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# Educational Equity for Linguistically Marginalised Students

**Anthony J. Liddicoat and Kathleen Heugh**

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## Introduction

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Language issues have come to be seen as significant for achieving equitable education and linguistic marginalisation is an important element in educational inequality. Linguistic marginalisation occurs when a language is excluded from the public life of a society in such a way that its speakers have less access to social, economic and political resources. It is a typical correlate of the selection of a national language that serves all linguistic functions to the exclusion of other languages. The term “linguistic marginalisation” is an attempt to move the focus away from the idea that educational inequity is only an issue for linguistic minorities. In many nations, linguistic marginalisation is experienced primarily by numerical minorities who are expected to adjust to the linguistic practices of the numerical majority. In many other nations, especially those that came into being at the end of European colonialism, the dominant language is typically the language of a numerical minority, while the languages of the numerical majority are excluded from much of public life, including education. Regardless of the nature of linguistic marginalisation, marginalised groups share similar educational needs and problems and we aim to bring into relationship some of the themes common to both.

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## Historical Perspectives

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Linguistic marginalisation is a consequence in part of the emergence of the one nation–one language ideology that developed with the rise of the nation-state. The idea that a nation-state should have a single official language is an innovation of the European post-Enlightenment period, although historically linguistic uniformity was not considered as fundamental for the operation of a polity. While this ideology can be traced to earlier periods, notably the Reformation, the one nation–one language ideology emerged most strongly during the French Revolution. The rationalist nation-building agenda of the Revolution argued for a single language for the French state in two ways (Geeraerts 2003). The first was a pragmatic rationale: A common language allows effective communication and access to state institutions and political functions. The second was symbolic: A single language creates and represents a single, unified identity. In effect, it is this second perspective that is most significant for the development of linguistic marginalisation. The first requires dissemination of a common language, but not inherently at the expense of other languages. The second sees linguistic diversity as inimical to the development of unified nation-states and therefore constitutes language diversity as a problem to be managed by states.

The rise of the nation-state with its monolingual ideology led to the formation of a dominant linguistic habitus, that is, a dominant sense of what constitutes linguistic normality. This dominant habitus was a *monolingual habitus* (Gogolin 1994) that conflated the one nation–one language ideology with perceived linguistic norms for individuals. Thus, in the emergence of nation-states, “a basic and deep-seated belief was created that monolingualism is the universal norm of an individual and a society” (Gogolin 2009, 536). From the perspective of the monolingual habitus, the plurilingual individual is a deviation from the norm and this deviation is understood within the

framework of other ideologies, notably those that equate language with national affiliation. The monolingual habitus thus effects linguistic marginalisation of those who do not speak the official language of their nation as an ideological production.

This ideology held sway most importantly at the beginning of mass education. Schooling was closely identified with the nation-building project and where nations emphasised monolingualism for unifying and identity functions, schooling became synonymous with assimilation into the dominant language and hence into the national identity. Non-dominant languages and cultures were excluded from schools and from officially accepted understandings of the nature and purpose of education and of what constituted the educated person (Paquette 1989). Schools therefore became essentially monolingual environments in which the dominant language was seen as both the goal and the instrument of education and other languages were marginalised if not completely excluded. Other languages were frequently considered as barriers to effective learning of the dominant language and so as an educational problem to be solved, ideally through language shift and assimilation to the monolingual norm.

School laws of the 19th century did not typically prescribe or proscribe languages for use in education and few contained a specific mention of media of instruction or the languages through which literacy or other education goals would be developed. The silence on questions of language represents the success of the one nation–one language ideology and the monolingual habitus. The lacunae about language in such laws were filled by the pervading language ideologies of the time. For example, the French Third Republic's laws on compulsory education of 1880 make no reference to French; however, French was the only language used in French schools. The use of French in this case is embedded within a republican ideology of linguistic diversity as divisive, anti-democratic, and anti-republican. In other cases, schooling laws explicitly addressed language

issues, as in the case of the 1907 Dialect Control Ordinance, which banned the use of Ryukyuan languages in Okinawan schools and punished children who spoke them (Liddicoat 2013).

Punishment of the use of languages other than the national language in school contexts was found even in contexts where no specification of language was made in law, with punishments ranging from ridicule to corporal punishment.

Monolingual education was poorly adapted to the needs of speakers of marginalised languages and frequently took the form of ‘submersion’ (Cohen and Swain 1976) of learners in a second language context for which they were little prepared. Moreover, teachers were typically monolingual in the official language, meaning that little real communication could be achieved between teachers and students. As Valenzuela (1999) argues, schools function less to develop capabilities and more to remove their linguistic, cultural, and community identities, marginalising languages and their speakers and, through this marginalisation, contributing to the educational, social, and economic marginalisation of their speakers.

The practices and ideologies of language education that emerged in the 19th century were not only features of education in nation-states but were exported to colonial contexts. In these contexts, the languages of the local people were marginalised in favour of the languages of the colonial powers, with the colonial language being the normal language of monolingual education. The introduction of monolingual, colonial educational models often overlaid older, multilingual education practices, such as those developed through religious education in Islamic West Africa (Heugh 2006). Such practices were typically ignored by colonial regimes and excluded from understandings of education and the educated person.

The association of education with national languages was not universal. In some cases, local languages were included in education in order to maintain colonial dominance (Pennycook 2000).

In other cases, alternative approaches to the education of marginalised linguistic groups existed outside government controlled education. Protestant missionary schools of the 19th century often emphasised the acquisition of literacy in local languages as a means of evangelisation and of accessing religious texts (Liddicoat 2012). For such schools, a religiously oriented set of goals held precedence over goals of nation building and was guided by a different logic in constructing education. However, in colonial contexts, there were also many cases in which evangelisation and the extension of colonial control went hand in hand; in such contexts, monolingual education in the colonists' language was the norm. The advent of compulsory state education, often accompanied by a utilitarian discourse, often led to the progressive abandonment of such models in favour of monolingual education in the colonial language.

The first half of the 20th century is characterised by studies that claimed to identify a “language handicap” in bilingual children (e.g., Jones 1952). When compared to monolingual children, bilingual children appeared to be less capable in a wide range of language abilities, including poorer vocabulary, lower standards in written composition and greater incidence of grammatical errors (e.g., Saer 1923). Such findings contributed to a discourse of deficit in educational and other contexts that equated bilingualism with negative effects on children's intelligence. The language handicap was understood as a form of linguistic confusion that had a negative impact on children's intellectual development and academic performance (e.g., Saer 1923). Most of these early studies of bilingualism were characterised by serious methodological shortcomings. A particular problem was that children were usually assessed only in the dominant language—that is, monolinguals were assessed in their first language and bilinguals in their second. This variable had significant impact on tests of language knowledge and performance and on performance in language-based tests of intelligence. Moreover, studies did not usually control for

variables other than language, especially socioeconomic status, and so confounded the variable of language with other variables that impact on education. This is particularly problematic as speakers of marginalised languages are typically marginalised in other ways, and the fact of their social, economic, and political marginalisation was ignored in understanding their educational performance. Some early critics (e.g., Fukuda 1925) recognised the methodological problems, but such studies did not lead to a questioning of the validity of the forms of psychometric testing being used to measure educational and linguistic success. Research that addressed such problems has typically found a positive rather than a negative impact of bilingualism. Studies from South Africa in the 1930s and 1940s (e.g., Malherbe 1946) found that students who received bilingual education, even from relatively poor socioeconomic contexts, achieved more highly in secondary school assessments than did students who received monolingual education. In these studies, assessment was conducted using bilingual instruments and students could read both language versions, and sometimes answer questions in the language of their choice.

The failure to control for the full range of variables in assessing bilingual students led to a reification of language as an explanatory factor in educational attainment, with bilingualism being referred to as a social plague (Epstein 1905) and “a hardship devoid of apparent advantage” (Yoshioka 1929, 476). Essentially, such thinking reflects an underlying monolingual habitus in educational and policy practice. This monolingual habitus had multiple and complex impacts on the educational experience of speakers of marginalised languages that reinforced their marginalisation. In particular, the idea that education was equated with the use of the dominant language led to a belief that other languages should be excluded from education.

The monolingual habitus did not mean that multilingualism was absent in schools but such multilingualism was largely constrained to elite education, which typically included sustained

learning of additional languages. The range of languages admitted in such educational programs was small—typically classical languages and a small number of prestigious modern languages, such as French, German, or English. The choice of languages reflects local ideologies of prestige and/or usefulness, and a high level of achievement in these languages was seen as fundamental to the concept of an educated person. There is thus an internal paradox in approaches to language in education that stigmatises the bilingualism of some and rewards the bilingualism of others. This paradox can be understood in terms of Skutnabb-Kangas' (1981) distinction between *elite* and *folk* bilingualism. Elite bilinguals are typically speakers of the dominant national language who have acquired a valued additional language through formal education as a form of intellectual training. Success in the acquisition of the additional language is taken to demonstrate intelligence and application. Folk bilinguals are those who acquire a non-dominant language through first language socialisation and also have knowledge of the national language. In this case, acquisition of the dominant language, as perceived through the monolingual habitus, is natural and unremarkable. This means that errors in speaking or writing are perceived in terms of deficiencies in knowledge and use of the normal language of communication rather than as achievement in the use of an additional language. Acquisition of the non-dominant language brings with it none of the social accolade associated with academic achievement and intellectual development; instead the non-dominant language is seen as the reason for deficiency in the national language. In this way, not only are some languages marginalised, but so are some types of bilingualism.

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## Core Issues and Key Findings

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The core issue in the education of linguistically marginalised students is the degree to which they have access to and receive quality education that is comparable to and equitable with that provided to students from dominant language backgrounds. For much of the 20th century, research conducted in the global north has dominated the literature on linguistically marginalised students, and this research indicates that bilingual education is necessary, especially for students from low income indigenous or migrant communities. However, this has been based on the assumption that the language of dominance is also the language of the numerical majority of the mainstream society in which the marginalised community lives.

While the core issue of access to quality education remains the same, the situation in southern contexts has complexities of scale that differ from those in the north. The first of these has to do with the scale of marginalisation. Whereas in the north, marginalisation affects minority communities, in the south it affects majority populations. The second has to do with the degree of linguistic diversity, since more than two thirds of the world's languages occur in the south (mostly in Africa and in South and Southeast Asia). The third is that in these settings, there are layers of linguistic marginalisation amongst indigenous communities, superimposed by one of the major international or former colonial languages. As in northern contexts, monolingual education in a dominant international or regional language is highly problematic. However, bilingual education may be equally problematic if this is in an international language and a dominant national or regional language. This type of bilingual education may approximate an elite bilingualism that serves to restrict multilingual practices, entrench class division, and further advantage dominant communities with closer proximity to urban centres of power. Geopolitical and geolinguistic marginalisation occurs on a sliding scale, so that it increases or decreases according to distance

from the structures and language(s) of the centre. Students further from the centre are likely to be more marginalised and less likely to have access to equitable education (e.g., Mohanty 2012).

In northern contexts, education authorities have tended to offer limited, short-term, or ‘weak’ bilingual programs that restrict opportunities for productive engagement in mainstream education. Education systems can do this for several reasons. Marginalised communities are either numerically small and/or socioeconomically disempowered, they have been effectively ‘invisibilised’ (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000), and education authorities misuse education assessment data. Weak programs include submersion or subtractive bilingual education (i.e., the child is prevented from being able to use the first language for learning at school) and early-exit bilingual education (limited use of the home language for one or two years of primary education). None of these facilitate the further intellectual development of a marginalised student in the school system, and the linguistic building blocks required for learning new knowledge are removed or prematurely terminated. Thus, students perform poorly on standardised and system-wide tests and typical responses from educational authorities have been to terminate whatever limited provision has been available, as was the case through Proposition 227 in California (c.f. Krashen 1996) and, more recently, in relation to Indigenous Australian education by the government of the Northern Territory in 2008 (Simpson, Caffery, and McConvell 2009). There are no reliable studies that demonstrate that low income students who are linguistically marginalised succeed in submersion or early-exit programs (Heugh 2011b). Such decisions reinforce low self-esteem, exacerbate marginalisation, and frequently result in what Mohanty (2012) calls ‘push-out.’ Students simply absent themselves from an education system that lacks meaning or relevance.

Educational linguists have understood equitable provision to be dependent upon strong, well resourced bilingual education in which the goal is biliteracy development in both the home

language and the dominant language of the nation-state (e.g., García and Baker 2007). Most research in bilingual education of marginalised students indicates that it is essential that both languages be used as mediums of instruction for a minimum of five to seven years. This is in order that students are able to progress, uninterrupted, in relation to the curriculum and also to learn enough of the dominant language to be able to use this language productively for learning in subjects across the curriculum after this point (e.g., Cummins 1981; Thomas and Collier 1997; 2002). Examples of successful or strong bilingual programs, such as heritage or dual language programs, have been described for Europe (e.g., Extra and Gorter 2001) and the United States (e.g., García 2009; McCarty 2013).

The numbers of students engaged in strong bilingual programs in northern contexts are relatively small, therefore the data sets from longitudinal studies of student achievement in such programs are often criticised (García and Baker 2007; Howard, Sugarman, and Christian 2003). Nevertheless, there are two longitudinal studies that together have gathered comprehensive data of more than 900,000 minority students (Thomas and Collier 1997; 2002). In these studies the researchers tracked students' achievement in L2 (English) reading proficiency from Grade 1 to Grade 11 across several different language models. These include weak (e.g., English-only, early-exit, late-exit) and strong (dual language) programs. The majority of students were in weak programs, while relatively fewer were in strong programs. The students in the dual language programs had higher achievement than those in the weak programs. However, because the number of students in such programs is relatively small in comparison with those in the weak programs, the findings have elicited some criticism (Howard et al. 2003). Nevertheless, the patterns of achievement in these studies, including the differences found between weak and strong forms of

bilingual education, show remarkable similarity to patterns of student achievement found in various studies in Africa (e.g., Ouane and Glanz 2011).

As discussed above, marginalisation in the global south has characteristics that differ from those in the north. Whereas in the north, most children were enrolled in formal education throughout the 20th century, this has not been the case in southern contexts. Prior to 1990, the majority of marginalised students in the south were either not enrolled in primary education or they fell out of the schooling system before completing primary school (Bamgbose 2000). Thus the degree of systemic marginalisation from the schooling system has been extreme. UNESCO's *Education for All* framework and the *Millennium Development Goals*, including universal primary education and gender parity for girls, have changed the dynamics. Most children are now enrolled in primary school, but this does not mean that they stay. Where marginalised students are in school in southern contexts, bilingual education is seldom provided, and where it is, it is inadequate and insufficient.

In most southern countries, the contemporary language ecology includes minority, regional, and national languages, as well one or more former colonial language(s). The former colonial language is used as the language of economic, political and educational dominance, and is also the language of access to the international community. As an instrument of power, this language serves to marginalise speakers of endogenous languages in post-colonial states. For example, in India, although speakers of the national language, Hindi, are relatively privileged, they aspire to high level bilingualism in Hindi and English in order to enjoy full citizenship and to participate in the global sphere. Speakers of regional (state languages), such as Oriya in Orissa, are one step removed from participation at the national level, and two steps removed from access to international possibilities, but, since their aspirations are no less, they would need trilingual education in Oriya,

Hindi, and English in order to have comparable access. Speakers of Tribal languages in Orissa are the most marginalised, and they would need to have education in the Tribal language, Oriya, Hindi, and English if they are to participate fully (Mohanty 2012). In Ethiopia, pastoralists in the Afar Region know that they need Afar for trade and survival at the local level, Amharic in order to engage in regional and national affairs, and they want very much that their children should develop a high level of proficiency in English.

There is a chasm between what students need and what they receive, particularly in southern contexts. The greater the linguistic diversity in such settings, the less likely it is that the most marginalised students will receive equitable educational opportunities. Education systems, for the most part, have offered students a monolingual education in the international or former colonial language, as in most Francophone and Lusophone countries of Africa. At best, these students are offered limited access to early-exit mother-tongue education. The educational outcomes for students in these programs are less positive than those for marginalised students in similar programs in the global north (Bangbose 2000; Ouane and Glanz 2011). In former British colonies, systems usually offer early-exit programs (mother tongue medium education [MTE] for three years followed by transition to English medium), and the outcomes, as evident in system-wide multi-country assessments of literacy, are usually dismal (Heugh 2011b). Elsewhere, Coleman (2011) demonstrates that access to the international language, English, in countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan is limited to students from middle class homes in private schools. Although lower income families and students do all in their power to facilitate access to English, there are sociopolitical constraints and ill-fitting educational programs that result in the further marginalisation of students who do not have efficient access to English education.

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Research on linguistic diversity, marginalisation and education has been a regular feature of education in Africa from the early 20th century, with numerous commissions of enquiry directed towards identifying effective language education models for African children. Based on these studies, UNESCO has recommended mother-tongue education for the first few years of primary (i.e. early-exit programs) since the 1950s, but there have been no legal instruments to put this into effect. Post-colonial governments have mostly reduced the number of years of MTE (in former British colonies) or introduced weak early-exit bilingual education (e.g., in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Mozambique). Some countries have elected to use the dominant regional or national African language for part or all of primary, followed by a switch to English medium (early-exit in Swaziland, Botswana, Malawi, Kenya; late-exit in Tanzania and Somalia). Speakers of less dominant African languages in these settings, invisibilised in the education system, have been most seriously marginalised. Achievement for speakers of the dominant African language has been disappointing, and even more so for more marginalised students (Bamgbose 2000; Ouane and Glanz 2011).

In South Africa, while English and Afrikaans speakers have been required to have bilingual education since 1910, speakers of African languages were required to have trilingual education until 1997. During the first 20 years of apartheid education, 1955–1976, African students received eight years of MTE plus the teaching of English and Afrikaans as subjects. Secondary education involved a switch to English and Afrikaans dual medium education, with the African language retained as a subject. Government, African communities, and educational linguists had no idea at the time that, quite by accident, the apartheid language education model, even if poorly resourced, offered the best opportunities for African students to succeed in primary school and to remain to the end of secondary. African students at school during this period had the highest level of achievement

in the secondary school-exit examinations in the country's history. Student resistance to eight years of MTE in 1976, however, resulted in a reduction to four years of MTE until 1994. Despite a constitutional commitment to multilingual education, three iterations of post-apartheid educational transformation have resulted in the further reduction of MTE for African students to three years (i.e., early-exit bilingual education). Achievement of African students declined from 1978 to 1994, and it has declined even further in the 20 years of post-apartheid education (Heugh 2011b).

In another example, system-wide data from Ethiopia offer some of the most recent and most significant evidence of the potential of multilingual education to reduce inequity and to increase opportunities for participatory citizenship. Since 1994, Ethiopia has implemented a bilingual and trilingual education system across the 11 administrative regions of the country, and in 32 languages. This resulted in a dramatic increase in primary school enrolment and retention to the end of primary. Assessment data for Grade 8 students between 2000 and 2008 show that students who have eight years of MTE in the local or regional language, with the national language Amharic and English as subjects, achieve more highly than students with fewer years of MTE, and are more likely to complete secondary school (Heugh 2013).

Even though Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries of the world, the government initiated and implemented a multilingual system across the country with a minimal education budget between 1994 and 2004, and the evidence shows increasing student enrolment, retention, and achievement. The increase in student achievement is similar to that found in South Africa with a similar policy of eight years of MTE between 1955 and 1976. However, the Ethiopian government decided to reprioritise English in the system from 2005 onwards, and diverted 44% of the teacher education budget to invest additional resources in English, reducing MTE. Just as student achievement declined once the provision of MTE was reduced in South Africa, so too has this

occurred in Ethiopia. In each case, the systems have attempted to introduce early-exit models and invested heavily in these, with no evidence of a positive return on investment. Argument that multilingual education is too costly does not hold true in Africa. Rather, monolingual or early-exit education offers limited or poor returns on investment (Heugh 2011a).

Sociopolitical and economic changes on a global scale from the 1990s have altered the world order in ways that affect the scale and complexity of linguistic marginalisation in northern contexts. Whereas in the last decades of the 20th century, a strong bilingual program may have offered marginalised students adequate access to equitable education, this may no longer be the case. Significantly altered language ecologies increasingly mean that speakers of dominant languages, previously satisfied with monolingual education, may now require at least two languages for purposes of international communication. If marginalised communities in countries of the global north previously required two languages, they now require three. Just as degrees of marginalisation are evident in the south, these are becoming increasingly recognised in the north. For example, Saami communities in Northern Scandinavia might have similar linguistic requirements in school education to those of Tribal children in India (see a related discussion of Basque and Frisian education in Gorter and Cenoz 2012). Increasing mobility of both indigenous and migrant communities brings about changes in language ecologies of highly urbanised/metropolitan centres. The scale and complexity of linguistic diversity and marginalisation of the north is therefore moving closer to that of the south. These global changes in no way reduce the needs of linguistically marginalised students in education systems. Rather, they sharpen the focus on increased opportunities for inequity and social stratification, unless education systems find ways to mainstream multilingual education.



In summary, there are several core issues and findings regarding linguistically marginalised students and (in)equitable opportunities for successful education in both contexts. Firstly, if education systems are to attempt to ensure equal access to meaningful education, there is evidence that linguistically marginalised students require a minimum of six or seven years of multilingual education in well resourced contexts of the global north. In less well-resourced contexts, as in the global south, students require at least eight years of strong multilingual education. Detailed and longitudinal studies of bilingual education in the north and system-wide assessment data of multilingual education systems in the south offer compelling evidence. This evidence shows gaps of achievement between marginalised students in submersion and early-exit programs compared with students learning through their home language. The evidence also shows improved achievement of students in strong bilingual/multilingual programs. The core issue remains, however, that large proportions of students remain marginalised in the schooling system in both the north and south. The difference is that in the south, marginalisation and inequity apply to most students.

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## Research Approaches

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The study of the education of linguistically marginalised groups is characterised by methodological diversity. Broadly, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used.

Quantitative methods have usually taken the form of assessments, typically involving testing of elements of language proficiency, literacy, and numeracy. Such testing can measure a range of different forms of educational achievement, but in measurements of literacy, often dominant language literacy is included, and in some cases it may be the only measure. This is

especially the case where data are obtained from standardised testing of national populations that includes both speakers of the dominant and marginalised languages. Quantitative research approaches are strongly supported by policy makers and development agencies, and the results from such methods are highly valued in education policy and program design. This is because quantitative data are considered useful for benchmarking and, thus, for identifying issues of success and failure in education.

While quantitative research does have a place in understanding the education of linguistically marginalised students, research using testing has been particularly problematic in this area; it has frequently been flawed because of the monolingual habitus underlying the research approach. This point was made above in relation to early studies of bilingualism, but persists in many modern studies. One significant problem has been that such research data has usually been collected in the dominant language. This means that linguistically marginalised students are tested in their non-dominant language, usually without recognition of the consequences for the validity and reliability of the data. This problem is compounded when achievement is compared with that of dominant language students, who are tested in their first, sometimes only, language. In addition, most quantitative studies of the education of linguistically marginalised children have been one-off, synchronic assessments of educational performance at a particular time. This is actually highly problematic for assessing education in multilingual settings as longitudinal studies (e.g., Ouane and Glanz 2011; Thomas and Collier 1997) have demonstrated that it is not possible to evaluate the impact of any second language (majority language) program in fewer than four years, and that accurate interpretations are only likely over a minimum of five to six years.

Quantitative benchmarking, when used in unsophisticated ways to inform policy, may lack validity and reliability. For example, the benchmarked results of large-scale national literacy and

numeracy testing in Australia in 2008 were used as a rationale to close bilingual education programs for indigenous Australians who spoke English as an additional language (Simpson et al. 2009). The argument used was that such students performed consistently below the national average for literacy and numeracy. The problem here was the nature of the comparisons: Second language capabilities for indigenous students were measured against those of first language speakers of English, rather than benchmarking against similar students. In reality, the testing showed that students in bilingual programs performed better than other indigenous students acquiring English as a second language who were not in bilingual programs. This situation points to the sort of problems that can result from a lack of nuance in the collection, interpretation, and use of quantitative research, and points to questions of the ethical conduct and use of such research with linguistically marginalised populations.

Since the 1980s, research on the education of linguistically marginalised children has increasingly used qualitative methods, especially ethnography, sometimes in conjunction with quantitative methods. Qualitative research allows for the possibility of more nuanced accounts that locate children's school performance to their context to develop a rich description of their education. Such research investigates not only the process and outcomes of educational programs but also issues such as attitudes to educational programs and perceptions of their value, engagement and participation in education, and sociopolitical issues relating to the provision of education. This research has sought to understand recurring processes in the education of linguistically marginalised children that can explain educational problems in context. The results of this research have produced a more nuanced picture of educational success for the children of marginalised linguistic communities. Research approaches to the investigation of linguistically marginalised students are often hampered by a monolingual habitus in research design and implementation that

privileges the language of the researcher over the language of the research participant (Liddicoat 2011), and this can have significant implications for the effectiveness of such research.

Most recently, research in this area has taken a critical stance towards the education of marginalised groups and has focused on how power and ideology shape educational possibilities. In particular, language education policies can be seen as ideological frames that shape understandings of the nature and purpose of education (Liddicoat 2013). Within such contexts, schools and teachers can contest these possibilities by opening new spaces for students' languages in teaching and learning (Ramanathan 2005). However, societal forces can also exert pressures that restrict possibilities for innovative action (Bekerman 2005). Education for minoritised students is thus subject to complex interactions of context that need to constitute elements of research approaches.

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## New Debates

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Debates about the languages and education of marginalised communities have been polarised along at least two fault lines. The first is the tension between the theory and research within educational linguistics (which includes key areas within applied, socio-, and cognitive linguistics) *vis à vis* the short-to-medium term interests of educational authorities (in political systems based on three-to-five year terms of office). The second, our focus here, is a set of competing positions within the various sub-fields of linguistics. The first of these involves terminology and either contested understandings of key terms or theoretical slippage in their use. The term 'mother tongue' or 'mother language' has recently been used pejoratively to stigmatise language maintenance, heritage, and bilingual programs as ahistorical, essentialist, and outdated. The pejorative discourse associated with this term is often linked to efforts to deny access to bilingual programs. Strategic

terminological slippage, in which subtractive or early-exit bilingual programs are passed off as if they were late-exit or additive in design, has been used by government agencies, merchants of early-exit programs, and some development agencies (Ouane and Glanz 2011). Multilingual education is variously (mis)represented as: a (monolingual) education system that includes linguistically diverse student communities; various forms of linguistic accommodation within a monolingual mainstream system; multiple iterations of bilingual programs, hence multilingual education across the system; and multiple alternatives to mainstream or non-formal bilingual and trilingual programs. Red herring debates or terminological slippage are often used as smokescreens to avoid implementing linguistically equitable education.

While there are persuasive sociolinguistic arguments regarding reframing terminology, these require conceptual clarity in order to avoid opportunistic misappropriation (see also Krashen 1996). It needs to be clear that when interested parties refer to bilingual education, that theoretical consistency would require that it is understood as the use of two languages for purposes of learning and teaching across the curriculum. Where the goal is to use more than two languages for learning and teaching across the curriculum, this is multilingual education. However, both bilingual and multilingual education extends beyond the notion of multiple languages in parallel.

New debates point towards key pedagogical practices within bilingual and multilingual education. Until recently, bilingual education has been understood to mean parallel, separated language systems in schools. Reanimated debates within socio- and cognitive linguistics suggest that language might be better understood as a process, or as a verb, and that bilingual and multilingual people use their linguistic repertoires to make meaning. Thus, a re-take on code-switching as ‘translanguaging’ (García 2009), or what Agnihotri (2007) refers to as ‘multilinguality,’ suggests the need for reconceptualising how we deliver bilingual and multilingual

education. Translation and interpreting appear to be significant language skills that have been ignored in the last four decades of post-grammar-translation pedagogy. Such considerations have implications for curriculum design, assessment, and teacher education.

Inequality in assessment has had serious implications for marginalised students everywhere. Limited forms of ‘language accommodation’ (e.g., permitting the use of dictionaries, additional time to write high stakes assessment instruments, etc.) are insubstantial and do not rectify imbalances in the validity and reliability of such testing regimes. There are, however, recently developed instruments that foreground linguistic diversity and equity (e.g., Shohamy 2011) and these have opened up further debates.

The challenges remain in how teachers and education authorities will accommodate the linguistic repertoires of students in ways that make use of their language skills and build on these so that students may engage as productive citizens of the contemporary world. There are useful examples of curriculum design, assessment practices, learning resources, and teacher education in Africa and India, and there are useful examples of multilingual accommodations in urban settings in Europe and North America. However, the continued scale of linguistic marginalisation of students in high income countries and the majority of students in low income countries suggests that the debates are in their infancy.

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## Implications for Education

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The main implication of research in the education of linguistically marginalised children is that there needs to be a radical reconsideration of the role and nature of multilingual education. In particular, it means that multilingual education needs to be seen as the usual practice for educating

such children and not as an exceptional or transitional arrangement. From this reconsideration, there flow a number of further implications.

Multilingual education involves teacher education and preparation costs. As linguistically marginalised groups tend to have had fewer educational opportunities, there may be significant issues in teacher recruitment. As a result, specific educational programs may need to be established to develop such teachers. These teachers also require specific preparation for teaching in multilingual contexts. In particular, they need preparation to assist them in teaching both dominant and marginalised languages in ways that are linguistically and culturally additive and embrace diversity. However, Heugh (2011a) has argued that this cost is less than is claimed by opponents of multilingual education. The cost is, moreover, offset by the benefits of improved educational outcomes for marginalised groups.

There are also implications for how linguistically marginalised children are assessed. Assessment needs to become sensitive to the fundamentally linguistic nature of any assessment task and to the ways that this plays out in various contexts of assessment. In order to do this, we will need innovative approaches to assessment that are more equitable in contexts of linguistic marginalisation. In particular, standardised testing is particularly problematic, as standardisation in itself may preclude the very possibility of linguistic and cultural diversity in assessment forms.

There are also implications for the development of educational materials ranging from curricula to textbooks. If education is to be sensitive to and respectful of linguistic and cultural diversity, materials need to be developed in a way that reflects this. This often involves more than the translation of curricula or textbooks. It also involves the development of new materials that incorporate the linguistic and cultural traditions and knowledge of marginalised groups into school education programs. One consequence of the lack of commercial interest in marginalised languages

has been that educational materials are often of poorer quality and have lower production standards than materials in the dominant language, a discrepancy that reproduces the marginalisation of the languages involved, at least in educational contexts.

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