

Linguistic and cultural rights of immigrant students in Catalonia: Perspectives and practices of educators in four elementary schools

Leslie Reese

Department of Teacher Education, California State University Long Beach, USA
1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA Phone 562-985-1152

Leslie.Reese@csulb.edu

Patricia Silva

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Universitat de Lleida, Spain
Avda l'Estudi General, 4. 25001 Lleida. Phone +34 973706587.

Serafín Antúnez

Department of Teaching and Educational Organization, Universitat de Barcelona, Spain
Pg. Vall d'Hebron 171, Pl. 2ª Barcelona 08035. Phone + 34 934035046

Isabel del-Arco

Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Universitat de Lleida, Spain
Avda l'Estudi General, 4. 25001 Lleida. Phone +34 973706575.

Please direct correspondence to Leslie Reese

Acknowledgements: We express our appreciation to the educators in the participating schools without whose generosity and support this project would not have been possible.

Linguistic and cultural rights of immigrant students in Catalonia: Perspectives and practices of educators in four elementary schools

A growing and increasingly diverse immigrant population in Spain, and in particular in the region of Catalonia, places demands on the educational system. In this study, we use of minority language rights framework to examine how Catalan educators conceptualize the linguistic and cultural rights of immigrant students in public schools, and the instructional and organizational practices they use to respond to the needs of these students within Catalan immersion programs. Interviews with teachers and principals and observations in classrooms and schoolyards were carried out in four elementary schools in two urban areas in Catalonia. Findings indicated that educators were adhering to a policy focus on the goal of social cohesion through Catalan language use and instruction; however, neither instructional strategies for non-native speakers of Catalan, nor use of their home languages for instructional support, were much in evidence. Although occasional efforts were reported to recognize students' home cultures in celebrations and activities at school, educators tended to view the home cultures in largely deficit terms. De facto segregation in schools serving almost exclusively immigrant students was identified by educators as a challenge both for elementary school instruction as well as for subsequent social integration of immigrant youth into Catalan society.

Comentado [G1]: new demands

Comentado [G2]: catalan-speakers

Keywords: Multilingual education, Catalan, immigrant pupils, language policy, elementary school

Introduction

With increasing transmigration and global mobility worldwide, the beginning of the 1990s marked a new immigration phase in Europe, with immigration concentrated in the Southern European countries of Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece (Azzolini, Schnell, & Palmer 2012). Currently in Catalonia, 15% of school-aged children are foreign born (IDESCAT 2016). Immigrant children, both foreign born and second generation children of immigrants, consistently underperform native students in school (Cebolla Boado and González Ferrer 2013; Vila 2006a, 2006b); and, among the regions of Spain, Catalonia has one of the largest achievement gaps between native born and foreign born students (Santos Rego, Crespo-

Comesaña, Lorenzo-Moledo, and Godás-Otero 2012). Immigrants are more likely to live in poverty, as well as to suffer ethnocentric and racist discrimination from the majority population (Teasley 2004). These conditions have caused researchers to conclude that educating the immigrant population ‘has become one of the greatest challenges for the Spanish educational system’ (Santos Rego et al. 2012, 194).

The education of immigrant children in Catalan schools takes place in a region in which language rights have been achieved as a result of long-term struggle and dedication. The Catalan Statute of Autonomy of 2006 affirms the co-official status of the Catalan and Aranese languages in the region along with the national language (Spanish). Policies in Catalonia protect and foster the use and maintenance of its “own language” (*llengua pròpia*) in school as well as in diverse public and private spheres in the community and workplace (Roller 2002). However, questions remain regarding the extent to which respect for and fostering of the linguistic and cultural experiences of children of a variety of other language backgrounds are part of their educational experiences in Catalan schools, posing the questions of what schooling will look like for an ever more multicultural Spain, and who will define its curricular content (Teasley 2004).

In this study, we examine the experiences of immigrant children in four elementary schools in Catalonia and explore ways in which educators are responding to the needs posed by this changing student population. We employ the term “immigrant students” to include those labeled ‘novinguts’ or newcomers and others born outside of Catalonia, as well as children of immigrant parents who, although born in Catalonia, were raised in homes in which the language was other than Catalan. Thus, we define immigrant students as children of immigrants who

speak a language other than Catalan or Spanish in the home and who enter school with little to no experience with or proficiency in Catalan.

Primary language instruction for minority students

From a strictly academic perspective, research in a wide variety of international contexts documents the advantages of instruction in the native language (L1) of language minority students (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Mohanty, and Panda 2009). The principle of linguistic interdependence posits that cognitive/academic skills and concepts learned in the first language are available to be accessed in the second language with instruction in that language (Cummins 1986, 2001, 2009). Thus, the concept of transfer of prior knowledge, concepts, and skills from a student's stronger language to his/her second language (L2) serves as a foundation of programs of bilingual instruction. Linguistic interdependence can involve transfer from L1 to L2 of conceptual elements, metacognitive strategies, specific linguistic elements, and phonological awareness (August and Shanahan 2006).

In countries such as the United States, with large populations of speakers of varied immigrant languages and little recognition of regional languages, the outcome of greatest interest to the state is the ability of minority language students to speak and compete academically in the national language (their L2). The benefits of bilingual instruction over monolingual instruction in the national language have been repeatedly documented for this purpose (Francis, Lesaux, and August 2006; Genesee et al. 2006; Rolstad, Mahoney, and Glass 2005; Slavin & Cheung 2005).

"Strong" bilingual programs, or those in which the native language is used for instruction over an extended period of time, have been shown to have superior academic outcomes in comparison with "weak" programs in which the L1 is used on a short-term basis

only as a transition into L2 instruction (Baker 2006; Benson 2009). In addition to fostering academic outcomes, institutional support for L1 language and culture is also necessary for students' self-confidence and positive identity formation, to combat marginalization, and to foster intercultural understanding (Cummins 2001).

With respect to regional languages, however, the arguments in favor of bilingual education rest less on the cognitive and academic advantages of home language instruction and more on the rights that linguistic communities should be accorded. Proponents of 'linguistic human rights' argue that minority languages and speakers should be accorded at least some of the protections and institutional support that majority languages and speakers enjoy (May 2006). A distinction is made between national minority groups and indigenous groups historically associated with a particular territory, such as the historical languages of the autonomous regions of Spain (e.g. *català*, *galego*, *eúsquera*), and ethnic minority groups who are typically immigrants or refugees. At the European level, regional languages have historically received greater protection and promotion than have immigrant languages, despite the growing numbers of speakers of immigrant languages (Extra and Gorter 2001). In Catalonia, active promotion of the *llengua pròpia* ('our own language') has resulted in high levels of bilingualism and of support for the equal use of both languages, Catalan and Spanish.

Bilingual education in Catalonia

Catalonia, located in the northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula, is one of the autonomous communities of Spain with its own recognized language. Although actively repressed during the years of the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975), the regional languages now enjoy co-official status with the national language, Spanish, within their respective autonomous communities. Educational responses within each community have varied. During the 1980's

and 1990's, Catalonia was the recipient of heavy immigration from other parts of Spain. In response, it implemented immersion programs to foster Catalan proficiency among Spanish-speaking students and native, or autochthonous, students alike. These immersion programs have been found to be effective in terms of students' academic performance and linguistic proficiency (Strubell y Trueta, Andreu Barrachina and Sintés Pascual 2011). However, implementation of instruction in the Catalan language has not been without controversy and political challenges that continue to this day (Woolard and Frekko 2013). Passage of the 1998 *Llei de Política Lingüística* requiring Catalan instruction at all levels of schooling resulted in critics from both within Catalonia and nationally to question whether the new requirements were “*igual que Franco pero al revés*”, or just like the linguistic repression under the Franco dictatorship but reversed now in favor of Catalan (Mar-Molinero 2000b). Proponents contend that the vulnerability of Catalan, in a context characterized by wide use of Spanish both socially and in the media, requires its continued protection and support.

Beginning around the year 2000, however, immigration patterns changed dramatically in Catalonia, as well as in other parts of Spain and Europe. The number of foreign residents in Catalonia reached a peak in 2010, with the number dropping to 1,028,069 in 2015. This figure represents 14.5% of the total population of Catalonia, a percentage well above the 10.7% of foreign residents in the Spanish population overall (IDESCAT 2016). While Moroccans are the most numerous group (at 21%) among foreign residents, immigrants form a highly diverse population made up of people from Romania, China, Pakistan, Italy, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa.

In response to these demographic changes, current Catalan language policy was formulated in the 2004 Plan for Language and Social Cohesion (*Pla per a la Llengua i Cohesio*’

Social, LIC). Besalú (2006) summarized the three main objectives of the Plan LIC as to (1) consolidate the Catalan and Aranese languages as the foundation for a plurilingual education; (2) foster intercultural education based on equality, solidarity, and respect for cultural diversity; and (3) to promote equality of opportunities in order to avoid any type of marginalization (52). Thus, current law reaffirms the critical role of the Catalan language as the ‘vehicular language’ of the school, the language in which instruction and all school-oriented activities take place. Current immersion programs in Catalonia are not voluntary, but rather constitute the required program for all students. In these multilingual programs, students study the Catalan, Spanish, and English languages for several hours a week in each language. The rest of the academic content instruction is carried out in Catalan.

Newman et al. (2013) claim that Catalan policy is a striking departure from assimilationist aims of English-only programs in the U.S., stating that use of the terms ‘multilingual’ and ‘intercultural’ in policy language represent acknowledgement and acceptance of diversity. The authors conclude that this orientation ‘reflects the post-immigration reality by moving beyond the traditional locally oriented Spanish Catalan binary opposition that Normalization addressed in the 1980s’ (197). While it is important to underscore the differences between the demographic characteristics and political climate of the earlier period and the present day, the present study will examine the extent to which intercultural education is understood and implemented in current settings.

Conceptual framework

Proponents of multilingual education, or the use of more than one language for instruction, argue that increasing globalization and migration result in settings across the world in which ‘linguistic diversity is no longer seen as an irregularity in a normally monolingual

pattern' but rather is viewed as normality (Busch 2011, 544). In Catalonia, active promotion of their "own language" has resulted in high levels of bilingualism and of support for the equal use of both languages, Catalan and Spanish. However, the principles of linguistic interdependence and transfer that support bilingual instruction in two-language settings, for the national and regional languages, are equally true for students in classrooms and schools in which multiple languages are present. And institutional use and recognition of students' L1 is equally important to foster self-confidence and combat marginalization of immigrant language speakers. As May (2008) notes, 'The promotion of Catalan, while not necessarily problematic in itself, does not as yet extend to the active recognition of other minority languages and cultures within Catalonia' (250). Multilingual education advocates recognize the difficulties in bridging theory and practice in ever more complex linguistic and cultural contexts, asking us to consider how to take the principles of bilingual education and move to the practicalities of multilingual education (Mohanty 2009).

In order to study the issue of the education of immigrant children in Catalonia, including the policies that guide its implementation, as well as the understandings of teachers and school leaders of their responsibilities in enacting these policies, we make use of a minority language rights framework. May (2006) reminds us that the establishment of majority-minority language hierarchies is not primarily a linguistic process. Rather it is a 'historically, socially, and politically constructed process' that is imbued with wider (and unequal) power relations (259). The linguistic situation in Catalonia is complex, with a regional minority language—Catalan—consolidating social and political power to emerge as a vibrant co-official language. Catalan is used in all levels of education, from early education through university, and is used in all social,

commercial, and administrative settings. At the same time, Catalan and Spanish co-exist with a growing number of immigrant minority languages that do not experience the same legal and educational rights.

Proponents of linguistic human rights do not advocate for replacing the majority language with the minority language, but rather for doing away with the assumption that majority language development must be at the expense of the minority language (May 2006). This assumption about language and what is necessary, appropriate, and effective in language instruction forms part of what Schiffman (2006) has termed linguistic culture: 'I see language *policy* (roughly, 'decision-making about language') as inextricably connected to *linguistic culture*, which I define as the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious structures, and all the other cultural 'baggage' that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their culture' (112). In his analysis of bilingual education and policy in the United States, Ricento (1998) identified core cultural values associated with language, and argued that policies that are aligned with these values have greater potential for implementation than do policies that are not aligned with these values.

Assumptions regarding the relative value and role of minority languages within the state range from those that explicitly promote minority languages (such as when these are accorded official status) to those that actively repress minority languages, resulting in what Skuttnabb-Kangas (2000) termed *linguicide* or 'linguistic genocide.' Skuttnabb-Kangas identified and documented worldwide a series of activities that, while not actively repressing minority language use and education, nonetheless serve to achieve covert *linguicide*, or disappearance of the languages. These activities include *invisibilization*, in which minority languages are ignored

in school. This can be achieved by placing students in classrooms with teachers who cannot speak their language, by distributing students in such a way that their languages cannot be used for instruction or interaction, and by refusing to provide translations to promote family involvement.

The protection and promotion of the historical regional languages of Spain has caused Spain to be cited as an example of ‘a positive approach to creating respect and appreciation for the many languages that coexist within a country’s borders’ (Miguéliz 2001, 348). We situate our study in an historical and sociopolitical context in which regional minority language rights have been attained as the result of decades-long struggle and in which these rights are perceived as requiring continuing defense and support. Is this historical context one in which immigrant minority language rights will also be championed? Our qualitative study addresses this complex issue, focusing on the following research questions:

1. What do educators perceive as their primary responsibilities in the teaching of immigrant students in Catalan immersion programs? How do Catalan educators conceptualize the linguistic and cultural rights of immigrant students in public schools?
2. What instructional and organizational practices do they use to respond to the needs of immigrant students?
3. How do educators view immigrant students’ current academic progress and probable future outcomes?

Methods

Research context

The present study was carried out in four public elementary schools with concentrations of immigrant students in the region of Catalonia in northeastern Spain. Two of the schools were

located in the greater Barcelona area and two were located in the city of Lleida, the center of an agricultural area approximately 160 kilometers from Barcelona. While there was variability with respect to the age of the school buildings and in the demographic characteristics of their surrounding communities, the schools shared certain characteristics. All were relatively small public schools of approximately 250 students and all included in the same campus three levels of early education (*educación infantil*) classes for children ages 3 through 5 and elementary school classrooms for students in grades 1 through 6.

All schools were located in low-income urban neighborhoods with high levels of diversity and all received the official designation of ‘educational centers with maximum complexity.’ According Departament d’Ensenyament (2014) guidelines, these schools are characterized by high percentages of parents with low levels of education and in low-skilled jobs or unemployed, as well as by high percentages of foreign-born students. The four schools each reported 15-20 different languages represented among their students and, while all schools hosted a significant number of students of families from Morocco, in no school did a single language background form a majority. As parents, primarily mothers, brought their younger children to school in the morning, some spoke to their children and to each other in their native languages (e.g. Arabic, Chinese and Urdu); most of the children, however, conversed with each other in Spanish. Teachers described Spanish, the language of the larger Spanish society, as the ‘language of the street’ and of the playground. Catalan, the ‘vehicular language’ of the school, was used exclusively by teachers in the immersion program and was used by students in addressing their teachers, at least by the middle and upper grades.

Although the Catalan law explicitly calls for integration of students, in actuality all four of the schools were characterized by high levels of segregation. One school counted no native

speakers of Catalan among the students, and other schools reported at most one student per classroom. Thus, although teachers used the vehicular language for instruction, children did not interact with peers who were native speakers of the language. As noted by Santos-Rego et al. (2012), ‘School segregation turns out to be greater than residential segregation; that is to say that the first is only partially explained by the second’ (195).

Data sources and analysis

Interviews were carried out with 4 school principals (3 females and 1 male) and 12 teachers (3 at each school; 9 females and 3 males). Teachers were all bilingual speakers of both Catalan and Spanish; however, none spoke any of the languages of the immigrant students or belonged to any of the immigrant ethnic groups.

The interviews were open-ended ethnographic interviews lasting 45-60 minutes in which participants were asked to describe the linguistic abilities of the children in their classrooms in Catalan, Spanish, and their native languages, and to describe their classroom practices with respect to instruction and evaluation of the students. Teachers were asked to share their perspectives on the purpose and effectiveness of the immersion program, changes that they had observed with the current immigrant students and families, their responsibilities with respect to the education of these students, and their prognoses for their students’ futures. With one exception, interviews were carried out in Spanish as a courtesy to the international research team. (Note: Direct quotes from the interviews in the text that follows have been translated from Spanish into English by the authors.)

School observations at each site included both formal and informal observations in a variety of classrooms, as well as informal observations of student interactions at entry to school, on the playground, and in the cafeteria. Interactions among parents and school personnel were

observed at school entrance and in the office. Research team members (authors of the study) recorded both structured observation protocols as well as open-ended field notes. Observations focused on evidence of attention to the primary languages and cultures of the students, instructional and organizational practices as evidenced during instruction as well as through materials posted in classroom and hallway displays. Community observations focused on evidence of linguistic and cultural diversity in the neighborhoods surrounding the schools.

The researchers carrying out the study represent an international perspective on immigrant education and institutional responses. The first author is a former bilingual teacher in the U.S. whose research focuses on the connections between Latino families and American schools. The second author is a Mexican immigrant to Catalonia whose research experience includes educational leadership. The third author is an immigrant from another autonomous community in Spain, with experience teaching Roma students and expertise in intercultural education. The fourth author is a native speaker of Catalan with extensive experience in areas of educational leadership and teacher preparation.

Data were analyzed using first and second cycle coding procedures for qualitative analysis (Saldaña 2013). Using NVivo software, interview and observational data were reviewed and coded according to topics of interest. These codes included both those derived from past research and theory, as well as those that emerged through review of the data. Codes derived from published research on minority education included L1 use, L1 culture inclusion, language as problem/right/resource (Ruiz 1984), and minority language rights. Codes that emerged through iterative review of narrative data included emotional needs, deficit perspective, immersion program goals, and social cohesion. The practice of constant

comparison, originally proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1965), was used to examine similarities and differences across participants.

Findings

Our research questions focus on educators' understandings of their immigrant students' cultural and linguistic rights, the instructional practices that they implement to address the needs of immigrant students, and their perceptions of their students' ultimate academic and post-educational outcomes. Because we view educators' understandings, values, and attitudes as inextricably linked with practices, we have chosen to report on these together as they relate to established policy goals for the education of immigrant students. The 2004 plan *Llengua, Interculturalitat i Cohesió Social* that guides current Catalan immersion programs includes three major goals: consolidating the Catalan language, fostering intercultural education, and attaining equal opportunities. Findings are organized around these goals as we examine the 'linguistic culture' (Schiffman 2006) that informs the policy formation itself, educators' understandings of how to educate immigrant students most effectively, and the practices that result from these understandings. Ultimately, we question the extent to which intercultural education as envisioned in the plan and practiced in the schools is in fact responsive to the diversity resulting from the current immigration boom.

Goal 1: Consolidating Catalan language

As one of the principals explained, 'The vehicular language of the school is Catalan because we are in Catalonia, obviously. This means that in all of the school tasks, in the hallways, in the classroom, in the cafeteria, on the playground, the vehicular language is Catalan. Apart from this, there are four hours a week of Spanish instruction. In general terms,

Con formato: Fuente: (Predeterminada) Times New Roman, Cursiva

Con formato: Fuente: (Predeterminada) Times New Roman, Cursiva

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman

this is what is outlined in the linguistic plan.’ Observations confirm that in all schools, teachers carry out instruction exclusively in Catalan for all subjects except Spanish and English. Catalan is not only the language in which academic knowledge and concepts are developed, but it is also the language that teachers use for purposes of social cohesion. ‘The thing is you need to create a framework for getting along, and that framework is Catalan.’

The term ‘*nouvingut*’ refers to newcomers, that is, students who have recently arrived in Catalonia and do not yet speak the language. Usually the term refers to students who have been in Catalonia for two to three years or less. School staffs recognize, however, that the majority of their students, although born in Catalonia, share experiences with *nouvinguts*. ‘A student can arrive here at three years of age and with Spanish nationality who has never spoken a word of Catalan or of Spanish, although this seems impossible... We consider them as if they were foreigners, in the sense of how we work with them.’

In the schools observed, the immersion program addresses the linguistic needs of ‘newcomer’ students (and those who come to school without proficiency in Catalan) in a variety of ways. The ‘*aula de acogida*’ (reception classroom) is a classroom designed for newcomers where students are pulled out of the classroom for special language attention during specific hours during the week. All schools utilized the strategy of ‘*desdoblament*,’ or providing two teachers in a single classroom during key classes in order to reduce class size and provide more individual attention. One teacher explained the purpose of the newcomer class as ‘basically so they learn Catalan quickly so that as soon as possible they can be incorporated normally into the regular classroom.’

However, in the ‘regular classroom,’ relatively little attention to the needs of second language learners was observed beyond preschool, where numerous visuals, labels, and

manipulatives were used. In the great majority of the other classrooms, individual help was provided for students who, in the words of one teacher, ‘can’t keep up with the rhythm of the class.’ However, although all of the students in most of the classrooms are non-native speakers of Catalan, there was no systematic use of instructional strategies such as those outlined in the well-recognized SIOP method, including focus on linguistic objectives as well as content objectives, explicit vocabulary instruction, providing comprehensible input, and frequent checking for understanding (Echevarría et al. 2015). Even when students were broken into smaller groups, ostensibly to foster oral language development, this was done without a clear linguistic focus or systematic practice of key vocabulary and structures.

An area that did receive focused attention was on meeting the emotional needs of children. Many of the educators associated emotional problems with what they termed culture shock: ‘In a neighborhood like this one, the level of culture shock is triple what might be experienced naturally. Another teacher observed, ‘There are children who are in their home country and they are told that they’re leaving, and a few days later they encounter a different reality. These children are forced into a state of shock.’ This culture shock was particularly dramatic in early education, when 3-year-olds arrived at school unable to understand anyone during the school day. A former P3 teacher described from her experience, ‘At the beginning it goes very badly for them because they cry a lot and you can’t say anything to them in their language.’

At the same time, many of the educators located children’s emotional problems in family circumstances, and in some cases, cultural experiences: ‘It is another social reality that children are living in with very difficult situations at home...At school they feel that they are heard, respected, loved...in ways that sometimes they are not outside of school.’ As teachers

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman, Inglés (Estados Unidos)

described immigrant family circumstances, these were frequently described in deficit terms, not only in terms of lack of support for school but in terms of lack of emotional support as well; in other words, teachers felt that they were giving children the emotional support that they were not receiving at home. However, there was no consideration of the possibility that, with greater attention to children's linguistic needs and their comprehension of instruction and material, their emotional stress might be reduced.

Although schooling is multilingual—Catalan, Spanish, and English languages are taught—and multilingualism is valued, there is no support for the development of the students' home languages during the official school curriculum or instructional practice. Rather, the students' primary language is viewed as a family responsibility to support, and when schools do host primary language (L1) classes such as Arabic, these are done on an extracurricular and voluntary basis. Several of the teachers reported that they invite parents to share stories in their native languages in class, an activity that occurs once a year. However, translation for parents to facilitate their participation in parent conferences or in meetings at school has not been offered since funding for this purpose was curtailed during the economic crisis. Students are not sanctioned for using their home language on the playground, or among themselves in class, but teachers report little inclination on the children's part to use their L1.

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman

It can be said, therefore, that the Catalan language is being consolidated at the expense of the home language(s). As noted above with respect to children's emotional needs, the immigrant family is cited by educators as the source of many of the students' problems. As one teacher summarized, 'The problem is not in the school, but rather in the perspectives that they have in the family.' Cultural values are cited by the educators as reasons why Moroccan families do not support their daughters' schooling, and as reasons

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman

why Chinese families keep to themselves and do not participate in school. This pervasive deficit view of the immigrant family is not only characteristic of educators' perspectives, but is also embedded in the official policy as well (e.g. when referring to them as 'a student body with specific needs, with high levels of absenteeism, of failure and of dropping out, from families that lack resources and who are affected by a variety of problems' (11). It is probably not surprising, therefore, that the primary language of these families is not viewed as a resource to be supported and utilized.

Goal 2: Fostering intercultural education

According to Besalú (2006), the foundations of intercultural education are based on knowledge of one's own and other cultures within a framework of '*buena convivencia*' or getting along well together (50). As described above, a focus in the four schools seemed to be on '*buena convivencia*.' This is observed in all areas. Teachers collaborate to team for instruction and enthusiastically describe the satisfaction that comes from working in a 'high complexity' school. They demonstrate care and respect for their students as individuals, and they foster positive relationships among students. As evidenced in the title of the 2004 linguistic plan guiding immersion programs, there is a strong focus on what is termed social cohesion. And social cohesion, as noted above, is explicitly fostered through use and emphasis on the Catalan language.

All of the schools described efforts and activities to include the students' home cultures at school, although these are done on an occasional basis. One teacher described the way in which children's cultural experience might be included in the classroom: 'We put 'welcome' in different languages in the doorway. We look at photos on Google Earth using the digital whiteboard. We ask [the students] to ask their parents about their home

city and we look for photos. We don't do it as part of the curriculum but whenever the opportunity arises.'

Another teacher described the annual cultural fair as evidence of the school's acceptance of the immigrant cultures: "*En la semana cultural que hacemos cada año, madres de diferentes nacionalidades ayudan en el aula y hacen actividades: cuentan cuentos—este año trataron el tema de Pinocho—y cosas de su país. Explican a los niños costumbres.*"

In one school, there is a map in the entranceway with labels of all of the countries that the children come from. In the school in our sample that did the most to foster inclusion of children's home cultures and experiences, teachers implement a '*capsa de vida*' (or life-box) program in which one student is chosen weekly to share family experiences and background with the rest of the class. At the same time, in none of the classrooms were students' home languages and cultures visible in the classes themselves, for example in the selection of books in the classroom libraries or in the projects undertaken in the different content areas. A focus on Catalan culture, such as a large display of artwork and student writing about the festival of *Sant Jordi*, was more evident.

Similar to treatment of the students' L1, one can conclude that cultural differences are respected in the sense that they are not prohibited, but neither are they are supported or promoted. For example, one of the principals shared that Muslim girls are encouraged not to wear headscarves at school, although they are not prohibited from doing so: 'We suggest that the girls not wear the scarf covering their heads but we allow them the freedom (to do so).' At another school, Muslim parents who were concerned with their older children's participating in sports activities during Ramadan when they would be fasting were told that children should stay home if they could not participate in school activities.

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman, Resaltar

Thus, although the 2004 policy uses the language of interculturality, the underlying focus of the policy and of educator efforts seems to be on social cohesion, and on the assumption that social cohesion is achieved through use of a common language (Catalan) and adherence to the norms of Catalan society. In addition, teachers report frustration with families whom they perceive as wanting to maintain themselves separate from society, for example, those who do not take advantage of Catalan classes for parents, who do not enroll their children in P3 (the first year of preschool), and who return to their homeland in the middle of the academic year. For example, one teacher was perplexed, describing the Catalan language as not difficult to understand and adding, ‘there are also mothers who don’t take the trouble to even learn Spanish. It depends on their cultures and origins.’ For this teacher and others, Catalan is seen as easy enough to learn, and those who do not speak it are not ‘troubling themselves’ enough to learn it.

Goal 3: Guaranteeing equal opportunities

The schools selected for participation in the study were schools that were viewed as successful in working with their immigrant student populations, largely for reasons associated with social cohesion as described above. As one principal stated, ‘We have a good reputation, a good image, a lot of demand for enrollment.’ When asked about the academic performance of immigrant students at their schools, teachers stated that students are doing well ‘for this kind of school.’ Overall, they expressed satisfaction with the progress of their students in Catalan, although some acknowledged that students experienced difficulty with reading comprehension and academic language. For example, one teacher contended that because the school is ‘the only space where they speak and practice Catalan, their language is very limited and they lack a great deal of vocabulary.’

“la escuela, como es el único espacio donde hablan y practican el catalán, queda muy limitado porque les falta mucho vocabulario.” A first grade teacher concluded, ‘In

general, we are content, knowing that the level of this site is not the same as in another site with children with middle class characteristics. I know that the first grade class I have is not at the same level as [first grade] generally.’

Other teachers, however, disagreed, stating that language and immigrant background had little to do with student performance: ‘The child who is good, is good; the child who struggles, well he struggles, independently of where he’s from.’ Another teacher felt that the children were learning well because ‘as people say, when you’re a child you’re a sponge and you learn everything.’ These teachers were among those who contended that their students were doing fine in Catalan language and who stated that ‘there are no problems here.’

Some teachers believed that their students make satisfactory progress in secondary school when they attend similar (highly diverse) schools and that many are able to complete obligatory secondary education (through age 16). However, the educators interviewed recognized that university attendance is not high for immigrant students. I believe that today at the level of ‘bachillerato’ (or post-obligatory secondary school) and university there might be some immigrants. There may be a lot, but I believe there are few. I see few.’ It is necessary to ask, therefore, what happens to immigrant students who manage to finish obligatory schooling but then appear to disappear from the system.

In describing the relationship between language proficiency of non-native speakers of Catalan and their academic performance, one of the school principals

Con formato: Fuente: Times New Roman, Resaltar

Comentado [G3]: I agree with the translator

summed up the relationship in terms of cultural and family values. She stated that she would not attribute low performance to language issues, 'but rather to the cultural situation in which [non-natives] find themselves. You have to start with the view that many of the fathers and mothers come from places where they practically don't know how to read and write. Now for them, when a child comes to school and surpasses their level [of education], they are very satisfied.' Thus, students were either seen as doing fine considering the type of school, or, when unequal outcomes were acknowledged, these were typically attributed to family values and socioeconomic conditions outside of the purview of the school. Overall, we observed low expectations for students, and this is an issue requiring future study.

Although all schools were implementing the Catalan immersion programs, the instructional strategies used were observed to vary somewhat from school to school. For example, one of the schools was implementing a 'communities of learning' approach that included a focus on parent involvement. Another school featured a focus on the arts as a way of both motivating students and fostering oral language development. Yet another school had experimented with broadening the use of the *aula de acogida* to include students with similar needs who might not be *nouvinguts*. Strategies varied from classroom to classroom as well, with some teachers doing more to explicitly address the needs of non-native speakers of Catalan than others. One of the four schools reported 6th grade test scores on par with rest of Catalonia, suggesting that effective implementation of instructional and organizational strategies can impact student performance in ways that narrow achievement gaps. This is an important point to consider in developing programs and professional development designed to improve student outcomes. In general, however, across sites teachers seemed to feel they were doing as much as

possible. There was not a recognition that some of the practices of the school (including the virtual lack of inclusion of L1 and culture and the positioning of the immigrant families as “problems”) might be associated with problematic outcomes for students later on after elementary school.

Finally, consideration of long-term outcomes for immigrant youth cannot be undertaken without taking into account the larger context in which their schooling takes place, that is, the fact that they attend largely segregated schools. At one of the schools in the study a merger with a nearby school with a minimum number of immigrant students was being planned, and one of the teachers expressed dismay that they had already heard that parents and staff there were opposed to the plan; ‘they don’t want us,’ she concluded. A second grade teacher at another school expressed concern about the future marginalization of immigrant students: ‘It is difficult for these children to be able to integrate into society when they have been taught in a school that doesn’t have anything to do with the society that they live in. They are grouped together and don’t have relationships with autochthonous children. We are creating a barrier starting with the school. They are in ghetto schools (‘*escuelas gueto*’) and that makes it more difficult for them.’ Although teachers realized that it was not considered politically correct to use the term “ghetto” to describe their schools, this term emerged in interviews at all of the sites.

Conclusions

In the ‘regular classroom’ where the majority of instruction for immigrant students takes place, instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of non-native speakers of Catalan were limited to non-existent, a situation noted in the study by Newman et al. (2013) with adolescents in secondary-level *aula de acogida* instructional settings as well. Catalan policy proposes these

classrooms as a way of quickly getting immigrant children into Catalan language and instruction. However, studies carried out in both Spanish and international contexts document the extended period of time needed for students to fully develop second language proficiency, typically citing a minimum of 7 years for development of academic proficiency (see Baker, 2011, for a summary; also Vila, 2006a, 2006b). A model that leaves language development to the specially trained teachers in the *aula de acogida* represents a surface attention to student needs, in the sense that academic language takes longer to develop than 2 to 3 years and that satisfactory language outcomes include more than the ability to orally participate in classes taught in Catalan. We reaffirm Vila's (2006a) recommendation that classroom practice needs to continue to attend to students' linguistic development through implementation of 'an educational practice that multiplies the linguistic supports for students, not only for them to be able to negotiate the meanings implied in what is said and done in the classroom, but also to foster knowledge of the language of the school' (39).

In his classic commentary on the concept of equality of educational opportunity in the U.S., Coleman (1968) described a perspective common throughout the most of the 20th century in which the school's responsibility was to provide equal opportunities by providing a free and common curriculum for all students. In this perspective, the responsibility of making use of this opportunity rested with the student, and unequal family inputs continued to result in unequal academic outcomes as well as perpetuation of an unequal social hierarchy. Coleman documented a 'change in the concept of equality of educational opportunity from school resource inputs to effects of schooling' (22), with the responsibility for student achievement resting with the school. The concept shifted from concern with providing equal opportunities to ensuring more equal outcomes. Although proposed a half century ago, his argument continues

to hold true with respect to the institutional supports and inputs necessary to promote equality of educational opportunity for immigrant youth in Catalan schools.

Catalan policy also proposes intercultural education as a way of integrating students socially into the school and subsequently into Catalan society. Again we observe a surface approach to intercultural education, with a focus on interpersonal relationships without the development of much deep knowledge about the histories, perspectives, and cultures of the different groups of students represented. Furthermore, the premise of knowledge of and respect for other cultures as a foundation of interculturality is difficult to attain when the bearers of the other cultures (in this case the families) are seen in deficit terms as needy, lacking, dysfunctional, and problematic. Over 15 years ago, Santos-Rego and Nieto (2000) examined multicultural teacher preparation in the U.S. and Spain and concluded, 'It is clear, then, that Spain's educational approach is assimilationist and integrationist; a pluralist or truly intercultural perspective is missing. In other words, multiculturalism is practiced with the goal of integrating minorities into the normal routine of the school by providing extra classes or minor curricular adaptations to resolve what are considered cultural deficits' (p. 419-420). Unfortunately, evidence from the current study reaffirms these conclusions.

The linguistic culture in which language policies and educational programs are being developed and in which educators are working appears to be one in which Catalan language is viewed as relatively easy to acquire by young children and which is essential to use in order to achieve social cohesion. These assumptions lead to instruction in Catalan with relatively little attention to the on-going needs of academic language development throughout the elementary school years for non-native speakers of Catalan. While this type of instruction may have been

successful when the non-native speakers were speakers of Spanish, a Romance language with lexical and grammatical similarities with Catalan, it is not destined to be as effective with speakers of the current international languages that differ markedly from Catalan. In fact, Oller and Vila (2008) document long-term lags in academic performance of immigrant students in comparison with native speakers of Catalan, even those students whose home language is a Romance language.

One of the solutions proposed by some educators is spreading the immigrant students out so that students are evenly distributed across schools. Edwards (2015) documented implementation of this model at the level of local government in the Catalan city of Vic. Several of the teachers in our study expressed concern that the high percentage of immigrant students in their schools resulted in the inability of the students to learn and practice Catalan with native-speaking peers for authentic purposes outside of the classroom; they recommended a redistribution of immigrant students along the lines of the Vic model. However, without greater attention to true intercultural education, this solution would amount to even greater invisibility of the immigrant languages and cultural experiences. Without significant changes in pre-service and in-service teacher preparation, it is unlikely that the 'regular classroom,' where the majority of immigrant students receive the bulk of their instruction, would implement strategies for more effective instruction of non-native speakers of Catalan.

As documented by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 2009), Cummins (2001), and others, the consequences of invisibility and its consequent lack of attention to and support of the students' primary language are likely to be L1 language loss. When this is accompanied by a lack of respect for the home country culture and an emphasis on integration into Catalan society, the likely outcomes are segmented assimilation and marginalization. Studies have documented a

rise in negative perceptions of immigrants and immigration in Spain over the last decade, citing beliefs that immigrants are contributing to delinquency and are taking jobs and social services from the native population (Cebolla Boado and González Ferrer 2013). Although public policy as enacted in the immersion model envisions immigrants' ability to speak Catalan as the main mechanism through which the goals of social cohesion and equal opportunities are addressed, our findings indicate that Catalan language proficiency alone will be insufficient to attain these goals. Social cohesion and societal integration may be outcomes, but these are not likely to be achieved in segregated neighborhoods and schools.

Our study suggests the need for a revisiting of the Plan for Language and Social Cohesion, and seeking ways in which Catalan would continue to be the major vehicular language of the school while at the same time assigning a more significant role to the students' primary languages and cultures, as well as to Spanish, the most commonly used language among students themselves. The logistical difficulty of inclusion and recognition of multiple languages (in some schools more than 20 languages) makes this a daunting, but not impossible proposal. This would also necessitate an investment in teacher preparation in strategies for instruction in Catalan for non-native speakers as well as integrating multiple cultural perspectives and histories into the curriculum on an on-going basis. Coelho, Oller, and Serra (2013) provide a practical guide of instructional strategies for diverse settings in Catalonia that can serve as a foundation for professional development for both new and experienced teachers. Professional development will need to address widespread assumptions about linguistic development and the time and instructional practices necessary to ensure equitable language proficiency and academic outcomes. Implementation of true intercultural education, based on

cultural knowledge and respect as well as interpersonal relationships, is a necessity not only for sites with high percentages of immigrant students but for all schools in Catalonia.

References

- August, Diane, and Timothy Shanahan, eds. 2006. *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Azzolini, Davide, Philipp Schnell, and John Palmer. 2012. Educational Achievement Gaps between Immigrant and Native Students in Two “New” Immigration Countries: Italy and Spain in Comparison. *ANNALS, AAPSS*, 643: 46-77.
- Baker, Colin. 2011. *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (5th ed.). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Benson, Carol. 2009. “Designing Effective Schooling in Multilingual Contexts: Going beyond Bilingual Models.” In *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*, edited by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Robert Phillipson, Ajit Mohanty, and Minati Panda, 63-84. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Besalú, 2006. “The Language and Social Cohesion Plan from the Government of Catalonia.” *Revista Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado* 20 (2): 45-68.
- Busch, B. 2011. “Trends and Innovative Practices in Multilingual Education in Europe: An Overview.” *International Review of Education*, 57: 541-549.
- Cebolla Boado, Hector, and A. González Ferrer. eds. 2013. *Inmigración ¿Integración sin modelo?* Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

- Coelho, Elizabeth, Judith Oller, and Josep Serra. 2013. *Lenguaje y aprendizaje en el aula multilingüe, un enfoque práctico*. Barcelona: I.C.E. Universitat de Barcelona.
- Coleman, James. 1968. "The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity." *Harvard Educational Review*, 38: 7-22.
- Cummins, Jim. 1986. "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention." *Harvard Educational Review*, 56: 18-36.
- Cummins, Jim. 2001. *Negotiating Identities: Education for Empowerment in a Diverse Society*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: California Association for Bilingual Education.
- Cummins, Jim 2009. "Fundamental Psycholinguistic and Sociological Principles Underlying Educational Success for Linguistic Minority Students." In *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*, edited by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Robert Phillipson, Ajit Mohanty, and Minati Panda, 19-35. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Del-Arco, Isabel. 2000. Entre el estigma y la utopía. Hacia un desuso de la interculturalidad. *Aula de innovación educativa*, 97: 49-52.
- Departament d'Ensenyament. 2014. Resolució ENS/906/2014, de 23 d'abril, per la qual es fa pública, amb caràcter provisional, la relació de centres educatius classificats com de màxima complexitat. DOGC 6613, de 30.4.2014.
- Echevarría, Jana, Mary Ellen Vogt, and Diane Short. 2012. *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model*. 4th ed. New York: Pearson.
- Edwards, Catrin (2015). "Language-in-Education Policies, Immigration and Social Cohesion in Catalonia: the Case of Vic." *International Journal of Bilingual*

Education and Bilingualism, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2015.1023253>.

- Extra, Guus and Durk Gorter. 2001. "Comparative Perspectives on Regional and Immigrant Minority Languages in Multicultural Europe. In *The other languages of Europe*, edited by Guss Extra and Durk Gorter, 1-41. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Francis, David, Nonie Lesaux, and Diane August. 2006. "Language of Instruction." In *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*, edited by Diane August and Timothy Shanahan, 365-414. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Genesee, Fred, Katherine Lindholm-Leary, William Saunders, and Diane Christian. 2006. *Educating English Language Learners*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Glaser, Barney and Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. London, UK: Aldine Transaction.
- IDESCAT. 2016. *Anuario de estadística de Catalunya*. Institut d'estadística de Catalunya. Recuperado de <http://www.idescat.cat/es/>
- Mar-Molinero, Clare. 2000a. "The Iberian Peninsula: Conflicting Linguistic Nationalisms." In *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, edited by S. Barbour and C. Carmichael, 83-104. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mar-Molinero, Clare. 2000b. *The Politics of Language in the Spanish-speaking World*. New York: Routledge.
- May, Stephen. 2006. "Language Policy and Minority Rights." In *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, edited by Thomas Ricento, 255-270. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

- May, Stephen. 2008. *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*. New York: Routledge.
- Miguélez, C. 2001. "The 'Normalization' of Minority Languages in Spain." In *Language Ideologies: Critical Perspectives on the Official English Movement, Vol. 2*, edited by R. Dueñas González and I. Melis, 346-368. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Newman, Michael, Adriana Patiño-Santos, and Mireia Trenchs-Parera. 2013. "Linguistic Reception of Latin American Students in Catalonia and their Responses to Educational Language Policies. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16: 195-209.
- Ricento, Thomas. 1998. "National Language Policy in the United States. In *Language and Politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and Realities*, edited by Thomas Ricento and Barbara Burnaby, 85-112). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Roller, Elisa. 2002. "When does Language become Exclusivist? Linguistic Politics in Catalonia." *National Identities*, 4 (3): 273-289.
- Rolstad, K., K. Mahoney, and G. Glass. 2005. "The Big Picture: A Meta-analysis of Program Effectiveness Research on English Language Learners." *Educational Policy*, 19: 572-594.
- Ruíz, Richard. 1984. "Orientations in language planning." In *Language Diversity, Problem or Resource?* edited by S. McKay and S Wong, 3-25. Boston: Heinle & Heinle

- Saldaña, Johnny. 2013. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Santos-Rego, Miguel, Julia Crespo-Comesaña, Mar Lorenzo-Moledo, and Agustín Godás-Otero. 2012. Escuelas e inmigración en España: ¿es inevitable la segregación? *Cultura y Educación*, 24 (2), 195-205.
- Santos Rego, Miguel and Sonia Nieto. 2000. "Multicultural/intercultural Teacher Education in Two Contexts: Lessons from the United States and Spain." *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16: 413-427.
- Schiffman, H. 2006. "Language Policy and Linguistic Culture." In *An introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, edited by Thomas Ricento, 111-126. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. 2000. *Linguistic Genocide in Education, or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates,
- Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. 2009. "Multilingual Education for Global Justice: Issues, Approaches, Opportunities. In *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*, edited by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Robert Phillipson, Ajit Mohanty, and Minati Panda, 36-62. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove, Robert Phillipson, Ajit Mohanty, and Minati Panda, eds. 2009. *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Slavin, Robert and Alan Cheung. 2005. "A Synthesis of Research on Language of Reading Instruction for English Language Learners." *Review of Educational Research*, 75: 247-284.

- Strubell y Trueta, M., L. Andreu Barrachina, and E. Sintes Pascual, eds. 2011. *Resultats del model lingüístic escolar de Catalunya. L'evidència empírica*. Barcelona: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.
- Teasley, Cathryn. 2004. "The Culture of Discourse on Educational Reform in Spain." *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 26: 249-275.
- Vila, Ignacio. 2006a. Acerca de las relaciones entre escuela e inmigración. *Revista Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, 20 (2): 23-43.
- Vila, Ignacio. 2006b. Lengua, escuela e inmigración. *Cultura y Educación*, 18 (2): 127-142.
- Woolard, Kathryn and Susan Frekko. 2013. "Catalan in the Twenty-first Century: Romantic Publics and Cosmopolitan communities." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16 (2): 129-137.