Chapter 12
Preparing Bilingual Teachers to Enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Bilingual students and teachers in the U.S. live in a context where linguistic and ethnic minorities are associated with inferiority. Preparing bilingual teachers of color without explicit attention to issues of race, language, and power would maintain and feed the vicious cycle of linguistic hegemony. With the goal of preparing critically conscious future bilingual teachers equipped to enact culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP), the authors centered issues of race, language, and power alongside bilingual instructional methodology and theories of bilingualism in their respective bilingual teacher preparation programs. Drawing on bilingual teacher preparation course material, student reflections, and bilingual teacher candidate interviews, they illustrate how two bilingual teacher preparation programs take two distinct approaches to developing bilingual teachers’ critical consciousness and CSP practices. In this way, they outline how bilingual teacher educators can prepare and support bilingual teachers to enact CSP with their K-12 students.

INTRODUCTION

Bilingual students and teachers in the U.S. live in a context where linguistic minorities are associated with inferiority (Flores & Rosa, 2016; Suarez, 2002). Derogatory beliefs about bilingualism, and Spanish-
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English bilingualism in particular, can have a negative influence on bilingual education in a variety of ways (Flores, 2016). After repeated messages that their ways of speaking are deficient, bilinguals have reported fear of speaking either language (Winstead & Wang, 2017), decreased confidence, and negative attitudes towards their own language (Arce, 2004; Briceño, Rodriguez-Mojica, Muñoz-Muñoz, 2018; Ek, Sánchez, & Quijada Cerecer, 2013; Fitts, Winstead, Weisman, Flores, & Valenciana, 2008). Some of the negative messages bilingual students receive come from school, where heritage Spanish speakers encounter English hegemony that devalues the Spanish language. We have shown that heritage Spanish speakers faced linguistic purism and elitism in their educational experiences, in their early schooling, in secondary settings like their Spanish World Language methods classes and in higher education (Briceño, Rodriguez-Mojica, Muñoz-Muñoz, 2018). Such ideological pressures undermined their home variety of Spanish and their communicative confidence. These experiences denigrated students’ home register of Spanish to the extent that, in their opinions, their Spanish was so incorrect that it prohibited them from becoming bilingual teachers (Briceño et. al, 2018).

In California, where we prepare bilingual teachers, Proposition 227 significantly limited bilingual education opportunities in 1997. Since then, most students have been educated in English-only contexts (Ochoa, 2016), leaving heritage Spanish speakers insecure with their academic usage of their home language (Briceño et. al, 2018). The resulting bilingual teacher shortage is currently preventing an expansion of bilingual programs even after the 2016 passage of Proposition 58, which supports multilingual education in California schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). This ongoing, vicious cycle of linguistic hegemony must be interrupted to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate instruction for all students (Guerrero & Guerrero, 2008).

Bilingualism and bilingual education have the potential to resist linguistic hegemony (Suarez, 2002). Countering the harmful messages bilingual K-12 students receive and fostering supportive language ideologies is critical to the long-term success of bilingual education. Chávez-Moreno (2019) calls for research that explicitly connects bilingual teacher preparation pedagogy to race and also shows how bilingual teacher preparation programs support candidates to develop critical consciousness in their students. This chapter adds to the literature by addressing both these tasks, showing how two universities prepare bilingual teachers to enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017) to counter the harmful, and often internalized, messages bilingual K-12 students receive.

We argue that bilingual teacher candidates (BTCs) must experience the examination and undoing of internalized deficit ideologies that may result in their enactment of harmful pedagogical practices before they teach with a CSP lens. Drawing on bilingual teacher preparation course material, student reflections, and BTC interviews, we illustrate how two bilingual teacher preparation programs take two distinct approaches to developing bilingual teachers’ critical consciousness (Palmer, Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, & Heiman, 2019) and CSP practices. We share course readings and activities from our bilingual teacher education programs designed to develop candidates’ critical consciousness and draw on candidate reflections and interviews to share their (re)examination of their own experiences and practices. In this way, we highlight the critical role bilingual teacher preparation in higher education plays in developing future bilingual teachers’ perspectives and CSP practices. We outline how bilingual teacher educators can prepare and support bilingual teachers to enact Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy with their K-12 students. We close the chapter by sharing lessons learned derived from our experiences as bilingual course instructors. Throughout the chapter we use the term “bilingual” to refer to people who have varying degrees of bilingualism or multilingualism (Valdés, 2001).