THE HEGEMONY OF ENGLISH

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INTRODUCTION

DURING A SYMPOSIUM SOME YEARS AGO ON BILINGUALISM AT THE Harvard Graduate School of Education, a student asked the panelists how they would reconcile their strong support for bilingual education in the United States with the current hegemony of English that was shaping the debate as to how to best educate millions of non-English-speaking students enrolled in the nation's public schools. Before the panelists could address the question, a senior Graduate School faculty member, who is also a language specialist, unabashedly asked, "What is hegemony?" This seemingly naïve (but not innocent) question was followed by a brief silence of disbelief that a senior School of Education faculty member would not know the meaning of hegemony. On closer analysis, one should not be at all surprised that a Harvard language specialist would not understand the concept of hegemony, given the almost total absence of courses in the required curriculum that would expose students to the body of literature dealing with the nature of ideology, language politics, and ethics. Such literature would provide students of language and language education with the necessary understanding and

critical tools to make linkages between self-contained technical studies of language and the social and political realities within which this technical approach to language studies often takes place. Graduate students in language education, in particular, and in linguistics, in general, are usually required to take multiple courses in research methodologies (mostly quantitative). However, no such requirements exist, for example, for a course on the nature of ideology, which would help students begin to understand the very ideology that shapes and maintains their often disarticulated approach to language analysis. This very selection process, which prioritizes certain bodies of knowledge while discouraging or suffocating other discourses, is linked to something beyond education: ideology. Thus, the very curriculum selection and organization in language studies favor a disarticulated technical training in preference to courses in critical theory, which would enable students to make linkages with, for example, the status and prestige accorded to certain dominant languages (the languages of the colonizers) and the demonization and devaluation of the so-called uncommon or minority languages (the languages of the colonized).

This curriculum points to the very ideology that attempts to deny its own existence through a false claim of neutrality in scientific pursuits in language studies. The curriculum selection and organization give rise to a social construction of "not naming," thus enabling even highly instructed individuals (i.e. a senior Harvard professor) to feel comfortable, and sometimes arrogantly proud, in dismissing any body of knowledge that falls beyond their narrow and often reductionistic specialized area of study. This arrogance was abundantly clear when this same Harvard Graduate School of Education faculty member admonished a doctoral student for quoting Antonio Gramsci during a graduate seminar presentation by telling him, "It is bad pedagogy to drop names of esoteric authors that one accidentally stumbles upon."

The flippant dismissal of Gramsci's leading ideas with respect to hegemony, in particular, and to language, in general, demonstrates that most educators, particularly in the United States, have blindly embraced a positivistic mode of inquiry which enables them to deny outright the role of ideology in their work. In the process, they try to prevent the development of any counter-discourse within their institutions—as clearly demonstrated by the attempted elimination of Gramsci's ideas at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The over-celebration of methodological rigor and the incessant call for objectivity and neutrality support their false claim of a scientific posture through which "they may try to 'hide' in what [they] regard as the neutrality of scientific pursuits, indifferent to how [their] findings are used, even uninterested in considering for whom or for what interest [they] are working."[1] Because most language educators and sociolinguists do not really conduct research in the "hard sciences," they disingenuously attempt to adopt the "neutrality" posture in their work in the social sciences, leaving out the necessary built-in self-criticism, skepticism, and rigor of the hard sciences. In fact, science cannot evolve without a healthy dose of self-criticism, skepticism, and contestation. However, a discourse of critique based, for instance, on the ideological understanding of the asymmetrical power relation between dominant and subordinate (euphemistically called uncommon or minority) languages is often viewed as contaminating "objectivity" in language studies and language education. For example, by pretending to treat sociolinguistics as hard science, the sociolinguist "scientist" is often forced to either dismiss factors tied to ideology or to make the inherently political nature of language analysis and language education invisible. In fact, even when sociolinguists, particularly in the United States, describe the relationship between language functions and class (see, for example, the work of William Labov), their analyses never go beyond a mere description of class position and its correlate

linguistic functions. In their view, doing a rigorous class analysis that would call for a Marxist framework would be to exit science. It is important to note that there are a handful of sociolinguists and language specialists whose work embraces important questions of ideology, class, race, gender, and the intersection of these factors with the very language under study, such as Basil Berrnstein, James Donald, Pierre Bourdieu, Norman Fairclough, Allastair Pennycook, Robert Phillipson, and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, among others, all of whom conduct their work outside the United States. It would be safe to assume that, by and large in the United States, most sociolinguists fall prey to the positivistic dogma that generally imposes a disarticulation between science and the ideological and political reality that constructs science, particularly social science, in the first place. One could argue with some level of comfort that by acquiescing to the pressure of positivism, most sociolinguists and language educators unknowingly planted the seeds that have rendered the field of sociolinguistics moribund, particularly in the United States. The promising work of William Labov and many of his contemporaries became truncated by their inability to incorporate fully into their analyses an ideological framework that could have unveiled important insights—for instance, on the relationship between racism and language policy as elegantly suggested by Bessie Dendrinos in her essay here on "linguoracism." The fear of incorporating factors such as race, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, and their intersection with language has enabled most sociolinguists and language educators to treat their analysis of language as if social beings are not participants in the social construction of the very language under study and its respective functions in society. Often, in their zeal for neutrality and impartiality, many sociolinguists and language educators approach the "real world, where the language under study is spoken, as if [they] were wearing 'gloves and masks' in order not to be contaminated by it."[2]

These metaphorical "gloves and masks" represent, in our view, an ideological fog that enables these language educators and sociolinguists to comfortably fragment bodies of knowledge. By reducing language analysis to pure technicism, they can more easily disarticulate a particular form of knowledge from other bodies of knowledge, thus preventing the interrelation of information necessary to gain a more critical reading of the complex nexus between language, culture, ideology, class, race, ethnicity, and gender. The urgent need to be viewed as doing "real" science, for example, pushed the important and promising earlier work of William Labov toward the framework of variable rules—an approach that appeared to be more scientific, but which relegated important concepts such as "status" and "solidarity" to the margins of his sociolinguistic analyses. As a result, Labov failed to realize that "status" and "solidarity"—as determinants in language use and function, and as concepts—could not exist outside the ideological reality that gives rise to these concepts in the first place. Even the bilingual movement that developed during the seventies in the United States as a reaction against the rampant mis-education of millions of immigrant children could not escape the positivistic zeal that permeates all language education programs. By its very nature and historical circumstances, the bilingual movement in the United States should have adopted a radical and critical posture. Instead, it was quickly taken over by "experts" who over-emphasized a facile empiricism in their research, and this, in turn, influenced program development based on testing and quantification of English-language acquisition. They also blocked any and all attempts to link bilingual research and programs with questions of racism, class, and other ideological factors that work systematically to devalue students' language and culture. Since the attack launched on bilingual education by conservative ideologues is political and ideological in nature, the bilingual movement, by its early refusal to engage ideology as a central focus for its work, has

been unable to fend off the recent backlash. One result has been that referenda to outlaw bilingual education programs in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts were easily approved. The referendum in Massachusetts not only outlawed bilingual education but it also criminalized the teaching of content area in a language other than English. Teachers who violate this newly promulgated anti-bilingual law can be fired, as they can also be sued by parents. The racism inherent in the Massachusetts anti-bilingual referendum becomes blatantly obvious when bilingual education, which serves mostly subordinate immigrant students, is juxtaposed with foreign language education that serves largely white middle-class students who are tracked for college preparation. For example, a bilingual teacher in a Boston school can be fired if caught teaching her students in Spanish while, down the hall, a teacher of Spanish as a foreign language is rewarded for teaching her English-speaking students in Spanish only. The insidious racism demonstrated by the 70 percent of Massachusetts voters (mostly white) who voted to prohibit bilingual education also unveiled the fault line of a fragile democracy—one that allows Ron Unz, a multimillionaire, to bankroll referenda designed to make education policy for linguistic minority individuals whose status as immigrants prevents them from voting. Given the heightened racism and xenophobia in the United States at the present time, it would not be too far-fetched for another white racist multimillionaire in a state like Mississippi to sponsor a referendum once again relegating African-Americans to the back of the bus.

By blindly embracing a model of language education that emphasizes technicism while dismissing and discouraging any critical and radical transformation of education for subordinate-language students, most bilingual education leaders have allowed themselves to remain captives of a colonial education ideology that gives primacy to positivistic and instrumental approaches to literacy concerned mainly with the mechanical acquisition of

English-language skills. A brief analysis of conference programs of the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) over the past ten years attests to the almost embarrassing lack of speakers (particularly keynote speakers) whose work includes a critical analysis of the social and political order that created the need for the bilingual movement in the first place. With the exception of a few speakers such as Jim Cummins, the NABE conference presentations in the ten years analyzed were stripped of any sociopolitical dimensions, while they functioned, sometimes unknowingly, to reproduce dominant educational values and meanings. The domestication of most bilingual leaders and educators became abundantly evident during the last annual conference, which took place in Philadelphia in March 2002. The conference shared space with the Federal Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), which was known until this year as OBEMLA (Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs), yet no perceivable protest to this significant name change took place. The change is not merely a function of nomenclature but rather signals a substantive shift that points to the conservative ideology of the Bush administration. The Bush administration erased any mention of bilingual education or minority languages from the agency's name without any public input or debate. Yet the NABE leadership, at least publicly, remained silent during the entire conference concerning this drastic government policy change that affects the education of millions of linguistic minority students. The same level of domestication was evident among the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, "once a stalwart ally of Title VII, when not one of its members voted against the legislation that transformed the Bilingual Education Act into the English Acquisition Act."[3] Most bilingual educators and leaders have been unwilling to embrace a radical posture regarding the undemocratic education of linguistic minority students, and they have rejected the critical tools needed to defend against the onslaught of attacks on bilingual

education. As a result, they have been, sadly, relegated to the status of low-level state functionaries whose major task (albeit unknowingly) is to reproduce the very status quo they had earlier purported to oppose.

Against a landscape that celebrates empiricism and methodological elegance over the crucial understanding of the social construction of these concepts in the first place, our present book, *The Hegemony of English,* attempts to challenge the straightjacket fashion with which most language educators and sociolinguists have approached the enterprise of language analysis and its relation to society. We also hope to demonstrate that no language analysis can escape a detour through an ideological framework no matter how many "gloves and masks" it attempts to wear. Most importantly, by making the political and ideological central to our analysis, we not only avoid embracing a social construction of "not naming" it, but we also unmask the dominant discourse in language analysis that attempts to treat language as neutral and autonomous.

In the European Union, English is fast becoming the de facto official language of exchange and communication, and in the United States, similar hegemonic forces are working overtime to outlaw bilingual education under the pretext that learning English only is a benefit. Slogans such as "English for all children" abound, creating the false notion that bilingual education is an obstacle to English-language acquisition. While research in language acquisition has amply demonstrated the social and cognitive advantages of bilingualism, policy makers and conservative educators either arrogantly dismiss the empirical evidence supporting bilingual education, or they manipulate the available data to fit their own ideological end of eradicating bilingual education. Their arguments are sometimes so vacuous as to border on the ridiculous. Take for instance the conservative treatment of the term "bilingual." Whereas in most people's minds bilingualism means the ability to speak two languages, conservatives in the United States use the term to mean education in a lan-

guage other than English. For instance, a principal in a Massachusetts public school summoned the director of the school's bilingual education program for help with translation because he had a bilingual student in the office that he could not understand. When the bilingual director asked the principal in which languages was the student bilingual, he promptly responded: Spanish. Thus, "bilingual" is used by the dominant hegemonic forces not to mean the ability to speak two languages, but rather to typecast ethnicity as a form of devaluation. When an American speaks two or more languages, he or she is normally not labeled bilingual. In most cases, an American speaking two or more languages would be characterized as a polyglot. In the American case, the ability to speak two or more languages would be viewed as advantageous unless the person who speaks the languages is a subordinate speaker (usually an immigrant), in which case it would be considered a handicap to the learning of English. Even the empty slogan "English for all children" is disingenuous in that it never tells those most affected by the proposition what the cost will be. The cost is generally the abandonment of the student's native language and culture. Thus, the present debate over bilingual education versus education in English only is often misguided to a degree that is almost ridiculous, as evidenced, for instance, by research to prove whether Spanish, is or is not an effective language of instruction. The entire question ignores the fact that the Spanish language has produced a vast literature over centuries which included such universal literary characters as Don Quixote, El Picaro, Don Juan, and La Celestina, among others. Over the past few decades, many Spanish writers have received the Nobel Prize in literature. The issue then could not be the suitability of Spanish as a language of instruction. The real issue is the power of the dominant society to manipulate the debate over the language of instruction as a means to deny effective education to millions of immigrant children in their native languages. It is the same

manipulation that creates racist labels such as "limited-English-proficiency students" or "non-English speakers" to identify students whose mother tongue is not English. The same ideology that uses these labels to typecast immigrant students would never refer to Americans learning Greek, for instance, as "limited-Greek-proficiency students" or "non-Greek speakers." On the contrary, if any label were used, it would necessarily conjure a positive attribute, such as "student of Greek," or an "American student learning Greek," or, even better, a "Classics major." Unfortunately, the racism is not restricted to the way subordinate language students are labeled. The field of English as a second language (ESL) also exhibits racism in the markedly white ESL teacher population which serves a markedly nonwhite student population. If one attends the annual conference of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), one will find oneself in a sea of whiteness sprinkled with islets of non-white teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL), given the international nature of the conference. If one moves to conferences in the United States sponsored by state ESL organizations, the islets are almost totally submerged by the all-white composition of the ESL field. In view of the lack of criticism in most ESL teacher training programs, due to their emphasis on the technical acquisition of English, most ESL teachers, even those with good intentions, fall prey to a paternalistic zeal to save their students from "non-English-speaker" status. They seldom realize their role in the promotion and expansion of English imperialism and racist policies—such as the referendum passed in Massachusetts that practically forbids instruction in a language other than English—which are designed to atrophy other languages and cultures.

What the labels to typecast linguistic minority students show is that for most subordinate speakers, bilingualism is not about the ability to speak two languages. There is a radical difference between a dominant speaker learning a second language and a

subordinate speaker acquiring the dominant language as a second language. Whereas the former involves the addition of a second language to one's linguistic repertoire, the latter usually inflicts upon the subordinate speaker the experience of subordination when speaking his or her devalued language and the dominant language she or he has learned, often under coercive conditions. Linguistic racism abounds even in the so-called democratic societies, which are marked by asymmetries of power relations along the lines of language, race, ethnicity, and class. Take the case of a highly celebrated marriage contract experiment proposed by the Harvard-trained psychologist, Robert Epstein, who is also editor-in-chief of the magazine *Psychology Today*. His experiment, which was covered by major newspapers in the United States, was premised on the theory that love is a learned behavior. He hypothesized that by narrowing down shared values and by making a commitment to learn to love each other, it would be possible to fall in love. As over 300 letters were sent to him for a possible match, his agent in New York proudly announced that he had rejected "one applicant because she had a foreign accent."[4] Thus, for the Harvard-educated Epstein, a foreign accent was an indication of nonsuitability for marriage to someone who is a native speaker of English. This is an example par excellence of how our society treats different forms of bilingualism. This attitude is also reflected in our tolerance toward certain types of bilingualism and lack of tolerance toward others. Most of us have tolerated various degrees of bilingualism on the part of foreign language teachers and professors, ranging from speaking the foreign language they teach with a heavy American accent to serious deficiency in the mastery of the language they teach. Nevertheless, these teachers, with rare exceptions, have been granted tenure, have been promoted within their institutions, and, in some cases, have become "experts" and "spokespersons" for various cultural and linguistic groups in their communities.

On the other hand, when bilingual teachers are speakers of a subordinated language who speak English as a second language with an accent, the same level of tolerance is not accorded to them. Take the case of Westfield, Massachusetts, where "about 400 people ... signed a petition asking state and local officials to ban the hiring of any elementary teacher who speaks English with an accent," because, according to the petitioners, "accents are catching."[5] The petition was in response to the hiring of a Puerto Rican teacher assigned to teach in the system. A similar occurrence took place some years ago at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A group of students petitioned the administration not to hire professors who spoke English with a foreign accent, under the pretext that they had difficulty understanding their lectures. By barring professors who spoke English with a foreign accent from teaching, these students would have kept Albert Einstein from teaching in U.S. universities. In fact, the Westfield principal lent support to the parents who had petitioned to prevent the hiring of the Puerto Rican teacher by stating that he would not even hire Albert Einstein to teach in his school because Einstein spoke English with a foreign accent. Thus, Einstein's genius as a physicist would be less important for this principal than speaking English without a foreign accent.

Any language debate that neglects to investigate fully this linguistic racism and treats bilingualism as mere communication in two languages, invariably ends up reproducing those ideological elements characteristic of the communication between the colonizer and the colonized. That is, the imposition of English in commercial or political exchanges, whether due to its assumed international status or to the coercive educational policies in English-speaking countries where English is viewed as an education in itself, points to a form of neocolonialism that is characterized by the erasure of "otherness." In this book, we argue that the questions surrounding the prominence of English in commerce and politics in the contemporary world and the

imposition of English upon millions of subordinate speakers of other languages who immigrate to English-speaking countries have nothing to do with whether English is a more suitable language for international communication or whether it is a more viable language of instruction in schools. This position would point to an assumption that English is, in fact, a superior language and that we live in a classless, race-blind world. We propose instead that understanding the present attempt to champion English in world affairs cannot be reduced simply to issues of language, but rests on a full comprehension of the ideological elements that generate and sustain linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination. These elements represent, in our view, vestiges of a colonial legacy in the so-called democracies of the world.

In this book we contend that subordinate languages have to be understood within the theoretical framework that generates them. Put another way, the ultimate meaning and value of subordinate languages is not to be found by determining how systematic and rule-governed they are. We know that already. The real meaning of a language has to be understood through the assumptions that govern it and the social, political, and ideological relations to which it points. Generally speaking, the issue of effectiveness and validity often hides the true role of language in the maintenance of the values and interests of the dominant class. In other words, the issue of the effectiveness and validity of a subordinate language becomes a mask that obfuscates questions about the social, political, and ideological order within which the subordinate language exists.

In this sense, a subordinate language is the only means by which subordinate speakers can develop their own voice, a prerequisite to the development of a positive sense of self-worth. As Henry Giroux elegantly states, voice "is the discursive means to make themselves 'heard' and to define themselves as active authors of their worlds."[6] The authorship of one's own world implies the use of one's own language and relates to what Mikhail

Bakhtin describes as "retelling the story in one's own words."[7] Telling a "story in one's own words" not only represents a threat to those conservative educators and political pundits who are complicit with the dominant ideology, it also prevents them from concealing, according to Vaclav Havel, "their true position and their inglorious modus vivendi, both from the world and from themselves."[8]

In *The Hegemony of English* we also point out that the purpose of English language education in the contemporary world order cannot be viewed as simply the development of skills aimed at acquiring the dominant English language. This view sustains an ideology that systematically disconfirms rather than makes meaningful the cultural experiences of the subordinate linguistic groups who are, by and large, the objects of language policies. For the role of English to become understood, it has to be situated within a theory of cultural production and viewed as an integral part of the way in which people produce, transform, and reproduce meaning. Thus, the role of English must be seen as a medium that constitutes and affirms the historical and existential moments of lived experience which produce a subordinate or a lived culture. It is an eminently political phenomenon, and it must be analyzed in the context of a theory of power relations and with an understanding of social and cultural reproduction and production. By "cultural reproduction" we refer to collective experiences that function in the interest of the dominant class, rather than in the interest of the oppressed groups that are the object of dominant policies. We use "cultural production" to refer to specific groups of people producing, mediating, and confirming the common ideological elements that emerge from and reaffirm their daily lived experiences. In this case, such experiences are rooted in the interests of individual and collective self-determination.

This theoretical posture underlies our examination of how the present neoliberal ideology in the guise of globalization has

promoted language policies aimed at stamping out the greater use of national and subordinate languages in the European Union, international commerce, and schooling within the English-speaking countries. These policies are consonant with a colonial legacy that had as its major tenet the total deculturation of colonized peoples. Take, for instance, the educational policies of colonization in Africa, where schools functioned as sites to de-Africanize the natives. As Paulo Freire succinctly wrote, colonial education

> was discriminatory, mediocre, and based on verbalism. It could not contribute anything to national reconstruction because it was not constituted for [that] purpose. . . . Schooling was antidemocratic in its methods, in its content, and in its objectives. Divorced from the reality of the country, it was, for this very reason, a school for a minority and thus against the majority.[9]

Colonial schools functioned as political sites in which class, gender, and racial inequities were both produced and reproduced. In essence, the colonial educational structure seemed designed to inculcate the African natives with myths and beliefs that denied and belittled their lived experiences, history, culture, and language. The schools were seen as purifying fountains where Africans could be saved from their deep-rooted ignorance, their "savage" culture, and their primitive language. According to Freire, the schools served to "reproduce in children and youth the profile that the colonial ideology itself had created for them, namely that of inferior beings, lacking in all ability."[10] In many respects, the policies of globalization and neoliberalism (which are not so transparent and therefore more insidious) constitute a re-articulation of a colonial worldview designed to deculturate so-called Third-World people so that they can be acculturated into a predefined colonial model. Like the colonial policies of the past, the neoliberal ideology, with globalization as its hall-

mark, continues to promote language policies which package English as a "super" language that is not only harmless, but should be acquired by all societies that aspire to competitiveness in the globalized world economic order. As a result, many countries, including many developed nations, eagerly promote an unproblematized English education campaign, where those citizens who opt not to learn English become responsible for their own lack of advancement. In other words, English is now associated with success to such an extent that the acquisition of English is deemed necessary for meeting the requirements of our ever more complex technological society. This view is not only characteristic of the advanced industrialized countries of the West; even within Third World countries the development of English has been championed as a vehicle for economic betterment, access to jobs, and increased productivity. Yet in contradiction to this assumption, many former colonial countries that made English their official language because they viewed it as more suited to the pragmatic requirements of capital, have sadly shown little economic advancement. Their policy often produced additional disastrous consequences, the development of national languages, culture, and identity nearly disappeared under the imperatives of economic and technical development.

The association of English with success is also misleading. For example, the fact that approximately 30 million African-Americans speak English as their mother tongue did not prevent the vast majority of them from being relegated to ghetto existence, economic deprivation and, in some cases, to the status of subhumans. It is most naïve to think that the uncritical acquisition of English will always be a great benefit. What is often left unexamined, even within the academy, is how the learning of English, a dominant language, imposes upon the subordinate speakers a feeling of subordination, as their life experience, history, and language are ignored, if not sacrificed. One can safely argue that English today represents a tool, par excellence, for

cultural invasion, with its monopoly of the internet, international commerce, the dissemination of the celluloid culture, and its role in the Disneyfication of world cultures.

It is important to highlight the point that language educators and most sociolinguists have been so deeply ingrained in a positivistic method of inquiry that they have, sometimes unknowingly, reproduced the dominant ideological elements that ignore the asymmetry of power relations as mediated by language, especially issues of language and race, and language and gender, and how the interaction of these factors molds particular identities. In their blind embrace of linguistic neutrality, most language educators and sociolinguists allow their programs to be plagued by the constant debate over scientific rigor and methodological refinements, a debate that often hides language issues of a more serious nature. Hence, it makes sense that language specialists and educators are discouraged from linking linguistic supremacy with cultural hegemony, and this keeps other issues of dominance and subordination hidden. As Antonio Gramsci so accurately explained, "[E]ach time that in one way or another, the question of language comes to the fore, that signifies that a series of other problems is about to emerge: the formation and enlarging of the ruling class, the necessity to establish more 'intimate' and sure relations between the ruling groups and the popular masses, that is, the reorganization of cultural hegemony."[11]

Coupled with the obsession with a false neutrality of language, the fact that most language teaching programs, particularly foreign languages (at least in the United States), exist within literature departments that, more often than not, function as pillars of the empire makes even more remote the possibility of raising issues of a more serious nature, such as the role of language in the reproduction of racism. Although there have been strong movements to develop a more interdisciplinary approach in some literature departments, especially in Europe, where cul-

tural studies and language studies, including language pedagogy, are gaining ground and are more and more represented in the curriculum, most literature departments continue to fragment bodies of knowledge and promote the false notion of art for art's sake, making it abundantly easier to disarticulate their enterprise from any political and social concerns. Furthermore, linking literary analysis with social and political concerns is often viewed as distracting the reader from the affective connection with literature as art that provides the reader with avenues to self-fulfillment and, possibly, a joyful experience, the process through which the reading of literature becomes "the intimate reliving of fresh views of personality and life implicit in the work of literature; the pleasure and release of tensions that may flow from such an experience ... the deepening and broadening of sensitivity to the sensuous quality and emotional impact of day-to-day living."[12] However, "the sensuous quality and emotional impact of day-to-day living" seldom refers to any political and ideological analyses of the human misery and oppressive conditions generated by the society within which the literature as art for art's sake is situated. The art-for-art's-sake approach to literary studies still predominates in most literature departments, which discourage any form of linkage between literature and social and political concerns. This is abundantly clear in the work of John Willett, a scholar and translator of Bertolt Brecht. When he evaluated Brecht's artistic contribution, he noted, "The Brecht of [the early period] ... was unlike the 'ruthless cynic of The Threepenny Opera or the Marxist of later years.' Instead he was ebullient, enjoying words for their own sake, caring little for other people's feelings or interests and less still for social or humanitarian causes."[13] This implies that art which shows concern for human suffering by denouncing the unjust social and political (dis)order invariably suffers artistically. It also implies that Marxism automatically disallows any possibility for artistic achievement. What is important to note is that literature as art

for art's sake not only fails to make problematic the "emotional impact of day-to-day living" with respect to class conflict, gender, or racial inequalities, but it also provides a refuge for those artists who pretend to remain neutral with respect to social injustices and other social ills. For example, Leni Riefenstahl, who was the cornerstone of Hitler's propaganda machine, continues to deny that her cinematography played any role in advancing the Nazi cause, claiming that she was interested only in beauty and was not "interested in politics at all."[14] While she claims that she saw Hitler as an important person "who was able to offer work to six million unemployed,"[15] her insistence upon disarticulating her art from the Nazi cause and atrocities enables her to disavow any responsibility that the employment of six million Germans came at the cost of six million Jews who were gassed in concentration camps by the very Nazi cause she so artistically promoted through her films.

Furthermore, this approach to literature completely ignores the cultural capital of subordinate groups and assumes that all people have the same access to literature and the language that sustains it. Yet it simultaneously devalues the language and culture of these same subordinate groups. The failure to address questions of cultural capital or structural inequalities means that literature departments tend to reproduce the cultural capital of the dominant class to which the reading of literature is intimately tied. It is presumptuous and naïve to expect subordinate people, who are confronted and victimized by myriad disadvantages and oppressive conditions, to find joy and self-affirmation through the reading of literature alone. Even more important is the failure of literature departments within which most language programs still exist to place adequate value upon language analysis and language education (see chapter 2 for a more detailed analysis of foreign language education). Traditionally, literature departments have seen the study of language only as a doorway to literature and not as an object of knowledge itself. The asym-

metrical power relations between literature and language studies reproduce the false notion that anyone trained in literature is automatically endowed (through osmosis) with the necessary skills to teach the language in which the literature is written. This position precludes viewing language teaching as a complex field of study which demands rigorous understanding of theories of language acquisition coupled with a thorough knowledge of the language being taught and its functions in the society that generates and sustains it. The power asymmetry between language education (in some cases including linguistics if it is housed within the literature department) and, let's say, medieval literature, is reflected in the fact that the teacher of the latter is assumed to be qualified to teach language without any specialized training or understanding of the complex nature of language development, while the opposite is never tolerated. That is, a language specialist would be never allowed to teach a course in medieval literature without first acquiring demonstrable background knowledge in medieval studies.

Conservative ideology generally predominates in literature studies (although there are some exceptions where critical theory has opened up the rigid disciplinary boundaries of literary studies, particularly in Europe), and language studies are still, in many ways, controlled by this conservative ideology to the extent that many language programs remain housed within literature departments. It is therefore not surprising that we produce language specialists at the highest level of the academy who do not know the meaning of hegemony and thus do not understand even their own complicity with ideological forces that use language to achieve "the reorganization of cultural hegemony." The convergence of the conservative ideology of most literature departments with the misguided influence of positivism in language studies, including pedagogy, has created a fertile terrain for the continued disarticulation of the technical approach to language analysis from the sociopolitical factors that shape and maintain the fragmentation of

bodies of knowledge. This process inevitably prevents the development of a global comprehension of reality within which language studies are inserted. The insidious nature of the fragmentation of bodies of knowledge, which often parades under the rubric of specialization, lies in its inability to reveal how language and culture embody ideological processes, contradictions, and interests, and how these, in turn, influence social practices and language use. What better way to support the pernicious hegemonic forces that are shaping and maintaining the present social world (dis)order than to reward commissars like the Harvard language specialist for not only not knowing the meaning of hegemony, but also for arrogantly admonishing students who turn to Gramsci's illuminating ideas in order to understand and expose the inherent racism in the facile and cynical promotion of English as the language of progress and the savior of civilization.

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THE POLITICS OF INTOLERANCE: U.S. LANGUAGE POLICY IN PROCESS

THE UNITED STATES HAS HAD NO OVERT OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY regulated by legal and constitutional declaration, yet it is the envy of many nations that aggressively police language use within their borders through explicit policies designed to protect the "purity" and "integrity" of the national language. They are envious that even without a rigid policy, the United States has managed to achieve such a high level of monolingualism and linguistic jingoism that speaking a language other than English constitutes a real liability. American monolingualism is part and parcel of an assimilationist ideology that decimated the American indigenous languages as well as the many languages brought to this shore by various waves of immigrants. As the mainstream culture felt threatened by the presence of multiple languages, which were perceived as competing with English, the reaction by the media, educational institutions, and government agencies was to launch periodic assaults on languages other than English. This was the case with American-Indian languages during the colonial period and German during the first and second world wars.

This covert assimilationist policy in the United States has been so successful in the creation of an ever-increasing linguistic xenophobia that most educators, including critical educators, have either blindly embraced the dominant assimilationist ideology or have remained ambivalent with respect to the worth of languages other than English. The assumption that English is a more viable and pedagogically suitable language than others has completely permeated U.S. educational discourse. Even though the advent of critical pedagogy has produced important debate concerning cultural democracy, social justice, and alternative ways of viewing the world, the question of language is, at best, rarely raised and, at worst, relegated to the margins. With the exception of a handful of critical educators who have taken seriously the role of language in enabling oppressed students to come to subjectivity, most critical educators have failed to engage in rigorous analyses that would unveil the intimate relationship between language, power, and ideology and the ensuing pedagogical consequences. Take, for example, the extensive literature in multicultural education, including critical multiculturalism. These writings usually assume that the valorization of ethnic cultures will take place only in English, of course. This assumption was bluntly interrogated by Donaldo Macedo and Lilia Bartolome when they argued that

> although the literature in multicultural education correctly stresses the need to valorize and appreciate cultural differences as a process for students to come to voice, the underlying assumption is that the celebration of other cultures will take place in English only, a language that may provide students from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds with the experience of subordination.[1]

Given this pervasive assimilationist culture it is not surprising that even well-intentioned critical educators fall prey to a seem-

ingly laissez-faire language policy. As a result, most educators, including critical educators, not only see nothing wrong with their own monolingualism, they also give their tacit assent, sometimes unknowingly, to the reproduction of the English-only ideology. Conversely, they fail to understand that the ongoing debate about the effectiveness of bilingual education springs from an enormous misconception about the *nature* and *functions* of language. Opponents of bilingual education, conservative educators, and advocates of movements that support national and linguistic homogeneity and assimilation, assign to language a mechanistic, technical character. Within this technical perspective, they propose the adoption of English-only instruction as a remedy for the so-called "failure" of linguistic minority students. In addition, they claim that only through the mastery of English will non-English-speaking students be able to participate equally in mainstream society. However, the English-only remedy, or "English for the Children," as it has euphemistically redefined itself, seems to cure neither the symptom nor the cause of the problem. Reducing the bilingual education debate to technical issues of "teaching language" constitutes an assault on non-English-speaking students' cultural and ethnic identity, which is inextricably related to their language. It also veils the political and ideological nature of the issue. Viewing bilingual education as merely a technical language issue is, in reality, a complication rather than a simplification of the complex nature of the pedagogies required to address the specific linguistic and cultural needs of linguistic minority students. For language is not simply a technical system, a total of phonemes, morphemes, words and phrases, a code of signs of a particular form that enables members of a linguistic community to communicate. "Simple communication" implies linguistic interaction between humans in given historical, social, and cultural contexts. Humans are not machines or robots that simply produce grammatically correct phrases and exchange codified messages. Their way of com-

municating not only reflects, but also produces and/or reproduces, specific ideologies, as well as the feelings, values, and beliefs that invariably define their historical and social location. Identity is mapped onto language. In other words, individuals draw from a pool of social practices available to them in order to interpret (written/oral) "texts." Texts, in turn, as Norman Fairclough notes, "negotiate the sociocultural contradictions ... and more loosely 'differences' ... which are thrown up in social situations, and indeed they constitute a form in which social struggles are acted out."[2] Moreover, language is not merely reflective, and, as explained so eloquently by James Donald, educators must understand its productive nature.

> I take language to be productive rather than reflective of social reality. This means calling into question the assumptions that we, as speaking subjects, simply use language to organize and express our ideas and experiences. On the contrary, language is one of the most important social practices through which we come to experience ourselves as subjects. My point here is that once we get beyond the idea of language as no more than a medium of communication, as a tool equally available to all parties in cultural exchanges, then we can begin to examine language both as a practice of signification and also as a site for cultural struggle.[3]

As Donald points out, linguistic functions are not restricted to simple reflection or expression. Language actually shapes human existence in a dual way. For one, it affects the way humans are perceived through their speech. Secondly, individuals develop *discourses* that are formed through their identity in terms of class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, popular culture, and other factors. Discourses should be understood, according to Fairclough, as "use[s] of language seen as a form of social practice,"[4] that is, as systems of communication shaped through historical,

social, cultural, and ideological practices, which can work to either confirm or deny the life histories and experiences of the people who use them. Recognizing discourse as a social and ideological construct, James Gee defines it as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network.'"[5] In what follows we want to argue that given the social and ideological nature of different functions and uses of language, the proposition that language is neutral or non-ideological constitutes, in reality, an ideological position itself.

Language as Ideology

The non-neutrality of language is very well understood by Jacques Derrida, who argues that even "everyday language is not innocent or neutral. ... It carries with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from metaphysics, which, although little attended to, are knotted into a system."[6] We would argue that the "metaphysics" to which Derrida refers can better be understood as ideological nets. Even if the functions of language are reduced to "mere communication," it still "presupposes subjects (whose identity and presence are constituted before the communication takes place) and objects (signified concepts, a thought meaning) that the passage of communication will have neither to constitute, nor, by all rights, to transform."[7]

As subjects of our language we possess a particular identity that is always crossed along the lines of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and so forth. At the same time, as objects, we are marked by our language in terms of these same categories. In this sense, Pierre Bourdieu argues correctly that linguistic utterances or expressions are forms of practice and, as such, can be understood as the product of the relation between a linguistic *habitus* (a set of predispositions) and a linguistic

market.[8] Linguistic utterances are produced in particular contexts or markets, and they always involve the speaker's socialized assessment of the market condition as well as the anticipations of this market. That is, all linguistic expression is a linguistic performance that addresses a particular market. For example, the U.S. linguistic market requires speakers to use so-called standard English, which is a valued and accepted linguistic variety for this particular market. A speaker of nonstandard English, e.g., Ebonics or "Spanglish," is not an acceptable speaker in the same market to the extent that he or she speaks a variety that is "inappropriate" and devalued by the dominant society. The highly charged debate in Oakland, California, over the recommendation to use Ebonics as a vehicle of instruction among African-American students in the public schools stands as formidable testimony to the power of linguistic hegemony in the U.S. market. Even middle-class African-Americans like Jesse Jackson became vocal adversaries of such pedagogical propositions, indicating the extent to which they have internalized the linguistic and cultural oppression perpetrated against them. Those African-Americans who oppose Ebonics as a viable vehicle of instruction in schools not only reflect a high level of colonization of the mind, but they also reinforce the yoke of the very colonialism that oppresses and represses their language—the most important signpost for cultural identity formation. Once African-Americans allow their minds to be colonized, they are unable to "examine language both as a practice of signification and as a site for cultural struggle—a mechanism which produces antagonistic relations between different social groups."[9]

Linguistic oppression is not necessarily restricted to speakers of nonstandard varieties. An alleged speaker of standard English who, for example, has not received formal education may turn out to be a nonacceptable speaker at certain levels of linguistic interaction (e.g., at a corporate board meeting or in academia). Bourdieu illustrates this point by saying that individuals from

upper-class backgrounds are endowed with a linguistic habitus—tied to a specific kind of cultural capital—that enables them to respond with relative ease to the demands of most formal or official occasions. This includes obviously the school curriculum. On the other hand, he adds, "Individuals from petit-bourgeois backgrounds must generally make an effort to adapt their linguistic expressions to the demands of formal markets. The result is that their speech is often accompanied by tension and anxiety, and by a tendency to rectify or correct expressions so that they concur with dominant norms."[10]

The notion of "habitus" can also be understood as a form of "apprenticeship, that is, socially learned discourse and behavior that can either deny or affirm access to particular social and cultural practices. Individuals who have been apprenticed through particular discourses to approach the dominant "norm" become competent speakers of the standard, while members who develop discourses that diverge from the "norm" are perceived as speaking nonstandard varieties. In either case, whenever language is present, an invisible but omnipresent evaluation system is put into play. Therefore, the set of predispositions—namely the cultural capital (as different forms of cultural knowledge, including language knowledge) that shapes one's discourse—differs among individuals. Through linguistic interaction, evaluation functions not only to measure an individual's "value"—in terms of what the language actually "says" about the speaker—but also classifies individuals into preconceived groups identified as speaking nonacceptable languages for the respective markets. As a result, language evaluation is an inherent mechanism that is often used to dominate other groups culturally. This mechanism was used effectively by the colonial powers, and its legacy remains anchored in the current language policies of former colonial possessions, particularly in Africa, where the official languages with more currency are always the colonial languages. In some real sense, the language policy in the United States functions as

a form of internal colonialism. Hence, even if non-English-speaking students are able to meet the needs of the U.S. linguistic market (in terms of mastering enough English to "simply communicate," as the proponents of English-only suggest), they will still be identified as the "other." Their language will always be marked by their color, race, ethnicity, and class and constructed within a politics of identity that situates subjects within an assimilation grid. Generally, groups of speakers who are typecast via the devaluation of their language tend to resort to resistance by protecting their only tools of opposing domination, namely language and culture. In short, their language will always be marked by their otherness, both in terms of ways they are perceived and the ways they see the world ideologically. Thus, it becomes obvious that the issue at hand is not language, but the right to be different in a supposed cultural democracy. Or as Fairclough accurately notes, "the problematic of language and power is fundamentally a question of democracy."[11] However, the issue here is not simply to acknowledge cultural diversity. As Homi Bhabha reminds us, cultural difference—as opposed to cultural diversity[12]—should be understood as

> the awareness that first of all you have the problem of difference, not because there are many preconstituted cultures. ... Cultural difference is a particular constructed discourse at a time when something is being challenged about power or authority. At that point, a particular cultural trait or tradition ... becomes the site of contestation, abuse, insult, and discrimination. Cultural difference is not the natural emanation of the fact that there are different cultures in the world. It's a much more problematic and sophisticated reproduction of a ritual, a habit, a trait, a characteristic ...
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> The question of cultural difference is not the problem of there being diverse cultures and that diversity produces the

> difference. It is that each time you want to make a judgment about a culture or about a certain element within a certain culture in the context of some kind of social and political condition that puts pressure on that judgment, you are standing at that point in this disjunctive difference-making site.

Through the proposition that the English language is a passport which gives access to the higher cultural, political, and economic echelons of U.S. society, opponents of bilingual education attempt to hide their ongoing cultural invasion of other groups. Learning standard English will not iron out social stratification, racism, and xenophobia. Nevertheless, under the "naivete" pretext and the notion that language exists in a vacuum, conservative educators continue to disarticulate language from its social and ideological context by conveniently ignoring the following facts:

First, *meaning carried by language can never be analyzed in an isolated fashion.* Meaning is always historically constructed, and it is a phenomenon of culture, a product of culture that is inherently ideological and, thus, political. Furthermore, as everything ideological possesses meaning, every sign—as a form of meaning—is also ideological. Following this line of argument, access to meaning must invariably involve a process whereby the reading of the world must precede the reading of the word. That is to say, to access the meaning of an entity, we must understand the cultural practices that mediate our access to the world semantic field and its interaction with the words' semantic features.

Second, *language cannot exist apart from its speakers.* The transition from the Sassurean "langue" to "parole " is possible only through the mediation of humans as agents of history who actively participate in the formation and transformation of their world. Human communication is unique; human language is "species-specific" and cannot simply exist in a form of abstract

signs. It is humans that give meaning to the signs, where the signifier becomes the signified. Language cannot exist as an autonomous code, detached from its speakers and contexts. By neglecting the role of the speaker in his/her cultural, political, and ideological location and by ignoring the context in which communication takes place (the parameters set in the linguistic market), we fail to acknowledge that language, in all of its aspects, can by no means be either neutral or innocent. It is a social as well as a cultural marker.

Roland Barthes makes the claim that "to decipher the world's signs always means to struggle with a certain innocence of objects."[13] This ostensible innocence of objects must be challenged in order to conceptualize language in its real dimension and to position the debate on bilingual education within its ideological and political context. The real context of the debate has nothing to do with language itself, but with what language carries in terms of cultural goods. As Bhabha reminds us,"there is some particular issue about the redistribution of goods between cultures, or the funding of cultures, or the emergence of minorities or immigrants in a situation of resources—where resource allocation has to go—or the construction of schools and the decision about whether the school should be bilingual or trilingual or whatever. It is at that point that the problem of cultural difference is produced."[14]

If Bhabha is correct, then linguists and educators need to move beyond the notion that language is a "treasure," a common possession—what Bourdieu calls "the illusion of linguistic communism."[15] The existence of a common language, a "code" open to use by everybody and equally accessible to all—as assumed by proponents of the English-only movement—is illusionary. This assumption begs the question of why, from a sea of languages, "dialects," "standards," and "varieties," standard English emerged as the most appropriate and viable tool of institutional communication. Application of the simple theorem that "language is identified with its speakers" would require that

we find native speakers of standard English, identify them, and analyze their "mother tongue." I am convinced that no American is a native speaker of "Harvard English," and definitely no French person has the discourse of the Académie Française as his or her mother tongue. If mastery of standard English is a prerequisite for enjoying the "common culture," we first need to clarify what kind of standard English we are to teach and thus to speak. This statement seems to contradict itself, as some would argue that there are not many kinds of standard English. Standard English would literally be "clear" English, sterilized from any "familiarity," "jargons," or "unacceptable" forms that "dialects" often use, the kind of English used in the "Great Books." In addition, the existence and use of a "colorless and odorless," sterilized code implies that language is dehistoricized and that we, as humans, have no obvious markers of identity (such as ethnicity, culture, race, class, gender, or sexual orientation) reflected and refracted through our language. A more honest definition would address the following questions: "Who speaks the standard?" "Who has access to it?" "Where does one develop this particular discourse and through what process of apprenticeship?"

Those who assume a "common culture" invariably imply the existence of a common language. This is evident when Ronald Wardaugh asserts that "language is a *communal possession,* although admittedly an abstract one. Individuals have access to it and constantly show that they do so by using it properly. ... A wide range of skills and activities is subsumed under this concept of *proper use.*"[16] However, Wardaugh's position raises a series of problems. If language is a common treasure among humans, how can we explain the fact that some languages are perceived as more "appropriate" or even more "civilized" than others? Why are there "standard" languages? Why are some languages considered "well-chosen," "sophisticated," "elevated," or "civilized," while others are "familiar," "uncouth," "popular," "patois," "varieties," "crude," or "pidgin"? If language is a communal

possession, why is it that, although every human being possesses a language, not every language is perceived as "human"? For example, pidgin and creole languages are usually characterized as savage, corrupt, or bastardized forms of colonial languages. How is it that the use of human language can work towards dehumanizing certain cultural groups? If everybody has a language, how is it that some people, although they have a language, don't have a voice, and as a result, need to be interpreted in order to emerge from their silenced culture? And if language is nothing but a communication tool, how can we explain the phenomenon of linguistic imposition of one language in preference to another, as well as the fact that some languages are held up as models to which others ought to aspire? If language is so innocent, why in most countries is linguistic policy part of governments' self-interest? Why do people work and fight for language conservation and propagation throughout the world? If language is a shared good, how is legitimacy granted to the process of robbing some people of their own language? Moreover, who defines the "proper" use to which Wardaugh was referring? If speakers of a language have equal access to this illusionary common code, why do we not all speak the same variety—namely the standard?

These questions can be answered only if language is assigned to its real ideological and social context, and the mechanisms of linguistic and cultural oppression are unveiled. As Paulo Freire suggested, "For cultural invasion to succeed, it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority ... The more invasion is accentuated and those invaded are alienated from the spirit of their own culture and from themselves, the more the latter want to be like the invaders: to walk like them, talk like them."[17]

Since language is always intertwined with culture, cultural invasion is intimately tied to linguistic invasion. Language is culture. The language policy of the United States—which gave

rise to the English-only movement and the more recent "English for the Children" idea, as well as the incessant debate over bilingual education—clearly illustrates the mechanism of linguistic and cultural hegemony in process. The dominant ideology requires a homogenized standard language and labels other forms as "dialects," "jargons," or "patois." This process legitimizes the standard as the norm, and that, in turn, benefits a dominant order. When the standard becomes the norm, it serves as the yardstick against which all other linguistic varieties are measured. This evaluation process will invariably lead to forms of devaluation, which are almost always connected to factors of culture, ethnicity, class, gender, and race. Through this process, the dominant ideology works to devalue any form of "different" or "popular" language, or language of a "different color." The same ideology labels African-American English as nonstandard and creates the perception that it is an incomprehensible dialect, occurring only in black ghettos, and that one can easily produce it by simply breaking the rules of standard English.[18] As mentioned earlier, the incredible intolerance for different varieties of language was clearly demonstrated a few years ago in the debate over Ebonics or black English. The mainstream mass media and public opinion totally rejected this form of linguistic and cultural "otherness" and manifested their inherent racism in their constant devaluation of Ebonics. In this context it is not an exaggeration to speak about linguistic hegemony to the extent that the development of a normative discourse through standard English naturalizes, for instance, ideologies and practices connected to white supremacy, racism, and oppression. According to Fairclough, "naturalized discourse conventions are a most effective mechanism for sustaining and reproducing cultural and ideological dimensions of hegemony."[19]

Moreover, as language is identified with its speakers, it is obvious why oppressed and marginalized ethnic or cultural groups are perceived as speaking a nonstandard or "second-class"

language, a "dialect" that does not deserve to be heard or taught and which is always associated with backwardness or savageness. It is also obvious why the speakers of those languages are perceived as not being "endowed" with the "linguistic habitus" required to address the needs of the U.S. linguistic market. The real target in the English-only debate is not the language spoken by these cultural groups but their humanity and cultural identity. The debate should be unmasked to reveal its inhumanity, unfairness, dishonesty, and outrageousness.

Identification of language with human culture sheds light on every attempt to impose English on students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This particular practice is not new; it has been implemented and tested for centuries through colonization. Integration into a single "linguistic community" is a product of political domination. Institutions capable of imposing universal recognition of a dominant language recognize this process as a means for establishing relations of linguistic domination and colonization.

As we have suggested, the existence of a common language also implies the existence of a common culture. Conversely, any reference to a common culture must also imply the existence of an uncommon culture. Donaldo Macedo analyzed this dialectical relationship in *Literacies of Power*:

> The conservative cultural agenda fails to acknowledge ... that the reorganization of 'our common culture' points to the existence of 'our uncommon culture,' for commonality is always in a dialectical relationship with uncommonality. Thus, one cannot talk about the centeredness of our 'common culture' without relegating our 'uncommon' cultural values and expressions to the margins, creating a de facto silent majority.[20]

What supporters of the English-only movement and opponents of bilingual education wish to achieve through the impo-

sition of a "common culture" is the creation of a de facto silent majority. Since language is so intertwined with culture, any call for a "common culture" must invariably require the existence of a "common language." In fact, the English-only proponents' imposition of standard English as the only viable vehicle of communication in our society's institutional and civic life, under the rubric of our "common language," inevitably leads to the "tongue-tying of America." This "tongue-tying" aids the conservative attempt to reproduce dominant cultural values by insisting, on one hand, on ever-present, collective myths that present a diverse origin, a diverse past, and diverse ancestors, and, on the other, on a common mother tongue and a necessary common, homogeneous, and indivisible future.[21] In general, movements that claim to promote ethnic, linguistic, and cultural integrity attempt, in reality, to impose cultural domination through linguistic domination, under the guise of an assimilative and let's-live-all-together-happily model. This process invariably becomes a form of stealing one's language, which is like stealing one's history, one's culture, one's own life. As Ngugi Wa' Thiongo so clearly points out:

> Communication between human beings is the basis and process of evolving culture. Values are the basis of people's identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race. All this is carried by language. Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation, and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next.[22]

If Ngugi is correct, and we believe he is, all of society is permeated by language. Therefore, in a certain sense, everything is cultural; it is impossible to be part of a non-culture, as it is impossible to be part of a non-language. When a dominant

group cuts out the possibility of language transmission from one generation to the next by imposing its own language under the guise of a "common language," it also cuts out the cultural sequence and, therefore, cuts people from their cultural roots. So far we have attempted to argue that, in reality, there is no such thing as a "common culture" in multicultural American society. In fact, it is an oxymoron to speak of a "common culture" in a cultural democracy. In truth, there was never a "common culture" in which people of all races and colors participated equally in the United States. Hence, the proposition "common culture" is a euphemism that has been used to describe the imposition of Western dominant culture in order to eliminate, degrade, and devalue any different ethnic/cultural/class characteristics. It is a process through which the dominant social groups attempt to achieve cultural hegemony by imposing a mythical "common language." In turn, language is often used by the dominant groups as a manipulative tool to achieve hegemonic control. As a result, the current debate over bilingual education has very little to do with language per se. The real issue that undergirds the English-only movements is the economic, social, and political control by a dominant minority of a largely subordinate majority which no longer fits the profile of what it means to be part of "our common culture" and to speak "our common language."

The English-only movements' call for a "common language" does more than hide a pernicious social and cultural agenda. It is also part of an attempt to reorganize a "cultural hegemony," as evidenced by the unrelenting attack of conservative educators on multicultural education and curriculum diversity. The assault by conservatives on the multiplicity of languages spoken in the United States is part of the dominant cultural agenda to both promote a monolithic ideology and to eradicate any and all forms of cultural expression that do not conform to the promoted monolithic ideology. This reproductive mechanism is suc-

cinctly explained by Henry Giroux, when he shows how the conservative cultural revolution's

> more specific expressions have been manifest on a number of cultural fronts including schools, the art world, and the more blatant attacks aimed at rolling back the benefits of civil rights and social welfare reforms constructed over the last three decades. What is being valorized in the dominant language of the culture industry is an undemocratic approach to social authority and a politically regressive move to reconstruct American life within the script of Eurocentrism, racism, and patriarchy.[23]

What becomes clear in our discussion so far is that the current bilingual education debate has very little to do with teaching or not teaching English to non-English speakers. The real issue has a great deal more to do with the hegemonic forces that aggressively want to maintain the present asymmetry in the distribution of cultural and economic goods.

Schools and the Reproduction of Legitimate Language

An understanding of the nature and functions of language is crucial in order to locate areas of public life and institutions that actually reproduce the so-called legitimate language. Habermas correctly urges us "not to limit our critique on relationships of power to those institutions in which power is overtly declared, hence to political and social power only; we must extend it to those areas of life in which power is hidden behind the *amiable countenance of cultural familiarity.*"[24] It is necessary to identify mechanisms of domination in order to make their ideology bare.

Educational institutions show this "amiable countenance of cultural familiarity," while at the same time, playing a crucial role in the perpetuation of linguistic domination—the cultural

reproduction inherent in any form of standardization process. Despite the widespread conservative notion that schools are, or at least should be, temples of neutrality and objectivity, the claim of neutrality hides a conservative view which perceives knowledge as neutral and pedagogy as "a transparent vehicle of truth." This perception "overlooks important political issues regarding how canons are historically produced, whose interests they serve as well as whose they do not serve, and how they are sustained within specific forms of institutional power."[25]

Schools as sites of struggle and contestation that reproduce the dominant culture and ideology, as well as what is perceived as legitimate language/knowledge, make use of their institutional power to either affirm or deny a learner's language, and thus his or her lived experiences and culture. Additionally, schools are not simply static institutions that mirror the social order or reproduce the dominant ideology. They are active agents in the very construction of the social order and the dominant ideology. In that sense linguistic jingoism is constructed and spread within educational institutions through curricula, textbooks, etc. Educational institutions, in their symbolic and material existence, are so powerful that Althusser considers them to be "the dominant ideological State apparatus[es]."[26] He further explains that "no other apparatus has the obligatory audience of the totality of the children in the capitalistic social formation, eight hours a day, for five or six days out of seven."[27] While Althusser's position collapses into a theory of domination that does not allow for any type of resistance or radical forms of pedagogy, he is correct when he insists that the meaning of schools should be understood within the context of ideological state apparatuses.

Schools, throughout history, have directly helped to devalue popular modes of expression, as well as "varieties" or "dialects." They have also served to elevate the standard language as the most clear and appropriate variety. This process has been implemented partly through the invisibility, falsification, or marginal-

ization of "otherness," which is usually subsumed under the "common" rubric. Schools as sites where legitimate knowledge and language are reproduced have promoted a "deficit view" of learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, managing thus to impose a linguistic norm that defines a socially recognized criterion of linguistic "correctness." As sites of cultural reproduction, schools have constantly denied the experiences of specific groups of students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, making sure to transmit what counts as knowledge, namely Western culture, so as to ensure national assimilation and preserve Western dominance in the curriculum. Through particular educational practices, the doctrinal system in the United States manages to promote the instruction of English as a necessary prerequisite in order to participate "equally" in the mainstream society. In reality, this requirement functions invariably as a barrier that prevents non-English speakers from having equal access to education and knowledge. This barrier prevents non-English speakers and other subordinate cultural groups from having access to the higher economic and social echelons of our society. It is important to point out that knowledge is not exclusive to English and that bodies of knowledge can be both produced and learned in other languages. To do otherwise is to consider English as education in itself. The facile English-only solution is illusionary to the extent that, in the mainstream, non-whites and students who belong to subordinate classes are deprived of access to quality education. Educational policy in the United States reflects an implicit economic need to socialize immigrants and members of oppressed groups to fill necessary but undesirable, low-status jobs.[28] In reality, instead of the democratic education the United States claims to provide, what is in place is a sophisticated colonial model of education designed primarily to train state functionaries and commissars who work for private ideological interests while denying access to millions. The result is to further exacerbate the equity gap already victimizing a

great number of so-called minority students. The majority of whites who do not speak standard English because of their class position are also victims of this model of U.S. democracy. They are strategically taught that they belong to the norm, though they themselves are exploited, excluded, and devalued.

In addition to the function of cultural reproduction, educators should pay closer attention to the cultural production that takes place within schools—a process that affirms the individual's daily, lived experiences and which could tend toward "collective self-determination." As Giroux so eloquently argues, "[i]t is essential ... to move from questions of social and cultural reproduction to issues of social and cultural production, from the question of how society gets reproduced in the interest of the capital and its institutions to the question of how the 'excluded majorities' have and can develop institutions, values, and practices that serve their autonomous interests."[29]

It is only through cultural production (and this includes one's own language behaviors) that one can come to subjectivity. This is a process through which linguistic minority students, by speaking their own language, gain authorship of their world and are enabled to move from their present object to a subject position. However, this movement cannot occur unless progressive educators acquire critical tools that would facilitate the development of a thorough understanding of the mechanisms employed by the dominant culture in the reproduction of those ideological elements that devalue, disconfirm, and subjugate cultural and linguistic minority students. It is only "through an understanding of hegemony and cultural invasion, [that] critical bicultural educators can create culturally democratic environments where they can assist students to identify the different ways that domination and oppression have an impact on their lives."[30] Bilingual/multicultural education has to be situated within a theory of cultural production and viewed as an integral part of the way in which people produce, transform, and reproduce meaning.

Bilingual and multicultural education must also be seen as a medium that constitutes and affirms the historical and existential moments of lived experience which produce a subordinate or a lived culture.

Within this framework of action, language cannot be seen only as a neutral tool for communication. It should be viewed as the only means through which learners make sense of their world and transform it in the process of meaning-making. In the meaning-making process, both subordinate students and their teachers need to know that standard English is "the oppressor's language yet I need it to talk to you."[31] As bell hooks so painfully understands, standard English "is the language of conquest and domination ... it is the mask which hides the loss of so many tongues, all those sounds of diverse, native communities we will never hear."[32]

All those teachers who consider themselves agents of change and who struggle to create a more democratic culture need a thorough understanding of the role of standard English—even when minority students must acquire it in order to capture its dominance and re-create it as a counter-hegemonic force. Their struggle needs to highlight how standard English is used "as a weapon to silence and censor."[33] In order to avoid the tongue-tying, silencing, and censorship that the use of standard English creates, we need to heed the analysis of language and its role in sabotaging democracy as recounted by June Jordan:

> I am talking about majority problems of language in a democratic state, problems of a currency that someone has stolen and hidden away and then homogenized into an official "English" language that can only express non-events involving nobody responsible, or lies. If we lived in a democratic state our language would have to hurtle, fly, curse, and sing, in all the common American names, all the undeniable and representative participating voices of everybody here. We would

not tolerate the language of the powerful and, thereby, lose all respect for words, per se. We would make our language conform to the truth of our many selves and we would make our language lead us into the equality of power that a democratic state must represent.[34]

III
THE COLONIALISM OF ENGLISH-ONLY

So, if you want to really hurt me,
talk badly about my language.
Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*[1]

BOTH THE RAPID SPREAD OF ENGLISH WORLDWIDE AND THE RECENT movements within the United States to outlaw instruction in languages other than English should be analyzed in tandem with a variety of contemporary race-related issues: vicious attacks on people of color, the demonization of immigrants, the dismantling of affirmative action, and the assault on welfare programs for the poor. These are all part and parcel of an unapologetic dominant ideology which was unleashed with the imposition of neoliberalism. This ideology opposes all public institutions, particularly those that are perceived to serve mostly the poor and people of color. For example, public education in urban areas of the United States that serves mostly nonwhite and poor students is under siege, and public housing is struggling to survive its so-called reform.

Interestingly enough, when publicly funded programs are used to strengthen the dominant sphere, we hear little protest from those media, politicians, and political pundits who otherwise work zealously to "end welfare as we know it." These conservatives take great pride in excoriating welfare mothers for cheating

and not working, as proof of social-program abuse. Yet they remain silent about rampant fraud within the military-industrial complex, such as Pentagon payments of $700 for a toilet seat or $350 for a screwdriver. The same silence surrounded the Savings and Loan scandal, which cost taxpayers over $250 billion in welfare for the rich. In this case, the cultural commissars found it convenient to embrace public spending as a means to socialize private financial losses, yet they pontificate about the importance of privatizing social security and hold the poor responsible for creating a "social catastrophe," as Patrick Buchanan put it. Buchanan blames the "Great Society programs not only for financial losses but also for drops in high-school test scores, drug problems, and . . . a generation of children and youth with no fathers, no faith, and no dreams other than the lure of the streets."[2] However, we hear not even a peep from Buchanan and other conservative commissars decrying the unmeasurable crimes committed by Enron, Worldcom, Zerox, and other corporations that blatantly engaged in fraudulent practices and deprived millions of working people of their hard-earned retirement funds, while a handful of corporate executives walked away with billions of dollars. Some estimates have put the value of present corporate fraud at close to a trillion dollars. In essence, the scope of the current fraud perpetrated by corporations is obscene. Yet the outcry among politicians and political pundits is negligible compared to the invective these same pundits use against the poor on welfare, who, they assert, are cheating honest, hardworking taxpayers. New corporate crimes are unveiled almost on a daily basis, and the list of corporations committing high-level crimes increases, causing the stock market to plunge. Yet President Bush and his conservative cohorts continue to pursue privatizing social security because, they claim, the private sector is more efficient and is guided by the accountability of the market.

Given this landscape of selective assaults on public institutions, the bilingual education movement could not escape the

wrath of the purveyors of the dominant ideology.[3] The present attack on bilingual education should not be understood as a simple critique of teaching methodologies. First, and foremost, the assault on bilingual education is fundamentally political. The denial of the political nature of the debate in itself constitutes a political action. It is both academically dishonest and misleading to point out the failures of bilingual education without examining the general failure of public education in major urban areas, where minority student dropout rates range from 50 to 65 percent in the Boston public schools to over 70 percent in larger metropolitan areas like New York City.

While conservative educators have been very vocal in their attempts to abolish bilingual education because of its putative lack of academic success, these same educators have remained conspicuously silent about the well-documented failure of foreign language education in the United States. Despite its shortcomings, no one is advocating closing down foreign language departments in schools. Paradoxically, although bilingual programs have much greater success in producing fully bilingual speakers, the same educators who propose dismantling bilingual education reiterate their support of foreign language education for the specific purpose of developing bilingualism.

The English-only movement's agenda in the United States points to a pedagogy of exclusion which views the learning of English as education in itself. What its proponents fail to question is by whom and under what conditions English will be taught. For example, in Massachusetts, a grandfather clause in the legislation governing programs for English as a second language allowed ESL teaching by untrained music, art, and social-science teachers. Immersing non–English-speaking students in these ESL programs will do very little to accomplish the goals of the English-only movement. In addition, the proponents of English-only fail to address two fundamental questions: First, if English is the most effective educational language, how can we

explain that over 60 million Americans are illiterate or functionally illiterate? Second, if education in English-only can guarantee linguistic minorities a better future, as educators like William Bennett promise, why do the majority of African-Americans, whose ancestors have spoken English for over two hundred years, find themselves still relegated to the ghettos?

In this chapter we will argue that the answer to these questions has nothing to do with whether English is a more viable language of instruction or whether it promises non-English-speaking students full participation both in school and in society at large. Framing the issue in that way points to an assumption that English is, in fact, a superior language and that we live in a classless, race-blind society. We want to propose that the attempt to institute proper and effective methods of educating non-English-speaking students cannot be reduced simply to issues of language. Rather, it must rest on a full understanding of the ideological elements that generate and sustain linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination, and which, in our view, represent vestiges of a colonial legacy in our democracy.

English-Only as a Form of Colonialism

Many educators will object to the term "colonialism" to characterize the current attack on bilingual education by conservative as well as many liberal educators. Some liberals who support bilingual education will go to great lengths to oppose our characterization of English-only movements as a form of colonialism, insisting that most educators who do not support bilingual education are just ignorant and need to be educated. This is tantamount to saying that racists do not really hate people of color; they are just ignorant. While one could argue that they *are* ignorant, one has to realize that ignorance is never innocent and is always shaped by a particular ideological predisposition. Furthermore, the attack on bilingual education or a racist act

stemming from ignorance does not make the victims of these acts feel any better about their victimization.

The apologetic stance of some liberals concerning the so-called ignorance of those educators who blindly oppose bilingual education is not surprising, since classical liberalism, as a school of thought and as an ideology, always prioritizes the right to private property, while relegating human freedom and other rights to mere "epiphenomena or derivatives.[4] A rigorous analysis of thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke will clearly show that the real essence of liberalism is the right to own property. The right to private property could only be preserved through the reproduction of a capitalist ideology. This led Liubomir Tadic to pose the following question: "Isn't conservatism a more determinant characteristic of liberalism than the tendency toward freedom?"[5] He concluded that owing to this insipid ambiguity, liberalism is always positioned ideologically between revolution and reaction. In other words, liberalism vacillates between two opposing poles. It is this position of vacillation that propels many liberals to support bilingual education, while at the same time objecting to the linkage between the attack on bilingual education and colonial language policies.

Any colonized person who has experienced firsthand the discriminatory language policies of European colonialism can readily see many similarities between colonial ideology and the dominant values that inform the American English-only movement. Colonialism imposes "distinction" as an ideological yardstick against which all other cultural values are measured, including language. In the United States this ideological yardstick serves to over-celebrate the dominant group's language to the point of mystification—viewing English as education in itself and measuring the success of bilingual programs only in terms of success in English acquisition. On the other hand, it devalues the other languages spoken by an ever-increasing number of students now populating most urban public schools. The position of U.S. English-only pro-

ponents is not very different, for example, from that of European colonizers who tried to eradicate the use of African languages in institutional life and who inculcated Africans with myths and beliefs concerning the savage nature of their cultures through educational systems which used only European languages.

If we analyze closely the ideology that informs both the present debate over bilingual education—spearheaded by the U.S. English-only movement—and the present polemic over Western heritage versus multiculturalism, we can begin to understand that the ideological principles which sustain those debates are consonant with the structures and mechanisms of colonial ideology, as succinctly described by Geraldo Davilla:

> Culturally, colonialism has adopted a negation to the [native culture's] symbolic systems [including the native language], forgetting or undervaluing them even when they manifest themselves in action. This way, the eradication of the past and the idealization and the desire to relive the cultural heritage of colonial societies constitute a situation and a system of ideas which, along with other elements, situate the colonial society as a class.[6]

If it were not for the colonial legacy, how could we explain U.S. educational policies in the Philippines and Puerto Rico? English was imposed as the only language of instruction in the Philippines, and the imposed American textbook presented American culture not only as superior, but as a "model par excellence for the Philippine society."[7] The impact of this type of mis-education is evident, for instance, in the following letter from T. H. Pardo de Tavera, an early collaborator with U.S. colonialism, to General Douglas MacArthur:

> After peace is established all our efforts will be directed to Americanizing ourselves, to caus[ing] knowledge of the En-

> glish language to be extended and generalized in the Philippines, in order that through its agency we may adopt its principles, its political customs, and its peculiar civilization, [and] that our redemption may be complete and radical.[8]

The United States hoped to achieve the same "complete and radical" redemption in Puerto Rico. In 1905 Theodore Roosevelt's Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico, Rolland P. Faulkner, mandated that instruction in public schools be conducted in English in order to make Puerto Rican schools

> agencies of Americanization in the entire country ... where [schools] would present the American ideal to our youth. Children born under the American flag and on American soil should have constantly present this ideal, so that they can feel proud of their citizenship and of the flag that represents the true symbol of liberty.[9]

By leaving the colonial legacy unexamined, the purported choice to adopt an effective methodology where students are at the same time denied the opportunity to study their language and culture is, for all practical purposes, a choiceless choice. Instead of becoming enslaved by the management discourse of the present bilingual educational reforms proposed by the English-only advocates, which enhance the economic interests of the reformers while securing their privileged social and cultural positions, educators need to reconnect with the historical past so as to understand the colonial legacy that undermines American democratic aspirations. Although Renato Constantino is writing about the colonial legacy in the Philippines, his thoughtful words are both a propos and illuminating regarding our present historical juncture in education.

> We see our present with as little understanding as we view our past because aspects of the past which could illumine the

> present have been concealed from us. This concealment has been effected by a systemic process of mis-education characterized by a thoroughgoing inculcation of colonial values and attitudes—a process which could not have been so effective had we not been denied access to the truth and to part of our written history. As a consequence, we have become a people without a sense of history. We accept the present as given, bereft of historicity. Because we have so little comprehension of our past, we have no appreciation of its meaningful interrelation with the present.[10]

Scientism as Neocolonialism

Throughout history oppressive dominant ideologies have resorted to science as a mechanism to rationalize crimes against humanity, ranging from slavery to genocide. Science is used to target race and other ethnic and cultural traits as markers that license all forms of dehumanization. If we did not suffer from historical amnesia, we would easily understand the ideology that informed Hans Eysenck's psychological proposal suggesting that "there might be a partly genetic reason for the differences in I. Q. between black and white people."[11] The same historical amnesia keeps us disconnected from dangerous memories of Arthur Jensen's racist proposals published decades ago by the Harvard Educational Review.[12]

One could argue that the above-cited incidents belong to the dusty archives of earlier generations, but we do not believe we have learned a great deal from historically dangerous memories. Consider American society's almost total embrace of scientism as exemplified by the success of *The Bell Curve,* by Charles Murray and former Harvard Professor Richard J. Hernstein. The same blind acceptance of "naïve" empiricism provides fuel to the English-only movement as it attempts to ban bilingual education in the United States. Ironically, when empirical data are

provided to demonstrate that bilingual education is an effective approach for educating non-English-speaking students—as in the research of Zeynep Beykont, Virginia Collier, Kenji Hakuta, David Ramirez, and Jim Cummins, among others[13]—the data are either ignored or buried in endless debates over research design which often miss a fundamental point: the inequities and racism that inform and shape most bilingual programs.

By and large the present debate over bilingual education is informed by positivistic and management models which hide their ideologies behind a demand for objectivity, hard data, and scientific rigor. This can be seen, for example, in comments Pepi Leistyna received on a term paper on the political nature of bilingual education during his doctoral studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "These are unsupported, politically motivated claims!" the professor wrote, and he suggested "a more linguistic analysis."[14] As Leistyna recounts, this same professor told him, "I hope you have been reading some hard science." This call for hard science in the social sciences represents a process through which naïve empiricists hide their anti-intellectual posture. However, this posture is manifested either through censorship of certain bodies of knowledge or through the disarticulation between theories of the discipline and empirically driven, self-contained studies. This empiricism enables the pseudoscientists to

> not challenge the territorialization of university intellectual activity or in any way risk undermining the status and core beliefs of their fields. The difference [for scientists] is that this blindness or reluctance often contradicts the intellectual imperatives of the very theories they espouse. Indeed, only a theorized discipline can be an effective site for general social critique—that is, a discipline actively engaged in self-criticism, a discipline that is a locus for struggle, a discipline that renews and revises its awareness of its history, a discipline that

> inquires into its differential relations with other academic fields, and a discipline that examines its place in the social formation and is willing to adapt its writing practices to suit different social functions.[15]

As these theoretical requirements make abundantly clear, when Pepi Leistyna's professor arrogantly dismissed Freire's social critical theories, she unveiled the ideology behind the prescription that Leistyna should have been "reading some hard science." The censorship of political analysis in the current debate over bilingual education exposes the almost illusory and schizophrenic nature of educational practice, in which "the object of interpretation and the content of the interpretive discourse are considered appropriate subjects for discussion and scrutiny, but the interests of the interpreter and the discipline and society he or she serves are not."[16]

The disarticulation between the interpretive discourse and the interests of the interpreter is often hidden in the deceptive call for an objectivity that denies the dialectal relationship between subjectivity and objectivity. The call for objectivity is deeply ingrained in a positivistic method of inquiry. In effect, this has resulted in an epistemological stance in which scientism and methodological refinement are celebrated. As suggested by Henry Giroux, "theory and knowledge are subordinated to the imperatives of efficiency and technical mastery, and history is reduced to a minor footnote in the priorities of 'empirical' scientific inquiry."[17]

The blind celebration of empiricism has created a culture, particularly in schools of education, in which pseudoscientists who engage in a form of naive empiricism believe "that facts are not human statements about the world but aspects of the world itself,"[18] according to Michael Schudson.

> This view [is] insensitive to the ways in which the "world" is something people construct by the active play of their minds

> and by their acceptance of conventional—not necessarily "true"—ways of seeing and talking. Philosophy, the history of science, psychoanalysis, and the social sciences have taken great pains to demonstrate that human beings are cultural animals who know and see and hear the world through socially constructed filters.[19]

These socially constructed filters were evident when California voters passed a referendum banning bilingual education. While school administrators and politicians were gearing up to disband bilingual programs, data from both the San Francisco and San José school systems showed that bilingual graduates were outperforming their English-speaking counterparts.[20] This revelation was met with total silence from the media, the proponents of English–only, and the political pundits. This is where the call for objectivity and scientific rigor is subverted by the weight of its own ideology.

What these educators do not realize is that there is a large body of critical literature that interrogates the very nature of what they consider research. Critical writers such as Donna Haraway,[21] Linda Brodkey, Roger Fowler, and Greg Myers, among others, have painstakingly demonstrated the erroneous nature of the claim to"scientific" objectivity which permeates all forms of empirical work in social sciences. According to Linda Brodkey, "Scientific objectivity has too often and for too long been used as an excuse to ignore a social and, hence, political practice in which women and people of color, among others, are dismissed as legitimate subjects of research."[22] The blind belief in objectivity provides pseudoscientists with a safe haven from which they can attempt to prevent the emergence of counter-discourses that interrogate "the hegemony of positivism and empiricism."[23] It is also a practice that generates a form of folk theory concerning objectivity believed only by non-scientists. In other words, as Linda Brodkey so eloquently puts it, "Any and all knowledge, including that arrived at empirically, is necessarily partial, that is, both an incomplete and an

interested account of whatever is envisioned."[24] In fact, what these pseudoscientists consider research, that is, work based on quantitative evaluation results, can never escape the social construction that generates these models of analysis—models whose theoretical concepts are always shaped by the pragmatics of the society that devised these evaluation models in the first place.[25] That is, if the results that are presented as facts were originally determined by a particular ideology, these facts cannot in themselves illuminate issues that lie outside the ideological construction of these facts to begin with.[26] We would warn educators that these evaluation models can provide answers that are correct but nevertheless without truth. If a study concludes that African-American students perform way below white mainstream students in reading, it may be correct, but the conclusion tells us very little about the material conditions under which African-American students work in the struggle against racism, educational tracking, and the systematic negation and devaluation of their histories. We would propose that the correct conclusion rests in a full understanding of the ideological elements that generate and sustain the cruel reality of racism and economic oppression. Thus an empirical study will produce conclusions without truth if it is disarticulated from the sociocultural reality within which the subjects of the study are situated. A study designed to assess the reading achievement of children who live in squalid conditions must factor in the reality these children face, as described, for instance, by Jonathan Kozol:

> Crack-cocaine addiction and the intravenous use of heroin, which children I have met here call "the needle drug," are woven into the texture of existence in Mott Haven. Nearly 4,000 heroin injectors, many of whom are HIV-infected, live here. Virtually every child at St. Ann's knows someone, a relative or neighbor, who has died of AIDS, and most children here know many others who are dying now of the disease. One quarter of the women of Mott Haven who are

> tested in obstetric wards are positive for HIV. Rates of pediatric AIDS, therefore, are high.
>
> Depression is common among children in Mott Haven. Many cry a great deal but cannot explain exactly why.
>
> Fear and anxiety are common. Many cannot sleep.
>
> Asthma is the most common illness among children here. Many have to struggle to take in a good deep breath. Some mothers keep oxygen tanks, which children describe as "breathing machines," next to their children's beds.
>
> The houses in which these children live, two-thirds of which are owned by the City of New York, are often as squalid as the houses of the poorest children I have visited in rural Mississippi, but there is none of the greenness and the healing sweetness of the Mississippi countryside outside their windows, which are often barred and bolted as protection against thieves.[27]

An empirical study that neglects to incorporate into its design the cruel reality just described—and which occurs often in our supposedly classless society—will never be able to explain fully the reasons behind the poor performance of these children. Pseudoscientists will go to great lengths to prevent their research methodologies from being contaminated by the social ugliness Kozol described in order to safeguard their "objectivity" in, say, studies of underachievement among children who live in ghettos. However, the residents of these ghettos have little difficulty understanding the root causes of their misery, here described by a resident of the Mott Haven community named Maria:

> If you weave enough bad things into the fibers of a person's life—sickness and filth, old mattresses and other junk thrown

in the streets, and ugly ruined things, and ruined people, a prison here, sewage there, drug dealers here, the homeless people over there, then give us the very worst schools anyone could think of, hospitals that keep you waiting for ten hours, police that don't show up when someone's dying . . . you can guess that life will not be very nice and children will not have much sense of being glad of who they are. Sometimes it feels like we have been buried six feet under their perceptions. This is what I feel they have accomplished."[28]

What Maria would probably say to researchers is that we do not need another doctoral dissertation to state what is so obvious to the people sentenced to live in this form of human misery. In other words, locking children into material conditions that are oppressive and dehumanizing invariably guarantees that they will be academic underachievers. Once underachievement is guaranteed by these oppressive conditions, it is very easy for research studies—which, in the name of objectivity, ignore the political and social reality that shapes and maintains these oppressive conditions—to conclude that blacks are genetically wired to be intellectually inferior to whites, as was done in *The Bell Curve* by Richard J. Hernstein and Charles Murray.[29] Along the same lines, for example, an empirical study which concluded that children who engage in dinner conversation with their parents and siblings achieved higher rates of success in reading would not only be academically dishonest but also misleading to the degree that it ignored the class and economic assumption that all children are guaranteed daily dinners in the company of their parents and other siblings. What generalizations could such a study make about the 12 million children who go hungry every day in the United States? What could a study of this type say to thousands upon thousands of children who are homeless, who do not have a table, and who sometimes do not have food to put on the table they do not have? A study that made such sweeping and distorted generalizations

about the role of dinner conversations in reading achievement would say little about children whose houses are without heat in the winter—houses which reach such dangerously cold conditions that a father of four children remarked, "You just cover up ... and hope you wake up the next morning."[30] If the father really believed the study results, he would suggest to his children, after they had all made it through another freezing night alive, that they should have a conversation during dinner the next night since it would be helpful in their reading development—should they be lucky enough to make it through another night alive. What dinner conversation would the Haitian immigrant, Abner Louima, have with his children after being brutally sodomized with a toilet plunger by two white policemen in a New York police precinct? Would his children's reading teacher include as part of his or her literacy development some articles about the savage acts committed by the white New York policemen against their father?

These questions make it clear how distorted the results of an empirical study can be when they are disconnected from sociocultural reality. In addition, such distortion feeds into the development of stereotypes that, on the one hand, blame the victims for their own social misery and, on the other hand, rationalize the genetic inferiority hypotheses that are advanced by such pseudoscholars as Murray and Hernstein. What empirical studies often fail to point out is how easily statistics can be used to take away the human faces of the subjects through a process that not only dehumanizes but also distorts and falsifies reality.

What educators need to understand is that they cannot isolate phoneme-grapheme awareness from factors of social class and cultural identity which ultimately shape such awareness.

Fracturing Cultural Identities

Most conservative educators as well as many liberals conveniently embrace a form of naïve empiricism. This allows them to

celebrate scientism and methodological refinement, while issues of equity, class, and cultural identity, among other sociocultural factors are always relegated to the margins. While the fields of bilingual education and English as a second language have produced a barrage of studies aimed primarily at demonstrating the effectiveness of English acquisition, these research studies conspicuously fail to raise other fundamental questions. Does cultural subordination affect academic achievement? What is the correlation between social segregation and school success? What role does cultural identity among subordinated students play in linguistic resistance? Does the devaluation of students' culture and language affect reading achievement? Is class a factor in bilingual education? Do material conditions that foster human misery adversely affect academic development?

These questions are rarely addressed in naïve empirical studies that parade under the slogan of scientific 'objectivity' in order to deny the role of ideology in their work. This process serves to prevent the development of counter-discourses that interrogate these studies' major assumptions. As Paulo Freire points out, when these educators claim a scientific posture, "[they often] try to 'hide' in what [they] regard as the neutrality of scientific pursuits, indifferent to how [their] findings are used, even uninterested in considering for whom or for what interests [they] are working."[31] Because most educators, particularly in schools of education, do not conduct research in the "hard sciences," they uncritically attempt to adopt the neutrality posture in their work in the social sciences, leaving out the necessary built-in criticism, skepticism, and rigor of the hard sciences. In fact, science cannot evolve without a healthy dose of self-criticism, skepticism, and contestation. However, a discourse of critique and contestation is often viewed as contaminating "objectivity" in the social sciences and education. Instead, the pseudoscientists who uncritically embrace the mantra of scientific objectivity, usually find refuge in an ideological fog that enables educators to comfort-

ably fragment bodies of knowledge when they conduct their research. For example, they can study children who live in Mott Haven to determine their phoneme-grapheme awareness while paying no attention to the material conditions described by Jonathan Kozol—conditions that lock children into a chain of oppressive and dehumanizing circumstances which invariably guarantee they will be academic underachievers.

By reducing the principles of reading or the acquisition of English to pure technicism (i.e. phoneme-grapheme awareness), these educators can easily disarticulate a particular form of knowledge from other bodies of knowledge, thus preventing the interrelation of information necessary to gain a more critical reading of the reality. Such disarticulation enables educators to engage in a social construction of "not seeing"—which allows them to willfully not understand that behind the empirical data there are always human faces with fractured identities, dreams, and aspirations. The fracturing of cultural identity usually leaves an indelible psychological scar experienced even by those subordinated people who seemingly have "made it" in spite of all forms of oppression. This psychological scar is painfully relived by Gloria Anzaldúa, when she writes, "El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arrancó la lengua." (The Anglo with the innocent face has yanked our tongue.) "Ahogados, escupimos el oscuro. Peleando con nuestra propia sombra el silencio nos sepulta." (Drowned, we spit darkness. Fighting with our very shadow we are buried by silence.)[32] Thus colonized cultural beings are sentenced to a silenced culture.

Fragmenting bodies of knowledge also obscures the linkages necessary for understanding that the yanking of linguistic minority students' tongues is not only undemocratic but is reminiscent of colonial policies, as, for instance, recounted by the African author Ladislaus Semali.

> I first went to Iwa Primary School. Our language of education was not Kiswahili. My struggle began at a very early age,

> constantly trying to find parallels in my culture with what was being taught in the classroom. In school we followed the British colonial syllabus. The books we read in class had been written by Mrs. Bryce, mostly adapted and translated into Kiswahili from British curricula. We read stories and sang songs about having tea in an English garden, taking a ride on the train, sailing in the open seas, and walking the streets of town. These were unfortunately stories far removed from our life experiences. As expected, we memorized them even though they were meaningless.
>
> By the time I was in fifth grade Swahili was no longer the medium of instruction. English had taken over and Kiswahili was only a subject taught once a week. Kichagga was not to be spoken at any time, and if caught speaking [it] we were severely punished. Thus, one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Kichagga while still on the school grounds. The culprit was given corporal punishment—three to five strokes of the cane on the buttocks.[33]

The expression, "And then I went to school," reflects an experience common throughout the world, including First World democracies like the United States, where bilingualism and multiculturalism are under constant assault by the Western cultural commissars. Americans conveniently fall into historical amnesia by forgetting the English-language reeducation camps that were designed primarily to yank Native Americans' tongues. Native-American children were taken from their parents and sent to boarding schools whose primary purpose was to cut them off from their "primitive" languages and "savage" cultures. While we ominously forget the dehumanization of American-Indian children in the so-called boarding schools, we nevertheless proudly denounce as human rights violations the re-education schools created by Communist governments. "And

then I went to school," however, is not forgotten by the American-Indian writer Joseph H. Suina.

> School was a painful experience during those early years. The English language and the new set of values caused me much anxiety and embarrassment. I could not comprehend everything that was happening, but I could understand very well when I messed up or was not doing well. The negative aspect was communicated too effectively, and I became unsure of myself more and more. How I wished I could understand other things as well in school."[34]

The pain of Gloria Anzaldúa's tongue being yanked and Joseph Suina's pain and embarrassment in American schools undeniably share the common experience of colonization with African author Ngugi Wa' Thiongo, who laments the loss of the Gikuyu language in Africa.

> We therefore learned to value words for their meaning and nuances. Language was not a mere string of words. It had a suggestive power well beyond the immediate and lexical meaning. Our appreciation of the suggestive, magical power of language was reinforced by the games we played with words through riddles, proverbs, transpositions of syllables, or through nonsensical but musically arranged words. So we learned the music of our language on top of the content. The language, through images and symbols, gave us a view of the world, but it had a beauty of its own. The home and the field were then our pre-primary school, but what is important for this discussion is that the language of the evening teach-ins, and the language of our work in the field were one.
>
> And then I went to school, a colonial school, and this harmony was broken. The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture.[35]

If we analyze closely the ideology that informs both the debate over bilingual education and the polemic over the primacy of Western heritage versus multiculturalism, we can begin to understand that those ideological principles are consonant with the structures and mechanisms of a colonial ideology designed to devalue the cultural capital and values of the colonized.

It is only through a full understanding of America's colonial legacy that we can begin to comprehend the complexity of bilingualism in the United States. For most linguistic minority speakers, bilingualism is not characterized by the ability to speak two languages. There is a radical difference between a dominant speaker learning a second language and a minority speaker acquiring a dominant language. While the former involves the addition of a second language to one's linguistic repertoire, the latter usually inflicts the experience of subordination upon the minority speaker—both when speaking his or her native language, which is devalued by the dominant culture, and when speaking the dominant language he or she has learned, often under coercive conditions. The colonized context and the asymmetrical power relations with respect to language use in the United States create, on the one hand, a form of forced bilingualism and, on the other, what Albert Memmi calls a linguistic drama.

> In the colonial context, bilingualism is necessary. It is a condition for all culture, all communication and all progress. But while the colonial bilinguist is saved from being walled in, he suffers a cultural catastrophe which is never completely overcome. The difference between native language and cultural language is not peculiar to the colonized, but colonial bilingualism cannot be compared to just any linguistic dualism. Possession of two languages is not merely a matter of having two tools, but actually means participation in two physical and cultural realms. Here, the two worlds symbolized and conveyed by the two tongues are in conflict; they are those of

> the colonizer and the colonized. Furthermore, the colonized's mother tongue, that which is sustained by his feelings, emotions, and dreams, that in which his tenderness and wonder are expressed, thus that which holds the greatest emotional impact, is precisely the one which is the least valued. It has no stature in the country or in the concept of peoples. If he wants to obtain a job, make a place for himself, exist in the community and the world, he must first bow to the language of his masters. In the linguistic conflict within the colonized, his mother tongue is that which is crushed. He himself sets about discarding this infirm language, hiding it from the sight of strangers. In short, colonial bilingualism is neither a purely bilingual situation, in which an indigenous tongue coexists with a purist's language (both belonging to the same world of feeling), nor a simple polyglot richness benefiting from an extra but relatively neuter alphabet; it is a linguistic drama. [36]

Empirical studies that neglect to investigate this linguistic drama fully and that treat bilingualism as mere communication in two languages, invariably end up reproducing those ideological elements characteristic of communication between colonizer and colonized. These naïve empirical studies cannot but recycle old assumptions and values regarding the meaning and usefulness of the students' native languages in education. The notion that education of linguistic minority students is solely a matter of learning standard English still informs the vast majority of bilingual programs and manifests its logic in the renewed emphasis on technical reading and writing skills. For the education of linguistic minority students to become meaningful, it has to be situated within a theory of cultural production and viewed as an integral part of the way in which people produce, transform, and reproduce meaning. Bilingual education, in this sense, must be seen as a medium that constitutes and affirms the historical and existential moments of lived culture. Hence, it is an emi-

nently political phenomenon, and it cannot be disarticulated from the very politics that shapes and maintains its implementation. Bilingual education programs in the United States in fact exist within a neocolonial educational model. By not basing bilingual education on a cultural production model, educators have created programs for linguistic minority students that not only invariably impose a disguised assimilatory model, but also deny students structures through which they could obtain a truly democratic and liberating educational experience.

While the various debates over the past two decades may differ in some of their basic assumptions about the education of linguistic minority students, they all share one common feature—they ignore the role of language as a major force in the construction of human subjectivities. That is, they ignore the way language may either confirm or deny the life histories and experiences of the people who use it.

The pedagogical and political implications in education programs for linguistic minority students are far-reaching, yet largely ignored. These programs, for example, often disregard a fundamental principle of reading, namely, that students learn to read faster and with better comprehension when taught in their native tongue. In addition, the immediate recognition of familiar words and experiences enhances the development of a positive self-concept in children who are somewhat insecure about the status of their language and culture. For this reason, and to be consistent with the goal of constructing a democratic society free from vestiges of oppression, a bilingual education program should be rooted in the cultural capital of subordinate groups and have as its point of departure their own languages.

Educators must develop radical pedagogical approaches that provide students with the opportunity to use their own reality as a basis for literacy, including, obviously, the language they bring to the classroom. To do otherwise is to deny linguistic minority students the rights that lie at the core of the notion of a dem-

ocratic education. The failure to base literacy programs on the minority students' languages means that the opposing forces can neutralize the efforts of educators and political leaders to achieve de-colonization of schooling. It is of tantamount importance in the education of linguistic minority students that the minority language be incorporated as the primary language of instruction, since it is through their own language that the students will be able to reconstruct their history and their culture.

Proponents of English only and other educators who are willing to violate linguistic minority students' democratic rights to be educated in their own language as well as in English work primarily to preserve a social (dis)order, which, according to Jean Paul Sartre, "sanctions misery, chronic hunger, ignorance, or, in general, subhumanity." Educators who refuse to transform the ugliness of human misery, social injustices, and inequalities invariably become educators who, as Sartre so poignantly suggested, "will change nothing and will serve no one, but will succeed only in finding moral comfort in malaise."[37]

Conclusion

During a conference in which Donaldo Macedo attempted to unmask the ideological mechanisms involved in the present assault on bilingual education, a woman approached him and said, "Thank you very much for your courage to say things that many of us are too afraid to say." Since he was taken by surprise, he did not know how to respond, but he managed to make a point with the following question: Isn't it ironic that in a democracy, to speak the truth, at least one's own truth, one must have courage to do so? She squeezed his hand and politely said goodbye. After she left Macedo began to think that what he should have told her is that to advocate for the democratic rights of bilingual students and to denounce the inequities and the racism that shape their mis-education, "it is not necessary to be coura-

geous; it is enough to be honest."[38] And being honest would require that we denounce those reactionary educators who believe that bilingual education "is highly contentious and politicized . . . and [that] there is a lack of clear consensus about the advantages and disadvantages of academic instruction in the primary language in contrast to early and intensive exposure to English."[39] Being honest would also require that we denounce the research industry that makes a living by pointing out the "lack of clear consensus" in the bilingual debate, yet does not provide alternative pedagogies that would effectively address the specific needs of linguistic minority students. The research industry remains complicit with those same oppressive structures responsible for the poverty and human misery that characterize the lives of a large segment of linguistic minority students who go to inner-city public schools.

For instance, take research on the Head Start program, particularly bilingual Head Start. Many white Head Start researchers are rewarded by the dominant ideology for their complicity with the doctrinal system. They receive large grants to study early exposure to literacy as a compensation for the poverty and savage inequalities with which many of the researchers remain in total complicity. Often, these studies end up stating the obvious, pointing out the proverbial "lack of clear consensus," which, in turn, calls for more research. While the call for more research ultimately benefits the researchers themselves, it invariably takes away precious resources that could be spent to diminish the adverse consequences of the inequities that inform the lives of most minority children. Being honest would require that reactionary educators acknowledge the existence of the intimate interrelationship between society's discriminatory practices and the savage inequalities that shape the mis-education of linguistic minority students. This would, no doubt, point to the political nature of education, whose recognition reactionary educators call "politicizing" education.

Accusations of "politicizing" education become a means to muffle rigorous academic debate concerning both the grievances and the educational needs of linguistic minority students. Addressing those needs requires a thorough deconstruction of the ideology that prevents linguistic minority students' sociocultural reality from becoming an area of serious inquiry. Only such an analysis could convince educators who want to take politics out of education that it is erroneous to think that "[s]peaking a nonstandard variety of English can impede the easy acquisition of English literacy by introducing greater deviations in the representation of sounds, making it hard to develop sound-symbol links."[40] This position makes the assumption that standard dialects are monolithic and show no phonological variations, and that they therefore restrict "deviations in the representation of sounds, making it [easier] to develop sound-symbol links." Such a posture is sustained solely by a folk theory that is believed only by non-linguists. Anyone who has been exposed to the Boston dialect notices that its speakers almost always drop the phoneme /r/ in the final position, as in car. Yet middle-class speakers of this dialect have little difficulty linking the dropped phoneme /r/ to its respective graphemic representation. The persistence of this folk theory can be attributed to the present excess of positivism, which elevates numbers to an almost mythical status, yet dismisses other fundamental factors that have important pedagogical implications. Consider Celia T. Leyva's account:

> Growing up, I was often reprimanded for speaking Spanish in class and even in the lunch room, and also discriminated against because I spoke English with a Cuban accent. I was ridiculed not only by classmates, but also by my teachers who insisted that I had to speak English like Americans do. Because of the humiliation I went through growing up, I felt the need to prevent my own children from similar situations,

> and robbed them of the opportunity to learn my native language, and, at the same time, denied them their own culture. I hated English and I hated learning it.[41]

Perhaps factors such as linguistic and cultural resistance play a greater role in the acquisition of standard English than the mere ability to link sound and symbol. bell hooks painfully acknowledges that most African-Americans view standard English, not as a neutral tool of communication, but as the "oppressor's language, [which] has the potential to disempower those of us who are just learning to speak, who are just learning to claim language as a place where we make ourselves subject."[42] In learning the "oppressor's language," students are often forced to experience subordination when speaking it. Upon reflection, bell hooks states, "It is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize."[43] The shame, humiliation, and colonization that non-speakers of standard English feel in their relationship with English have a great deal more to do with their lack of success in reading English than the mechanical difficulties of making sense of sound-symbol link—even those difficulties due to the unavoidable phonological variations found in all dialects, including the dominant standard English. The nature of the nonstandard dialect is not the determining factor in the subordinate students' inability to learn the ABCs, even though that inability makes it appear that they need to be taught "how to learn." These students have little difficulty learning what the chief of psychiatry at the San Diego Children's Hospital rightly described as the "more relevant skills of the DBSs (drive-by-shootings)."[44] These and other survival skills are vividly and painfully mastered by any student whose reality is characterized by violence, human misery, and despair.

Being honest would require that we reconnect with history so as to learn from the thousands of Chicano high-school students who, in 1968, walked out of their schools as a protest against their mis-education. They walked out to demand quality education, cultural dignity, and an end to cultural violence. The passion, courage, and determination those Chicano students demonstrated will serve us as a model as we attempt to refigure how to best educate linguistic minority students. Their courage, passion, and determination energized educators, political leaders, and community activists, who coalesced to address the urgent needs of Chicanos and other linguistic minority students. The needs of linguistic minority students are perhaps even greater today, given the added vicious assault on bilingual education. For this reason teachers, parents, researchers, and community members need to work together with the same determination, not only to provide quality education to linguistic minority students, but also to dismantle the social and cultural fabric that informs, shapes, and reproduces the despair of poverty, fatalism, and hopelessness.

By incorporating minority students' cultural and linguistic forms into their textual, social, and political analysis, educators will develop the means to counter the dominant attempt to impose English as the only educational practice. They will also equip themselves with the necessary tools to embrace a pedagogy of hope based on cultural production, in which specific groups of people produce, mediate, and confirm the mutual ideological elements that emerge from and affirm their cultural experiences. These elements include, obviously, the languages through which these experiences are reflected and refracted. Only through experiences that are rooted in the interests of individual and collective self-determination can we create democratic education. Cultural production, not reproduction by imposing English, is the only means through which we can achieve a true cultural

democracy. In this sense, bilingual education offers us not only a great opportunity to democratize our schools, but, as Paulo Freire said, "is itself a utopian pedagogy."

> It is full of hope, for to be utopian is not to be merely idealistic or impractical, but rather to engage in denunciation and annunciation. Our pedagogy cannot do without a vision of the man [and woman] of the world. It formulates a scientific humanist conception that finds its expression in a dialogical praxis in which the teachers and learners together, in the act of analyzing a dehumanizing reality, denounce it while announcing its transformation in the name of the liberation of man [and woman]."[45]