BILATERACY: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND LITERACY

Sonia White Soltero

Abstract

The primary objective of this paper is to present a review of the current literature on the development of literacy skills and abilities in the first and second language. Based on the research and theories reviewed, the secondary focus of this paper is to propose more effective instructional practices for language minority children.

The review begins by examining language development theories an related issues involved an the process of first and second language acquisition. Attention shifts to reading and writing process theories and relevant research of the evolving definition of literacy. The final discussion focuses on second language reading and writing development and the importance of becoming bilaterate.

Terms key: <language instruction> <mother tongue instruction> <second language instruction>

Sinopsis

El objetivo principal de este artículo es presentar un resumen de la literatura actual en cuanto al desarrollo de la lectura y la escritura el primero y segundo idioma. El enfoque secundario de este articulo se basa en el análisis de las teorías y las investigaciones actuales y propone prácticas de instrucción más efectivas y relevantes para niños de idiomas minoritarios.

Este informe empieza por analizar las teorías del desarrollo del lenguaje y los tópicos relacionados al proceso de adquirir el primer y segundo idioma. El enfoque del artículo continua con las teorías y la investigación del desarrollo del aprendizaje de la lectura y la escritura. El tema final presenta aspectos relevantes del desarrollo de la lectura y escritura en el segundo idioma, y recalca la importancia de llegar a ser competente en el uso escrito y hablado de dos idiomas.

Términos clave: <enseñanza de idiomas> <enseñanza de la lengua materna> <enseñanza de la lengua moderna>

Introduction

The complex and diverse needs of growing population of non-English speaking students have resulted in a wave of interdisciplinary research of the relationships between first and second language acquisition and the reading and writing processes. Through the collaboration of distinct fields of study, such as anthropology, sociolinguistics and psychology, researchers and educators have contributed a more holistic perspective on bilateracy. Knowledge derived from such research on the nature of language and literacy acquisition provides valuable insights into the development of appropriate and effective instructional practices of language minority students.

The primary focus of this paper is to present a review of the current literature on the acquisition of reading and writing abilities in the first and second language. The review begins by examining aspects involved in first and second language acquisition processes and describes current language theories. Attention is shifted to the definition of literacy and the interrelated components of the reading and writing processes. The final discussion focuses on second language reading and writing instruction and its implications for language minority students.

Language acquisition and language theories

First Language acquisition

Understanding the development of a child's second language involves a meticulous analysis of the language acquisition. This continual examination will advance current efforts to develop sound educational policies for language minority children. Regardless of their cultural or linguist background, children master basic syntactic, semantic and phonological structures of their language before they enter school. How does it occur? Different theoretical positions exist regarding the answer to this question. The following section will review three of the most prominent perspectives.

Behaviorist Perspective

Linguistics, psychologists and educators have debated for years on how children acquire language , what influences its development, and whether it is innate or depend on the environment. People have often assumed that children develop language by imitating what they hear from adults; This was once of the traditional and popular view of language development. This behaviorist perspective maintains that children learn language through reflex response to reinforcement. According to this point of view, language is determined by stimuli from the environment: children reproduce language, or approximations of what they hear , and are then reinforced by rewards and attention. Children are believed to develop language through reinforcement and hence, are considered passive recipients o environmental stimuli (Ambert, 1988). However, this theoretical framework does not account for children's utterances not heard in adult speech, such as "two mouses" or "taked". Although children do not heard adults produce these types of utterances, they are common generalizations found in young children's early speech. Imitation does not account for this pattern of speech development in children nor the ability to produce original utterances.

Nativist Perspective

Nativists maintain that children are born with a innate capacity to acquire language. According to this position, humans are genetically predisposed to acquire and transmit language. Chomsky contends that the human brain has a built-in mechanism called the "Language Acquisition Device" which infers the rules of language when triggered by the stimulation of spoken language. Once the language acquisition device is activated, children discover the regularities of language and begin to internalize the rules of

grammar (Ambert, 1988). This happen regardless of external reinforcement or training. Thus, Chomsky maintains that language is acquired and no learned. In other words, language is embedded in our brains and automatically comes to the surface when we are exposed to the spoken word (Lesson-Hurley, 1990). However, nativists fall short in accounting for understanding the behaviours that correspond to language use. That is, understanding the contexts where language occurs goes beyond the internalization of appropriate grammatical rules.

Interactionist Perspective

Interaction theorists combine behaviorists' beliefs that language is learned through conditioning, and nativists' beliefs that humans are born with the innate ability to acquire language. According to the interactionists perspective, language is a product of both genetical and environmental factors (Strickland & Morrow, 1989). That is, humans are born with the ability to produce and learn language by using their genetic capacity and by interacting with their environment and other humans. The interactive model not only emphasizes children's comprehension and production of language, but also context and intent (McLaughlin, 1984).

1. The term "communicate competence" coined by Hymes in 1971, refers to the ability to use language effectively in social situations to convey meaning. Contrary to Chomsky's view of the underlaying grammatical competence assumed common in all native speakers, Hymes' concern with meaning focuses on the social interactions between speaker and listener (Hymes, 1971). Savignon (1983) provides a set of characteristics that reflect the integration between communication and culture involved in communication competence:

2. Communicative competence is a dynamic process where meaning is negotiated between two or more persons who share the same or similar symbolic system. It is an "interpersonal" rather than a "intrapersonal" characteristic.

3. Communicative competence involves both written and spoken language.

4. Communicative competence takes place in a variety of situations and is dependent on prior knowledge and on basic understanding of its context. It is said to be "context specific".

5. **Competence** and **performance** are theoretically different; competence is the "presumed underlying ability" and performance is the "overt manifestation of that ability". Through performance, competence can be developed, maintained and evaluated. The development of communicative abilities occurs when the learner is able to interpret or create discourse in context, through the use of linguistic skills (Savignon, 1983). Thus, the emphasis shifts from isolated drill and practice of linguistic skills to the natural reinforcement of these skills through a purposeful speech or written act. Children's linguistic skills are reinforced while they engage in meaningful communicative interactions between themselves and others.

Characteristics of Language Development

Language development begins very early in life. Research suggest that most children experience similar patterns of language acquisition. Halliday (1979) found that a one day old baby would stop crying to attend to his mother's voice. He maintains that this reaction is the first step towards language acquisition. Infant cries also contain elements of speech, such as intonation, pattern and pitch. Skuttnab-Kangas (1981) sites studies of English and Chinese new born babies conducted by Condor and Sanders in 1974. The studies show that children react rhythmically to speech by imitating the rhythm of the speech in their movements. Assumptions have been made that the intonation and rhythm of the first language are imprinted so early in life, that is possible to detect the mother tongue ever after it has been substituted by another language.

Very young children react and listen actively to human voices by the turn of their heads, babble, or

facial expressions. Babbling allows children to explore speech production and control (Lesson-Hurley, 1990). During first year of life, children begin to acquire grammatical and pragmatic knowledge that govern language. This acquisition comes from the children's membership in a language community (Williams and Snipper, 1990) Concrete objects acquire certain properties and relations when a child begins to learn language. The child then attaches words to things and later meanings begin to be differentiated. For instance, "mama" at first is referred for any adult, or "doggy" for any animal. The child later begins to understand the differences between distinct meaning (Skutnab-Kangas, 1981).

In learning to speak, children develop their own increasingly complex rules for structuring language. Children are not formally taught language in a mechanical way, bit by bit. Rather, they learn language by interacting with the environment in a natural way (Hudson, 1988). Although we do not teach children how to speak, we do facilitate their language development in several ways. First, though exposing children to a language-rich environment, adult language is modelled in naturalistic, real-life contexts such as; in the process of buying groceries or setting the table, language is used to explain, describe, command. Children are also exposed to different language functions in the environment; such as language use to get something (instrumental language) or conveying information (informative language). Second, adults have appropriate expectations and responses regarding children's language development. Children are expected to be successful and eventually to learn to speak like adults. The main focus is on the child's meaning rather than the form and, generally, immediate feedback is given to the child (Weaver, 1988). Adults respond to an infant's first attempts at speaking with joy and pride, accepting the approximation of the language use (Holdaway, 1979). Later, adults support the child's language development by modeling and surrounding the infant with an abundance of diverse language experiences.

Weaver (1988) contends that children go beyond imitating the language of adults to formulate sophisticated rules for creating language structures. The acquisition of language rules in children takes place unconsciously and without direct instruction. Meaning rather than form is the primary focus in the acquisition of a child's first language. Regardless of the many distinct language experiences children have, there is a underlying commonality: they are all real communicative events.

Language processes reflect children's cognitive abilities as well as their social and emotional development. The acquisition of representational systems (symbols to express concepts and experiences) motivate children's intellectual growth (Perez & Torres-Guzman, 1992).

Second Language Acquisition

Our Understanding of the complex processes involved in native language acquisition has provided a basis for the development of numerous theoretical frameworks. Current research in second language acquisition has, in turn, contributed to the understanding of the processes and conditions of language learning in general. Theoretical developments concur with the notion that proficiency in second language may be acquired under similar circumstances as the first language. That is, second language proficiency may be acquired and developed more effectively under less contrived and more natural and meaningful conditions. Effective instruction for linguistic minority children should be conducted within a flexible structure in which the teachers, the parents and the students have a certain degree of control of the instructional strategies and activities.

Language Deficiency Myth

Many negative myths about bilingualism have advocated the notion that the use two languages in children causes cognitive, social and emotional damage (Cummins, 1984). The Language Deficiency Myth describes language minority children as

nonverbal, alingual and semilingual, causing learning disabilities and speech impediments. The assumption that bilingualism causes any effect on cognitive ability is based on the idea that language is a major part of cognition (Hakuta, 1990). On one hand, Jean Piaget's theoretical approach which places a minimal role on language in cognitive development, would maintain that bilingualism has little or no effect in the cognition. On the other hand, Vygotsky (1975) emphasizes the importance of language in guiding the thought processes, be it negative or positive, depending on society's attitudes.

Based on the need to clarify conflicting theoretical issues such as these, research on bilingualism and the cognitive processes began, in the early 1960s, to focus on "metalinguistic abilities". This refers to the ability to think about language in a flexible and abstract manner; such as making judgements about the grammar of sentences, understanding innuendos and perceiving play and jokes. Although both monolingual and bilingual children develop metalinguistic abilities, bilingualism induces children to better control their mental processes (Hakuta, 1990). Metalinguistic ability has been linked with the development of early reading skills in monolingual children. Hence, it follows that bilingual children, all other variables being equal, have an advantage in the acquisition of literacy. Cummins's position on this and related issues will be discussed later in the paper.

English Exposure Myth

Other myths on bilingualism have perpetuated inappropriate educational programs for language minority students. The English Exposure Myth maintains that language minority children must be exposed to great amounts of English in order to become proficient in that language. Moreover, instruction in the native language has been considered a hinderance for the acquisition of English (Ambert, 1988). Research evidence unequivocally rejects this myth. It has been found that language minority children who receive instruction in the native language develop the second language more efficiently that children who are immersed in the second language (Wong Fillmore & Valadez, 1986). Despite research evidence demonstrating that native language instruction promotes second language acquisition, the United States Department of Education still advocates the "structure immersion" approach as an alternative to bilingual education (Crawford, 1989). In this method, a simplified and diluted version of the academic content used, in English, as the medium of instruction. Proponents of this approach cites the success of Canadian immersion programs, where the majority language children (English) are immersed in the minority language (French). However, researchers have warned that immersion programs are not effective for language minority children. It is important to note that in the Canadian immersion the second language is not simplified, but follows the same French curriculum of native French speakers.

Current Perspectives

The demographic distribution of language minority groups given in the 1980 Census data suggest that linguistic minority enrolled in the United States public schools will increase significantly in the next twenty years. Approximately 35 million people in the United States speak a language other than English, of whom 20 million are not fluent in English. Almost 11 million of them are school age children (Trueba, 1991). In the United States English is seen as a fundamental tool to achieve in school and become successful citizens in society. However, the loss of the home language and culture are often seen as necessary for the appropriate development of English. Hence, linguistic minorities not only experience a loss of personal identity and emotional bond with the community, but also experience rejection from the mainstream society.

Trueba (1991) contends that educators must create a "culturally appropriate learning environment" which is harmony with the values an beliefs of the home culture in order to maximize the cognitive development in language minority children. Cognitive

skills are best acquired through the primary language and then transferred to the second language. The use of the home language helps children develop critical thinking abilities and cognitive skills. This cognitive structuring is not only shaped by linguistic knowledge but also by cultural knowledge and the context in which that knowledge is obtained.

Cummins (1989a) proposes three principles relevant to bilingual development and language teaching. First, the **additive bilingual enrichment** principle contends that "The development of additive bilingual and biliteracy skills entails no negative conse quences for children's academic, linguistic or intellectual development... the evidence points in directin to subtle metalinguistic and intellectual benefits for bilingual children." (pg. 21). Numerous studies have reported findings that demonstrate a grater awareness of linguistic meanings and seem to be more flexible in their thinking than monolingual children (Cummins, 1989). Bilingual children must decipher much more linguistic input through the effort of gaining command of two languages than monolingual children who are exposed to the only ñanguage system.

Second, the **interdependence** principle is based upon the premise that there is an underlying cognitive and academic proficiency common across all languages regardless of their distinct features. Cummins maintains that first and second language academic skills are interdependent. His claim is based on the empirical evidence that there is nor relationship between amount of instructional time spent in the second language and academic achievement. Studies on second language acquisition have correlated variables such as age, gender and sociohistorical background with different measures of second language proficiency (Gardner, 1985). However, the most controversial variable has been the relevance of time spent exposed to a second language and the acquisition of that language. Researchers have found that proficiency in a second language is unrelated to time spent learning it. Similarly, German researches found that Spanish and Turkish migrant workers'

competence in German was unrelated to their length in residence, but rather to the amount of contact with other Germans (Giles & Coupland, 1981).

According to Cummins the underlying proficiency makes possible the transfer of literacy-related skills between languages. He found that transfer is more likely from the minority to the majority language due to the greater exposure to literacy in the majority language and the social pressures to learn it.

Third, the **interactive pedagogy** principle subscribes to Krashen's (1981) assertion that language is acquired involuntarily and effortlessly only when it is comprehensible. The key factor is Krashen's theoretical model is **comprehensible input:** messages in the second language that make sense when modified and facilitated by visual aides and context. He contends that we acquire grammatical structures in their natural order when sufficient amounts of high quality input are present. Rules are then generalized from verbal stimuli according to innate principles of grammar. The principle of comprehensible input is based on the idea that the main function of language use is meaningful communication. The importance of meaningful language use at all stages in the acquisition of second language skills has come to be recognized as a critical and determining factor for the successful development of a second language and the maintenance of the first language.

The interactive pedagogy principle provides significant insights for educators of its relevance to literacy and first language development. As has been noted earlier in this discussion, children negotiate meaning by focusing on comprehending what is being communicated and by using language for variety of purposes.

The reading process

Through the extensive research on reading, second language researchers and teachers are in a position to better understand what fluent first language (L1) readers do and make possible connections to the

developmental processes involved in second language reading.

Defining literacy

An appropriate starting point for discussion, thus, would be to address the definition of reading. Although the essence of the act of reading has been captured by numerous definitions, no clearly stated and empirically supported definition has been generated. Defining reading ranges from a sole emphasis on decoding, to a focus on comprehension, to attributing meaning by interpretation.

Bernhardt (1991) contends that issues regarding reading generally fall on one of two paradigms: cognitive or social. This suggest that reading is either a meaning-constructing process or that is meaning extracting. He explains that this two views are dichotomous and are incompatible.

A cognitive perspective examines the reading process as an intrapersonal problem-solving task that takes place within the brain. Several cognitive models describe how information from the text is processed into meaning. Within the framework of most models is the view that reading is an individual act consisting of processing steps that are separated and measurable (Bernhardt, 1991). In other words, the readers have processors that reponds to information much like a computer program. This perspective, which underlies skills and subskills approaches, separates complex tasks into a series of simpler steps so that teaching can be standardized (Weaver, 1988).

Reading as a social process asserts that literacy is an integral part of cultural transmissions and socialization. The reading and writing act is used to establish, organize and preserve social relationships between individuals as well as group of people (Bloome & Green, 1984). This perspective implies that both reader and writer process socially prescribed valued systems, sociopolitical histories and inherent beliefs. Hence, the text is open to multiple interpretations contingent on the schema of the reader. Parallel to the interactionist position, Golman (1987) argues that literacy, whether on first or second

language, is a both a cognitively and an interpersonally constructed event. The language learner uses his/her cognitive abilities in a particular internal context while immersed in a sociocultural and linguistic context.

The dichotomy between cognitive and social views poses interesting viewpoints about the nature of reading and introduces a critical ramifications on the development of instructional approaches. Weaver (1988) maintains that the instructional approach reflects the definition of reading, in that the notion of how people learn to read is often the basis for reading philosophies and programs. In attempting to provide a definition of reading, Grave (1881) opts for a definition of knowledge and processes required for fluent reading. He contends that reading is rapid, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, flexible and gradually developing. Grabe explains:

"...reading is **rapid**, the readers need to maintain the flow of information at a sufficient rate to make connections and inferences vital to comprehension. Reading is **purposeful**; the reader has a purpose for reading, whether it is for entertaining, information, research and so on. Reading for a purpose provides a motivation... Reading is **interactive**; the reader makes use of his/her background knowledge as well as information from the printed page...also...many skills work together simultaneously in the process. Reading is **comprehending**; the reading expects to understand what he/she is reading. Reading is **flexible**; the reader employs a range of strategies to read efficiently...adjusting the reading speed, skimming ahead, considering titles, headings, pictures and text structure information, anticipating information to come... Reading **develops gradually**... fluent reading is the product of long-term effort and gradual improvement."(378-379).

Williams and Snipper (1991) present three broad categories of literacy defined according to different social contexts. First, **functionally literacy**

is described as "the ability to read and write well enough to understand signs... fill out job applications... and write checks." (pg.4). This represents a minimum level of reading and writing that enables people to function in society. However, it does not necessarily follow that a person who is not able to read and write cannot function with certain constraints. Functionally illiterate adults resort to coping strategies that allow them to meet immediate and specific situational demands. This phenomenon is also found in classrooms, particularly in the secondary grades.

Second, **cultural literacy** is viewed as the construction of meaning and readers and writers process the text. This process is direct influenced by the discourse community to which the reader and writer belong. That is, the meaning of the text depends on what the reader bring to the reading or writing event, such as values and experiences. The cultural heritage of a given community is linked to the reader and writer. Literacy is then based on a shared body of knowledge and traditions. The controversy regarding cultural literacy was fueled by E.D. Hirsch's Cultural Literacy (1987), which consists of a list of terms, events and names reflecting Eurocentric and elitist historic and literacy milestones. This view of literacy dismisses the contributions made by the non-mainstream culture and fails to represent an increasingly pluralitic society (Williams and Snipper, 1991).

Finally, according to William and Snipper, **critical literacy** has recently emerged as a challenge to the common view of cultural literacy as advocated by writers like Hirsch. Critical literacy is defined like "...not only the ability to recognize the social essence of literacy but also to understand its fundamental political nature." (pg. 10). The ability to assess the ideology portrayed in text and to understand the intended audience represents the highest level of literacy skills.

The various aspects involved in the definition and understanding of literacy reviewed above, provide a foundation for the discussion of specific components related to the development of literacy.

Characteristic of Literacy development

Several characteristic predominate in the current research about the development of literacy. First, reading and writing begins to develop very early in life (Goodman, 1986) along with oral language acquisition. The most critical period in language development takes place before the child comes to school. During the late sixties Mary Clay (1967) broke ground in examining young children's reading and writing based on language on language acquisition research. Ages one to five had been regarded as the period during which oral language and reading readiness took place, leaving reading and writing for school. Clay (1967) found that young children could engage in significant reading behaviours such as self correction and directionality. She concluded that there was no evidence that contact with printed language should be withheld from young children on the ground that they are immature. Moreover, Yetta Goodman (1967) found that even children who were described as "at risk" had knowledge about various aspects of reading, such as boo-handling knowledge and an understanding of the functions of print. Print awareness studies conducted by Goodmans supported the notion that function precedes form in learning to read and concluded that learning to read is natural in a literate society (Teale & Sulzby, 1988).

Evidence suggests that children who come from homes rich in literacy experiences and which include supportive adults, learned reading strategies in natural, developmentally appropriate ways. These children who are exposed early in life to stories, begin to internalize story language and structure, directionality, and the notion that print represents meaning. Children are constantly exposed to print in the environment and, in most cases, in the home. It is important to note that literacy learning occurs during a child's early years through a wide variety of experiences (Teale & Sulzby, 1989). Nursery rhymes and songs, environmental print, bet-time stories, adults or siblings engaged in reading and writing, and even television are part of the repertoire of child's early experiences with literacy.

Second, the functions of literacy are a vital component of the learning process. Children's learning experiences are embedded in real life situations with real life goals. Literacy, then, becomes a functional aspect of a larger system: society. Thus, children view reading and writing as purposeful and goal oriented. They become aware that a recipe or written direction serve a concrete purpose for fulfilling a goal; produce cookies or get a friend's house. In addition, children also begin to view fictional literature as a way to interpret and make connections between their lives and the world.

Third, reading and writing develop simultaneously. Proficiency in oral language and abilities in reading and writing influence each other in a circular framework (Strickland and Morrow, 1989). Traditional reading and writing instruction has been viewed as discreet subjects isolated from one another as well as from oral language (Holdaway, 1979). However, extensive research suggests that speaking, reading and writing are integral and concurrent parts of the cognitive process found in learning (Teale and Sulzby, 1986).

Finally, children learn through active involvement, constructing meaning based on their prior knowledge. Children are active learners who achieve the highest success by engaging in authentic and purposeful activities. Language as well as literacy development must be viewed in terms of authentic interaction. The past two decades have shown an increasing interest in meaning for educators and scholars. "Authentic", "purposeful", "meaningful" and "real communication" are the underlying common threads that connect the recent research on language and literacy development.

Second language reading and writing instruction

The preceding examination has provided a rudimentary but comprehensive description of the most important aspects regarding literacy development and language acquisition. Based upon the research findings and theories, educators have proposed legitimate applications of these principles for elementary and secondary bilingual classrooms. The following discussion examines several essential elements which must be considered in developing sound pedagogical strategies for second language readers and writers.

Authentic language experiences in context

Cummins (1989) suggest that the development of academic proficiency is largely dependent on context-embedded instruction. That is, teachers facilitate academic growth by providing opportunities that validate students' prior experiences and by encouraging them to share and expend on these experiences. Language and content can be effectively taught through the use of the students' own experiences and prior knowledge. This approach is effective for several reasons. First, the learners' levels of anxiety decrease because the content is familiar and relevant. Second, the learners take on active roles by engaging in real communicate events about their life while learning about others. Third, the learners take ownership of the processes involved in learning language in the context of their own experiences.

Second language learners should have plenty of opportunities to use and hear authentic language appropriate to particular contexts. Language develops when children are to use it in real contexts for real purposes. Students should be constantly engaged in meaningful activities with their first language peers rather than being subjected to isolated, structured language experiences. The notion of mixed ability grouping goes beyond language learning into the whole development of children. That is, children should not be separated or isolated from their peers according to their linguistic, cognitive, social or attitudinal strengths or weaknesses (Levine, 1988). Providing students with appropriate opportunities for success, placing second language learners with first language learners and allowing them to explore the same concepts that their age peers are exploring are essential components for the success of a second language learner (Rigg & Allen, 1989).

Teachers facilitate language learning when they keep authentic language in context by providing linguistic or extralinguistic cues. Contextual support such as action, gestures, objects and pictures enables the learner to make connections between language and meaning. Many traditional methods of language teaching have relied on simplified language and watered-down instructional materials. This reductionist use of language not only limits the range of cues available and reduces the context, but also provides the students with a false idea about natural language (Freeman & Freeman, 1992).

The teacher and the learner

Vigotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" asserts that children's attempts to acquire knowledge are mediated by formal and informal interactions with members of the society at large. This "assisted performance" is what the child can do with the help of adults and the environment. These interactions are embedded in social and cultural systems where cultural tools(language, music, writing, etc.) are used. One of the teacher's functions, the is to create a context in the classroom where the social tools and processes are used to interact with others.

Thus, the ideal teacher would create an environment where students are able to engage in collaborative activities that combine their interests and experiences with the four domains of language(Perez & Torres-Guzman, 1992). Creating an environment that is conducive for optimum learning incorporates a strong sense of community through group cohesiveness and responsibility (Savignon, 1983). Most importantly, creating an authentic community within the classroom places the teacher as part of that learning community.

Beyond the learning environment that teacher creates, is the role that the teacher adopts. Traditional roles has the teacher initiate and evaluate the students the majority of the time, while the students passivily respond. Harman and Edelsky (1989) suggest more effective approaches where the teacher/student roles are flexible and open the students and teachers are

learning as well as teaching. Thus, the role of the student and the teacher shift and alternate. By building a climate of trust where the learners interact without fear of threat or failure, the teacher's role becomes that of an interested person who has the resources to assist the development of language and knowledge. Rather than assume the role of the conventional teachers who relies on teaching manuals and employs direct, didactic teaching strategies, holistic teachers not only have a high command of the subject-matter, but also guide and motivate students to become to become critical thinkers and independent problem solvers.

The educators' role is redefined by Cummins(1989b), from teachers who hold unintentional or intentional disabling attitudes and misconceptions based on subtractive ideologies, to teachers who advocate intercultural and linguistic empowerment of minority students through an additive perspective. The teacher then incorporates the students' language and culture in to the school curriculum, reinforcing students' first language and their cultural identity. This approach results in a stronger cognitive and academic foundation for language minority students. Consequently, the minority culture and language are viewed as advantages that enrich the live and opportunities of the minority group and broadens the awareness and understanding of the majority group.

Parent and Comunity

De Gaetano (in Ambert, 1988) presents research conducted by Owens (1986) regarding the vital role parents exert on children's language acquisition. She gives particular attention to the positive attitude and manner in which parents integrated language reinforcement in everyday activities. However, she found significant differences between parent's instructional interaction with the children and the teachers' interaction with the students. Lareau (in Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) suggest that there are social and cultural differences that create a mismatch between the learning environment of the home and the school. This results is a mismatch between the school's mainstream

expectations of the parents' and the parents' interpretations of "parent involvement". The school-home mismatch (Cummins, 1989) disappears when the school and the community collaborate to accommodate all genres as well as introduce new ones. Similar to Cummins viewpoint, Heat (1983) suggest that the community be consulted to elaborate and explain the uses of genres that are used in the community. Heath claims that in order to expand the ways to use language the schools must attain a certain level of community awarenes.

In order to brake dawn the barriers that the education system has fostered for so many years towards minority culture and language, school must begin to involve the community as an important component and resource in the decision making of curriculum. Parents, students, and teachers must collaborate to formulate appropriate instructional strategies, discover and use relevant instructional materials, and develop sound strategies for support in the home and the school. The collaborative notion views the community as a vast resource of knowledge. Educators became responsible for encouraging parents to become an active component of the student's education. Moll and Diaz (1987) discuss the reorganization of instruction based on information gathered through community resources (language and culture). They contend that the use of this information is a key factor in changing children's academic performance. Moll and Diaz propose that connections between the school and the community will promote educational change.

Integrating Language and Content

Speaking, reading, listening and writing must be considered independent aspects of literacy development; educators should not assume that of one should precede mastery of any other. Children who engage in listening, reading, producing (writing) and speaking about literature (retelling) (Rigg and Allen, 1989) develop more cohesive knowledge of language. Through children's literature, in particular classic folktale and modern children's literature, rich,

interesting and natural language can be used as a vehicle to second language develop as well as growth in academic subject matter. Students should be encouraged to produce or dictate their own reading materials regardless of their age. Rigg's (1989) rationale for having the students create their own reading material is based on the idea that different interest within a classroom can be met, and at the same time expose students to array of genres. Moreover, the materials are readable, where students are able to build meaning from the print. Content and form are determined largely by the audience and the purpose and the material is always authentic. Freire's (1989) account of his own teaching reflects the importance of presenting knowledge in a "dynamic and living way". He distances himself from rote memorization and stagnant teaching and learning. Instead he uses the student's schemata to interpret reading and knowledge; making new information relevant to the students' own experiences. He emphasizes the importance of content and ownership of the word.

Content-area material should be used for the development of language and literacy. Some key concepts must be considered, such as "holistic", "active preparation", "language processes versus language products" "authentic" (Hudelson, 1989). Students must be motivated to become active participants in the learning process. This notion reflects a closer correlation with the theories of language acquisition and learning, and the psycholinguistic approaches to reading. The notion that learners, whether they be ESL students or native speakers, use language in a purposeful manner to understand, share and inquire about information appears to be shared by the current influx of research on literacy and language development.

The literature reviewed presents the view that language and literacy is acquired through meaningful, purposeful communicative events. Proponents of this movement assert that integrating communicative strategies with content provides a means, not only to develop language skills, but also acquire knowledge (Carrasquillo, 1988). More importantly, schools that

provide culturally relevant opportunities for linguistic minority children encourage them to succeed and become empowered.

Summary

A strong theoretical framework of literacy and language acquisition provides the foundation for the development of appropriate classroom instructional strategies. Thus, instructional practices are validated through current research finding and classroom applications. The complex relationship between bilingualism and literacy propels educators and researchers to have a better understanding of the development of language, reading and writing. Through the collaboration of distinct fields of study, such as anthropology, sociolinguistic and psychology, a more holistic perspective of biliteracy is developed. That is, biliteracy not merely the function of reading and writing in two languages. Biliteracy encompasses cultural and historical facets, political and economical aspects, societal attitudes and expectations, the mechanisms of the language and its symbols, and much more. Hence, the academic and social success of language minority students must be guided under the interdisciplinary perspectives of language and literacy acquisition.

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