The Teaching of Spanish to Bilingual Spanish-speaking Students: Outstanding Issues and Unanswered Questions

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THE TEACHING OF SPANISH TO HISPANIC BILINGUALS: FROM THE 1970s TO THE 1990s

In the United States Spanish is one of several foreign languages commonly taught at the elementary, middle-school, high-school, and university levels. According to studies based on the results of the 1990 census (e.g., Macías 1993), the number of Spanish speakers currently living in this country grew dramatically between 1980 and 1990. The number of Spanish speakers residing in the United States increased from 11.1 million in 1980 to 17.3 million in 1990 at which time they represented 54.5% of the non-English-speaking population in the United States. The school-age segment of the population grew by 1.2 million at a rate of 41.4%, whereas the adult population increased by 61.3%. In 1990, according to Macías (1993), the school-age Spanish-speaking population represented 24% of the total number of Spanish speakers in this country.

The impact of this population change has been felt strongly in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Massachusetts. Particularly in California and Texas, public schools have experienced rapid population changes. For example, according to Macías (1993), during the 1991–92 school year approximately 5.1 million students were enrolled in California’s public schools, and 1.8 million of these students were Chicanos or Latinos. Among the latter, 828,036 students were categorized as limited English proficient (LEP) and considered unable to participate effectively in English-only classrooms. Nevertheless, it was also the case in 1992 that of the total number of LEP students in the state (1,087,145), fewer than half received some instruction in a language other than English. More than half received instruction exclusively in English.
Many school districts in various parts of the country have responded to the impact of this population shift by implementing transitional bilingual education programs as well as special English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional programs. However, many, if not most, Hispanophone students who arrive at school with little or no English background are still being submersed in classes taught totally in English.

The impact of this population shift on Spanish language classes—especially at the secondary and post-secondary levels—has also been felt strongly. Since the mid-seventies, college- and university-level faculty trained to teach Spanish as a foreign language have had to open their doors to students who in some cases were more fluent in the language than they were but who could not talk about the language using the terminology employed in the teaching of traditional grammar. Instructors involved in teaching such students Spanish in the classroom setting quickly discovered that these young people had a very difficult time learning the grammar rules taught to foreign language students. Not only did these students become confused by explanations of aspects of the language that they already knew (e.g., the difference between ser and estar), but they also refused to confine themselves to the limited vocabulary of the textbook. Since many Latino students who made it to college had been schooled exclusively in English, they had no experience in reading and writing Spanish. Worst of all, they were often speakers of very stigmatized varieties of Spanish. No textbooks on the market could adequately deal with this “problem,” and there was little agreement among Spanish teaching professionals (most of whom had been trained in literature) about what these students required and how to provide it. The consensus was that bilingual Hispanophone students were in need of remediation, of techniques and pedagogies that would help undo the damage that had been done at home.

More recently, secondary school Spanish teachers have faced an even more difficult situation. Their enrollment includes traditional foreign language students (monolingual Anglophone students), second- and third-generation bilingual Latinos and Chicanos who are largely English-dominant, and newly arrived Latino students who speak little or no English and who were schooled to a greater or lesser degree in Spanish in their home countries. For many of the latter students, Spanish language class is the only “real” subject that they are taking. Their other classes include only multiple ESL classes, art, physical education, and perhaps cooking.

**TEACHING SPANISH TO SPANISH-SPEAKING BILINGUALS AT THE SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY LEVELS**

Currently, according to Teschner (personal communication, March 4, 1994), 22% of all colleges and universities in the United States that offer instruction in Spanish have implemented special programs for bilingual Spanish-speaking students. The number of secondary schools that have implemented such programs for
Spanish speakers is also quite large in Texas, California, New Mexico, and Arizona. While the particular objectives of these programs vary (e.g., some focus on vocabulary development, others on transferring reading abilities developed in English), the primary objective of instruction in Spanish for students who have a home background in this language and are thus to some degree Spanish-speaking is the maintenance and/or retrieval of functional abilities in Spanish. The goal of most programs and most instructors is to offer students classroom instruction that will allow them to develop further their existing competencies and proficiencies.

The teaching of Spanish to Spanish-speaking bilinguals is not a new area of interest. Indeed, as Teschner and I discovered (Valdés-Fallis and Teschner 1977) when we put together our bibliography on the subject in 1976, interest and concern about how to teach Spanish to students who already spoke the language had been present in educational circles since the 1930s. It would not be inaccurate to say, however, that in spite of the long-standing interest in this question, only in the late seventies and early eighties did the teaching of Spanish to Spanish speakers become more widely known as an area of focus. At that time, increasing enrollments of nontraditional students (particularly Chicanos and Puerto Ricans) at state colleges and universities led to the realization that existing Spanish language teaching practices were inappropriate for this group.

Even then, the majority of Spanish language departments barely acknowledged the presence of Hispanic bilingual students. Spanish language study continued to be structured for traditional foreign language students whose first language was English. Most traditional students enrolled in introductory Spanish language study for two years to fulfill a university language requirement. A much smaller group of traditional students declared a Spanish major and enrolled in third- and fourth-year literature courses. If classes for bilingual students were present in the curriculum at all, they were seen as a special, "remedial" sideline, and in fact, they were often labeled as remedial.

Graphically, the situation encountered in the seventies can be appreciated in Table 1. It is important to note that all methodologies and practices used at that time to teach Spanish were based on theories of second language learning. Instruction was structured so that monolingual Anglophone students could fulfill a language requirement or move through third-year courses in composition and grammar to the study of literature. Generally, completing remedial Spanish courses did not fulfill the university language requirement. However, they did enable bilingual students to enroll in third- and fourth-year courses—on the condition that they could pass undetected among regular, traditional Spanish majors.

Since the early seventies much has been accomplished in the field of Spanish for bilingual students. A number of articles in the late seventies and early eighties attempted to define the field by discussing the difference between foreign language and native language instruction (Valdés 1981), the implications of the study of linguistic differences for the teaching of Spanish to bilingual students (Floyd 1981; Solé 1981; Guitart 1981), concerns and questions surrounding the teaching of the prestige or standard variety (Valdés-Fallis 1976, 1978;
### Table 1
Programs of Study Available in Spanish Departments in the 1970s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classes Available for Traditional Foreign Language Students</th>
<th>Courses Available in Some Departments for Bilingual Hispanophone Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-year courses</td>
<td>Instruction in beginning Spanish</td>
<td>Remedial Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-year courses</td>
<td>Instruction in intermediate Spanish</td>
<td>Remedial Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-year courses</td>
<td>Advanced grammar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture &amp; civilization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey courses in Peninsular and Latin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth-year courses</td>
<td>Specialized courses in Peninsular and Latin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Also during this period, much activity in the field centered around the production of textbooks to be used in teaching bilingual students. (e.g., Valdés-Fallis and Teschner 1978; Valdes 1992; Burunat and Starcevic 1983; Migueléz and Sandoval 1987; de la Portilla and Varela 1978; Quintanilla and Silman 1978; Mejías and Garza-Swan 1981). Practitioners, especially at the university level, settled into what appeared to be comfortable teaching patterns using a variety of readily available materials.
Currently, in many if not most university Spanish departments, the situation has changed somewhat, as depicted in Table 2. At many universities there are two parallel tracks that allow students to fulfill language requirements differently during the first two years of study. A four-semester requirement for non-native speakers, for example, may be fulfilled by Hispanic bilinguals in a two-semester sequence. What is important to notice in Table 2, however, is that in most Spanish departments the expectation is that at a particular point the two tracks will come together. This means that bilingual students who elect to continue the study of Spanish beyond the requirement will be taught together with non-natives at the third-year level. The same courses in composition, grammar, or Latin American or Peninsular literature, conducted by the same professors, will be open to both groups of students.

Not surprisingly, this departmental reality has had an impact on the goals and objectives of existing instruction for bilingual Spanish-speaking students. As I argued recently (Valdés 1992), all too often, in spite of their belief that other objectives might be valid in elementary courses for Hispanic bilinguals, Spanish instructors have been constrained by the fact that they were still expected to prepare students to pass undetected among "real" Spanish majors.

In different parts of the United States, as Spanish language instructors were faced with the challenges of moving diverse groups of students through a lan-

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**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs of Study Available in the 1990s in University Spanish Departments in the United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classes Available for Traditional Foreign Language Students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-year courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second-year courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third-year courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth-year courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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language requirement and/or preparing them to major in Spanish, they found themselves developing methodologies and practices to respond to the specific characteristics of their various student populations. In some parts of the country, newly arrived Spanish-speaking students were well educated speakers of the prestige variety of Spanish. In other areas, newly arrived students tended to be relatively unskilled speakers of stigmatized varieties of Spanish. In still other places, most students were second-and third-generation Chicanos who had acquired Spanish in a contact environment, largely from speakers of nonprestige varieties of Spanish. At many universities, this diversity problem was further compounded by the presence of students whose Spanish language competencies varied from the merely receptive to the fully productive.

By the late eighties it became clear that these problems of diversity had not been resolved. Few materials were available for Spanish-speaking bilinguals at the secondary level, and younger college faculty, trained primarily in Peninsular and Latin American literature, found themselves facing the same problems with this student population that others had faced a decade before. Meanwhile, the foreign language teaching profession had changed also. Emphasis had shifted away from grammar-based instruction to a proficiency orientation, and much confusion existed about what constituted appropriate kinds of instruction and assessment. By the late eighties and early nineties articles began to examine old issues in new ways or to pose entirely new questions (such as the use of the oral proficiency interview with bilingual students (Valdés 1989), the issue of dialect and standard (Hidalgo 1987, 1993; Politz 1993), the role of foreign language teachers in teaching bilingual students (Merino et al. 1993), the relationship between theory and practice (Merino, Trueba, and Samaniego 1993), and the role of the foreign language teaching profession in maintaining minority languages (Valdés 1992). Again, much attention was given to describing instructional practices (e.g., Roca 1990; Gorman 1993; Hocker 1993; Faltis and DeVillar 1993) and to curriculum development (e.g., D'Ambrusso 1993; Quintana-Sarellana et al. 1993; Samaniego et al. 1993).

PRACTICES AND PEDAGOGIES

The pedagogical problems facing instructors who teach Spanish to Hispanophone bilinguals are not simple and they are made more complex by the heterogeneity of the student population as compared to Anglophone students, who begin their study of Spanish at absolute zero. Hispanophone students, variously referred to as native speakers, quasi-native speakers, residual speakers, bilingual speakers, and home-background speakers, bring to the classroom a very wide variety of competencies and proficiencies in the Spanish language. Some students exhibit minimal competencies, understanding only everyday Spanish related to a limited number of topics. Other students' competencies may include almost total control of academic Spanish in both productive and receptive modes and in both reading and writing modalities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Students</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Newly arrived: Type A | Well schooled in Spanish-speaking country  
                           Speakers of prestige variety of Spanish |
| Newly arrived: Type B | Poorly schooled in Spanish-speaking country  
                           Speakers of stigmatized variety of Spanish |
| Bilingual: Type A | Access to bilingual instruction in U.S.  
                           Basic academic skills in Spanish  
                           Good academic skills in English  
                           Fluent functional speakers of contact variety of rural Spanish |
| Bilingual: Type B | No academic skills in Spanish  
                           Good academic skills in English  
                           Fluent but limited speakers of contact variety of rural Spanish |
| Bilingual: Type C | No academic skills in Spanish  
                           Good academic skills in English  
                           Fluent but limited speakers of prestige variety of Spanish  
                           Some contact phenomena present |
| Bilingual: Type D | No academic skills in Spanish  
                           Poor academic skills in English  
                           Fluent but limited speakers of contact variety of rural Spanish |
| Bilingual: Type E | No academic skills in Spanish  
                           Poor academic skills in English  
                           Very limited speaker of contact variety of rural Spanish |
| Bilingual: Type F | No academic skills in Spanish  
                           Poor academic skills in English  
                           Receptive bilingual in contact variety of rural Spanish |

Table 3 summarizes the types of students that normally enroll in courses for native-speaking (bilingual) students, generally referred to as SNS courses. Table 4 correlates Spanish language development needs with the immigrant and bilingual student populations presented in Table 3. Pedagogical responses to these different instructional needs have varied widely. Early textbooks produced for bilingual speakers (e.g., Baker 1966; Barker 1972) focused almost exclusively on teaching the prestige variety of Spanish using a contrastive/pattern drill approach. Later
### Table 4

**Student Characteristics and Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Characteristics</th>
<th>Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newly arrived immigrant children</td>
<td>Language maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued development of age-appropriate language competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly arrived immigrant adolescents/young adults</td>
<td>Language maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued development of age-appropriate language competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High literacy</td>
<td>Language maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of literacy skills in first language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued development of age-appropriate language competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low literacy</td>
<td>Acquisition of prestige variety of the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second- and third-generation bilinguals</td>
<td>Maintenance, retrieval, and/or acquisition of language competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g., oral productive abilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expansion of bilingual range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer to Spanish of literacy skills developed in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquisition of prestige variety of the language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

texts (e.g., Valdés-Fallis and Teschner 1978; Burunat and Starcovic 1983; de la Portilla and Varela 1978; Quintanilla and Silman 1978; Mejias and Garza-Swan 1981) have attempted to teach grammatical terminology, reading and writing skills, vocabulary, and the like. For the most part, these textbooks reflect the teaching experiences of the authors and the particular language abilities of the students they have personally encountered in class. Although different authors have made efforts to produce materials appropriate for students from both Puerto Rican and Mexican backgrounds, few efforts in this direction have been completely successful.

In general, very few theoretical advances have been made in the field, and only a handful of papers have endeavors to move beyond the classroom and to discuss larger issues. No attempts have been made to examine the implicit theories undergirding existing instructional practices. In spite of these limitations, many practitioners consider themselves successful in implementing instruction for this special, diverse group of students.

Table 5 lists a number of the pedagogies that instructors have used in SNS courses at both the secondary and post-secondary levels to achieve commonly accepted course goals. Note that although I have separated these four different goals in the table, all four goals are often in fact simultaneously targeted in a single
### Table 5

**Instructional Goals and Frequently Used Pedagogies for SNS Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Goal</th>
<th>Pedagogy Frequently Used</th>
<th>Less Frequently Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of literacy skills</td>
<td>Instruction in reading and writing</td>
<td>Introduction to sociolinguistic principles of language variation and language use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching of traditional grammar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of prestige</td>
<td>Teaching of prestige variety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>variety</td>
<td>Teaching of traditional grammar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching of helpful strategies for monitoring use of contact features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching of strategies designed to monitor use of stigmatized features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of bilingual</td>
<td>Teaching of vocabulary</td>
<td>Structuring of class activities to provide student participation in activities designed to expand linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>range</td>
<td>Reading of different types of texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language maintenance</td>
<td>Instruction in reading and writing</td>
<td>Consciousness raising around issues of identity and language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching of vocabulary</td>
<td>Reading texts focusing on issues of race, class, and gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Carrying out ethnographic projects in the Spanish-language community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curricular sequence or even within a single course designed for bilingual Spanish speakers. It is possible for a course to focus both on consciousness raising about issues of language and on preparing students to use Spanish professionally.

Also, note that Table 5 does not include details about classroom practices. Teaching the prestige variety of Spanish, for example, often entails teaching verb morphology, lists of stigmatized language features, contrastive analyses of the prestige and nonprestige varieties, oral presentations, and the like. Similarly, teaching reading and writing often involves instruction in spelling conventions, written accents, etc.
My purpose in presenting this overview of the field of teaching Spanish to bilingual Hispanophones has been to provide a point of departure for examining the theories and language teaching principles that undergird existing practice. What I intend to point out is that current practices within this instructional emphasis are not informed by a coherent set of theories about language learning. Instead, classroom practices have been primarily informed—as I have pointed out in Tables 3 and 4—by student characteristics and by instructional goals. They have also been informed—as I will subsequently point out—by theories about language developed in the fields of linguistics and sociolinguistics.

**Principles of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics**

Figure 1 (Ingram 1994) illustrates the relationship between theories within the fundamental sciences (theories of language) and theories in applied linguistics (theories of language learning) to the field of second and foreign language teaching. As the figure clearly emphasizes, second and foreign language teaching is based on theories about language acquisition or learning that are in turn based on theories about language drawn from the fundamental sciences. The theoretical scientist studies language itself and develops theories about the nature of language and linguistic variation, the process of first and second language acquisition, the characteristics of bilingualism, etc. Linguistic descriptions are produced by these scientists.

Applied linguists, on the other hand, develop theories about language learning. A linguistic description—no matter how complete—is not a theory of language learning. A theory of language learning endeavors to explain how individuals come to acquire the features described by the fundamental scientist. Once the applied linguist develops a language learning theory, the next task is to apply that theory to the design of a methodology that will be utilized in classroom practice.

Ingram’s model is especially useful because it shows clearly the relationship among theoretical sciences, applied linguistics, and classroom practice. Each level of activity provides insights for the other two levels. Thus classroom practice and its results provide important data that both theoretical scientists and applied linguists can use to inform the continued development of theory.

For example, as Table 6 makes clear, audiolingual methodologies and classroom practices were based on a particular theory of language learning. Applied linguists at the time—basing their positions on those held within structural linguistics and psychology—adhered to behaviorist views of language learning and believed that repetition (rather than overt learning) and activities that involved stimulus, response, and reinforcement led to language acquisition. These theories in turn led to the design of a specific syllabus and particular classroom procedures. In class, students repeated, imitated, and memorized because theories of second language acquisition held that second languages were acquired in these ways.

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Similarly, Table 7 lists selected theories of language and of language learning that undergird Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach. Note that the classroom practices listed in the table and followed in the implementation of the Natural Approach are directly related to theories of L2 acquisition.
### Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory of Language Learning</th>
<th>Syllabus Design</th>
<th>Classroom Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language is structure</td>
<td>L2 acquisition is like L1 acquisition.</td>
<td>Key items of phonology, morphology, and syntax used for selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 is acquired through a process of positive and negative reinforcement</td>
<td>Stimulus, response, and reinforcement lead to acquisition of L2. (Practice makes perfect.)</td>
<td>Order of learning: listening, speaking, reading, writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language can be described at different levels (phonemic, morphemic, syntactic, etc.)</td>
<td>Grammar taught inductively</td>
<td>Grammar taught inductively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary medium of language is oral</td>
<td>Dialogues and drills used extensively</td>
<td>Dialogues and drills used extensively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LANGUAGE THEORY AND THE FIELD OF TEACHING SPANISH TO HISPANOPHONE BILINGUALS**

As it is presently structured, the instructional field known as teaching Spanish to Spanish (or Native) Speakers (SNS) has developed multiple classroom practices and pedagogies that are not directly based on coherent theories of the kinds of language learning with which it is concerned. Very specifically, language teaching professionals engaged in this area of instruction are concerned with such questions as the acquisition of a standard dialect, the expansion of bilingual range, the transfer of reading and writing abilities across languages, and the maintenance of...
Table 7

Language Theories and the Natural Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory of Language</th>
<th>Theory of Language Learning</th>
<th>Syllabus Design</th>
<th>Classroom Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language is the vehicle for communicating meanings and messages</td>
<td>Aspects of L2 acquisition similar to L1 acquisition</td>
<td>Intended for beginners</td>
<td>Student role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 acquisition requires meaningful interaction</td>
<td>Acquisition/learning hypothesis</td>
<td>As much comprehensible input as possible</td>
<td>Processes comprehensible input at:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor hypothesis</td>
<td>Goals involve developing:</td>
<td>pre-production stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural order hypothesis</td>
<td>basic personal communication skills, both oral and written</td>
<td>early production stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Input hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
<td>speech emergent stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affective filter hypothesis</td>
<td>Academic learning skills, both oral and written</td>
<td>Teacher role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

an immigrant language. In each of these areas existing practice is informed to some degree by theories of language and by research carried out in the language sciences. For example, language professionals working in SNS have utilized descriptions of Spanish in the United States to prepare instructional materials and to predict difficulties that students will experience in using Spanish. However, these professionals have not yet developed theories about how standard dialects are acquired, how bilinguals expand their range in each language, and how skills transfer across languages. Our existing situation, I would argue, can be represented as it appears in Figure 2.

What I am contending here is that although applied linguists and language professionals concerned with teaching Spanish to bilingual speakers have a number of theories from which to draw in the areas of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and linguistics, they have not yet attempted to develop theories that can directly support their teaching practices. More surprisingly, perhaps, neither have they examined the results of their teaching practices to determine what important insights about language and language learning may be drawn from those results.

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**Figure 2**

A Model for Applied Linguistics in the Context of Teaching Spanish to Hispanic Bilinguals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal domain of the theoretical scientist</th>
<th>Fundamental Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psycholinguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociolinguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas in Which Principles of Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to Be Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of standard dialects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of bilingual range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of literacy skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual language maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Applied                                        |
| Methodology                                    |
| Methods                                        |
| Syllabus                                       |
| Objectives                                     |

| Teaching Projects                              |
| Reassessed in Practice                         |

| Principal domain of the applied linguist       |

| Established Classroom                          |
| Domain of Teaching Practice                    |
| Techniques                                     |
In the following sections, I will briefly focus on the four principal goals of Spanish language instruction for bilingual, Spanish-speaking students to illustrate the existing limitations under which such instruction is currently being carried out in the United States.

Goal 1: Spanish Language Maintenance

For many persons engaged in teaching Spanish to bilingual students, Spanish language maintenance is an important and primary goal. The belief that the formal study of Spanish can contribute to the maintenance of the Spanish language among second- and third-generation Chicano and Puerto Rican students is widely held. Those who support this position and argue in favor of the need to maintain the Spanish language in the Chicano and Puerto Rican communities often cite research at the level of the fundamental sciences that focuses on bilingualism and on the nature of language maintenance and language shift (e.g., Fishman 1964, 1991). Indeed, the field of societal bilingualism has contributed important theories about factors that contribute to each of these processes. Similarly, students of individual bilingualism who have researched language loss (Hyltenstam et al. 1989; Seliger et al. 1991) have examined the linguistic danger signs that point to the general weakening of one of a bilingual’s two languages. What is known is that it is difficult to maintain individual bilingualism across generations even when societal bilingualism is stable. In the case of Hispanophones, as Hernández-Chávez (1993) carefully documented in his broad review of the literature on these questions, we know that individual language shift is rapid and ongoing.

What practitioners currently do not have access to are theories about how classroom practice at the university level, for example, can contribute to stemming such language loss. Little information exists concerning the extent to which consciousness raising about language and identity, and teaching sociolinguistic principles and overall language skills can contribute to encouraging individual students to view themselves as lifetime Spanish speakers and to make the effort of transmitting the language to their children.

It is important to note that few sociolinguists and students of societal bilingualism are optimistic about developing simple principles that explain why and how individuals maintain minority languages in bilingual contexts. The variables are many, and the classroom is limited in what it can accomplish against the assimilative pressures of the wider society. Fishman (1991) is most persuasive in arguing that language maintenance depends on its transmission across generations. He further maintains that schools, by themselves, cannot reverse language shift and he suggests steps that may be followed in those communities that are at level 6 of his Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) in order to create a community rather than a school context in which use of the minority language can both grow and thrive.

However, if practitioners believe that they can contribute—if only in some small way—to language maintenance, the questions that they and applied linguists working with them must answer in developing a theory of classroom approaches to such maintenance include:

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1. What levels of linguistic development correlate with students' desire to maintain Spanish?

2. What kinds of interactions with other Spanish speakers in the school context promote increased interest in continuing to participate in such interactions?

3. What kinds of readings promote understanding of students' linguistic circumstances and a concomitant awareness of the efforts involved in maintaining language?

4. Which classroom activities contribute to students' positive attitudes about themselves and their use of Spanish?

Responses to such questions will serve as a point of departure for the development of a set of coherent principles concerning the precise role of language instruction in language maintenance. For the moment, instruction aimed at bilingual speakers of Spanish that purports to support language maintenance is operating according to what are, at best, very tentative hypotheses about the relationship between language instruction and language maintenance. Significantly, some of these hypotheses do not appear to be supported by work currently being carried out in the fundamental sciences.

**Goal 2: Acquisition of the Prestige Variety of Spanish**

Teaching prestige or standard varieties of language to speakers of nonprestige varieties is an area that has received much less attention than second language teaching and learning. Recent work (Cheshire et al. 1989) on the relationship between nonprestige dialects and education in Europe underscores the fact that, while such dialects appear to have been the subject of controversy for many years, few theories exist on how standard dialects are acquired by speakers of nonprestige varieties. Moreover, while it has always been tempting to view the acquisition of a standard dialect as analogous to the process of acquiring a second language, important differences exist between the two processes.

In general, it may be said that individuals learning a second language (even a closely related language) are always aware, when presented with a given utterance, of whether or not the utterance is part of their first language. Likewise, one may also say that for most items or elements that are part of language A, one or more translation equivalents exist in language B. Learners, then, are always aware of whether they are speaking or listening to their own language or the target language.

However, this is not the case when native or bilingual learners are confronted with a standard or prestige variety of the language that they speak. In such cases, as Craig (1988) has argued, learners' vocabularies are substantially identical to vocabularies in the prestige or standard varieties of the language. Indeed, as Craig has further argued, from the learner's perspective, the standard variety "can be regarded as consisting of four sets or strata of linguistic features." Craig's four features (to which I have added a fifth) are:

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1. Features common to both the nonprestige dialect and the standard dialect and normally produced by the nonprestige dialect speaker

2. Features normally not produced in the nonprestige dialect, but familiar to and possibly produced by the learner in situations in which such learners make an extreme effort to be “correct”

3. Features that the learner is unable (or unwilling) to produce but recognizes and understands when they are used in context by prestige dialect speakers

4. Features totally unknown to the nonprestige dialect speaker

5. Features that are used exclusively in the nonprestige dialect and are highly stigmatized among prestige variety speakers

In the instructional context, the existence of these five sets of features creates a situation for nonprestige dialect speakers unlike that encountered by the second language learner. Because nonprestige dialect speakers are aware of the existence of feature sets 1 and 2, they often use features from set 5 when attempting to speak standard dialect, under the mistaken assumption that the latter are also part of either set 1 or set 2.

As I pointed out earlier, concern about the perceived need to teach an educated, standard variety of Spanish has been very much at the center of the field of teaching Spanish to bilingual Hispanophone students in the United States. In terms of this pedagogical emphasis, practitioners and applied linguists are fortunate in having access to a great deal of fundamental research. Descriptions of the characteristics of norma culta or prestige variety Spanish exist in many Spanish-speaking countries (Lope Blanch 1974, 1983; López Morales 1971; Escobar 1978), and descriptions of U.S. varieties of Spanish are also available from a number of different perspectives (e.g., Elías-Oliva et al. 1985; Hernández-Chávez 1973; Valdés 1988; Sánchez 1983; Peñalosa 1980; Pedraza 1985; Pousada and Poblack, 1982).

However, as Politzer (1993) recently suggested, in spite of our knowledge about the complexity of inter- and intra-individual variation, little is known about how standard dialects are acquired. No existing theories guide practitioners in deciding how to teach such a standard. As Politzer (1993) points out, early efforts to teach standard English to speakers of Black English Variety (BEV) have been abandoned. Teachers of standard dialects who hoped to be guided by theories of L2 acquisition now have serious doubts about the parallels to be found between these two very different kinds of acquisition.

In developing language learning theories to guide the development of classroom methodology for teaching or bringing about the acquisition of a prestige variety, questions such as the following must be asked and answered. How is a prestige dialect acquired in natural settings? What is the order of acquisition of different features? How and why do such features become salient to speakers of the nonprestige variety? How do personal interactions contribute to such language awareness? How much access to the standard is necessary before particular features are noticed and acquired? What kind of language exposure provides the most benefit? Does avoidance of stigmatized features and production of standard features depend on the development and use of an internal monitor? How does
the monitor develop? What can be done in the classroom to create an environment in which the standard can be acquired? What sets of activities promote language awareness? What kinds of language exposure (e.g., reading, writing, viewing and analysis of videos, studying formal grammar) contribute most to the acquisition of an alternative set of rules?

**Goal 3: Expansion of Bilingual Range**

One of the key challenges facing those who teach Spanish to bilinguals (i.e., less-than-totally-native speakers of whatever degree of competency) is the development of these students' **bilingual range**. Because of the importance of this particular goal of teaching minority languages in bilingual contexts, I will briefly examine the construct of bilingual native speaker and define the notion of bilingual competence and range. Following Bachman (1990), I will point out that language proficiency includes a variety of different competencies that need to be considered in examining the range of abilities encountered among bilingual students. I will define these competencies and after doing so I will raise questions about the limitations of existing instruction for bilingual, Spanish-speaking students. I will argue that pedagogies that focus primarily on developing students' grammatical and textual competencies fail to take into account the complexity of the challenge facing students who hope to expand their entire bilingual range.

**Spanish Language Competencies of Monolingual and Bilingual Speakers of Spanish** Many differences exist between persons who acquire their first language in a monolingual context and persons who acquire it in the context of communities in which two languages are spoken. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate these differences graphically, representing the Spanish language competencies of both types of speakers. Figure 3 illustrates the Spanish language proficiency of a

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**Figure 3**

Native Speaker Who Acquired Spanish in a Monolingual Context

![Diagram](image)

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normal native Spanish speaker who acquired the language in a largely monolingual context.

In contrast, Figure 4 illustrates the varying proficiencies of native speakers who acquired Spanish as their first language in a bilingual environment.

Note that the proficiency of the speakers depicted in Figure 4, who acquired and use Spanish in a bilingual context (e.g., Catalonia, the United States, Puerto Rico, Paraguay) is not identical to that of native speakers who acquired and use Spanish in settings in which only Spanish is used for all interactions. Speakers who acquire Spanish in bilingual contexts have what is represented here graphically as a smaller degree of Spanish language proficiency. Indeed, several researchers (e.g., Lavandera 1978) have argued that bilingual speakers, who acquire and use two languages in their everyday lives, achieve varying levels of control of two codes that together form a unitary whole. The totality of their proficiency and linguistic abilities can thus only be described by examining the sum of their proficiencies and abilities in the two languages. Note also in Figure 4 that representations of the proficiencies of different bilingual speakers also differ. The first individual represented is Spanish-dominant, having less ability in Language B.
than in Spanish. On the other hand, the second individual is dominant in Language B. Although Spanish was the language acquired first, it is not this person’s stronger language.

What should be evident from these two illustrations is that expanding the Spanish language abilities of the kinds of speakers represented in Figure 4 to a level of competency approaching that of the speaker depicted in Figure 3 is a challenge indeed, because proficiency, which is represented quite simplistically here, is extraordinarily complex. Consider, for example, Figure 5, drawn from Bachman (1990: 87), which suggests that language competence includes a number of different components that interact together.

As Figure 5 reflects, for Bachman language competence includes grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competence. Further, language competence involves not only control of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology, but also the ability to manipulate interactions, express ideas, create and imagine when using the language, and manifest sensitivity to differences in social and geographical varieties of the language, differences in register, naturalness, and to cultural references.

Speakers who acquire their native language in a monolingual context certainly vary in their control and abilities in a number of these areas. For example, some individuals claim to be notoriously deaf to style and register differences.

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**Figure 5**

Components of Language Competence
Nevertheless, all native speakers who acquire their first language in a monolingual context develop whatever competencies are required in that language to carry out their communicative needs.

The situation is quite different for speakers who acquire their first language in a setting where two languages are used in the community. In such cases, speakers may develop very different strengths in each language depending on their opportunities for using them in their everyday lives. Often, bilingual individuals have very limited textual competence in one of their two languages because they have not been exposed to reading and writing in that language. Other abilities and competencies of bilinguals may also vary and shift as illustrated in Figure 6.

Here, the language competence of bilingual speakers is viewed as spread over both languages. This conceptualization focuses on the fact that these individuals develop different strengths in different components. Thus a bilingual individual such as the one represented here may have a limited vocabulary in the first language acquired (Language A) but greater sociolinguistic competence in that same language. A bilingual speaker may grope for terms to discuss school or professional topics in Spanish, for example, but at the same time be capable of interpreting every cultural reference made by fluent monolingual speakers engaged in a heated discussion.

The implications of this uneven development of competencies are many. Given this representation and conceptualization, it should be evident that a single instructional approach (e.g., focus on vocabulary or reading and writing) would be insufficient to expand this particular speaker's competency in language A in all or even most of the components of language competence.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that, even within a single component, most bilingual speakers display a great deal of variation in terms of strengths and limitations. In the grammatical component, for example, one frequently finds that bilingual speakers vary immensely in their abilities. Figure 7

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**Figure 6**

Language Competencies of Bilingual Individuals

![Diagram of language competencies]
illustrates the uneven development of a single bilingual speaker within the grammatical component. Note in the figure that even within a single type of competence a bilingual's strengths may not be evenly distributed. Here we see that vocabulary and knowledge of phoneme/grapheme equivalencies may vary impressively within a single bilingual.

**Examination of Bilingual Competence and the Teaching of Spanish to "Native" Speakers**

The examination of bilingual competence is of interest to the language teaching profession, and particularly to those engaged in the practice of teaching Spanish to bilingual speakers, because it can help them to understand both the ideal end goals of existing instructional efforts and the challenges involved in achieving those goals. Indeed, what I am arguing here is that the so-called home-background, residual, and quasi-native speakers about whom these professionals are concerned are not simply imperfect speakers of Spanish who have fallen short of the monolingual norm. Rather, they are complex individuals who are fundamentally different from monolinguals. As opposed to monolingual speakers of Spanish who grow up in societies where Spanish is the sole or primary language, bilingual Hispanics in the United States are members of communities where a single language (be it English or Spanish) does not suffice to meet all communicative needs.
The particular competencies of these speakers are especially difficult to assess because they cannot be easily compared with those of either monolingual English or monolingual Spanish speakers. Indeed, the competence of bilinguals who function on an everyday basis in two languages can perhaps be best understood by using the construct of bilingual range.

**Bilingual Range Defined** In attempting to describe functioning bilinguals, I have defined *bilingual range* as the continuum of linguistic abilities and communicative strategies that these individuals may access in one or the other of two languages at a specific moment, for a particular purpose, in a particular setting, with particular interlocutors. From this perspective, at a given moment of interaction, a bilingual is considered to have a particular range in language A, a particular range in language B, and a particular range when both languages are used together.

When arguing with a sibling about money, for example, one bilingual's total range might be characterized as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language A</th>
<th>Language B</th>
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</table>

This representation indicates that the bilingual's momentarily "preferred" language would be language B rather than language A. At a different moment, for other purposes, with other interlocutors, and in a different setting, this same bilingual's range might be characterized as exhibiting greater strengths in language A than in language B.

Bilingual range encompasses different kinds of competencies in two languages, including what Bachman (1990) has termed grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competence. A bilingual's shifting communicative abilities in different types of interactions, in different settings, with both monolingual and bilingual interlocutors are seen to result from the (often momentarily) varying availability of these various competencies to the individual.

Currently, not much is known about bilingual range and about why and how communicative abilities and other language competencies in bilinguals appear to shift in unpredictable ways. Even less is known about how these abilities and competencies can be strengthened.

**Turning Bilinguals into Monolingual-Like Speakers of Spanish: Theoretical and Pedagogical Challenges** The primary aim of the language division of many post-secondary Spanish departments in the United States is to produce
students whose competency approaches that of monolingual speakers of Spanish. In the case of students who have no background in this language, the task is generally seen as a difficult one. Acquiring the language and reaching near-native proficiency is thus expected to take many years for such students. Moreover, if language teaching professionals are truthful, they will admit that very few of these students ever reach that level of proficiency. When they do so, it is understood that their success involves a rare combination of natural ability, determination, and opportunity. Serious students are thus urged to travel and live in Spanish-speaking countries for a period of time and to nurture close friendships with native speakers. Instructors impress upon students the facts that language competencies erode and that maintaining broad abilities in the language will involve a lifetime effort.

While seemingly commonsense, in reality these views on how near-native competencies are acquired are based directly on what is now known about how second languages are acquired. Indeed, a large body of literature on second language acquisition is accessible to language teaching practitioners. A great deal less is known about how persons acquire their first language in bilingual contexts, and almost nothing is known about how a bilingual person’s range in each language changes and develops over time. We know enough, however, to make us suspect that the process of further development of a first language is fundamentally different from the process of second language acquisition. The theoretical questions are many. Currently, we have only begun to carry out the kind of research that can help us understand whether and how the process of growth in a “limited” first language actually occurs. We do not yet know how closely bilingual speakers can actually come to resemble monolinguals in a natural setting over a lifetime, and we know even less about how this process might work in the high school or university classroom. We have no answers to the question of what is possible for such students in what length of time. We have no existing theoretical framework from which to draw in order to inform practice.

What must therefore be developed is a theory about how bilingual range—once we know what that is—can be expanded in both natural and classroom settings. We can conjecture that expansion of this range involves growth in grammatical, textual, illocutionary, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies. A language learning theory might therefore endeavor to explain, for example, how growth in these various kinds of competencies is related. For the moment our fundamental theories of bilingualism, including those that have examined language loss, have focused almost exclusively on grammatical competence. In order to move our understanding of the other competencies forward, theoretical scientists and applied linguists must expand their research significantly.

SNS practitioners have consistently been concerned with the question of expanding bilingual competencies. Whether they have called it expanding vocabulary or increasing fluency, they have attempted in their practices to bring about broad and general growth in language abilities. As I argued previously, however, applied linguists have not developed theories of language learning to support these practices. We need to recognize that fact and to move forward in developing such theories.

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**Goal 4: Transfer of Literacy Skills**
Goal 4: Transfer of Literacy Skills

Compared to teaching the standard language or expanding bilingual range, achieving the transfer of literacy skills appears to be a far more straightforward goal. A number of allied fields (e.g., bilingual education, foreign language education) are also concerned about the transfer of literacy skills from one language to another, and the development of theory in this area is already moving forward.

In teaching Spanish to bilingual speakers, however, these questions are more precisely focused. Instructors need to know how different types of skills transfer, how best to bring about an efficient and effective carry-over of reading and writing skills, and what range of materials best accomplishes the task.

THEORY AND TEACHING PRACTICE: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

What I have been suggesting here is that the practice of teaching Spanish to Hispanic bilinguals can contribute in important ways to theory building within the field of applied linguistics. In moving toward the future, I believe it is important to consider exactly where the field currently known as SNS should be positioned. Is it simply a subfield of the Spanish teaching profession, as shown in Figure 8? Or is it more broadly one of two branches of the foreign language teaching profession, as depicted in Figure 9? I would argue that the implications of work carried out with Hispanic bilinguals goes much beyond teaching Spanish to Spanish-speaking students. The practice of SNS, and indeed the nascent theories that undergird such instruction, can inform many other bilingual groups in the United States that are also facing the slow erosion of their languages.

Taking an even broader view, however, I am arguing that what SNS practitioners do positions them in a much larger context. Their work directly contributes to the field of applied linguistics, which is grappling at this moment with issues

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**Figure 8**

SNS and the Spanish Teaching Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish Teaching Profession</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual, Native-Speaker Branch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9

Two Proposed Branches of the Language Teaching Profession in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Language Teaching Profession</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign Language Branch</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Maintenance Branch</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolingual speakers of English</td>
<td>Circumstantial bilinguals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Objective for Student Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop functional proficiency in a second language</td>
<td>To maintain and retrieve functional abilities in a heritage language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research and Theory</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on the process of second language learning and theories of second language acquisition inform practice.</td>
<td>Research on the process of expansion of bilingual range, second dialect acquisition, and reading and writing skills transfer is almost nonexistent. Theories about such processes need to be developed and extended to inform practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Testing and Assessment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing and assessment are strong and growing areas of interest. They are directly informed by theories of second language ability development in elective bilinguals.</td>
<td>Testing and assessment practices that are directly informed by theories of heritage language ability in circumstantial bilingual individuals need to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Training and Materials Production</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training focuses on developing language competencies in the instructional language and on the needs of potential elective bilinguals. Materials are informed by current theories about second language acquisition.</td>
<td>Teacher training needs to focus on the characteristics of immigrant students. Materials need to be developed which are based on research and theory on the process of language maintenance, language retrieval, and second dialect acquisition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
involving minority languages all over the world. For example, Australia has recently adopted K–12 language teaching standards that include specialized sequences for students who enter school with home backgrounds in immigrant and aboriginal languages (Ingram 1994; Smith et al. 1993; Fernández et al. 1993; Kalantzis et al. 1989; Scarino et al. n.d.). Similarly, Canada has been engaged for a number of years in the teaching of heritage languages (Cummins 1983, 1984; Danesi 1986). More recently, Europeans (Benton 1986; Baker 1988; Alladina 1993; Wright 1993; Latomaa 1993; Oud de Glas et al. 1993) have begun to examine the language teaching challenges posed by students who have acquired their L1 in a contact environment. The practice of SNS and the experiences of those who have worked in this area have much to contribute to these efforts. This is especially true because, for all of the publicity that the heritage language programs in Canada have received, we have yet to see a report on the set of principles that guides this ongoing teaching effort (Benyon and Toohey 1992; Rincker 1991; Feuerverger 1991; Yee et al. 1991; Lopes and Lopes 1991; Larner et al. 1986).

I urge all practitioners and applied linguists who have worked in the area of minority language teaching to minority speakers to view their efforts and endeavors not as a tiny subfield, but as a larger enterprise that has much to contribute to the practice of language teaching in general. The role of such professionals is illustrated in Figure 10. This figure depicts the field of language teaching as involving two main thrusts: majority language teaching and minority language teaching. Minority language teaching (e.g., Spanish in the United States, Polish in Australia, Ukrainian in Canada, Turkish in Germany) can be directed at bilingual minority speakers of that language, at minority speakers who have lost these ancestral languages, and at monolingual speakers of the majority language who are also members of the majority group. The practice of SNS falls precisely within the first category. It involves teaching a minority language in the United States to bilingual speakers of different types who also happen to be members of a minority community.

As I am sure will be obvious, there are many implications inherent in practitioners' viewing themselves and SNS as part of a larger practice. The most obvious implication involves the choice of the language to be used in professional communications. If others are to participate in conversations carried out about the practice of SNS, a decision must be made about whether or not to select English—as opposed to Spanish—for such communications.

On the one hand, I believe that what SNS practitioners have to say contributes directly to the solution of much broader problems, and I know that being heard outside the Spanish teaching profession will require the use of English to reach the broader community of professionals. On the other hand—at the global level—I want to reject what Phillipson (1992) has termed the linguistic imperialism of English and to argue for the validity of using Spanish to talk about important theoretical questions. I am thus caught between politics and pragmatics.

The problem of the choice of language becomes even more difficult when one moves from the global to the local arena. Here language politics take on a different character. Members of the Spanish teaching profession include bilinguals of many different types who mirror in their bilingual range the diglossic contexts in
which Spanish is used in the United States. Some of our colleagues are highly English-dominant and feel most comfortable using English in intellectual discussions. Others are newly arrived Latin Americans who may be less comfortable using English than they are using Spanish. Often these individuals are speakers of educated, standard varieties of Spanish who are not familiar with contact varieties of the language and occasionally tend to confuse lack of fluency in an educated standard with intellectual limitations.

It is easy to fall into making choices about language that result in unanticipated consequences. In 1978, for example, Richard Teschner, Charles Tatum, and
I ran an NEH Summer Institute at New Mexico State University. The focus of the institute was teaching Spanish to Spanish speakers, and our purpose as organizers was to work with 18 faculty members from universities around the country—all of whom had Ph.D.’s in Spanish—to develop SNS curricula. The institute ran for six weeks and included persons who had been raised in Spanish-speaking countries, Anglo-Americans whose first language was English, Puerto Ricans from New York, and Chicanos. I am sorry to say that we spent the first week of the institute establishing in subtle but very pointed ways who were the speakers of the “best” Spanish. As a result, during the remainder of the institute, the less fluent voices were not heard. Those that spoke the “best” Spanish dominated the group, and form rather than ideas about the issues that brought us together tended to be privileged in our interactions. Making the decision to use Spanish as a language of interaction for the institute had—in retrospect—very high costs. Those who sat around the table did not participate in the conversation as equals.

I worry, then, about establishing Spanish as the primary vehicle for communications on teaching Spanish to Spanish speakers in the United States. I worry about conducting workshops primarily in Spanish. I am concerned about the power relationships that are established when it is assumed that those of us who speak “better Spanish” should use such workshops to upgrade the Spanish of fellow professionals. I do not want to see privilege conferred on proficiency in certain class-derived varieties of Spanish. I do not want to engage in linguistic one-upmanship with those whose proficiency in Spanish is a product of their circumstances. Spanish teaching professionals need to come to the table as equals and to take part in conversations surrounding important pedagogical issues without concern over whether their Spanish is “good enough.”

It is thus important that those who work in the field deliberate carefully over their choice of language for various kinds of interactions. Judgments about which language to use for what purposes are never simple in bilingual contexts. In our field of endeavor we must be particularly vigilant in examining the potential effects of decisions that at first glance appear entirely neutral.

**CONCLUSION**

In sum, what I have argued here is that, in terms of language learning theory, the field of SNS has much to contribute to our understanding of complex, vitally important phenomena. Practitioners are in a unique position to connect what they have learned from research in the language sciences with what they observe in their classrooms and to develop a coherent theoretical framework to support existing and future practice. The questions asked by professionals in this particular specialty of the Spanish teaching profession are of interest not only to those who teach Spanish to Hispanic bilinguals but also to researchers and practitioners working in a number of related areas.

In the years to come, those engaged in teaching Spanish to Hispanic bilinguals must move beyond their classrooms. That is, they must study their own
practices, asking themselves why they teach as they do, and rigorously evaluate the results of their teaching. If the field is to move beyond the anecdotal and begin to address the outstanding issues and unanswered questions surrounding it, sharing details about classroom practice at national meetings will not be enough. Instead, the theories underlying such practices must be made explicit and subjected to vigorous debate among others in the field.

I believe that the work we have carried out to date on teaching Spanish to Hispanic bilinguals puts us at the forefront of a new emphasis in the field of applied linguistics, and I am optimistic that we can contribute meaningfully to the development of an agenda that focuses on maintaining and expanding minority languages around the world.

ENDNOTES


2. Taken from Ingram (1994).


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Capítulo 2

Algunas consideraciones acerca de la enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes a nivel secundario

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INTRODUCCIÓN

Por muchos años, las clases de español a nivel secundario contaban entre su alumnado con adolescentes que estaban aprendiendo español por primera vez, como parte de sus requisitos de lengua extranjera, al igual que con jóvenes que hablaban esta lengua como su primer idioma o el idioma de la familia. Demás está decir que esta combinación de alumnos no producía los mejores resultados, ya que es imposible satisfacer las necesidades de ambos grupos al mismo tiempo.

Durante la última década, han comenzado a aparecer en el programa de la enseñanza secundaria cursos de español dirigidos a alumnos que ya hablan este idioma. Estos cursos llenan un vacío muy importante en el programa, Además de presentar una excelente oportunidad a este grupo de estudiantes para el desarrollo de habilidades y conocimientos que les permitan continuar su desarrollo social e intelectual y su bilingüismo. De igual manera, estos cursos pueden servir como el nivel más avanzado en los estudios de español para los alumnos de habla inglesa que se encuentran en proceso de desarrollar su competencia comunicativa en el español. En este trabajo haré un análisis de la situación que ha hecho posible el surgimiento de estas asignaturas, las características del alumnado al que se dirigen, y los principios metodológicos que estos cursos deben seguir. Igualmente señalaré los requisitos previos para una exitosa implementación de programas secundarios de español para hispanohablantes, los riesgos inherentes a esta empresa y el potencial que ofrecen tales programas para el beneficio futuro de los estudiantes.