjugated, colonized or exterminated when it benefited the U.S. were indoctrinated in schools to be proud to be Americans (even while they live in racially segregated, dilapidated communities) and recruited by the military to serve as colonial soldiers to subjugate others around the world and enforce the hegemonic entrenchment of American culture, language and consumerism. While subjugated groups spend their time trying to survive, the colonizer understands that culture gives people group identification and builds on shared experiences, creating a collective

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personality. Culture represents the values that are created by the group out of shared knowledge as a methodical set of ideas into a single coherent affirmation. It includes history, language, literature, poetry, art, music, religion, law, philosophy, customs, and values. Therefore, culture provides the foundation for obligation, priority, and preference that gives direction to the development and behavior of the group. Culture is the basis for informing the world as to whom a people are; it also serves to inform the people themselves about how they look at the world. The epistemology of a culture constructs knowledge, inquiry, and the way research is accomplished (Ani, 1994; Carruthers, 1994). Therefore, it is imperative that colonizers impose their own cultural norms and traditions upon subjugated groups. For instance, Native Americans were immersed and deculturized from their own indigenous culture into Anglo-American culture but not prepared to go back and lead their own people out of the poverty and off the reservations (Spring, 2001).

It is important to understand that the colonizer constructs a white supremacist culture by imposing their discourse on subjugated groups. Deculturalization becomes the mode of instruction for all subjugated people as they are educated to devalue their own culture and language. Subjugated groups are taught to see Western Civilization as universal and in the U.S. the English language is taught not just as a second language, but to replace the student's first or home language (Spring, 2001). Colonizers propagate their ideas through politics, education, and the media; thus the images nonwhites center on are sexual promiscuity, laziness, criminal activity, and an unwillingness to conform, presenting the public with ideas that subjugated groups are to blame for all the problems in society and therefore need to be controlled.

The colonizer maintains a grip on subjugated people through cultural hegemony, tolerating individuals from subjugated groups, volunteering allegiance to the subjugated group, and pacifying the will to resist. For example, hegemonic institutions in the U.S. have convinced many that the Civil Rights Movement was a success and racism has been resolved. Hegemony never ignores the demands of subjugated people—instead it makes concessions to the demands of resistance and allows the emergence of a small group with gains (e.g., black middle class) that has a vested interest in sustaining the dominant social structure (Artz & Murphy, 2000; hooks 2000). White culture tolerates the assimilation of particular aspects of African American culture into the dominant white culture until it feels threatened; at the same time, the colonizer guards and protects their dominance and hinders or marginalizes any attempt by nonwhites to form any independent cultural or political coalitions. Although the black middle class is frustrated with marginalization and

racism, they consent to the status quo of the dominant white society (Feagin, 1991; hooks, 2000; Scott, 1990; West, 1993). The colonizer will always tolerate nonwhites who align themselves with the dominant culture such as conservative blacks because, as bell hooks (2000) states, “the miseducation of underprivileged black groups strengthens the class power of the nonprogressive black elite” (p. 97).

Linguistic Terrorism

Stripping children of their home language has left the U.S. intelligence sectors scrambling to find experts who can speak particular languages or can understand particular cultures (e.g., during the Gulf War, after the World Trade Center tragedy and during the War in Iraq). Yet, these very linguistic and cultural gifts have been present in our classrooms. These bicultural/bilingual immigrant children with linguistic gifts are forced to discard their own culture and language and then fill the void with American culture and language just to be accepted amongst their peers. Many immigrant children accept American traditions such as Christmas and Thanksgiving as their own and forget their own cultural traditions that have survived for hundreds or thousands of years, thus making themselves vessels of their new masters.

The monolingual, mono-cultural educational model has successfully wiped out possibilities for multilingual American children. We have relied on outdated teaching methods. Macedo (2000) notes the irony of how America has dismantled bilingual education, a field with decades of research, while promoting foreign language education, a field with well-documented failures. Whites who fear that the United States will lose its Anglo Protestant American cultural roots to the hordes of nonwhite immigrants have eliminated the very programs that can help our children and our nation (Soto, 1997).

This stripping of bilingual education is no more than the continual expression of white supremacy and its continual advocacy to Americanize all others. In 1796, George Washington gave his farewell address and spoke of the need of all white European immigrants to be made to come together under the Anglo Protestant umbrella and form one culture, one homogeneous society if the new Republic was to survive (Grant & Davidson, 1928). This meant that the religion, language, and traditions were to be established and set in place as the cultural norms of the new nation. A nationalist ideology had to be created to ensure continual growth whereby the people would give allegiance. Those who advocate a monolingual society realize that a theoretical foundation allows for an understanding of culture as a distinctive product that develops into a political ideology. Since knowledge

is based upon cultural constructs, culture becomes the lens of the people and communicates the structure that defines a people. For example, analyzing dominant white institutional practices through Afrocentric cultural constructs, rather than through Eurocentric theoretical paradigms, reveals supremacist philosophy and behavior.

Language is important because it can either enhance a child's education or destroy a child's progress in school and leave the child to languish on the margins of society. Schools have even gone so far as to forbid children from speaking their own language altogether (Stubbs, 2002). In Trinidad mastering the Queen's English can decide one's economic status and success in life, whereas the local Trinidadian dialect is disenfranchised and those who resist the Queen's language are relegated to living in poverty and/or working in low paying positions. In the U.S. rap music is tolerated because it brings billions to the coffers of white record owners; calypso singers in the Caribbean are allowed to use their local dialects to 'entertain' the colonizer (Dowdy, 2002). The language of the subjugated is relegated to communicate their home language as minstrels for the colonizer. Subjugated people must maintain a bilingual knowledge to survive in both their own cultural world and that of the colonizer. This is particularly true of students and professionals who must operate in two worlds, not wanting to be labeled as acting white among their own families and people or seen as uncultured among their peers in professional settings.

Linguistic Domination

Language also classifies people, serving as an 'indication of class and cultural background' and, if not used 'correctly,' as a marker of inferiority to the dominant group. Teachers correct and discourage children from speaking or writing in their home language and if teachers are not careful they end up silencing the child thus causing more harm than good (Christensen, 1995). The English language thus becomes oppressive as it builds a bulwark to keep people out, only including those who master it enough to serve the colonizer's needs (with the 'native language' valued for exotic entertainment).. Therefore, the colonizer can "weigh the colonized's language, history, and community experience that it represents, and decide that the value is nil" (Dowdy, 2002, p. 11). In other words, the subjugated must wear the 'white mask' to be successful in the colonizer's world, while at the same time "having the freedom to go back and forth" between the language at home and the Queen's language.

This form of language and cultural domination also establishes subordinate social relations whereby the possibility for critical literacy by

bicultural, monocultural, and multicultural subjects is denied. Language domination by the bilingual education abolitionists' constitutes hegemonic forces of class oppression and cultural invasion. This form of language conflict occurs when there is competition between two languages for exclusive access to the same power-related function-e.g. schools or the government. This is one reason why bilingual education is constantly under attack by the English-only forces in the United States. The paradox lies in the fact that while bilingual education (perceived as language minority education) was being assaulted, there were 253 two-way bilingual immersion programs in 23 states and the District of Columbia (CAL, 2001). Two-way bilingual immersion programs are viewed as benefiting English language speakers although they have been designed to benefit all learners. (See Guadalupe Valdes, 1997 for an insightful critique). Linguistic domination is the work of the colonizer translating itself into a nightmarish slice of the "American Dream". Anzaldua describes the linguistic terrorism of the '*deslenguados*':

Somos los del español deficiente. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic mestizaje, the subject of your burla. Because we speak with tongues of fire we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally and linguistically somos huerfanos-we speak an orphan tongue. (1999, p.80)

Children are systematically stripped of their integrity, independence, freedom, and voice in this form of linguistic colonization. This form of educational violence and slaying of the soul functions to perpetuate social control. Children are denied their ability to participate in school and community life when their voices are silenced and they are unable to enter into dialogue and reflect on their daily realities and lived experiences. Ultimately this marginalization leads to multiple and complex issues for children including issues of identity and biliteracy. As the privileged assert their superiority, bicultural children continue to lead an oppressed existence while continually reaching out to the "other" with love and compassion (Soto, 2002). "To live in the Borderlands means you are neither hispana india negra espanola ni gabachacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed while carrying all five races on your back not knowing which side to turn to, or to run from" (Anzaldua, 1999 p. 216).

As long as we continue to struggle against linguistic terrorism in just terms to maintain one's language, we will never understand what is at stake. The stripping of voice from bicultural children strips them of something more important than just their ability to have voice; it strips them of their world-view, group identification and historical experience, their commitment to their own cultural norms. "The battle is cultural but

more important it is ideological because ideology holds the authority and power to guide activity; it shapes character, and is the blueprint for thought and behavior” (Abraham, 1962, p. 27). When subjugated children learn the language and literature of the colonizer, the justification of alleged inferiority is embedded. What is amazing is that subjugated children accept this inferiority as they master the language of the colonizer.

The ideological underpinning is important because the subjugated are now defined and labeled by the intellectual in academia in “scientific terms.” Intellectual terrorism is valorized as the colonizer hides behind science claiming not to be impartial, but to be objective in the quest to destroy the knowledge base of the subjugated. Here lies the power of the colonizer; the few who have access to literacy are the same who set the intellectual and ideological patterns and make decisions for many. They decide what is taught in schools, who is taught what and who benefits from education, which in turn determines access to economic compensation.

Economics, English-Only, and Colonizing Thought

The notion of ‘progress’ for western civilizations echoes Columbus’s most salient question ‘Where is the gold?’ Perhaps the more contemporary question is ‘Where is the oil?’ The notion of ‘progress’ is toward the economic with little regard for human dignity and freedom (Zinn, 2005). As privileged economic power holders become entrenched with cultural notions of consumption, the possibilities for democracy become more and more fragile (Bigelow & Peterson, 2002). The colonizer inhabits our classrooms and our homes; he (she) also invades our minds, our thinking, and our human spirit. This ‘new age post-colonizer’ continues to invade the private and the public. In this post-modern era of the ‘post-colonial’ the newly argued rationale for denying minority linguistic and cultural rights is based upon notions of “economic relevancy”. Yet, what is the economic relevancy now post the World Trade Center tragedy? While 68,000 languages are in danger of extinction, it is a myth to argue that English-only mono-cultural education is desirable or necessary for economic well being.

The struggle is for power. Linguistic and cultural conflicts rarely center on economic issues alone but are based on cultural and social factors. The 1990 Free Trade Agreement brought into question the need for Mexican children’s home language literacy in the overall program of educational modernization. Why are we expecting the Mexican children to travel in the English-only direction? Would United States children benefit from bilingualism? Guillermo Gomez-Pena notes, “The notion of bilingualism can be very tricky. It can be reactionary or progressive, depending on the context. When North Americans talk about bilinguality,

they think it is the Mexican who has to be bilingual, not themselves” (Fusco, 1995, p.150).

Noting that 1.6 billion people, nearly 1/3 of the world’s population will use English in some form, Fishman (1998, 2000) asks, “is English the killer language?” Fishman examines the debate between whether the spread is a benign globalization or a form of linguistic imperialism. This well respected linguist has reasons to believe that the English language will eventually wane in influence. His rationale stems from documentation of how English reaches and is utilized by the privileged while what globalization has encouraged is a regionalization of languages (e.g., the spread of Arabic, Chinese, Hausa, Spanish). He also indicates that local language revival is resistant to global change. What will become of English? According to Fishman it will gravitate toward the higher social classes to such an extent that it might become widely disliked as a linguistic bully. There is no reason to believe that English will always be necessary for technology, higher education, and social mobility since “ultimately democracy, international trade and economic development can flourish in any tongue” (1998, 2000)

English has attained a broader context with the advent of the popular culture, and as a major source of influence in writings and the media. Never before in human history has one language been spoken so widely by so many affording an extraordinary reach with unparalleled power. For international workers, the high stakes include the fact that employees will require English for hiring and promotions. For the nations of the world, the impact includes areas such as diplomacy, air traffic control, and victory for privileged political leaders. Ultimately what we have seen is that:

the oppressed instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become the oppressors...the very structure of their thought has been conditioned by contradictions of the concrete, existential situations by which they were shaped...this phenomenon derives from the fact that the oppressed, at a certain moment in their experience, adopt an attitude of adhesion to the oppressor...the oppressed find the oppressor their model. (Freire, 1970, pp. 29-30)

The question posed by Fishman (1998,2000), “is English the killer language?” leads us to examine the possibility that the influence of English will diminish with the increased growth in local/regional relations. The spread of the regional languages occurs with the advent of the local/regional communications, informal social interactions/networks, interethnic families, travel, worship, exchange of goods, and migration. Issues of identity are also fostered with their symbolic functions and a call for authentic cultural markers.

Fishman notes how local tongues foster higher levels of school

success, higher degrees of participation in local government, and more informed citizenship. He goes on to document how Navajo children in Rough Rock Arizona who were schooled initially in Navajo were found to have higher reading competency in English than those who were first schooled in English. There are multiple reasons for us to advocate for the maintenance of young children's home languages and cultures; including to maintain the language gifts which will ultimately benefit a nation with their macro-social ability to communicate in the global theatre. Healthy confident children who experience the value of their home languages and cultures also have a strong sense of identity, attain higher reading ability in their second languages, are able to become active democratic participants with authentic voices, and can enhance the needs of our communities by working in solidarity toward our common needs.

Cultural Hegemony

Bilingual children and bilingual families continue to experience what Freire (1970) referred to as cultural invasion: "invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing expression (p. 170)." Blaut (1993) documents how colonized people are ultimately perceived as children via concepts adopted from Piaget, Marx, Freud, and Jung. Colonial terrorism is nothing but another term for white supremacy which was used to justify enslavement of millions of Africans, transported them as cheap labor in foreign lands and in the process moved in and colonized the African's homelands for economic greed, and forced the indigenous people to learn European languages. This terrorism colonized thousands of poor Spanish people from Spain and Portugal in order to rid the mother country of its poor. This same process was done to the indigenous people in the Americas and now is being done again throughout Central and South America as the indigenous population is being displaced. People are forced to migrate from their homelands to the United States as cheap laborers while at the same time their homelands are taken over by multinational oil and other corporations searching for resources needed in Western nations. Globalization is nothing more than a modern version of Western Imperialism bent on raping other lands for their resources (Bigelow & Peterson, 2002). It becomes imperative for nations like the U.S. to export their hegemonic culture into other nations such as Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and others labeled by the U.S. as regions of strategic interest because of national security (Chomsky, 2001, 2003).

European nations and the U.S. used religious missionaries to impose

their languages as civilized and to label indigenous languages as savage. Both groups then imposed their religion as angelic and indigenous culture and language as demonic, thus justifying the use of the military to exterminate indigenous culture. Picture Mexican children in U.S. public schools learning in English to pledge allegiance to the U.S. while learning that the U.S. invasion and theft of their native homeland was justified (Macedo, 1994; Zinn, 2005). In the current conservative politicized national curricular agenda in America; the field of bilingual education and the possibility for biliterate contexts are continually and consistently under attack.

Ethnolinguistic and Democratic Education

Language has become a site of struggle and a symbol of a colonialism that promotes language domination, cultural invasion, loss of sovereignty, loss of resources, loss of dignity, loss of humanity and silences the voices of children and 'others.' The colonial process itself so often begins with language and continues as an integral part of the post-colonial. Language domination impacts the cultural, the social, the spiritual, the civic, the moral, the economic, and the political. The imposed language becomes the axis where the colonizer breathes as a superior being. The home language and culture begin to be dislodged as the colonizers language is established as the 'model.' Naming the word, the world, and 'reality' affords the colonizer unprecedented power and silences 'the other'. The implementation of an English-only education, the introduction of a 'superior' history, and the establishment of 'otherness' begin to tear away at the socio-cultural fabric of a people. Even in democratic spheres 'ethnolinguistic democracy' is rarely an integral part of the dialogue.

Teachers and instructors systematically negate the cultural experiences of subjugated children and refuse to allow them to exercise their own reality as a foundation of literacy. Donaldo Macedo argues that white 'Freirean' teachers and others who promote a radical leftist stance also subjugate their bicultural/bilingual students by supposedly giving them voice as long as the discourse is controlled by the colonizer. The moment the colonized wants to be independent and stand as an equal with the white instructor, teach or present their own research, their white counterparts become indifferent and some set out to marginalize those who want to be independent of the colonizer (Freire, 2004). Thus educators, instead of letting their students go, maintain the oppressive chains that continue to keep their students as guinea pigs for research. Their Freirean pedagogy is nothing more than a method of assimilating his ideas into Cartesian methods thus cannibalizing Freire's pedagogy of liberation. Myles Horton, one of the founders of the famous Highlander

School in Tennessee in 1932 where civil rights activists were trained, says that what makes a school or teacher successful is “commitment in terms of people’s interest, not in terms of ours” (Horton & Freire, 1990, p 54). Therein lie the secrets to successful teaching and allowing children to liberate themselves from oppression—a commitment to teach, competency in knowing what one teaches, and most of all, respecting the children, their mistakes, and their prior knowledge before coming to school, which includes their home language.

Linguistic Human Rights

A socio-political climate that allows language domination, cultural invasion, and linguisticism has the ultimate effect of totally disregarding children’s linguistic human rights (LHR’s). At the individual human rights level, children have the LHRs to learn their mother tongue (the first language you learn and identify with: Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984) and at least one of the official languages of the nation. It makes sense to think that it would be in our country’s best interest to encourage teachers to become bilingual in order to protect children’s LHR’s and to encourage second language learning. At the collective human rights level, LHR’s implies: (a) the right to establish and maintain schools that include home language, home culture, and second language learning; (b) the guarantees of representation in political affairs, and (c) that there is autonomy with regard to issues of culture, religion, education, information, and social affairs.

Often individuals and groups are treated unjustly and suppressed by means of language. People who are deprived of LHRs may thereby be prevented from enjoying other human rights, including fair political representation, a fair trial, access to education, access to information, freedom of speech, and maintenance of cultural heritage. (Phillipson, Rammut, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, p.2)

The political reality of unequal access to power can be largely attributed to two myths generated by English-only proponents: first, that monolingualism is somehow helpful to economic growth, and second that minority rights pose a threat to the nation. English-only proponents argue that learning English as one’s first language will lead to economic prosperity while bilingual education tongue-ties students in their home language and limits their education. First, if learning English leads to economic growth and prosperity, who is benefiting and who is prospering? African, Native and Hispanic Americans have been Americanized in language and culture, yet why are most African, Native and Hispanic Americans still living in poverty? Secondly, African, Native, and Hispanic Americans have not been a threat to the security of the U.S; in fact, all

three subjugated groups have served bravely in every war despite the racist policies of the U.S. government and its white soldiers. These myths against bilingual education are just racist arguments used to exterminate the various languages of these three groups and sustain ideological racism as well as discrimination (Macedo, 1994). International evidence shows that not granting rights to minorities is more likely to lead to secession (French Canadians); while second language learning actually enhances possibilities.

Schools are the major agency for imposing assimilation of the dominant language and the dominant culture. The forced inclusion into a monolingual and mono-cultural system has meant that children throughout the world are punished for speaking their mother tongue physically (Kurds in Turkey), psychologically, and economically (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984, Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995). "In fact, formal education through the medium of majority languages has often forced minority children to assimilate and change identity. We are reminded of the definition of cultural genocide..... this transfer can, of course, be either physical or psychological or both" (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995, p.72-73). Although teacher education has made some progress in teacher beliefs, there is very little attention given to the ideological and political beliefs teachers bring to the classroom of bilingual/bicultural children. There is very little deliberation given to teacher predispositions regarding their political beliefs and the social order regarding the education of subjugated groups period. We do not question the conscious or unconscious attitudes that reflect the views and beliefs of the dominant power structure. Thus, most white teachers and some teachers of color instruct from an assimilationist and deficit model that continues to have detrimental consequences upon bilingual/bicultural children. Many teacher education programs teach from an assimilationist and deficit model view of non-whites and poor which is absorbed by teacher candidates. Consequently, bilingual/bicultural children are educated as if something is wrong with them, and that their cultures, languages and histories are defective.

Bilingual/bicultural children are educated to conform to the dominant Anglo Protestant culture and its socioeconomic hierarchy, a hierarchy based upon merit. The children's native language and culture is disrespected and in turn miseducated into the dominant Anglo Protestant culture. Bilingual/bicultural children are taught to believe that their academic problems are their fault and instead of the research paying attention to racist, discriminatory practices and policies, researchers focus on the children they have labeled pathological and deficient (Howard, 1997). The English language amendments of the United States of America along with the treatment of the Kurds in Turkey are viewed as the most

extreme and assimilation-oriented by the international community (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995). Racism against ethnic groups in various countries has only exacerbated the problem of global terrorism as nations try to impose their own particular form of nationalism upon ethnic minorities. For example, in 1989 over 80,000 people were killed in Kashmir, India and most of them Muslims by India's security forces (Roy, 2004). What effect does this have upon ethnic minorities as they are castigated by dominant social orders? In Hawaii, researchers observed native Hawaiian children as bright and capable learners, yet they had classroom problems that were misinterpreted by non-Hawaiian teachers who claimed Hawaiian children were disorderly and did not value education (Macedo, 1999, pp. 133-134). Activities designed to punish children for speaking their native language still persist in the contemporary United States. In Louisiana, for example, children have been asked to kneel for speaking in a language other than English. In Pennsylvania, children have been retained a grade for speaking a language other than English. In California, children are expected to 'prove' their national origin.

A Post Monolingual Society

In order for our educational programs to move beyond colonialism, our learners need to be able to read the word and the world bilingually, biculturally, and multiculturally. In the post-monolingual society a 'critical bilingual education' will ensure dual-language learning but also biliteracy, biculturalism and the opportunity for human dignity with democratic participation. As Albert Memmi (1965) noted:

The difference between native language and cultural language is not peculiar to the colonized, but colonial bilingualism cannot be compared to just any linguistic dualism. Possession of two languages is not merely a matter of having two tools, but actually means participation in two psychical and cultural realms. Here, the two worlds symbolized and conveyed by the two tongues are in conflict; they're those of the colonizer and the colonized. (p. 105)

There is tremendous wisdom that we can gain from diverse groups. Currently there are 550 Indigenous and First Nations people in the lower forty-eight states and Alaska (Yellow Bird, M. 1999). Zinn (1995) notes how children in Iroquois society, while being taught in solidarity, were taught to be independent without harsh punishment. The number of cultural traditions that were lost as a result of slavery will be difficult to determine. But we know that W.E.B. DuBois' understanding of 'the problem of the color line' is still with us. How might we heal and end the madness as we move beyond the binaries of power in solidarity toward critically biliterate

and multi-literate communities of compassion? It may be that our sisters of color, minorities on the hyphen, monolingual Americans, the poor and disenfranchised, may begin to experience elements of decolonization and liberation. Together we can explore spaces of healing for our common wisdom, our common good, and our love for each other.

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