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Language Minority Education in Great Britain: A Challenge to Current U.S. Policy

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British educational policies advocate placing language minority students in mainstream classes where their regular teacher receives ongoing support from a TESOL specialist. By contrast, in the United States, the policies favor placing nonnative speakers in separate programs such as ESL pull-out classes, sheltered English, or bilingual education, where they are taught solely by the TESOL or bilingual education specialist. The same rationale—protecting equality of opportunity—is offered for both approaches. This article compares the events that led to the contrasting solutions and the institutional structures that support those solutions; it gives an example of the British mainstream system at work and shows how the different approaches to educating nonnative speakers reflect different assumptions about language development and definitions of equality of opportunity. The article concludes by asking language teachers three questions about programs for language minorities that are raised by the contrastive examination: (a) What are the consequences of social segregation in educational programs? (b) What are the effects of varied instructional contexts on language learning? (c) What are the most helpful roles ESL teachers can play with respect to teaching subject matter and linguistic competency?

Many parallels exist between the educational issues presented by language minorities in the United States and Great Britain. During the 1960s, both countries experienced a tremendous influx of immigrants with varied countries of origin. In both countries, new immigrants tended to settle in large industrialized urban areas for employment purposes. Because of this fact, the language minority student population in the urban centers increased tremendously.

School districts, however, were largely unprepared for this shift in demographics and had no language program in place for the new students. Since 1960 both countries have experimented with various types of educational programs to meet the needs of language minority students. At the present time the two countries seem to be moving toward very different conclusions as to the best model for the education of language minorities; while British policies tend to support mainstreaming (Department of Education and Science, 1985 [The Swann Report]), U.S. educational policies promote separate educational programs such as ESL pull-out programs, sheltered English, or bilingual education (in response to legislative acts such as Title VII and Supreme Court decisions such as *Lau v. Nichols*). What is ironic is that in both countries the same rationale is being offered for these very different approaches, namely, the rationale of protecting equality of opportunity for language minority students.

What follows first is a framework for considering different language minority policies in both Britain and the United States. Then British language minority education policies since the 1960s are described, with the aim of demonstrating how social assumptions impact the making of educational policy. The British decision to place nonnative speakers in mainstream classrooms is discussed in the context of the British educational system, with its provision of language specialists working side-by-side with the subject matter teacher. To show how an ethnically and linguistically integrated classroom works in Britain, we provide a case study of a student learning in such a setting, illustrating the complexities of teaching nonnative speakers, who have come into a new cultural as well as a new linguistic context. We elaborate extensively on British policies for two reasons: First, British language policies are clearly articulated in comprehensive government reports; and second, only by a thorough presentation of British policy can we specify the challenge that these policies present to the United States. With the British context firmly in mind, we review the language minority policies in the United States since the 1960s and discuss the decisions that have resulted in separate programs for nonnative speakers in the United States. In conclusion, we provide a challenge to current U.S. policy as we pose several questions that educators need to examine before implementing any educational policy for language minorities.

In this paper, the phrase *language minority students* will be used to describe immigrants (i.e., foreign-born children who emigrate with their parents), refugees (i.e., foreign-born citizens who enter a country under special conditions), and long-term residents who

come from non-English-speaking homes. Language minority students who lack proficiency in English will be referred to as *language minority/limited English proficient* (LM/LEP).

Throughout the paper, we will refer to three social attitudes toward policy planning for language minority groups (Ruiz, 1988): *language-as-problem*, *language-as-right*, and *language-as-resource*. According to Ruiz's framework, a society with a language-as-problem perspective views language minority students as having a linguistic "deficiency" that can best be remedied by replacing the native language with the dominant language, e.g., English. A society that adheres to a language-as-right perspective promotes the rights of language minorities to maintain their native language on legal grounds. Finally, a society with a language-as-resource perspective regards the languages spoken by language minorities as a national resource; and thus, educational policies are designed to maintain and develop native languages. These social orientations toward linguistic diversity have been exhibited in various educational language policies in both Britain and the United States from the 1960s to the present, as will be evident from the historical overview of changing language policies in both countries.

EVOLVING LANGUAGE POLICIES IN GREAT BRITAIN

While Britain, like the United States, has a long history of immigration, it was only beginning in the early 1950s that speakers of many languages came to settle in Britain in significant numbers all at the same time. These immigrants were mainly refugees from Eastern Europe, East Africa, and Southeast Asia, and labor migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, and from former British colonies in South and East Asia and the Caribbean (Martin-Jones, 1989). Since these immigrants tended to settle in large urban industrialized areas, there has been, since the 1950s, a steady increase in the number of LM/LEP students in such areas.

For example, while in 1978 the inner London area had only 10% LM/LEP students, by 1983 these students comprised 23%. In 1983 LM/LEP students represented 172 different languages with only 14 of these languages spoken by more than 100 students (Martin-Jones, 1989). In spite of tendencies in Great Britain toward a nationally centralized system of education, with a long tradition of national examinations and now the new national curriculum, British school districts, called Local Education Authorities (LEAs), have, according to Martin-Jones (1989), "considerable autonomy in policy formulation and curriculum development within their area." Policy guidelines for LM/LEP students "issued by the central government

through the Department of Education and Science (DES) have no mandatory force, although, increasingly, financial controls are centrally imposed and these, in turn, have an impact on local autonomy" (p. 9).

Early policies viewed LM/LEP students as social problems, and decisions about their education were based on what was perceived as best for the Anglo majority. During the 1960s, one of the first programs local school districts established for LM/LEP students provided separate language centers, termed *induction centres*, for LM/LEP students. According to Reid (1988), LM/LEP students were

separated from their English-speaking peers ostensibly so that they could be taught English to a level which would allow them to join classes in ordinary schools, but also, of course, to satisfy majority parents that their children would not be "held back" by the presence of large numbers of immigrant children in the same classes. (p. 187)

The Department of Education and Science, meanwhile, advocated a policy of dispersal or busing since parents in areas where there were large concentrations of LM/LEP pupils were complaining about the emergence of "black majority" schools" (Martin-Jones, 1989, p. 44). Because of these complaints the Department of Education and Science issued a set of guidelines in 1965 for what they called the dispersal of minority children. The guidelines for this policy presented the following rationale:

Experience suggests . . . that, apart from unusual difficulties (such as a high proportion of non-English speakers), up to a fifth of immigrant children in any group fit in with reasonable ease, but that, if the proportion goes over about one third, either in the school as a whole or in any one class, serious strains arise. It is therefore desirable that the catchment areas of schools should, wherever possible be arranged to avoid undue concentrations of immigrant children. Where this proves to be impracticable simply because the school serves an area which is occupied largely by immigrants, every effort should be made to disperse the immigrant children round a number of schools and to meet such problems of transport as may arise. (Department of Education and Science, 1965, pp. 4-5, as cited in Martin-Jones, 1989, pp. 44-45)

Of particular significance is the fact that the promotion of this dispersal policy was made purely on the basis of an untested social assumption, namely, that if the immigrant population in a particular school were allowed to exceed one third, "serious strains" (Department of Education and Science, 1965, as cited in Martin-Jones, 1989, p. 45) would arise. Determining language policies on the basis of unchallenged social assumptions is, as we shall see, a

common pattern throughout United States and British minority education history.

Accompanying the view that these children present social problems is the view that their language, too, is a problem. In 1971, the Department of Education and Science issued a national policy document clearly exemplifying a language-as-problem perspective of minority languages:

If there is any validity in Bernstein's view that the restricted code of many culturally deprived children may hinder their ability to develop certain kinds of thinking, it is certainly applicable to non-English speaking children who may be suffering, not only from the limitation of a restricted code in their own language, but from the complication of trying to learn a second language. Experiencing language difficulties, they may be suffering handicaps which are not conspicuous because they concern the very structure of thought. (Department of Education and Science, 1971, p. 9, as cited in Martin-Jones, 1989, pp. 45-46)

A major and public challenge to the language-as-problem perspective occurred in 1975 with the publication of what is known as the Bullock Report. This central government report was produced by a committee of inquiry whose primary purpose was to investigate native-speaking children's language development across the school years. However, in the chapter on the language needs of LM/LEP children entitled "Children from Families of Overseas Origin," the committee argued that

in a linguistically conscious nation in the modern world, we should see it [mother tongue] as an asset, as something to be nurtured, and one of the agencies that should nurture it is the school. Certainly the school should adopt a positive attitude to its pupils' bilingualism and whenever possible should help to maintain and deepen their knowledge of their mother tongues. (Department of Education and Science, 1975, p. 294)

Ironically, after the publication of the report, few programs were established to promote native language maintenance even though the rhetoric of the report suggested that this should be done, illustrating a discrepancy between policy recommendations and the implementation of these recommendations.

DECISION FOR MAINSTREAMING

In 1985, a second major educational policy statement regarding LM/LEP students was issued with the publication of the Department of Education and Science's report, *Education for All*, commonly known as the Swann Report. This report was prepared by a national committee whose task was solely to examine

educational policies for language minority students. Whereas the Bullock Committee considered looking at issues such as mainstreaming outside their scope, they did assert, "Common sense would suggest that the best arrangement is usually one where the immigrant children are not cut off from the social and educational life of a normal school" (Department of Education and Science, 1975, p. 289). The Swann Report went one step further and strongly endorsed the mainstreaming of LM/LEP students: "We are wholly in favour of a move away from E2L [English as a second language] provisions being made on a withdrawal basis, whether in language centres or separate units within schools" (Department of Education and Science, 1985, p. 392). The Swann Report argued that withdrawal classes "establish and confirm social and racial barriers between groups" and "whilst not originally discriminatory in intent" were "discriminatory in effect" because they deny children "access to the full range of educational opportunities available . . . by requiring them to miss a substantial part of the normal school curriculum" (p. 389). The report argued strongly that the informal interaction that occurs in schools is as important for language development as the formal context of language development and thus, that it is important for LM/LEP students to be placed in a context where they could interact with native speakers. Mainstreaming was viewed as "offering an opportunity for all teachers to consider the language demands of the work they do with *all* children in the classroom, whatever the language background" (Martin-Jones, 1989, p. 52).

The Swann Report did not support bilingual education "principally on the grounds that to implement it, minority children would have to be segregated. They feared that this might highlight differences and have a detrimental effect on race relations" (Edwards, Moorhouse, & Widlake, 1988, p. 81). While the report argued that Local Education Authorities should make school buildings available for native language instruction, the Swann Committee viewed the maintenance and development of LM/LEP students' native language as a responsibility of the ethnic community itself rather than the school. The committee argued that by putting LM/LEP children in mainstream classes, schools could provide a framework for promoting a pluralistic society:

We also see education as having a major role to play in countering the racism which still persists in Britain today and which we believe constitutes one of the chief obstacles to the realization of a truly pluralistic society. We recognize that some people may feel that it is expecting a great deal of education to take a lead in seeking to remedy

what can be seen as a social problem. Nevertheless we believe that the education system and teachers in particular are uniquely placed to influence the attitudes of all young people in a positive manner. (Department of Education and Science, 1985, p. 319)

The Swann Report has sparked substantial debate. The major criticisms have come from advocates of instruction in the student's first language (see, for example, Khan, 1985; National Council for Mother Tongue Teaching, 1985). First, the critics challenged the report's definition of pluralism, arguing that the report, by not advocating native language instruction in the schools, was promoting a type of linguistic assimilation in which the ability to speak English was equated with being British (National Council for Mother Tongue Teaching, 1985). Advocates of instruction in the native language lamented the fact that the Swann Report offered no support for the earlier recommendation of the Bullock Report for native language instruction in the schools (see, for example, Devall, 1987). In essence, the critics viewed the Swann Report as presenting a language-as-problem perspective.

The critics further argued that the Swann Report failed to recognize the important link between first and second language development. Pointing to bilingual programs in the United States and Scandinavian countries and to the work of Cummins (1982, 1984), critics argued that the report ignored the important role that first language maintenance can have in both cognitive development and in the acquisition of a second language. In addition, proponents of instruction in the native language viewed the development of LM/LEP children's first language as a way of promoting a truly pluralistic society in which government policies actively promoted linguistic pluralism.

Finally, proponents of native language instruction criticized the Swann Report for its failure to see the intimate connection between language and culture. Critics argued that

in failing to recognise the intrinsic links between language and culture, the Report does not perceive the centrality of language in culture, in the development of ethnicity and of the individual's cultural identity. At the very outset of the Report, ethnic identity is described by stressing a physical attribute of race—skin color—rather than the social attribute of language. (National Council for Mother Tongue Teaching, 1985, p. 501)

More recently, support for the Swann Report's negative stance toward bilingual education has come from the Kingman Report (Department of Education and Science, 1989), authored by the conservative forces currently controlling education in Great Britain, who contend that placing language minority students in mainstream

classes benefits all students' awareness of language. This recent report, which outlines a national curriculum in English, maintains that

bilingual children should be considered an advantage in the classroom rather than a problem. The evidence shows that such children will make greater progress in English if they know that their knowledge of their mother tongue is valued, if it is recognised that their experience of language is likely to be greater than that of their monoglot peers and, indeed, if their knowledge and experience can be put to good use in the classroom to the benefit of all pupils to provide examples of the structure and syntax of different languages, to provide a focus for discussion about language forms and for contrast and comparison with the structure of the English language. (p. 10.12)

While the authors of the Swann and Kingman Reports and advocates of bilingual education disagreed on important issues, all accepted the idea that ethnic pride and cultural respect should be central concerns in the formulation of a language policy. All shared the idea of promoting an ethnically pluralistic society, but for the Swann and Kingman Committees this pluralism meant promoting *cultural* pluralism in mainstream classrooms, while for proponents of bilingual instruction this pluralism meant developing *linguistic* pluralism even if it resulted in cultural segregation. What is significant, however, is that in all instances a discussion of the relationship between ethnicity and language programs was considered necessary to the educational decision-making process.

The Role of the Language Specialist in the Mainstream Classroom

In his summary of linguistic minorities and language education in England, Reid (1988) points out that today

“separate” ESL classes and learning materials are becoming increasingly rare; they are being replaced by “*English Support*” for *Bilingual Learners*, provided in the context of mainstream classes at both primary and secondary school level; or, very recently, by “collaborative learning” or team teaching. (p. 189)

When LM/LEP students are placed in mainstream classes, there is a call for close collaboration between ESL teachers, who are called *support teachers*, and the subject specialists. In the British educational context, language specialists or support teachers of LM/LEP students play a role unfamiliar in U.S. schools. As regularly certified teachers who have returned to the university or to a teacher training college for a postgraduate degree, the support

teachers function as resource teachers; however, instead of pulling students out of the regular classroom, they go into the mainstream classroom to help the subject-matter specialist teacher teach the LM/LEP students. The language specialist helps both in language instruction and in providing LM/LEP students with the support necessary for meeting the normal demands of subject-matter instruction. Riley and Bleach (1985) explain the benefits of the language and subject-matter teachers working together:

The development of co-operative teaching looks to be central. It is more stimulating and a good learning situation for both teachers and for children. No matter how gifted the class teachers are, how much language knowledge they have, or how good their initial training has been, the full responsibility for the language learning and total education of developing bilingual pupils should not rest with classroom teachers unsupported. If responsibility is taken away from them, they can never begin to develop their classrooms as places where bilingual pupils have an equal right to learning and being. The same is true of ESL specialists operating in a separatist structure. Co-operative teaching is not the sticking together of two pedagogies, but the development of something new. Co-operative teaching and the taking of responsibility for developing bilingual pupils by the whole school means that from reception stage onwards pupils can be supported over much longer phases of their learning and across all language modes. Literacy can be developed earlier and more consistently, and the students will then have this, as well as spoken means, as an impetus for further language development. (p. 88)

Britain maintains well-established postgraduate programs for training language support teachers. For readers interested in a detailed discussion, Levine (1985) describes the program at the University of London, Institute of Education.

A British Mainstream Classroom at Work

What does the British mainstream classroom look like, and how do LM/LEP students learn in this context? In his essay, "Khasru's English Lesson: Ethnocentricity and Response to Student Writing" (1990), Alex Moore provides one example. Moore has written sensitively about Khasru, a Bangladeshi boy learning to write in a British mainstream classroom. Moore raises issues about Khasru's needs that transcend the specifics of the teaching context and shows how a teacher's ethnocentricity can cause communication problems with an LM/LEP student independent of the classroom model.

Khasru has been in England for less than two years. He is in his fourth year of secondary school, the U.S. equivalent of ninth grade,

and the first of two years during which British students prepare for the national examinations that they must pass in order to graduate from secondary school. His teacher has read the class a love story and has asked the students to write their own love stories for their examination folders. Khasru's first draft begins:

once aponar time I fund a grill and I ask har exquiseme wher you going she said?

I went to go some way wher you ask me for.' I said No I s Just Ask you you going I am sory about that have you dont mind she said thats OK and anther I fund har on the buse and i s was set on the Front and she was set on the back about ÷ Five Minuts ago two bay was come And ther set back of the set then this two bay said to hiar hellow £ wher you going s And she was sket skate.

and bays ~~go am a troyng~~ wha troy to do some bad think, (p. 2)

Khasru continues by describing going over to the girl who then asks for his help. They get off the bus together, but she is too afraid to walk home alone, so Khasru agrees to help her. During their walk home she declares her love for him, and he says that he loves her too. They then discuss their siblings at some length, and Khasru concludes, "Now we go every day." Moore explains:

There is a support teacher in Khasru's class, who sits with Khasru to work with him on this preliminary draft. This support teacher's corrections are of two kinds. First, there is a concentration on the production of acceptable Standard English sentences, spellings, punctuation, and paragraphing; on presenting the story so that it makes immediate sense to any reader; and on helping Khasru with obvious confusions. . . . The second set of corrections, made simultaneously with the first, relate to Khasru's storytelling *style* . . . [e.g.,] "Let's get rid of some of these 'ands'." (p. 2)

After three sessions with the support teacher, Khasru's second draft shows dramatic improvements in the acceptability and accessibility of the language and in sentence-level grammar:

Once upon a time I saw a girl and I asked her, "Where are you going?"

She said "I'm just going somewhere. What are you asking for? Do you want to know for any special reason?"

I said "No. I was just asking where you were going. I'm sorry. I hope you don't mind."

She said "That's okay."

Afterwards, I saw her on the bus. I was sitting at the front and she was at the back. After about five minutes, two boys got on. They sat at the back near the girl and one of them said to her "Hello. Where are you going?"

She was scared, and the boys tried to do something bad to her. (p. 2)

The rest of the story continues in this vein. At this point in Khasru's process, Moore concludes:

The omens at this stage are good. Khasru is clearly pleased about his work so far, and his showing it to other Bangladeshi boys in the class seems to have had the effect of encouraging them to take their own stories more seriously. Khasru is fortunate, too, to have one teacher who can work with him on a one-to-one basis, apparently for as long as is necessary to complete each stage of the project: not just any teacher, either, but one committed to a multicultural approach to teaching that, to use his words "condemns the Eurocentrism that has afflicted compulsory education in this country since its inception." (p. 25)

Moore quotes the support teacher who explains why he thinks bilingual students should be "in 'mainstream' classes in 'mainstream' schools" (p. 25):

Of course they need to be in the mainstream classes: they need to read, listen to, and join in with the languages and behaviours of their English peers—and they need that sort of audience and feedback for their work. They need to know, and deserve to know, that we're taking them seriously: seriously enough to listen to what they've got to say, and to give them the sort of space and opportunities we give to every other kid in the school. (p. 25)

Khasru's draft again goes to the support teacher who again sits beside him to discuss further possible improvements before Khasru moves on to revise again. Problems surface, however, when the support teacher, in discussing this second draft, questions Khasru's content, asking about the suddenness of the declaration of love and about the talk about siblings. When the support teacher suggests "all this stuff about relations . . . This isn't really necessary, is it . . . For the reader . . . What do you think?" he is met with silence from Khasru (pp. 25-26). The support teacher then asks Khasru if people would really talk this way: "Do people talk that way? In real life? Do they talk about how old their brothers and sisters are?" Khasru replies, "Yes, Sir." Then the support teacher responds, "Do you think so? I'm not so . . ." (p. 26).

At the end of this session the support teacher instructs Khasru: "Well, take it home with you, Khasru, think about what we've said, and see if you can make Chapter 1 any better" (p. 27). Khasru becomes confused. He has been asked to write a story that is true to life, but when he does so, he is told that what he writes is not really true to life. Khasru stops working on the story and never completes it.

Moore concludes that the support teacher, at this point, albeit unintentionally, is imposing his reality on Khasru's writing. Further, the support teacher assumes

there is *a* way or set of ways of talking to one another and *a* way or set of ways of telling a story—in both cases, traditional English ways. . . . This leaves no room for the possibility of linguistic diversity in the broadest sense, that embraces genre, perception, and form, and that is suggested by the whole-school policy—which on one level the teacher supports. (p. 26)

Moore warns:

There is a very real danger that such children [as Khasru] will grow up not thinking “Yes, they do and see things differently here,” but “Yes, they do and see things *properly* here”—and that consequently, school-learning will always be that much harder for them: for it is surely easier to learn new ways that are set into a framework where they can coexist with existing ways than it is to learn new ways that must simply *replace* old ones; psychologically, the problem is very different. . . . schools must clearly work hard to develop and to adopt new styles of pedagogy: styles that will encourage the development of required expertise without promoting the corresponding, and all too prevalent, loss of faith. (p. 27)

Khasru's experience shows how a piece of writing evolved in a British mainstream context, with the support teacher helping the students in a regular class achieve regular curricular goals, in this case preparing for the national examination. It also serves as a cautionary tale about the potential effects of unintended ethnocentric response to student writing by teachers of LM/LEP students, whether these students are in a mainstream or a separate classroom context.

CHANGING LANGUAGE POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES: DIFFERENT DECISIONS

In the United States, educational and government leaders who favor programs that take LM/LEP students out of regular classes argue that these programs are necessary to support students' language development. Unlike their British counterparts, they rarely address the potential social effects of these programs' cultural isolation, segregation, and racism. In order to understand the different emphases that underlie United States and British education policies for LM/LEP students, we turn now to the United States language minority policies since the 1960s.

Like Britain, the United States experienced a large increase in immigrants during the 1960s, largely due to the change in

immigration laws of 1965, which abandoned the national origins quota system and gave preference instead to family reunification and occupational skills. As in Britain, these recent immigrants tended to come from varied countries of origin and to settle in large industrialized urban centers. In the sixties, urban schools in the United States, as in Britain, were faced with a large influx of nonnative speakers of English with very diverse language backgrounds. As in Britain, local school districts in the United States have a great deal of autonomy. State and local governments have the primary responsibility for funding and developing policies for public elementary and secondary schools. According to Rotberg (1984), the limited educational funding that comes from the federal government is “intended to increase equality of educational opportunity by providing additional resources for areas of the country and for population groups with special needs” (p. 134).

The United States has little comparable to the Bullock, Swann, or Kingman Reports, which set forth national language policies for LM/LEP students. Rather United States policies develop from constitutional, statutory, or judicial sources. As Wong (1988) points out, most LM/LEP programs have arisen from legal issues regarding the entitlement of LM/LEP students to language education services. The primary constitutional basis for LM/LEP services is the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment, which states that “No state shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” The major statutory bases for LM/LEP language education services are Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, and Title VII of the 1968 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as Title VII or the Bilingual Education Act). The Civil Rights Act (Section 601), as cited in Wong (1988), states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (p. 372)

The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (Section 170 (f)) states:

No state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his race, color, sex, or national origin, by . . . the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs. (p. 372)

These two acts, along with the Fourteenth Amendment, are used to

argue for language education programs for LM/LEP students on the basis of equal protection under the law. As we shall see, the issue that has been argued in applying these rights to LM/LEP students is whether equality is to be interpreted as equality of access or equality of outcome.

The third significant statutory basis for language programs for LM/LEP students is Title VII. As Hakuta (1986) notes,

[Title VII] heralded the official coming of age of the federal role in the education of persons with limited English-speaking ability. Seven and a half million dollars were appropriated for the 1969-1970 fiscal year, to support experimental programs responsive to the "special educational needs of children of limited English-speaking ability in schools having a high concentration of such children from families . . . with income below \$3,000 per year" (Bilingual Education Act, 1968). (p. 198)

Rotberg (1984) cites the language of the Title VII Program to note that the original purpose was to encourage the "use of bilingual educational practices, techniques and methods" (p. 134). However, in 1983, Secretary of Education Terrell Bell proposed amendments that were designed to give school districts greater flexibility in their choice of instructional approaches, so that instruction in LM/LEP students' native language would no longer be required for Title VII funds (Rotberg, 1984, p. 135). From the beginning, the majority of programs funded under this piece of legislation have been transitional in nature, with LM/LEP students' native languages regarded as a problem rather than a resource. As Ruiz (1988) points out,

the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968 and the state statutes which have followed start with the assumption that non-English language groups have a handicap to overcome; the BEA, after all, was concerned and formulated in conjunction with the War on Poverty. Resolution of this problem—teaching English, even at the expense of the first language—became the objective of the school programs now generally referred to as transitional bilingual education. (p. 7)

The major judicial foundation for LM/LEP language education programs is the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision. In this case, the parents of 12 LM/LEP Chinese American students filed a class action suit against the San Francisco Unified School District arguing that they had been denied an education because of a lack of language classes with bilingual teachers. Two of the main legal issues dealt with in the case were: equality of access versus equality of outcome and discriminatory intent versus discriminatory impact (Wong, 1988).

Although in previous Supreme Court decisions regarding equal

educational opportunity, such as in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Case, the Court “found a denial of equal protection only where the state has made *different* provisions for similarly situated citizens without adequate justification” (Grubb, 1974, as cited in Wong, 1988, p. 374), in *Lau v. Nichols* the Court ruled that, although the LM/LEP students had been given equality of access to the regular classroom, they had been denied equality of outcome because they did not have the necessary language background to benefit from the program. As quoted in Wong (1988), the Court decided:

There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.

Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful. (p. 378)

The second issue addressed in the case was the issue of discriminatory intent versus discriminatory impact. The Court argued that placing non-English-speaking students in the regular classroom was discriminatory in effect while not discriminatory in intent because LM/LEP students did not have the basic skills needed to function in the regular classroom. The Court argued that some program must be devised for LM/LEP students other than to leave them in the regular classrooms, but it left the implementation of the remedy to the local school boards (Wong, 1988). According to the decision: “No specific remedy is urged upon us. Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice. Giving instructions to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others. Petitioners ask only that the Board of Education be directed to apply its expertise to the problem and rectify the situation” (Teitelbaum & Hiller, 1977, as cited in Hakuta, 1986, p. 201).

United States educational policy has tended to interpret this directive to mean that some type of language development must occur *before* an LM/LEP student is placed in the regular classroom. In fact, according to the decision, the placing of LM/LEP students in regular classrooms without support services would be a violation of fundamental rights (Wong, 1988). In Britain, however, the

current educational policy of mainstreaming assumes that the development of language skills of LM/LEP students can best occur while they are in regular classes, if some type of language support service is provided. Indeed, the Swann Report argued that any solution that would require withdrawing the students from the regular classroom was discriminatory in effect if not discriminatory in intent.

CONFLICTING ASSUMPTIONS

What is the basis for such differing perspectives between the two countries? At issue is a definition of what type of equality of opportunity is being considered. In *Lau v. Nichols*, the issue was the question of equality of opportunity in reference to language skills. Linguistic equality, the Court seemed to suggest, was the primary issue since LM/LEP students would not experience equality of outcome unless they acquired those basic skills referred to in the decision. The fact that special programs dealing with linguistic inequality can result in racial segregation has not been raised as a challenge in the courts even though the basis for the *Lau* decision was Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. By focusing on equality in terms of *linguistic* opportunities, the Supreme Court argued that "Chinese-American, non-English-speaking students were denied equal educational opportunity under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act when instructed in English, a language they did not understand" (Rotberg, 1984, p. 135).

One of the few expressions of concern about the matter of racial segregation in LM/LEP language programs came from the 1974 American Institutes for Research evaluation report for Title VII programs. It found that often students were assigned to Title VII Spanish-English classes not on the basis of their proficiency in English, but rather on their ethnic background (Rotberg, 1984). To avert the segregation that could arise from assigning students to classes on the basis of ethnic background, the 1978 Title VII Amendments dealt with the issue in the following manner:

In order to prevent the segregation of children on the basis of national origin in programs assisted under this title, and in order to broaden the understanding of children about languages and cultural heritages other than their own, a program of bilingual instruction may include the participation of children whose language is English, but in no event shall the percentage of such children exceed 40 per centum. (U.S. Congress, 1978, as cited in Rotberg, 1984, p. 141)

However, striving to minimize segregation by placing students

whose native language is English in bilingual classes is quite different from the philosophy underlying the Swann Report. It recommended that racial integration be maintained at all costs in all classrooms even if it results in a lack of support for bilingual maintenance programs. While the Title VII Amendments express concern about the problem of possible segregation caused by special language programs, there are no documents in the United States comparable to the Swann Report, which argues that only language programs adhering to racial integration are acceptable.

The contrasting language policies of the United States and Britain rest on very different pedagogical and social assumptions. In the United States, the current policy of removing LM/LEP students from regular classes rests on a definition of equality of opportunity as linguistic opportunity in which the development of English language skills is taken to be primary, even if the language programs result in racial segregation. This view often results in language programs in which LM/LEP students learn English in classes without a large number of native speakers present. In Britain, on the other hand, advocates of the Swann Report equate educational opportunity with the idea of social equality and racial integration, even if this integration results in a lack of support for the native language. Language programs for LM/LEP students are to be undertaken in the mainstream classroom where there are a large number of native speakers.

The different definitions of equality of opportunity evident in U.S. and British language minority programs provide a framework for re-examining the social and linguistic assumptions language teachers wish to make regarding language programs for LM/LEP students. The authors support, as does Rex (1988), the idea that the first step in designing any social or educational program is to make "value standpoints clear and explicit" in order to demonstrate "what the system is achieving and failing to achieve" (Rex, 1988, p. 219). In his review of British language minority programs, Rex begins by citing the work of Gunnar Myrdal (1944) and his classic study of U.S. race relations. He points out that when Myrdal was asked to undertake a study of race relations in the United States, he argued that social scientists need to state the goals they wish to achieve so that they can then determine what practices are "conducive to the attainment of those goals" (p. 205).

In the tradition of Myrdal, the authors suggest that, as language teachers, we state our goals and value standpoints on language minority programs clearly before we make any recommendations regarding particular programs for LM/LEP students. We urge a careful examination of the following questions:

1. What are our views on social segregation in educational programs? How does social segregation rank in our order of priorities in determining language policies for LM/LEP students? Programs that separate LM/LEP students from mainstream classes often result in social segregation. Are the benefits of separate programs greater than any potential negative effects of social segregation?
2. What are our views on language learning? How high on our priority list is interaction with native speakers in promoting linguistic development? Separate language programs minimize the LM/LEP students' opportunity to interact with native speakers. Are the benefits of separate programs greater than what might occur if planned interaction with native speakers were to occur in mainstream classrooms?
3. What are our views on the role of language teachers? Do we see our role as primarily one of developing linguistic competency in order to promote content learning, or do we see our role as one of using subject content as a vehicle for developing linguistic competency? If we support the latter role, what benefits exist in developing language and content learning in separate classrooms rather than in mainstream classrooms in collaboration with subject teachers?

All of these questions need to be addressed and seriously examined as language teachers evaluate different types of language development programs for LM/LEP students. In the end, policy makers may advocate separate language programs for LM/LEP students or may, like Britain, find that there are benefits to promoting mainstream programs with carefully crafted systems of language support. If, for example, U.S. teachers were to provide language support within the mainstream context, classrooms would likely have to be reorganized to allow for individualized help. Freedman and McLeod (1988) conducted a comparative study of English teaching in the U.S. and the U.K. Through national surveys and classroom observations in both countries, they found that British teachers of English are more likely to individualize instruction while U.S. teachers are more likely to concentrate on whole-group teaching. Classroom contexts that provide for individualized teaching make it possible to handle the diversity of needs within a mainstream class.

Our goal with this contrastive examination of national language policies is to raise key issues. Given the differences in educational contexts and educational histories in the two countries, it is not

surprising that the approaches vary. What is essential before taking a position either for mainstreaming or for separate programs is to clarify our assumptions and values regarding social integration and language learning so that, as Myrdal suggests, there is a basis for assessing what is or is not being achieved.

■

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