

De Mejía. A.-M. (Ed.) (2005).

Bilingual Education in South America.

Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 151 pp.

This volume brings together eight studies on bilingual education in Latin America, providing accounts of bilingual projects in six countries: Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. The research presented here focuses on three important aspects of language learning in South America: the rationale behind bilingual education, the progress that has been made so far, and the current challenges. These chapters lay the foundations for a sound understanding of this subject against the panorama of the continent as a whole, taking into account the special context of each country.

The South American situation allows us to think of two scenarios in which bilingualism is important. On the one hand, we have the context of communities in which the majority of citizens can learn their first language and a foreign language such as English, French, Portuguese or Spanish. On the other, there are projects intended to preserve and promote the language of minorities within the population, such as the native language of autochthonous groups, and the sign languages used in each country. Research from each of these scenarios is reported, in order to provide an all-round perspective on bilingualism.

The first three chapters discuss policy and practice concerning minority languages in Ecuador, Peru and Brazil. Kendall King describes the most frequent models and fallacies in the area of bilingual education in the Andes. King maintains that bilingual education in the indigenous languages will contribute to conserving linguistic diversity and promoting equality and job opportunities. In particular, the author emphasizes the project in Saraguro, Ecuador, which offers the population an additive model for the acquisition of Quechua as an L2, enabling the people who live in this community to learn their heritage language.

Interest in continuing the formal study of indigenous languages is not exclusive to Ecuador. Other countries have also made the effort to conserve their ancestral languages. María Elena García gives a historical account of the different phases which Quechua has gone through in Peru since the Spanish conquest, and the varying levels of status accorded to it. She quotes from a variety of texts, as well as from people she met during 16 months of ethnographic fieldwork. Her chapter offers a chronological vision of the events which have led the Peruvian people to accept that the indigenous peoples had the right to bilingual education, so that they

can interact with the world of culture and learning both in the official language of the country and in their native tongue.

The right to communicate competently with others on an equal footing in the L1 and L2 has also been a particular focus of interest for a minority population in the south of Brazil. Carlos Skliar and Ronice Muller Quadros describe the different steps that Brazilian society has taken to understand the dignity, identity, capacities and rights of people with hearing disability. They explain how these people construct their own identity when they learn Brazilian sign language and Brazilian Portuguese, as they can communicate not only in sign language but also in written Portuguese.

The fourth chapter proposes a model which integrates the principles of high-quality bilingual education in programmes that are open to the whole population. Anne-Marie de Mejia's study centres on the different ethnic groups in Colombia, as well as the majority groups. She identifies four issues that have to be taken into consideration when planning for bilingual education. First, De Mejia advocates the promotion of bi-culturalism, bilingualism and an attitude of tolerance towards groups with different cultures. Moreover, she believes that it is vitally important that bilingual programmes should encourage students to progress in their first language. She also points to the need to adapt each programme to the realities of each institution. Finally, her study brings out the importance of pre-service and ongoing teacher education.

In the fifth chapter, Cristina Banfi and Raymond Day provide an overview of the development of bilingual education in Argentina. They summarize changes in learning and curriculum, ranging from heritage language schools for immigrants, to measures designed to develop a curriculum that integrates the national and international requirements of a globalized world. Their chapter concludes by stressing the need to evaluate the progress of such programmes and their participants.

The last three chapters analyse oral or written language produced by learners at bilingual institutions in Paraguay, Ecuador and Colombia. What these studies have in common is their interest in uncovering the extent to which this kind of education has contributed to the pupils' academic and communicative attainment. Susan Spezzini describes the case of thirty-four Paraguayans who studied at a centre for immersion in English throughout their school years. She provides the results of interviews and questionnaire in which the participants give their opinions about their skills, knowledge and learning experience. JoEllen M. Simpson aims to determine the influence of bilingualism on the development of narrative styles and strategies in Spanish and English in first-year primary school students.

Lastly, Claudia Ordóñez compares the level of spoken production among students aged 15. Her subjects are divided into three groups of 18 students from a bilingual school (English and Spanish), a monolingual one (Spanish), and a monolingual school in the USA.

One invaluable contribution of this publication is the clarity with which the subject matter is handled. The authors offer sound arguments to justify the right to bilingual education, and provide solid evidence of the progress that has been made over the years, bringing to light the challenges that are still to be met so that students can develop their academic and communicative competences to the full. The contents of this book are accessible to all members of the educational community interested in the role of bilingual education in students' linguistic, academic and cultural development.

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Creese, A., & Martin, P. (Eds.) (2003).

Multilingual Classroom Ecologies: Inter-relationships, Interactions and Ideologies.
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This work is comprised of a set of eight papers presented at the Third International Symposium on Bilingualism at the University of the West of England, Bristol, UK, in April 2001, preceded by a Foreword by the editors, and closed by an Afterword by Nancy H. Hornberger. All the studies within this work shed light on an issue that has not been very well documented so far: the ecology of multilingual classrooms in very varied places (USA, UK, Brunei, Corsica, Sweden), revolving around how ideology can shape the inter-relationships and interactions between individuals and languages (language evolution), depending on geographical, socio-economic and cultural factors (language environment), and revealing the power relationships inherent in the use of any given language, which might hinder its natural use (language endangerment).

Ellen Skilton-Sylvester's paper makes the point that teachers' ideology of multilingualism is the last instance to support (a position she defends) or devalue linguistic diversity in their class policy (micro level), regardless of state laws on this issue (macro level). To illustrate her point, the author studies the case of ten different ESL teachers in the USA (a country with an officially monolingual tradition), who work with young and adult Cambodian students. She divides the teachers