Ryerson University
Digital Commons @ Ryerson

Early Childhood Education Publications and Research

Early Childhood Education

1-1-2001

Struggling to Preserve Home Language: The Experiences of Latino Students and Families in the Canadian School System

Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw
Ryerson University

Judith K. Bernhard
Ryerson University, bernhard@ryerson.ca

Marlinda Freire
University of Toronto

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/ece

Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons

Recommended Citation
Pacini-Ketchabaw, Veronica; Bernhard, Judith K.; and Freire, Marlinda, "Struggling to Preserve Home Language: The Experiences of Latino Students and Families in the Canadian School System" (2001). *Early Childhood Education Publications and Research.* Paper 16.
http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/ece/16

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Early Childhood Education at Digital Commons @ Ryerson. It has been accepted for inclusion in Early Childhood Education Publications and Research by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Ryerson. For more information, please contact bcameron@ryerson.ca.

Struggling to Preserve Home Language: The Experiences of Latino Students and Families in the Canadian School System

Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Judith K. Bernhard
Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada

Marlinda Freire
University of Toronto, Canada

Abstract

Latinos in Canada are receiving attention because of frequent poor performance in school. This phenomenon turns out to be connected to a number of basic problems that can only be understood through investigation of institutional processes with routine operations that may disadvantage certain minorities. This paper presents and discusses part of the data collected in a larger research project on Latino families and Canadian schools. Bilingual Latina researchers used participant observation and action research techniques to report on the home language practices of 45 Latino families and how the school's routine processes influenced those practices. Findings include the following: (a) parents saw Spanish maintenance as a way to foster family unity, Latino identity, and professional advancement; (b) the strong assimilative pressures experienced by parents often resulted in their doubting the desirability of openly speaking Spanish at home; (c) because the children were losing their home language rapidly, the parents used a number of strategies; and (d) there are several things that parents would like to see happen that would enable them to maintain Spanish. Our findings indicate the necessity for schools to proactively recognize and build on the family's cultural capital, including their home language.

Introduction

> *Cuando el niño empezó la escuela, yo le puse en la planilla que su primer idioma era inglés. La persona que me estaba ayudando a hacer los papeles me dijo que era mejor que le escriba eso para que no tenga problemas en la escuela. Si yo decía que su primera lengua era el español, lo discriminarían, no recibiría ayuda y terminarían poniéndolo en inglés como segunda lengua. Entonces yo tuve que cambiar mi respuesta y escribir que inglés era su primera lengua porque sino no lo iban a poder ayudar en nada.*
>
> [When my son started school, I wrote down on the form that his first language was English. The person who was helping me to fill out the papers told me it would be better to write that, so that he would not have problems at school. If I said that his first language was Spanish, he would be discriminated against, would not get any help, and would be placed in English as a Second Language. So I had to change my answer and write that English was his first language. Otherwise they would not be able to help him with anything.]

Mrs. De Santos, a Guatemalan mother of two, like many other Latina mothers is receiving a clear message about the lack of value placed on maintaining a home language other than English or French. In spite of official multiculturalism policies in Canada, Mrs. De Santos will have a difficult time raising bilingual children. The loss of the home language is likely to have profound effects not only on the children's academic achievement but also on the family's ability to nurture their children and on familial relations.

Background

Latin Americans, as part of one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in Canada, are receiving attention because of frequent poor performance in school. The vast majority of the newer migrants are from Central and South America. Approximately 50,000 people in Toronto, Canada's largest city, have been identified as having Spanish as their first language (Statistics Canada, 1999). Tables 1 and 2 show the number of Latin American children and adolescents living in Canada and in Ontario by ethnic origin and age. The number of Latin Americans in Canada is close to 400,000; about 51% simply identify themselves as Spanish, and the remaining ones identify themselves according to country of origin.

In Canada, the children of Latin American migrants often show low academic achievement; only 65% obtain a high school diploma, and university graduates account for barely 10% of this group (Ornstein, 1997). Two studies reported poor outcomes for the Latino public school population in the Toronto

Table 1

Number of Latin American Children and Adolescents in Canada by Ethnic Origin and Age

Geography: Canada	Single and Multiple Ethnic Origin: Total			
	All Ages	Under 5 years old	5-9 years old	10-14 years old
Argentinean	7,115	690	715	795
Central/South American Indian	9,285	965	870	775
Chilean	33,835	3,230	3,210	3,080
Colombian	8,525	1,010	825	725
Costa Rican	1,115	165	120	180
Cuban	4,265	460	445	310
Ecuadoran	6,910	655	615	695
Guatemalan	8,460	1,235	1,090	815
Hispanic	5,275	580	485	485
Honduran	1,820	265	280	170
Latin/Central/South American n.i.e.	30,365	3,320	3,290	3,095
Mexican	23,300	3,110	3,055	2,320
Nicaraguan	4,895	500	555	585
Panamanian	1,690	215	110	155
Paraguayan	705	120	130	80
Peruvian	14,160	1,545	1,650	1,320
Salvadoran	24,125	2,690	3,030	2,570
Spaniard	204,365	18,970	17,875	17,635
Uruguayan	2,940	300	345	235
Venezuelan	4,580	655	495	425
Total (less Spaniard)	397,730	40,680	39,190	36,450

Note: Special Tabulations from the 1996 Census of Canada prepared by Statistics Canada for the Department of Canadian Heritage. The authors would like to thank Fernando Mata, Research Officer of the Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage for making these tables available for the study.

Table 2

Number of Latin American Children and Adolescents in Ontario by Ethnic Origin and Age

Geography: Canada	Single and Multiple Ethnic Origin: Total			
	All Ages	Under 5 years old	5-9 years old	10-14 years old
Argentinean	3,540	365	395	335
Central/South American Indian	4,380	520	420	350
Chilean	10,875	1,000	975	1,000
Colombian	4,145	460	350	340
Costa Rican	435	85	15	55
Cuban	2,305	255	280	170
Ecuadorian	5,930	585	470	590
Guatemalan	2,960	435	385	225
Hispanic	3,260	400	275	285
Honduran	440	50	60	40
Latin/Central/South American n.i.e.	16,185	1,790	1,665	1,525
Mexican	8,210	1,075	1,040	775
Nicaraguan	2,480	280	290	300
Panamanian	925	85	70	80
Paraguayan	120	30	30	--
Peruvian	5,570	650	670	445
Salvadoran	9,480	1,065	1,130	1,110
Spaniard	96,280	8,940	8,575	8,585
Uruguayan	1,850	200	225	145
Venezuelan	1,945	210	180	135
Total (less Spaniard)	181,315	18,480	17,500	16,490

Note. Special Tabulations from the 1996 Census of Canada prepared by Statistics Canada for the Department of Canadian Heritage. The authors would like to thank Fernando Mata, Research Officer of the Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage for making these tables available for the study.

area (Brown, 1994; Drever, 1996). Brown's (1994) study found low academic achievement as a general characteristic for both Latin Americans and African Canadian students. Spanish-speaking students in the high schools who make up the Toronto District Board of Education were found to be under-represented in the advanced classes and achieving at a lower level compared to the overall student population and most other ethnic groups. In addition, Drever's (1996) study of the population of one Toronto high school showed how rapidly Latin American students become disengaged from school.

Many consider the academic difficulties of Latin American immigrants in general to be linked to a number of basic problems the communities face. Prominent among them are unemployment, housing, and relative poverty (Borjas & Tienda, 1985; Kazemipur & Halli, 1998). The effect of de-skilling and underemployment on parental morale should also be considered; such difficulties have a strong linguistic component besides the class component. The assimilative pressures toward abolishing Spanish as a language of the home must be taken into account. In short, the functionality and integrity of the families is threatened in a number of ways.

To shed light on the phenomenon described, several studies have been conducted in Canada among Latin Americans. The experiences of immigrant and refugee Latin American women living in Canada have been examined in several situations (Damaris, Carrasco, & Charbonneau, 1998; Israelite & Herman, 1999; Rockhill & Tomic, 1992; Rublee & Shaw, 1991). Research has also focused on the range of problems that Salvadoran refugees face as they migrate to Canada (Durst & Lange, 1999; Jacob, 1994). Taking a different perspective, Carrillos and Simmons (1999) investigated the identity politics of Latin American youth in Toronto.

The present study grows out of our earlier work with the Latino population. One of our earlier studies (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Chud, & Lange, 1996; Bernhard, Lefebvre, Murphy Kilbride, Chud, & Lange, 1998) incorporating various immigrant communities, viewed the language socialization of children and highlighted how the early childhood educational system operates under an assimilative approach, contributing to the eventual loss of children's home language. A second study, conducted with Latin American parents, indicated that elementary school-age children tended to lose their mother tongue during the "normal processes" of institutional functioning of the Canadian schools (Bernhard, Freire, Torres, & Nirdosh, 1998). The issue of additive bilingualism has been researched for a number of years in Canada (Cummins, 1993; Genessee, 1983, 1987; Harley, Hart, & Lapkin, 1986; Ianco-Worrall, 1972; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Cummins (1991, 1993, 1995) and others have pointed out the rarity of additive as opposed to subtractive outcomes. In simple terms, a number of minority language communities are likely, within a generation, to have no young adult speakers of the language. In order to better understand this phenomenon, this study focused on the lived experiences of Latin American parents raising their school-age children in their mother tongue. Here, we report

on the home language practices of 45 families and how the schools' institutional processes influenced these practices.

We recognize that Latin Americans in Canada, not unlike Latin Americans in other parts of the world, are a diverse demographic and sociocultural population (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1993). Therefore, the views of the parents participating in this study are not to be generalized, and claims about Latin American parents as a homogeneous group cannot be made. Further, the situation of the parents participating in this study should not be viewed as though culture alone can adequately explain the circumstances and lived experiences of participants. Interactions of race, class, and gender affected the situations of the mothers, who came from various educational, socio-economic, political, and professional backgrounds that influenced how they engaged their role as immigrants and newcomers to this society.

Theoretical Framework

Power relations shape language practices between families and schools and the roles that families, groups, and institutions play in the process of first and second language acquisition. Following Michel Foucault (1972), power is not "held" in the hands of an elite; our analysis focuses on the micro-organization of daily practices and on the assumptions of dominant discourses including social and educational theory (Foucault, 1972; Gramsci, 1998; Smith, 1990; Walkerdine, 1990). Parents' practices, often seen as ineffective or characterized as passive, are the common result of present institutional practices. As has been pointed out by several investigators, these practices illustrate the connections between power and knowledge and, in particular, serve to maintain the power differences of groups in our society. The knowledge required in school systems, including an understanding of how the systems themselves operate, reflects the present network of power relations.

According to Bourdieu (1994), the dominant structures of society, especially its educational institutions, determine the role of the school in maintaining the school culture and represent an essential element for acquiring and maintaining social power relations. Besides content, the manner in which subjects are taught has differential effects on the children of those in dominant and subordinate positions. The children of those in the dominant groups are given skills recognized as "capital," or those beliefs, skills, and abilities necessary to achieve success as defined by the dominant society. Hence, those who pass through the educational system acquire differing amounts and kinds of capital reflecting the existing power relations. Thus, it is clear that all groups have some form of capital enabling them to maintain themselves in human society, and it may be said that certain kinds of capital are devalued or ignored in the functioning of the dominant institutions. Specifically, the cultural capital of both minority families and those of the working class (Lareau, 1989) are generally devalued at schools,

with the minority disadvantage being multiplicative with other disadvantages. The consequences of the situation described are high drop-out rates and other academic problems already described.

We do not consider language maintenance as an isolated issue. Rather, language maintenance is considered within the broader framework of social, political, and ideological factors, particularly when analyzing the situation of culturally diverse students at schools (Corson, 1993, 1994, 1995; Cummins, 1995, 1996, 1997; Macedo, 1997; Nieto, 1996, 1999). Language operates as one of the most important practices within our society wherein cultural production and reproduction take place (Corson, 1998; Darder, 1991). The vitality of a language indicates how well a group is maintaining itself in society.

A number of studies have investigated language issues throughout the discourse of power relations (Corson, 1995, 1998; Cummins, 1995, 1996, 1997; Bernhard, Freire, Torres, & Nirdosh, 1998; Schecter & Bayley, 1998; Soto, 1997; Walsh, 1991; Zentella, 1997). Cummins (1996) argues that teachers' attitudes and behavior toward the language and culture of students largely affect how students perceive their own background. Students are empowered or disempowered as they interact with educators. Their interactions are mediated by the role that teachers assume in relation to language incorporation, community participation, pedagogy, and assessment. Teachers may unwittingly contribute to students' feelings of shame about their cultural and linguistic background.

Research findings have extensively documented both the positive impact of bilingualism and biculturalism among culturally diverse students as well as the negative consequences that often result from language assimilation (Cummins, 1996; Wong Fillmore, 1991a, 1991b). Yet, bilingualism and biculturalism are still very rare in our society. The present study explores home language practices and experiences of a group of Latin American parents facing enormous pressures in their decisions about their children's language. In particular, we look at parents' reactions to assimilative pressures and interactions with school personnel, as viewed by the parents, and we take into account such variables as the use of the mother tongue in the home.

Methodology

This study is part of an extensive research program on Latin American immigrant children and their teachers and families (Bernhard & Freire, 1999; Bernhard, Freire, Pacini-Ketchabaw, & Villanueva, 1998; Bernhard, Freire, & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2000). The families who are highlighted in this article were part of a two-stage ethnographic study of how 45 Latin American families support their children's efforts to adapt to the Canadian educational system. Because of the authors' familiarity with the language and culture, it was our intention to use what has been called "action research" (Lather, 1986) and participant observation methods, as described in the following section.

Stage One: Exploratory Study

In Stage One we assessed the context of the educational system in one particular school and developed an in-depth understanding of all the actors involved (i.e., children, teachers, support staff, principal, vice-principal, families). The school was chosen because of its proximity to the homes of Latin American refugees and the principal's reputation for being responsive to family needs. During three school terms of five months each, we immersed ourselves as participant observers in three classrooms to study the day-to-day practices of the classroom with a particular focus on the Latin American children. We spent three half days in the school following the 10 Latin American children in two classes through their daily routine in academic and nonacademic activities, to recess, gym, special education classes, and the heritage language program (Spanish). We collected field notes and tape-recorded all interviews. We also talked formally and informally with school personnel and the children's families over a period of 18 months during 1996-1998. Our ethnographic method was based on a naturalistic, cultural contextual paradigm (Cole, 1992; Harkness & Super, 1996; LeVine, Dixon, LeVine, Richman, Leiderman, Keefer, & Brazelton, 1994). Bernhard and Freire (1999) give details of the methodology. In our findings, we identify several themes, which were addressed in the second phase and are reported here.

Stage Two: Confirmatory Study

In Stage Two, we involved an additional 35 families in the following manner. We contacted several agencies that offer services to the Latino community in the same Canadian city and asked for names of families with school-age children who had been in Canada for less than 10 years. We received the names of such families, contacted them, and informed them of the purpose of the study: to gain knowledge of children's learning and adaptation to the Canadian educational system. The third criterion for participation was that the family members had not been seen by mental health professionals and had not formally received services for psychoemotional problems, and none of them declined. Thus, five families were excluded leaving the sample at 35.

Procedure

After the initial telephone contact and selection, each family was interviewed on two occasions in Spanish at the family's home (each interview lasted 2-3 hours). After establishing rapport, background information was sought. Parents were then asked questions that had the same content as that described in Stage One of the family consultation. Additionally, parents were asked to show us documentation from the school, including report cards and other correspondence, and to explain their content. Behavioral observations were recorded after the interviews.

Table 3

Demographic and Family Characteristics of Mothers Interviewed

Name	Year of arrival	Focal child's age and gender	Country of origin	Occupation in country of origin	Occupation in Canada	Education in country of origin
Mrs. Balnear	1988	8, girl	Venezuela	F: N/A M: Secretary	F: N/A M: Cleaning	F: N/A M: Post sec.
Mrs. Ramirez	1986	11, boy	El Salvador	F: Vet M: Teacher	F: Vet asst. M: Student	F: Post sec. M: Post sec.
Mrs. Roman	1992	7, girl	Peru	F: Computer analyst M: Financial advisor	F: Computer technician M: Babysitter	F: Post sec. M: Post sec.
Mrs. Rivera	1995	7, boy	Peru	F: N/A M: Retail sales	F: House painter M: Babysitter	F: N/A M: High School
Mrs. Perez	1995	8, boy	Peru	F: Decorator M: Secretary	F: N/A M: Student	F: Post sec. M: Post sec.
Mrs. Rodriguez	1985	13, boy	Guatemala	F: N/A M: Teacher	F: Student M: Seamstress	F: N/A M: Post sec.
Mrs. Valdez	1997	8, girl	Peru	F: Sales M: Tailor	F: Waiter M: Home parent	F: Post Sec. M: High School
Mrs. Moreno	1991	8, boy	Uruguay	F: Shoe maker M: Shoe manufactor	F: Waiter M: Home parent	F: High School M: High School
Mrs. Gonzalez	1986	10, girl	Ecuador	F: Electrician M: Accountant	F: Construction M: Home parent	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.

F=Father, M=Mother

Table 3, cont.

Demographic and Family Characteristics of Mothers Interviewed

Name	Year of arrival	Focal child's age and gender	Country of origin	Occupation in country of origin	Occupation in Canada	Education in country of origin
Mrs. Portes	1990	6, boy	Venezuela	F: Computer analyst M: Teacher	F: Computer repairs M: Home parent	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Torres	1997	6, girl	Venezuela	F: Sales M: Tailor	F: Cleaning M: Student	F: High School M: High School
Mrs. Lopez	1980	8, girl	El Salvador	F: N/A M: Secretary	F: N/A M: Home parent	F: N/A M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Chavez	1997	9, girl	Guatemala	F: Agriculture M: Home parent	F: Landscaping M: Home parent	F: Elem. School M: Elem School
Mrs. Cervantes	1996	7, girl	Mexico	F: Public administrator M: Supervisor	F: Cleaning M: Home parent	F: High School M: High School
Mrs. De Santos	1987	8, boy	Guatemala	F: N/A M: Nurse	F: N/A M: Cleaning	F: N/A M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Burgos	1972	10, girl	Ecuador	F: N/A M: Jewelry sales	F: N/A M: Home parent	F: N/A M: Elem. School
Mrs. Gutierez	1988	10, girl	Peru	F: N/A M: Secretary	F: N/A M: Student	F: N/A M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Romero	1995	10, boy	Ecuador	F: Supervisor M: Seamstress	F: Factory worker M: Home parent	F: Post Sec. M: High School

Mrs. Garcia	1995	11, boy	Chile	F: N/A M: Perfume distributor	F: N/A M: Home parent	F: N/A M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Ballesteros	1996	11, boy	Cuba	F: Lawyer M: Home parent	F: Factory worker M: Babysitter	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Pulido	1991	6, girl	Peru	F: Engineer M: Teacher	F: Construction M: Student	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Calderon	1983	8, girl	Ecuador	F: N/A M: Clothing sales	F: N/A M: Factory employee	F: N/A M: High School
Mrs. Hernandez	1987	7, boy	Chile	F: Geographer M: Teacher	F: Computer analyst M: Babysitter	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Barrera	1991	8, boy	Ecuador	F: N/A M: Sales	F: N/A M: Cleaning	F: N/A M: Elem. School
Mrs. Morales	1991	6, boy	El Salvador	F: Airplane technician M: Student	F: Hardware store sales M: Babysitter	F: Post Sec. M: High School
Mrs. Ovando	1986	9, boy	Chile	F: N/A M: Secretary	F: N/A M: Receptionist	F: N/A M: High School
Mrs. Rivas	1995	9, boy	Honduras	F: Factory employee M: Secretary	F: Hotel employee M: Student	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.

Table 3, cont.

Demographic and Family Characteristics of Mothers Interviewed

Name	Year of arrival	Focal child's age and gender	Country of origin	Occupation in country of origin	Occupation in Canada	Education in country of origin
Mrs. Fernandez	1991	7, boy	El Salvador	F: Technician & repairs M: Hairdresser	F: Machine operator M: Waitress	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Mendoza	1987	11, girl	El Salvador	F: N/A M: Tailor	F: N/A M: Factory worker	F: N/A M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Mendez	1988	8, girl	Guatemala	F: Gov't Employee M: Teacher	F: Student M: Factory Employee	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Valenzuela	1990	10, boy	Colombia	F: Factory supervisor M: Student	F: Sales clerk M: Postal worker	F: High School M: High School
Mrs. Guzman	1989	6, girl	Colombia	F: Sales clerk M: Home parent	F: Cleaning M: Cooking	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Lorca	1883	7, girl	Mexico	F: N/A M: Tailor	F: N/A M: Seamstress	F: N/A M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Martinez	1983	7, boy	Colombia	F: Public administrator M: Secretary	F: Machine operator M: Factory employee	F: High School M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Madeiros	1988	10, girl	El Salvador	F: Farmer M: Secretary	F: Construction M: Factory employee	F: Elem. School M: High School

Mrs. Cortez	1988	10, girl	Nicaragua	F: Welder M: Secretary	F: Welder M: Babysitter	F: Elem. School M: High School
Mrs. Lucas	1988	8, boy	Colombia	F: Student M: Student	F: Computer technician M: Cashier	F: Post Sec. M: High School
Mrs. Villanueva	1989	5, girl	Colombia	F: Public Administrator M: Seamstress	F: Factory M: Home parent	F: Post Sec. M: High School
Mrs. Montenegro	1989	11, girl	Colombia	F: Public administrator M: Seamstress	F: Factory worker M: Home parent	F: Post Sec. M: High School
Mrs. Solis	1994	11, boy	Chile	F: Teacher M: Teacher	F: Factory worker M: Factory worker	F: Post Sec. M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Sanhueza	1984	5, boy	El Salvador	F: Carpenter M: Home parent	F: Cleaning M: Cleaning	F: High School M: High School
Mrs. Marti	1984	9, girl	Mexico	F: Electrician M: Teacher	F: Cleaning M: Babysitter	F: High School M: High School
Mrs. Escobar	1975	7, girl	Ecuador	F: N/A M: Student	F: N/A M: Receptionist	F: N/A M: Elem. School
Mrs. Vallejo	1991	8, girl	Ecuador	F: N/A M: Teacher	F: N/A M: Factory worker	F: N/A M: Post Sec.
Mrs. Mena	1990	11, girl	Nicaragua	F: Community organizer M: Home parent	F: Factory M: Cleaning	F: Elem. School M: Elem. School

The families lived in different parts of the city had immigrated to Canada in the last 10 years from Central or South America, and had children attending public schools in the Toronto area. Background characteristics of all the families are given in Table 3.

Because the selection criteria for the families in the two stages of the study were identical, and the exploratory findings were supported by the confirmatory study, all findings are reported together. The present paper reports the data gleaned from these extensive interviews. Although the families were recruited through "snowballing" referrals, the group essentially constitutes a sample of convenience.

Findings

Spanish Maintenance

Although the parents faced strong assimilative pressures, they viewed the raising of bilingual children as an important task and saw Spanish maintenance as a way to foster family unity, Latino identity, and professional advancement. The parents interviewed expressed a number of reasons for wanting their children to grow up knowing Spanish as well as English. First, knowing Spanish was seen as essential for maintaining contact with relatives and keeping links with their native culture. Mrs. Guzman, a mother of a 6-year-old daughter who emigrated with her husband from Colombia 10 years ago, said:

> *[Español] es importante para que se pueda comunicar con sus familiares. Cuando vamos a nuestro país, ella debe hablar con sus abuelos y ellos no hablan inglés. También con sus primos y con sus tíos. Yo pienso que es muy bueno para ella. Mi esposo también trata de que ella aprenda el español. El le habla en español.*
>
> [(Spanish) is important so that she can communicate with her relatives. When we go to our country, she has to speak with her grandparents, and they don't speak English. She also has to speak with her cousins and her aunts and uncles. I think that it is very good for her. My husband also tries to help her to learn Spanish. He speaks to her in Spanish.]

Mrs. Martinez, a Colombian mother of two children, ages 7 and 9, also recognized the value of Spanish for developing a sense of Latino identity.

> *Yo quiero que ellos hablen el idioma. Yo a veces escucho a niños que hablan el idioma y lo hablan mal. Eso no está bién. Nosotros somos Latinos y es importante que hablemos en español. El idioma que se habla en mi casa es el español. Por qué? Porque somos latinoamericanos y esa es nuestra identidad. Yo vine a este país, pero no nací en este país, no me eduque en este país, no crecí en este país.*

Mis valores y lo que soy viene del país de donde provengo. Yo puedo aprender las costumbres de este país. Yo he aprendido la lengua de este país pero yo sigo teniendo mi identidad y parte de mi identidad es mi idioma y por eso se habla español. Porque estoy orgullosa de donde vengo y quién soy.

[I want them to speak the language (Spanish). Sometimes I hear the children speaking the language, and they are speaking it wrong. That is not good. We are Latinos and it is important that we speak in Spanish. The language that they speak in my home is Spanish, because we are Latin Americans and that is our identity. I came to this country, but I was not born in this country, I was not educated in this country, I did not grow up in this country. My values and what I am come from my native country. I can learn about the customs of this country. I have learned the language of this country, but I still have my identity and part of my identity is my language, and that is why we speak Spanish. Because I am proud of where I come from and of who I am.]

Most of the parents spoke of the benefits of growing up bilingual. Mrs. Madeiros, a Salvadoran mother of three children, like the other mothers, envisioned greater professional opportunities as a result of having two languages:

No queremos que ellos pierdan el idioma. La comunidad hispana está creciendo y el día de mañana es bueno que tengan dos o tres idiomas. De esa forma pueden trabajar como bilingue en cualquier lado. Nosotros consideramos que si usted es bilingue, usted tiene muchas posibilidades de trabajo con empresas privadas americanas y europeas. Por eso a nosotros nos interesa que ellos aprendan bien el español y el francés también.

[We do not want them to lose the language. The Hispanic community is growing and it is good for them to have two or three languages for the future. That way they can work as a bilingual person anywhere. We believe that if you are bilingual, you have many job opportunities with private American and European businesses. That is the reason it interests us that they learn good Spanish and French as well.]

These examples illustrate the parents' positive attitudes toward raising bilingual children and their satisfaction in seeing children become capable of communicating in both languages.

Strong Assimilative Pressures

Strong Assimilative Pressures experienced by parents often resulted in their doubting the wisdom of speaking Spanish at home. Although all the mothers favored the use of Spanish at home with their children, many of them perceived a number of threats in this practice. Some mothers routinely related

suspicious comments about the negative role of Spanish use in children's English acquisition. Mrs. Valenzuela, who emigrated from Colombia nine years ago, recounted her experiences with her two sons:

> *Los maestros saben que yo hablo español con los niños en la casa. Una profesora me dijo que yo les tenía que hablar en inglés porque ellos lo pronunciaban mal. Ella me dijo que el niño necesitaba mas inglés porque él pronunciaba muy mal, y que el hablarle español en la casa no les estaba ayudando.*
>
> [The teachers know that I speak Spanish with the children at home. One teacher told me that I had to speak English with them because they do not pronounce it properly. She also told me that my son needed to speak more English because of his poor pronunciation, and that I was not helping them by speaking Spanish at home.]

Mrs. Guzman's experience also shows that the school did not attach any particular value to Spanish:

> *Yo le dije un día a la maestra que a mi me gustaba hablarle en español a la niña porque yo quería que ella aprendiera los dos idiomas. La maestra me contestó que yo debería hablarle en inglés y no en español. Me dijo que ella pensaba que yo le debería hablar en inglés a la niña. Pero yo no le hice caso porque para mí era demorar a la niña en aprender el español. Yo le dije eso a la maestra. Y ella me volvió a decir que a ella le parecía que yo le debía hablar en inglés. Ella siempre dijo que era mejor que le hablara en inglés.*
>
> [One day I told the teacher that I like speaking in Spanish with my daughter because I wanted her to learn both languages. The teacher answered me that I should speak in English and not in Spanish. She told me that she thought that I should speak to my daughter in English. I didn't do what she suggested because for me that was to slow her down in learning Spanish. I told this to the teacher. And she told me again that she thought that I should speak to her (my daughter) in English. The teacher always said that it would be best if I spoke in English (to my daughter).]

Although not all parents faced explicit disapproval regarding Spanish maintenance, they talked about the constant subtle messages they received from school personnel. The school psychologist diagnosed Mrs. Madeiros's son as having language and speech problems, and he was attending a special program offered by the school. Mrs. Madeiros was required to attend monthly meetings to discuss her son's progress with school personnel. In all the meetings, she heard school personnel discuss the possibility that her son's problem could be linked to the use of Spanish at home. During the research interviews, Mrs. Madeiros stated that after attending the meetings she doubted her decision to raise her children in her mother tongue:

Mi niño está en un programa especial porque está un poco atrasado en la escuela. A mí me preguntaron si en la casa hablabamos solo español. Yo le dije que sí. En la escuela estaban tratando de ver si era que el hablarle español en la casa le afectaba y que por eso no le estaba yendo muy bien en la escuela. Eso es lo que ellos comentaron en la reunión a la que yo asistí. Entonces ahí se pusieron a discutir si tal vez el problema que él tiene en la escuela sería porque hablamos otro idioma en la casa. Yo les digo que yo hablo en español, pero de ninguna manera quisiera que eso lo perjudicara a él en la escuela. Tal vez sea mi culpa.

[My son is in a special program because he is falling behind in school. I was asked (at school) if at home we only speak Spanish. I told them yes. The school was trying to see whether talking to him in Spanish at home was affecting his poor performance at school. This is what they were discussing at the meeting I went to. So there, they discussed that the problem he was having at school may be because of the language we speak at home. I told them that I speak in Spanish. However, by no means would I want to cause any harm to him in regard to school. It might be my fault.]

Another example of the subtle messages parents perceived from schools devaluing bilingualism is Mrs. Martinez's case. She was a strong advocate of using Spanish at home. However, she questioned whether this practice would be detrimental to her children. While school personnel did not make remarks about the use of Spanish, neither did they actively encourage the use of the mother tongue at home. Mrs. Martinez felt that her two children's difficulty in reading and writing could be due to her not speaking English:

Los profesores nunca me han dicho nada acerca de que yo les hable en español en la casa, ni que es malo ni que es bueno. Pienso que están de acuerdo que les enseñe español. Pero no sé. A lo mejor lo bueno sería que nosotros siempre les hablemos en inglés. De esa manera nosotros aprenderíamos a hablar y tal vez eso les ayudaría a ellos a que les vaya mejor en la escuela. Yo no puedo hablar muy bien inglés. He estudiado y he aprendido un poco a hablar y a leer, pero no se escribirlo. Yo me siento muy frustrada cuando les tengo que ayudar con las tareas. Yo a veces pienso que nosotros fallamos porque no tenemos la preparación y el conocimiento para ayudarles a ellos en inglés.

[Teachers have never told me anything about me speaking Spanish in my home, whether it is a good or bad thing. I think that they agree with me teaching them Spanish. But I don't know. Maybe the best thing would be for us to always speak to them in English. In this way, we would learn how to speak it and that might help them to do better in

school. I cannot speak English that well. I have studied it but I have learned to speak and to read only a bit. But I don't know how to write it. I feel very frustrated when I have to help them with their homework. Sometimes I think that it is our fault. We are not prepared and do not know enough to help them with their English.]

In Mrs. Martinez's case, the teacher had not explicitly advised her to switch to English in the home, but her acceptance of her child's Spanish language ability was passive; she paid no attention to that language in the class. This message gave Mrs. Martinez the impression that her children would benefit if she would speak better English.

Some parents also felt bombarded with outside assimilative pressures. Mrs. Rodriguez, a Guatemalan mother of one, was very aware of constant messages from the dominant society suggesting that maintaining a sense of Latin American identity was negatively perceived:

Es difícil porque es un bombardeo constante desde afuera. Porque afuera hay dos mensajes: el de querer crear nuestra propia nueva identidad, que es Canadiense; y el de conservar nuestra cultura hipócritamente. Digo hipócritamente porque eso lo quieren hacer para discriminarnos, no para respetar nuestra propia identidad, sino para excluírnos. Porque si miramos cuántos latinoamericanos están ahorita en lugares de poder o están saliendo de las universidades y los colleges, vemos que hay muy pocos. Si realmente Canadá no tiene ningún problema con el multiculturalismo, por qué la mayoría de los que están en el poder son blancos y no personas de nuestros países?

[It is hard (to maintain the language) because there is a constant attack from the outside. Outside there are two messages: to create your own identity, which is Canadian, and to preserve your culture in a hypocritical way. I mean hypocritical because that is what they do to discriminate against us, not to respect our own identity, but to exclude us. If you take a look at the number of Latin Americans who are in powerful positions or who graduate from university and college, there are a few. If Canada does not have any problem with multiculturalism, then why is that the majority of those who are in positions of power are white and not persons from our countries?]

Parents' intentions and desires to maintain their mother tongue and their Latino identity became overwhelmingly difficult as they got little encouragement from dominant institutions. For some of these mothers, their feelings of insecurity, and sometimes guilt, led them to abandon the use of their mother tongue with their children resulting in the loss of Spanish. Mrs. Madeiros's children, like other children, were able to understand only some Spanish words and tended to speak more English than Spanish:

El español no lo hablan bien. Cometen muchos errores. Hablan un poco en español y un poco en inglés. Entre los niños y con sus amigos comunmente hablan en inglés. A veces miran algún programa en televisión que han traducido al español: Magic School Bus. Y ella [la niña] me pregunta palabras que no entiende. Lo entiende sólo un poco. A veces hablan de cosas que ellos no saben. La mayoría de las veces ellos me contestan en inglés. El más grande que tiene 16 años habla mejor el español, pero los más chicos no lo hablan muy bien.

[They (my children) do not speak Spanish well. They make a lot of mistakes. They speak a bit in Spanish and a bit in English. They usually speak English among themselves. Sometimes they watch some television show that has been translated into Spanish, The Magic School Bus. And, she (my daughter) asks me words that she does not understand. She understands the show only a little bit. Sometimes the show deals with topics that they do not know about. Most of the time, they answer me in English. The oldest is 16 years old and he speaks Spanish better than the younger ones. The younger children do not speak it (Spanish) very well.]

Mrs. Guzman, a mother of two who emigrated from Ecuador, also mentioned how hard it was to influence the children to appreciate the value of Spanish:

Es un poco difícil para mí que ella mantenga el español. Ella está en la escuela más de la mitad del tiempo hablando inglés. Se me hace muy duro para mí porque cuando vuelve de la escuela ella continúa hablando el inglés. Casi siempre habla en inglés en la casa.

[It is a bit difficult for me that she (my daughter) maintains the language. She spends more than half her time in school speaking in English. It is very hard for me because when she comes home from school she continues speaking in English. She speaks in English at home most of the time.]

Although all parents expected their children to be bilingual in Spanish, many of them observed that their children slowly became more and more assimilated to the dominant culture and language. Neither the schools nor society at large helped to encourage parents' desires regarding bilingualism and biculturalism.

Parental Strategies

As illustrated in the above section, bilingualism and biculturalism were not easy to attain for these mothers. They named several strategies they commonly used in order to challenge the messages surrounding them:

Making their voices heard at home and school

Mrs. Ballesteros, a Cuban mother of three, provided an example of how she encountered the situation of bilingualism at home:

> *Una de las cosas que nosotros estamos luchando aquí es que hablen español en la casa. Aquí en la casa todos hablamos español y si sale alguna palabra en inglés o si ellos me empiezan a pedir cosas en inglés, no se las doy o les rectifico. Creo que deben mantener su español. Ellos conviven con nosotros que somos hispanos . Yo me preocupo mucho para que ellos hablen el español. Yo les entiendo lo que me dicen en inglés pero no se los acepto. A veces no les doy lo que quieren hasta que no me lo dicen en español.*
>
> [One of the things we are fighting for is that they speak Spanish at home. Here, at home, we all speak Spanish, and if an English word comes up, or if they start to ask for something in English, I don't give it to them, or I correct them. I think that they should maintain their Spanish. They live with us, and we are Hispanic. I worry a lot and I try very hard so that they speak Spanish. I understand what they say to me in English, but I do not accept it. Sometimes I do not give them what they want until they ask for it in Spanish.]

Mrs. Valuenzuela, on the other hand, as an attempt to ensure her two sons did not assimilate too rapidly to the dominant culture, challenged the resistance she encountered at school:

> *Cuando la profesora me dijo que yo les tenía que hablar en inglés, yo le dije que no. Yo no se mucho inglés. Pero aún si lo supiera yo le dije a ella [la profesora] que el inglés lo aprendían en la escuela y que yo les iba a enseñar el español. Yo le dije que se suponía que ellos le tenían que enseñar el inglés en la escuela, y yo el español en la casa. Sino cómo me voy a comunicar con ellos?*
>
> [When the teacher told me that I had to speak to them in English, I told her that I was not going to. I do not know much English. But even though I knew it, I told her (the teacher) that they would learn English at school and that I was going to speak to them in Spanish. I told her that she had to teach them English at school, and I had to teach them Spanish at home. Otherwise how am I going to communicate with them?]

This mother took the courage to stand up to the authority of the teacher and made her case heard. However, this situation may not be possible in all cases. Parents often feel that is not their position to make their views known to teachers as they initially view them as authority figures.

Participation in heritage language programs

Many parents encouraged children to participate in heritage programs and found it important to challenge the obstacles they identified. Although the school board often provided heritage language programs, the parents participating in the study had to pay to send their children to Spanish school. Mrs. Martinez explained her reasons for sending her children to Spanish classes and how rewarding this has been for her as a mother. She felt that she could help her children with homework, as she was fluent in the language of instruction:

> *Yo los llevo a clases de español. Son fantásticas. Es algo increíble. Mi hijo está aprendiendo a leer y a escribir. Me gusta mucho que vayan a las clases de español porque es lindo cuando ellos empezaron a leer y a escribir en español. Por ejemplo, yo les pregunto como se escribe caballo. Y ellos empienzan a decirme. Todavía no lo escriben perfecto porque no tienen la ortografía. Pero están aprendiendo. La escuela de español a la que van los niños es muy buena. Los niños hacen muchos proyectos. Nos toca trabajar mucho con ellos también con sus tareas. Y en este caso yo les puedo ayudar.*
>
> [I take them to Spanish class. They are fantastic. It is something incredible. My son is learning to read and write. I really like them going to Spanish class because it was very nice when they started to read and write in Spanish. For example, I ask them how to spell horse. And they start to tell me. They don't write perfectly yet, because they cannot spell very well. But they are learning. The Spanish school that my children go to is very good. The children do a lot of projects. We also have to work a lot with them on their homework. And in this case I can help them.]

Visiting relatives in their country of origin

Maintaining contact with extended family was another strategy used by some parents trying to encourage their children to maintain the language. Mrs. Rivas, a Honduran mother of two, explained:

> *Yo estoy tratando de que ellos vayan a mi país para que no pierdan el contacto. Pero eso es de acuerdo a las posibilidades de cada uno. En mi país van a tener que hablar en español sino no van a poder identificarse.*
>
> [I am trying to get them to go to my country so that they do not lose contact. But that is according to the possibilities of each family. In my country they will have to speak in Spanish, otherwise they will not be able to identify (with their family).]

Providing resources at home

Some parents believed that it was important to provide as many resources as possible at home in order to maintain and strengthen the links with the language:

> *Yo les hago escribir a su papá y a su abuelo en español y así los obligo a que lo practiquen. También les compro libros en español.*
>
> I make them write to their father and grandfather in Spanish. That way, I force them to practice. I also buy them books in Spanish.

Talking to children in Spanish

Other mothers mentioned that using Spanish in parent-child interactions was important for teaching the language. Mrs. Ovando, a Chilean mother of a 9-year-old boy, mentioned:

> *Mi relación con él es en español y siempre le estoy corrigiendo. O a veces me habla mal y yo le repito la palabra y se da cuenta que está mal y la corrige. Le estoy enseñando español hablándolo.*
>
> [My relationship with him (my son) is in Spanish and I am always correcting him. Or, at times, he speaks incorrectly and I repeat the word to him and he realizes that is wrong and corrects it. I am teaching him Spanish by speaking it.]

Having friends who speak Spanish

Mrs. Pulido, who emigrated from Perú where she was a teacher, felt that developing friendships with other Latin Americans would help her children to be fluent in Spanish:

> *Yo no voy a muchas actividades de nuestra comunidad pero sí tengo mi círculo de amigos de mi país. Yo trato de que mis hijos estén en ese ambiente. Eso para mí es muy importante para que puedan mantener el español.*
>
> [I do not go to many community activities, but I do have a circle of friends from my country. I try to have my children involved in that environment. To me, this is very important for them to maintain Spanish.]

It is important to note that often parents' behaviors did not make a difference. As we saw in the previous section, many of the children were slowly losing their first language. However, we should understand that parents were very concerned about the issue and tried their best to maintain their children's Latin American cultural and linguistic identities:

> *Aunque yo trato de hablarles español en la casa, me ha resultado que ellos me hablan en inglés. Yo trato de que me hablen español en la casa o cada vez que anden conmigo, pero como yo soy una madre*

soltera y no tengo muchos familiares aquí, no los puedo obligar tanto. Es difícil mantener nuestra cultura. A mi me cuesta mucho que ellos se acostumbren.

[Even though I try to speak Spanish with them at home, it has ended up that they speak to me in English. I try to have them speak Spanish at home or whenever they are with me. But because I am a single mother and do not have a lot of relatives here, I cannot force them. It is difficult to maintain our culture. It is hard for me to get them used to speaking it.]

The example above shows the importance of community support and how difficult it became for parents participating in the study when support was not present. Unfortunately, the isolated efforts that parents made were not taking them far enough. Societal and school supports are essential for bilingualism and biculturalism. Home support appears to be just one aspect of bilingualism.

The many strategies and efforts used to maintain the Latin American identity show the importance and value these parents assigned to the maintenance of their mother tongue. Although their efforts were not totally successful in the end, these mothers felt that pursuing them was an important task for the betterment of their children.

Specific Changes in the Schools

Parents participating in the study provided examples of what they envisioned for a multilingual and multicultural society. Mrs. Valuenzuela dreamed of schools actively encouraging and promoting the establishment of heritage language programs:

Yo pienso que en la escuela deberían darle clases de la lengua nativa de cada niño o de la lengua que más sobrasalga en la escuela. Por ejemplo, en la escuela donde van los niños hay muchos Latinos. La escuela debería tener un programa de español. Sería mucho más fácil para que nosotros les ayudemos. Para mí es muy difícil ayudarles. Hay muchas palabras que no les se el significado (en inglés) entonces se me hace muy difícil. Primero tengo que entender lo que dicen en inglés. Después se lo tengo que decir a ellos en español. Y ellos lo tienen que entender en español para poder traducirlo en inglés. A veces ellos se enojan.

[I think that each school should offer classes in each child's native language, or in the language that stands out the most. For example, in the school my children go to, there are a lot of Latinos. The school should have a Spanish program. It would be a lot easier for us to help them. It is very difficult for me to help them. There are a lot of words that I do not know the meaning in English, so it becomes very hard. First, I have to understand what the activity is in English. Then, I have

to tell them what it means in Spanish. Finally, they have to understand it in Spanish to be able to translate it into English. Sometimes they get mad.]

Mrs. Mendoza, a single mother from El Salvador, also expressed the desire that schools participate in the promotion of Spanish among students:

Nosotros decimos que es bueno que nuestros niños dominen su lengua materna. Por eso sería bueno que los maestros se preocupen para que los niños hablen su idioma.

[We think that it is good that our children master their mother tongue. For this reason, it would be good that teachers made the effort that the children speak their own language.]

Further, Mrs. Pulido talked about the crucial role that Spanish should play in Canadian society:

Para mí sería importantísimo que no lo perdiéramos. Si el alumno quiere aprender su idioma materno y hay posibilidades de ofrecerles la oportunidad, la escuela debería considerarlo. Yo creo que las experiencias de los hispanos acá pueden ser mucho más positiva si nos dan más oportunidades. Yo quisiera que el gobierno apoyara más a nuestra comunidad ya que el español es el segundo idioma del mundo.

[For me, it would be extremely important that we don't lose (Spanish). If the student wants to learn his/her mother tongue and it is possible, then the school should consider it. I think that Hispanics' experiences here (in Canada) could be much more positive if we were given more opportunities. I would like that the government provides support to our community, since Spanish is the second language in the world.]

As minority-language members of Canadian society, these parents were aware of the need to support their children to function in English. However, they prized their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds and wished to transmit their ethnic pride to their children. In order to attain these goals, schools must undergo democratic transformations, some of which are indicated in our recommendations below.

Discussion

While the phenomenon of assimilation has been widely discussed, detailed investigations of the experiences of those being assimilated are less common. Structural models have been proposed that help to understand, at a macro level, how minorities are disadvantaged in the educational system (Cummins, 1996; Darder, 1991; Ogbu, 1978). Our data, however, are intended to illustrate the personal impacts of such assimilative structures on the Latino

children's educational experiences and illustrate the micro-processes constitutive of power. We have shown how both the child and family's cultural capital has little impact on the educational system in which they find themselves. Knowledge of the outcomes of routine and institutional actions as experienced by families is necessary in order to be in a position to help educators and families improve their relationships. Through fuller understanding of families' experiences, educators would be able to build on and recognize the families' cultural capital including their home language (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992). It is an assumption of our analysis that the teachers themselves are generally without ill intent or conscious bias. Hence, when the effects of existing routines are understood, beneficial change is possible. The parents, likewise, are assumed to be willing and capable of departing from their present position of powerlessness, given an improved understanding of the situation and political activity.

Even if we believed in the inevitability of assimilation, we think the psychological and educational price paid by minority students could be reduced. Our preferred route is toward bilingualism in the educational process. While we will not reiterate the earlier findings of benefits of bilingualism here (see Cummins, 1996; Wong Fillmore, 1991a, 1991b), we endorse a variety of bilingual approaches suited to particular contexts in order to enhance students' educational outcomes and Latino families' life in general. Given that we wish to reach appropriate bilingual outcomes, the present data are useful in indicating obstacles and impediments to these goals. Our earlier studies have found evidence that educators and teachers are often unaware that seemingly well-intentioned practices and procedures have often led to poor outcomes, not only loss of language but also impaired educational achievement and damage to career prospects. It is important for educators and teachers to understand the seemingly impersonal processes by which the cultural capital of minority students is modified or rendered irrelevant. Although our data do not indicate the problem that parents strongly believe in assimilation, we believe that those designing a bilingual program should expect to encounter resistance from certain parents and that resistance is not simply a problem to be over ridden. A bilingual program must honor the various sensitivities of families who choose to be involved or who choose not to be involved.

It is worth noting that although Latinos in the United States have been investigated extensively in view of their substantial population (e.g., Schecter & Bayley, 1998; Soto, 1993, 1997; Walsh, 1991; Zentella, 1997), significantly fewer research efforts have been directed toward the situation of the relatively smaller Latino population in Canada. Yet, as we stated earlier, the numbers are large enough to warrant attention, and there is reason to expect an increased percentage of Latinos in the school population. It is probable that some of our findings about doubts or demoralization of the parents reflect the fact that they are a much smaller minority in Canada than in the United States and that

the Latino community is relatively fragmented. In another Canadian study, investigators looked at ways in which networking among parents can be encouraged (Bernhard, Freire, Pacini-Ketchabaw, & Villanueva, 1998). We believe that schools can do much to facilitate the formation, operation, and effectiveness of such networks.

Because of the small size of our Canadian sample and the methods by which it was drawn, the above results cannot necessarily be generalized to other Latino populations. The findings are intended to be a basis for preliminary hypotheses to be tested in more extensive investigations. In particular, since Latinos are found in a number of major Canadian cities, an attempt to picture the situation necessarily involves multi-site investigations of various cities and of particular neighborhoods. We educators can do much to improve how our schools are functioning, to recognize the experiences of families and build upon their cultural capital. It is our hope that through deeper understanding, the diverse structural mosaic of Canadian society can be strengthened.

Recommendations

1. School personnel would do well to familiarize themselves with the findings of the present research and other investigators on the subject of bilingualism and its possible benefits.
2. Parents would benefit if school personnel were to have a greater understanding of bilingual issues and to successfully communicate to families the benefits of bilingualism as well the value of maintaining home culture and language.
3. Parents, through their school councils, can encourage teachers to take a proactive attitude toward children's languages by organizing projects focused on home languages, acknowledging children's linguistic accomplishments, learning some of their children's languages, and generally taking a proactive stance toward working with parents to maintain minority languages (e.g., Edwards, 1996, 1998).
4. Parents would do well to form groups that meet outside the schools in which problems can be shared and common approaches can be developed. Based on their participation in such groups, parents can do more to communicate their views about home language maintenance to school personnel. A goal of parents' groups and parent organizations should be to give the families hope for achieving their goals and a belief that interactions with school personnel can be successful.

References

Bernhard, J. K., & Freire, M. (1996). Latino refugee children in childcare: A study of parents and caregivers. *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education, 5* (1), 59–71.

Bernhard, J. K., & Freire, M. (1999). What is my child learning at school? Culturally contested issues of Latin American children and families? *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal, 31* (3), 72–94.

Bernhard, J. K., Freire, M., Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Villanueva, V. (1998). A Latin American parents' group participates in their children's schooling: Parent involvement reconsidered. *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal, 30* (3), 77–98.

Bernhard, J. K., Freire, M., & Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2000). Apoyo a la participación de padres en las escuelas primarias: Un estudio etnográfico de un grupo latinoamericano en Canadá. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 8* (52). [On-line]. Available: http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n52.html

Bernhard, J. K., Freire, M., Torres, F., & Nirdosh, S. (1998). Latin Americans in a Canadian primary school: Perspectives of parents, teachers, and children on cultural identity and academic achievement. *Journal of Regional Studies, 19* (3), 217–236.

Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Chud, G., & Lange, R. (1996). Linguistic match between children and caregivers in Canadian early childhood education. *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education, 5* (2), 5-18.

Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Murphy Kilbride, K., Chud, G., & Lange, R. (1998). Troubled relationships in early childhood education: Parent-teacher interactions in ethnoculturally diverse settings. *Early Education and Development, 9* (1), 5–28.

Borjas, G., & Tienda, M. (1985). *Hispanics in the U. S. economy*. New York: Academic Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1994). Social space and symbolic power. In *The Polity reader in social theory* (pp. 111–120). Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Brown, R. S. (1994). *A follow-up of the Grade 9 cohort of 1987 secondary students survey participants*. Toronto, ON: Toronto Board of Education.

Carrillos, L., & Simmons, A. (1999, August). *Home and heart: Identity politics among "Latino" youths in Toronto.* Paper presented at the Conference on Immigrants and Immigration, Toronto, ON.

Cole, M. (1992). Context, modularity, and the cultural constitution of development. In L. T. Winegar & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *Children's development within social context: Vol. 2. Research and methodology* (pp. 5–31). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Corson, D. (1993). *Language, minority education and gender: Linking social justice and power.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Corson, D. (1994). Minority social groups and nonstandard discourse: Towards a just language policy. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 50,* 271–295.

Corson, D. (1995). *Using English words.* Boston: Kluwer.

Corson, D. (1998). *Changing education for diversity.* Bristol, PA: Open University Press.

Cummins, J. (1991). Language development and academic learning. In L. M. Malave & G. Duquette (Eds.), *Language, culture and cognition* (pp. 161–175). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J. (1993). Bilingualism and second language learning. In W. Grabe (Ed.), *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 13* (pp. 51–70). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, J. (1995). Power and pedagogy in the education of culturally-diverse students. In J. Fredericskon & A. F. Ada (Eds.), *Reclaiming our voices: Bilingual education, critical pedagogy, and praxis* (pp. 139–162). Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society.* Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Cummins, J. (1997). Cultural and linguistic diversity in education: A mainstream issue? *Educational Review, 49* (2), 105–114.

Damaris, R., Carrasco, P., & Charbonneau, J. (1998). *The role of "weak ties" in the settlement experiences of immigrant women with young children: The case of Central Americans living in Montreal.* Toronto, ON: Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.

Darder, A. (1991). *Culture and power in the classroom: A critical foundation for bicultural education.* Toronto, ON: OISE Press.

Drever, N. (1996). *Frustrated learners: An ethnographic study of Spanish-speaking students at an inner-city high school in Toronto.* Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON.

Durst, D., & Lange, A. (1999, January). *The social integration of Salvadoran refugees in Regina: An exploratory study.* Paper presented at the 3rd annual Metropolis conference, Vancouver, BC.

Edwards, V. (1996). *The other languages: A guide to multilingual classrooms.* Staffordshire, UK: Reading and Language Centre.

Edwards, V. (1998). *The power of Babel: Teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms.* Staffordshire, UK: Trentham.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language.* New York: Pantheon.

Genessee, F. (1983). Bilingual education of majority-language children: The immersion experiments in review. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 4,* 1–46.

Genessee, F. (1987). *Learning through two languages: Studies of immersion and bilingual education.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Gramsci, A. (1998). *Introducción a la filosofía de la praxis.* México: Distribuciones Fontamara.

Harkness, S., & Super, C. M. (1996). *Parental cultural belief systems: Their origins, expressions, and consequences.* New York: Guilford.

Harley, B., Hart, D., & Lapkin, S. (1986). The effects of early bilingual schooling on first language skills. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 7,* 295–322.

Ianco-Worrall, A. (1972). Bilingualism and cognitive development. *Child Development, 43,* 1390–1400.

Israelite, N. K., & Herman, A. (1999, May). *Settlement experiences of recent Latina immigrants and refugees: Perspectives on work.* Paper presented at the 16th annual Qualitative Analysis conference, Fredericton, NB.

Jacob, A. G. (1994). Social integration of Salvadoran refugees. *Social Work, 39* (3), 307–312.

Kazemipur, A., & Halli, S. S. (1998). Plight of immigrants: The spatial concentration of poverty in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Regional Science, 20* (1–2), 11–28.

Lambert, W. E., & Tucker, G. R. (1972). *Bilingual education of children.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Lareau, A. (1989). *Home advantage: Social class and parental intervention in elementary education.* New York: Falmer.

Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review, 56* (3), 257-277.

LeVine, R., Dixon, S., LeVine, S., Richman, A., Leiderman, P., Keefer, C., & Brazelton, T. (1994). *Child care and culture: Lessons from Africa.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Macedo, D. (1997). English only: The tongue-tying of America. In A. Darder, R. D. Torres, & H. Gutiérrez (Eds.), *Latinos and education: A critical reader* (pp. 269–278). New York: Routledge.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, D., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 21* (2), 132–141.

Nieto, S. (1996). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education.* White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Ogbu, J. U. (1978). *Minority education and caste: The American system in cross-cultural perspective.* Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Ornstein, M. (1997, February). *Ethno-racial inequality in Metropolitan Toronto: Analysis of the 1991 Census.* Paper presented at the Urban Forum on Immigration and Refugee Issues, Toronto, ON.

Rockhill, K., & Tomic, P. (1992). *Assessing ESL: An exploration into the effects of institutionalized racism and sexism in shaping the lives of Latin American immigrant and refugee women in Metropolitan Toronto.* Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Rublee, C. B., & Shaw, S. M. (1991). Constraints on the leisure and community participation of immigrant women: Implications for social integration. *Loisir et Societes / Society and Leisure, 14* (1), 13–150.

Schecter, S., & Bayley, R. (1998). Concurrence and complementarity: Mexican-background parents' decisions about language and schooling. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 4* (1), 47–64.

Smith, D. (1990). *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Soto, L. D. (1993). Native language for school success. *Bilingual Research Journal, 17* (1–2), 83–97.

Soto, L. D. (1997). *Language, culture, and power: Bilingual families and the struggle for quality education.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Statistics Canada. (1999). *Population data.* [On-line]. Available: http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/popula.htm

Suarez-Orozco, M., & Suarez-Orozco, C. (1993). Hispanic cultural psychology: Implications for education theory and research. In P. Phelan & A. Locke Davidson (Eds.), *Renegotiating cultural diversity in American schools* (pp. 108–138). New York: Teachers College Press.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1982). *Evaluating bilingual education*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Walkerdine, V. (1990). On the regulation of speaking and silence: Subjectivity, class, and gender in contemporary schooling. In *Schoolgirl Fictions* (pp. 29–60). London: Virago.

Walsh, C. (1991). *Pedagogy and the struggle for voice: Issues of language, power, and schooling for Puerto Ricans.* Toronto, ON: OISE Press.

Wong Fillmore, L. (1991a). Language and cultural issues in the early education of language-minority children. In S. L. Kagan (Ed.), *The care and education of America's young children: Obstacles and opportunities* (90th yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, pp. 30–49). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wong Fillmore, L. (1991b). When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 6,* 323–346.

Zentella, A. C. (1997). *Growing up bilingual: Puerto Rican children in New York.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Authors' Note

Funding for the project described has been generously provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by Ryerson University. Special thanks to all the children, families, and teachers for their participation in the study. We gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments of our colleagues Jim Cummins and David Corson. Special thanks to Fernando Mata, research officer of the Multiculturalism Program, and the Department of Canadian Heritage for support with census tables. Canadian statistics information is used with the permission of Statistics Canada. Users are forbidden to copy the data and redisseminate them, in an original or modified form, for commercial purposes, without the expressed permission of Statistics Canada. Information on the availability of the wide range of data from Statistics Canada can be obtained from Statistics Canada's Regional Offices, on its Web site at http://www.statcan.ca, or its toll-free number 1-800-263-1136.