Researching and teaching (with) the continua of biliteracy

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Continua of biliteracy (COB)

- The continua of biliteracy and how it grew
- Philadelphia: research, teaching, teacher education
- Indigenous multilingual education contexts:
  - Brazilian Amazon: Indigenous teacher education course
  - Bolivian & Peruvian Andes: bilingual education reforms
  - Post-apartheid South Africa: CapeTown & Limpopo
  - Sápmi, Scandinavia: Sámi language education
  - Peruvian Amazon: Alto Napo Quichua primary school teachers
- Back to immigrant contexts: advocating for biliteracy

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Decades and dialogues

- Continua of biliteracy (COB) – 1980’s
- Ecology of language & voice -- 1990’s
- Implementational / ideological spaces & ethnography of language policy – 2000’s
- Ethnographic monitoring & mapping the COB-- 2010’s

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Continua of biliteracy: beginnings

- Literacy in Two Languages Project, beginning 1987 through 1990s
- Multi-year comparative ethnographic research
- Puerto Rican and Cambodian communities of Philadelphia
- Two-way maintenance bilingual program and pull-out ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program

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Biliteracy

• ‘any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing’ (Hornberger 1990)

• interaction and interpretation around writing (following Heath 1982)

• instances refer to events, actors, interactions, practices, activities, programs, sites, situations, societies, worlds

(Hornberger 2000, 2008)
Continua

• fluid and dynamic continua of language and literacy use

• interrelated dimensions of highly complex and fluid communicative repertoires (Gumperz 1971, Hymes 1980, Hornberger 2000, Blommaert 2010)

• biliteracy use and learning occur in dynamic, rapidly changing and sometimes contested spaces along and across intersecting continua

• continua of context, content, media, and development bring into focus all the dimensions to be taken into account in creating learning environments that recognize and build on students’ language and literacy repertoires

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Communicative repertoires

- verbal repertoire is ‘the totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the community in the course of socially significant interaction’ (Gumperz 1971)

- ‘the range of varieties of language, the circumstances, purposes, and meanings of their use’ (Hymes 1980)

- multiple languages & literacies, and cultural practices & views of the world in which they are embedded, on which individuals and groups draw as they take on different identities in different domains of their lives (Hornberger 2000)

- complexes of linguistic, communicative, & semiotic ‘resources people actually possess and deploy’ e.g. ‘concrete accents, language varieties, registers, genres, modalities such as writing – ways of using language in particular communicative settings and spheres of life, including the ideas people have about such ways of using’ (Blommaert 2010)

- ‘the collection of ways individuals use language and literacy and other means of communication (gestures, dress, posture, or accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate’ (Rymes 2010)
Continua of biliteracy: three-dimensional spaces

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Continua of biliteracy: nested spaces

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Creating successful learning contexts for biliteracy

ethnographic research on differences and similarities between two teachers -- one bilingual, one English-only, both successful in allowing children to develop biliteracy

- attention to and accountability of each individual (motivation)
- clear task-definition and task-focused correction including teacher’s acknowledgement of own mistakes (purpose)
- exposure to variety of genres (text)
- signaling understanding, analyzing features, reasoning (interaction) (Hornberger 1990)

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Developing the continua lens

When seen through the continua of biliteracy, one explanation for success of the English-only teacher of Cambodian children despite not using their first language as medium of instruction might lie in the interconnectedness of the continua -- a particularly rich environment along one or two of the developmental continua makes up for poverty with respect to another (Hornberger 1990)
Drawing from across the continua

The more students’ contexts of language and literacy use allow them to draw from across the whole of each and every continuum, the greater are the chances for their full language and literacy development and expression (Hornberger 1989)
Contesting powerful practices

There is a need to contest the traditional power weighting [along the continua] by paying attention to, granting agency to, and making space for actors and practices at what have traditionally been the less powerful ends of the continua

(Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester 2000: 99)
Continua of Biliteracy
Traditionally less       more powerful

**Contexts of biliteracy**
- micro <------ macro
- oral <------ literate
- bi(multi)lingual <------ monolingual

**Development of biliteracy**
- reception <------ production
- oral <------ written
  - L1 <------ L2

**Content of biliteracy**
- minority <------ majority
- vernacular <------ literary
- contextualized <------ decontextualized

**Media of biliteracy**
- simultaneous <------ successive exposure
- dissimilar <------ similar structures
- divergent <------ convergent scripts

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Philadelphia bilingual schools

fine-grained analyses of curricular adaptations and culturally contextualized teaching strategies in bilingual classrooms:

• how, why, for what purposes, in which varieties educators might or might not correct Latino student “errors“ in use of bilingual oral and literacy norms as they develop standard monolingual Spanish and English literacy skills in a bilingual middle school classroom (Cahnmann 2003)

• how two elementary school bilingual education teachers creatively adapted mandated and scripted curricula by drawing on linguistic, cultural, and textual resources to ensure comprehensible instruction, inclusion of community funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and students’ bilingual/biliterate development (Schwinge 2003)

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Language teacher education at Penn GSE

vignettes exploring dilemmas confronting language educators and how the continua framework might shape a response:

• global-local trends and biliteracy contexts
• standard-nonstandard repertoires and biliteracy media
• language-content assessment and biliteracy development
• language/culture/identity and biliteracy content

(Hornberger 2004)
COB as heuristic in Indigenous & immigrant language education

- Brazilian Amazon: Indigenous teacher education course
- Bolivian & Peruvian Andes: bilingual education reforms
- Post-apartheid South Africa:
  - Cape Town: Battswood School & Saturday Reading Clubs
  - Limpopo: Dual language BA program at U of Limpopo
- Sápmi: Sámi language education
- Peruvian Amazon: Quichua primary school teachers
- Immigrant language education in Philadelphia and Europe

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Brazilian Amazon: Multilingual Indigenous teachers/speakers of Apurinã, Asheninka, Jaminawa, Katukina, Kaxinawá, Manchineri, Shawandawa, Yawanawá

- rainforest site
- Indigenous teachers’ dual roles as learners and teachers-in-formation
- robust reflexive practice and interdisciplinarity of the program
- daily practice of multimodal interlingual communication by which participants from multiple languages engaged in their learning and
- development of teaching materials reflective of local Indigenous culture, history, and artistic expression, including geometric drawings

(Hornberger 1998)
Continua of biliteracy: an ecological framework

the continua as heuristic for an ecological approach to multilingual language policy – encompassing themes of evolution, environment, endangerment (Hornberger 2002, 2003, 2005)

- assumes one language and literacy develops in relation to one or more other languages and literacies (language evolution)
- situates biliteracy development -- whether in the individual, classroom, community, or society-- in relation to the contexts, media, and content in and through which it develops (language environment)
- provides a heuristic for addressing unequal balance of power across languages and literacies (for both studying and counteracting language endangerment)

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Bilingual Intercultural Education at Kayarani, Bolivia: 2nd-3rd grade

• Quechua-speaking children thriving in schools implementing bilingual intercultural education in Quechua and Spanish several years into the sweeping 1994 National Educational Reform in a nation where Indigenous-language speakers make up 63% of the population

• A comprehensive and multi-faceted Reform, making space for all thirty of Bolivia’s Indigenous languages alongside Spanish as subjects and media of instruction in all schools, including also popular participation in school leadership and introduction of constructivist pedagogies

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Kayarani, Bolivia, 2000: *Big Books in Spanish with Indigenous content*

- A library in every primary classroom of the nation, stocked with a collection of 80 books provided through UNESCO
- 6 Big Books in Spanish--3 based on oral traditions in Quechua, Aymara, and Guarani:
  - *El Zorro, el Puma y los Otros* ‘The Fox, the Puma, and the Others’
  - *La Oveja y el Zorro* ‘The Sheep and the Fox’
  - *La Chiva Desobediente* ‘The Disobedient Goat’
- Approximately 18" x 24", with large print text and colorful illustrations, the pictures could be seen by the whole class if the teacher held the Big Book up in front of the class in a reading circle

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Voice and biliteracy

- Big Books in Spanish telling stories from Indigenous oral traditions as an instance of **biliteracy content** making space for **self-authoring** drawing on languages and cultural genres of others, i.e. Bakhtinian voice (following Holland & Lave 2001)

- Other biliteracy instances as examples of Bakhtinian voice
  - **biliteracy development** and the **individual in active dialogue** with environment (Basilia at home and at Puno PEEB school in the 1980s)
  - **biliteracy context** and the **widely circulating discourses** that animate processes of dialogism & self-authoring (Guarani inclusion in school curriculum in the 2000s)
  - **biliteracy media** and the **active stance** toward others and the dialects, languages, genres, cultural forms they produce (Maori immersion education across multiple decades)

(Hornberger 2006)
Language and voice

As much as language and voice are related, it is also important to distinguish between them. I have become convinced of the need for this distinction through a consideration of instances of language planning in which the ‘inclusion’ of the language of a group has coincided with the exclusion of their voice...language is general, abstract, subject to a somewhat arbitrary normalization; voice is particular and concrete. Language has a life of its own -- it exists even when it is suppressed; when voice is suppressed, it is not heard -- it does not exist. To deny people their language....is, to be sure, to deny them voice; but, to allow them "their" language ... is not necessarily to allow them voice.

(Ruiz 1997, pp. 320-321)
Voice, biliteracy, and Indigenous language revitalization

• although not all (Indigenous or immigrant) language minority/ized children find voice through use of their own or heritage language as medium of instruction, many of them do
• when they do, it is perhaps because of the ways that biliterate use of their language alongside the dominant language mediates the dialogism, meaning-making, access to wider discourses, and taking of an active stance that are dimensions of voice
• minority/ized voices thus activated can be a powerful force for enhancing the children's own learning AND promoting maintenance/revitalization of their languages
  (Hornberger 2006)
Ideological spaces can carve out implementational ones

- multilingual language policies open up ideological and implementational spaces in the environment for as many languages as possible, and in particular endangered languages, to evolve and flourish rather than dwindle and disappear.

- educators, researchers, language users need to FILL those ideological and implementational spaces (Hornberger, 2002, p. 30).
PRAESA Battswood Primary School – structuring trilingual pedagogical practices

• develop, try out and demonstrate workable strategies for teaching and learning with an additive bilingual approach

• at a formerly ‘coloured’ Afrikaans/English dual medium school where, after apartheid, Xhosa-speaking children were arriving from townships

• PRAESA team included an early literacy specialist (Carole) and a Xhosa-speaking teacher (Ntombi) working with resident Battswood teacher (Erica), Grades 1 to 3

• they saw themselves as working at less powerful micro, oral, multilingual ends of the COB to challenge power relations at macro, literate, monolingual English ends

(Hornberger 2018)
Saturday Reading Clubs

• Continuing PRAESA endeavors in the next decades
  • Little Books for Little Hands Stories Across Africa early literacy
  • Saturday Reading Clubs in the townships, where PRAESA
    • began each session with oral storytelling
    • brought along an array of multilingual books for children to choose from
    • spent an hour or so reading with the children

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University of Limpopo: dual language CEMS BA honors degree

- another implementational/ideological space, using COB as heuristic
- Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies CEMS program at U of Limpopo, South Africa’s only bilingual university-level program in English and an African language
- founded 2003 by Michael Joseph and Esther Ramani in response to South Africa’s multilingual language policy with explicit aim of reclaiming the power of the powerless
- Joseph & Ramani turned to COB and Cummins’ (1982) 4-quadrants as theoretical basis for designing and implementing curriculum and pedagogy to support students’ academic biliteracy development in both English and Sepedi, one of nine African languages officially recognized in South Africa’s Constitution of 1993

(Granville et al. 1998, Joseph & Ramani 2004, 2012)
Michael Joseph’s 3\textsuperscript{rd} year seminar

- students engage in a third-year project exploring Sepedi-speaking children’s private speech in their own communities, following Vygotskyan conceptual and methodological guidelines, originally written in Russian, studied and discussed with their instructor in English, and implemented in their communities in Sepedi.

- Joseph and Ramani, program founders and the instructors in the English medium modules, are not fluent speakers of Sepedi, but they and their students practiced a flexible multilingual or translanguaging approach in which students were encouraged to claim spaces for both spoken and written Sepedi and other local varieties alongside South African English, other Englishes, and other international languages (Hornberger 2010, 2014a).
“one [language and culture] unlocking the other” through biliteracy

the CEMS program is an instantiation of the continua of biliteracy, of the ways in which translanguaging and transnational literacy practices therein enable a kind of learning that is at once about ‘discovering their culture and the great ideas in the literature, one unlocking the other’

Ethnography of language policy

• illuminates local interpretation and implementation of top-down language policy and planning (LPP)
• exposes human agency and ingenuity at the local level of implementation
• uncovers indistinct voices, covert motivations, embedded ideologies, invisible instances, or unintended consequences of LPP
• highlights opening up / closing down of implementational /ideological spaces

Ethnographic monitoring

Hymes (1980) proposed evaluating U.S. bilingual education via ethnographic monitoring (EM), rather than through summative testing, arguing that “evaluation in terms of gross numbers can only guess at what produced the numbers”

- EM is collaboratively undertaken with program participants
- three overriding purposes and activities of EM
  - description of current communicative conduct in programs
  - analysis of emergent patterns and meanings in program implementation
  - evaluation of program and policy in terms of social meanings, specifically with regard to countering educational inequities and advancing social justice

(Hornberger 2014a)
Ethnographic monitoring in Sápmi curricular dimensions for designing a proposed Sámi language teacher education program at Umeå University

- specific Sámi varieties to include (North, South, and Lule) and the feasibility of a common Sámi pedagogy across all of them
- accommodating students learning the language and students learning to teach the language in the same courses
- dispersion of speakers and prospective teachers across hundreds of square miles in Sápmi with different varieties geographically concentrated in different areas
- scarce human resources and competing institutions of language teacher training in Kautokeino, Norway and Oulu, Finland

(DeKorne & Hornberger 2017)
COB and multilingual literacy in Sápmi

• 3–country study: Norway, Sweden, Finland
• 150 youth who study North Sámi as school subject
• 800 texts written in their national language, English, & North Sámi; descriptive & argumentative
• research team brainstorming with me on ways COB might be useful in analyzing the data

North Sámi: Hanna’s Ph.D. Thesis

- Hanna Outakoski employed the COB as overarching theoretical framework for her PhD thesis, spanning her work on:
  - linguistic structure of North Sámi in relation to Finnish
  - teachers’ metapragmatic statements about Sámi language use, teaching, revitalization
  - youth multilingual literacy practices across North Sámi – English – national language Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish

- acknowledging the logic of linguistic power relations & inherent power imbalance that informs the model, Hanna proposes mapping the continua for any particular North Sámi language community to identify positive & problematic areas in literacy emergence and develop measures appropriate for rebalancing those power imbalances for language revitalization

(Outakoski 2015; Hornberger & Outakoski 2015)
Mapping the continua of biliteracy

- mapping and rebalancing power imbalances in multilingual literacy contexts for North Sámi language revitalization in Sweden, Norway, and Finland (Outakoski 2015)
- mapping biliteracy teaching in Kichwa intercultural bilingual education in the Peruvian Amazon to uncover tensions in the teaching of majoritized languages in an Indigenous context of postcoloniality, challenge constructs of student shyness, and propose pedagogies to support the flourishing of student voice (Hornberger & Kvetok Dueñas 2017)

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Teaching Spanish L2 in the Peruvian Amazon: Alto Napo Kichwa bilingual schools

- at request of school network which has since 2008 built & sustained community-school relationships in order to develop & implement an education by & for Indigenous peoples
- Frances Kvietok spent two months in 2013 working w Kichwa teachers in 6 schools in Alto Napo (Peruvian Amazon) as workshop leader with a focus on ‘active methodological strategies for work in Spanish as a second language’
- Frances and I conceptualized her role as ethnographic monitoring, including participant observation & interviews as well as leading professional development workshops, modeling Spanish lessons & participating in lesson planning with teachers

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Mapping L2 pedagogies using the COB

Using COB, Frances modeled & reflected with teachers on crafting pedagogies of voice thru strategies such as:

• using vernacular genres/styles -- CONTENT
• developing lessons around topics taken from everyday contexts of Kichwa use e.g. river market transactions -- CONTEXT
• shifting participation practices from teacher-centered to student-centered -- DEVELOPMENT
• encouraging students’ critical metalinguistic awareness of their uses of Kichwa & Spanish – MEDIA

(Hornberger & Kvietok-Dueñas 2017)
Back to Philadelphia: advocating for biliteracy

- ideological spaces can open implementational ones, but ALSO
- implementational spaces can serve reciprocally as wedge to pry open ideological ones
  - U.S. classrooms & programs developing non-English languages alongside English, thereby wedging open ideological spaces in the era of No Child Left Behind (Hornberger 2005, 2006a)
- implementation/ideological spaces & wedges becoming ever more urgent – two Philadelphia new Latino diaspora studies
  - translanguaging & transnational literacies in multilingual classrooms: A biliteracy lens (Hornberger & Link 2012 a, b; Reyes & Hornberger 2016)
  - immigration policy as family language policy: Mexican immigrant children & families in search of biliteracy (Gallo & Hornberger 2017)

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Continua of biliteracy lens

- Context
- Content
- Development
- Media

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Immigration policy as family language policy

Gallo’s three-year ethnography on Mexican immigrant fathers & their elementary school aged children revealed

- unintended language education consequences of immigration policy
- complex ways children discursively contribute to family language policy & migration decisions, orienting to monoglossic schooling ideologies as they prepare for & contest possibilities of transnational schooling in Mexico
- limited opportunities to develop dynamic bilingualism or biliteracy in U.S. schools shape families’ decisions
- urgent need for educational policy & classroom practices that open up ideological & implementational spaces along the COB to better prepare children for educational success on both sides of the border

(Gallo and Hornberger 2017)
Researching and teaching with the COB in Europe


• Stockholm University, Sweden – PhD on multilingual study guidance in Swedish compulsory school (Warren 2016, 2017)

• Luxembourg – postdoctoral research on preschool multilingual children’s cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional development (Aleksic, forthcoming)

• Netherlands – master’s thesis on translanguaging pedagogy in superdiversity classroom (Ticheloven 2016)

• Swedish National Agency for Education – basic literacy for adult Swedish L2 speakers (Westerholme & Marrone 2016)

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Imagining multilingual schools

Continua of biliteracy remain my foundational schema, allowing me to gauge my attention to the full gamut of issues relevant to the concerns which have always been at the core of my interest:

• how best to serve Indigenous/immigrant/refugee and other language minoritized students in our educational systems AND
• how best to support language revitalization and social justice for Indigenous/immigrant/refugee and other language minoritized groups in our societies

To the extent that the continua of biliteracy and associated notions such as ecology of language & voice, ideological/implementational spaces & ethnography of LPP, ethnographic monitoring & mapping the COB --contribute to furthering cultural and linguistic diversity in our world through research, policy, and practice, it will be fulfilling the purpose for ‘imagining’ it in the first place.

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References


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