

Universität Hamburg
Streitfall Zweisprachigkeit
The Bilingual Controversy

Mainstreaming: Pedagogies
& Policies



Schooling for ethnic and linguistic minorities

Mainstreaming – common policy rhetoric in many English-speaking countries

- respect for ethnic & language diversity
- equal opportunities
- common entitlement to services

But

▶ very different curricular & pedagogic responses are possible

Access to mainstream provision

2 main approaches:

- making majority-language medium schooling environment inclusive and beneficial for minority-language students (e.g. English as school language for Polish pupils in England, may use students' L1 opportunistically)
- making use of minority-language students' 1st language as medium of learning and wider curriculum communication (e.g. bilingual school programmes in some parts of the USA, provision under pressure)

Making majority-language medium schooling environment inclusive and beneficial for minority-language students

4 main types of pedagogic orientations:

- language-content orientation
- content-language orientation
- trans-curriculum language orientation
- student orientation

(See Leung, 2007 for details)

England - late 1970s-present

Official policy position: Making curriculum accessible for language minority pupils in English-medium education

Student orientation

Pedagogic assumptions:

- managing student affect is key to success
 - learning English through exposure & osmosis
- no official English as second/additional language curriculum; little specialist teacher education for ESL/EAL

Social & political context:

- end of affairs with empire legacy
- former colonial subjects now citizens

Britain as home of nested communities

We believe that a genuinely pluralist society cannot be achieved without the social integration of ethnic minority communities and the ethnic majority community within a common whole. Whilst we are not looking for the assimilation of the minority communities within an unchanged dominant way of life, we are perhaps looking for the 'assimilation' of all groups within a redefined concept of what it means to live in British society today. (DES, 1985:8)

Student orientation: mainstreaming ideology

Language and language education...[have] usually been perceived in narrow and discrete terms, initially as concerning the 'problem' of teaching English to children for whom it is not a first language... **We believe that the language needs of an ethnic minority child should no longer be compartmentalised in this way and seen as outside the mainstream of education since language learning and the development of effective communication skills is a feature of every pupil's education...**Linguistic diversity provides the opportunity for all schools...to broaden the linguistic horizons of all pupils by ensuring that they acquire a real understanding of the role, range and richness of language in all its forms. (DES, 1985: 385-386, emphasis added)

Proposition 227 California 1997/8

- bilingual school programmes of various kinds in place in mid-1990s
- 29% of school students in California participated in 1997-8 (Gándara, 2000)
- two-way bilingual programmes - 40/60 or 50/50— high level student achievement across the curriculum — received strong research support (e.g. Cummins, 2000; Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1997 & 2002)

Proposition 227 →

- severely restrict the use of language minority students' L1 for curriculum learning purposes
- language minority students to be offered specially designed English language learning provision ...

Arguments for Proposition 227

If other languages such as Chinese or Spanish are of growing world importance, English ranks in a class by itself ... over the past 20 years it has rapidly become the entire world's unofficial language, over the past 20 years it has ... [dominated] the spheres of science, technology and international business ... lack of literacy in English represents a crippling almost fatal disadvantage in our global economy. (Unz, 1997: M6)

Arguments for Proposition 227

It is...a tragedy of the first order that, even as the reality of the American melting pot remains as powerful as ever, the ideology behind it has almost disappeared, having been replaced by the 'diversity' model...A social ideology that allots to blacks and Latinos and Asians their own separatist institutions and suggested shares of society's benefits cannot long be prevented from extending itself to whites as well, especially as whites become merely one minority among many minorities...the diversity prescription contains the seeds of national dissolution. (Unz, 1999:18)

Similar Ideology \neq Similar Policy

Common policy value &
rhetoric \rightarrow

Different local interpretations
in historic contexts \rightarrow

Different policies in practice