

Ofelia GARCÍA *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*

West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009 (paperback)

481pp.

ISBN: 978-1-4051-1994-8

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A glance at Ofelia García's impressive CV tells us that a large portion of her professional life has been dedicated to a study of bilingualism and bilingual education. She is currently Professor of Urban Education at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her previous positions include Professor of Bilingual Education at Columbia University Teachers' College and at the City College of New York. García has been on the advisory board of a number of language projects and is currently on the editorial board of two major journals about bilingualism: International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism; the Bilingual Research Journal. She has published widely in the field both individually and with notable scholars, among them Johsua Fishman, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Colin Baker and Hugo Baetens Beardsmore who has contributed to the book in review.

Published in 2009, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*, sets out to convince the reader that, 'Bilingual education is the only way to educate children in the 21st century' (p.5), and this it does over its 481 pages divided into five parts and fifteen chapters with an additional final appendix, *Myths and Realities*. The five parts are an impressive trajectory of the field, and it is clear that García has left no stone unturned in offering the reader in-depth information, factual knowledge and insights into this most complex and controversial areas of education.

We are reminded throughout the book that there are more bilingual and multilingual individuals in the world than monolinguals and that bilingual education, particularly in this day and age, would be a more suitable form of educational delivery than the monolingual models offered by most institutions.

Two metaphors run throughout the book. One is of the banyan tree whose many entwined roots represent the complexity of bilingualism but also allow 'for growth in different directions at the same time [because they are] grounded in the diverse social realities from which it emerges', (p.17). The other metaphor represents opposing views of bilingualism symbolized in two vehicles - the simple bicycle, the two balanced wheels of which represent the traditional monolingual/ monoglossic view of a bilingual as having equal competence in two separate languages, and the all-terrain vehicle, the wheels of which bear unequal weight as the vehicle moves across rough territory. This represents a heteroglossic view of

bilingualism which is more suited to 'our complex multilingual and multimodal global communicative networks [that] often reflect much more than two separate monolingual codes', (p.8).

Part I: Bilingual Education for All

This consists of a single chapter, *Introducing Bilingual Education*, in which the thesis of the book is stated. García's argument is bold, that bilingual education is 'the only way to educate children in the twenty-first century' (p.5), and that this is dependent on a plural vision of bilingual education which requires a reconceptualisation of what it is in this day and age. This reconceptualisation challenges the monoglossic 'one plus one equals two' concept of bilingualism which has pervaded and still pervades many societies, and sets it against a heteroglossic, more dynamic perspective which reflects the 'linguistic fluidity present in the discourse of the twenty-first century' (p.17). This chapter maps out the geopolitical, sociohistorical and sociolinguistic orientations of language use which present bilingualism as a problem, as a right and as a resource. The chapter ends with the admonition that in a globalised world there are no clearly demarcated boundaries of language and culture. Bilingual education, though complex, offers choice and the means of dealing with the linguistic complexity of the world.

Part II: Bilingualism and Education

This consists of four chapters which deal with the concepts of 'Languaging', 'Translanguaging', the 'Sociopolitics of Bilingualism' and the 'Benefits of Bilingualism'. Language and language use are examined in accordance with the context in which they are developed. García uses 'language' as a verb and states that people *language* for many purposes: at home, in society and in academic contexts. She argues that 'languaging bilingually' is the norm throughout the world. She uses the term 'translanguaging' (borrowed from Cen Williams, cited in Baker, 2001) to describe 'multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds' (p.45). In the bilingual classroom this may mean that, for example, reading is done in one language and writing in another. This is compatible with a more realistic view of bilinguals as having unequal competence in the two languages.

García provides a comprehensive overview of the various models of bilingualism. These are dependent on the needs of communities, nations and states and are often politically-driven. Four models of bilingualism are presented: subtractive (where children learn a second language which gradually takes over from and eliminates the other), additive (a sort of 'double monolingualism' where another language is added to the existing repertoire), recursive (where attempts are made to revitalize a language that had previously been suppressed) and dynamic (involving multiple and multimodal language practices as befits the means of communication in a world of shifting peoples and increased access to and use of technology). This term is compatible with what European institutions call 'plurilingualism'. García also

presents social and cognitive benefits of bilingualism which can be maximized or minimized depending on socio-political contexts which influence educational policy.

Part III: Bilingual Education Policy

This part is divided into six chapters which deal with 'Frameworks and Types' of educational policy, 'Factors and Variables', 'U.S Language Policy', 'Language Promotion by European Supra-national Institutions', 'Monoglossic Bilingual Education Policy' and 'Heteroglossic Bilingual Education Policy'. These chapters will be of particular interest to policy makers and course developers as theoretical frameworks for bilingual education types are presented. These are supported by a number of tables containing all relevant information which facilitate reading and interpretation. A full global trajectory of bilingual education is presented. Of particular interest to me was the chapter on 'Language Promotion by European Supra-national Institutions' by Hugo Baetens Beardsmore which emphasizes the positive promotion of foreign language learning by The Council of Europe and The European Commission, and cites Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a means of providing for dynamic heteroglossic bilingual education. CLIL is something that I have been actively promoting in primary English language teaching and have included the study and practice of it in the Masters in the Teaching of English and another Foreign Language at FLUP.

Part IV: Bilingual Education Practices

This part consists of four chapters which are of particular relevance to teachers in bilingual contexts. The chapters cover 'Bilingualism in the Curriculum', 'Pedagogy and Practices', 'Biliteracy Practices and Pedagogy', and 'Assessment of Bilinguals'. These chapters serve to illustrate how bilingual education may be implemented. Such implementation, García insists, is one in which social justice and social interaction should prevail.

Those of us viewing bilingual education from a foreign language teaching perspective will be familiar with the bilingual education approaches and methods mentioned: grammatical, communicative and cognitive. Interesting too, are the scaffolding strategies mentioned and the suggestions of the phases in which these may be applied (p. 329). Once more, all main points are made accessible by the tables of key terms presented in these chapters.

Part V: Conclusion: Bilingual Education for the Twenty-first Century

In this short section García brings together her arguments for bilingual education for the twenty-first century profoundly and sensitively. We are reminded of the limited, short-sighted traditional view of bilingualism from the monolingual/ monoglossic perspective - that of a stigma on one hand or privilege of the elite on the other (in subtractive and additive bilingual education) to the broader heteroglossic view of bilingualism as the right and necessity of all children in

the world (in recursive and dynamic bilingual education). The languaging and translanguaging behaviours of bilinguals should be encouraged and regarded as a resource in this day and age. García brings to our minds once again the image of the banyan tree, the entwined roots of which should remind us of the complexity of bilingualism and bilingual education. The banyan trees of bilingual education are ones which are fertile and grow in the many different soils around the world.

García's work is essential reading for policy-makers, course developers, and teachers and students everywhere. It is 'the must-have manual' which provides in-depth coverage of bilingualism and bilingual education from historical, socio-cultural and educational perspectives. This it does with great clarity and sensitivity.

'Bilingual education is much more than a technique or a pedagogy. Bilingual education is education, and it is also a way of equalizing opportunities' (p.386).

Recebido em março de 2012; aceite em maio de 2012.