

37 Language Education in Mexico

Access, Equity, and Ideology

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Introduction

Mexico is a complex, multilingual society. The education system has tried, with varying degrees of success, to educate its citizens in the national, global, and local languages. In Mexico, the term *bilingual education* refers to two parallel but quite distinct forms of language education. The first is bilingual instruction in Spanish and some European language; historically there were some German and French schools, but nowadays the default meaning of a “bilingual school” for most Mexicans is Spanish–English. These bilingual schools have been exclusively private elementary and secondary institutions. Within the last few years, English has also been expanded into public primary schools. The second form of bilingual schooling in Mexico is the Indigenous education system. This system is formally called *Indigenous Intercultural-Bilingual Education*, and serves primary schools mostly in rural areas, educating children in one of Mexico’s 68 recognized Indigenous languages.

This chapter considers the contexts of bilingual education in Mexico by presenting three cases. Each case describes a school that belongs to one of the three systems: (i) private Spanish–English bilingual education, (ii) public primary with English program, and (iii) Indigenous bilingual school. The cases presented here are composite sketches meant to depict typical schools of each type we are profiling. The descriptions are based on our own fieldwork and experiences with bilingual education in Mexico. Through these three cases, we discuss the contemporary issues and challenges of bilingual education in Mexico.

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Private bilingual schools

In the K–12 system in Mexico, almost all private schools bill themselves as bilingual. However, the term “bilingual school” actually covers a wide range of private institutions, from a few hours weekly of English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction to elite English-medium schools. Many are connected to churches, but many are secular. The inclusion of the term *bilingual* in the school’s name or sign indexes the prestige of English (Sayer, 2012) and, along with computer classes, is what has distinguished private schools’ curricula from the public system. The school profiled here represents a typical example of a private bilingual program.

Case 1: Bilingual school in Oaxaca, The Antequera Valley School

The southern state of Oaxaca is the most culturally and linguistically diverse state of Mexico with 16 Indigenous languages officially recognized. The state capital of the same name is in the central valley, and the Antequera Valley School¹ is located in an affluent suburb. It is a “bilingual” school that serves students ranging from kindergarten to middle school. Antequera Valley was one the first schools in Oaxaca to adopt the “bilingual” label to indicate that English is used as a medium of instruction in content areas and to strategically distinguish it apart from other private schools, which offer English as a subject. The bilingual label attracted middle- and upper-class parents who invest a significant amount of money on tuition each month, roughly equivalent to the entire monthly income of a working-class family.

The school uses a version of the 50–50 model, with two parallel but unaligned curricula. Students study the main content areas in both languages, but the Spanish and English curricula are kept rigidly separate. Alternating mornings and afternoons every other week, children study in English from 7:45 to 10:30 a.m. and in Spanish from 11:00 to 2:15 p.m. The English teachers work independently from their Spanish-language colleagues. On the English side, the curriculum and language separation are accompanied by an English-only policy, emphasized by the textbooks and materials, which have been imported from the United States and were developed for English-speaking children. The school recently adopted books from the American state of Texas; parents must buy the complete set of books, which are very expensive, but they are seen as an improvement on the previous books, designed for EFL students, that were regarded as too easy.

The teachers are almost all Mexicans—though many have spent time in the United States—who have been hired based on their English proficiency and perceived native-like accent. While their language skills are generally excellent, and often much stronger than those of English-language teachers in public schools, most of the teachers working in English at the Antequera Valley School do not have formal teacher preparation. Since the American materials are designed for an ESL setting, the level of linguistic difficulty is much too high for the students; however, the teachers have not been trained to use sheltered techniques and most lack

the pedagogical knowledge of how to scaffold the content and make the input—both from the textbook and the teacher’s own explanations—comprehensible. Often then, students do not understand what they are hearing or reading, and receive no primary language support (Wright, 2010).

The topics covered in the English and Spanish tracks do not align because, while the English section follows a textbook based on the curriculum from the American state of Texas, the Spanish curriculum must still cover all content required by the Mexican Ministry of Education. Studying at a bilingual school places a heavy academic burden on children, especially at the elementary school level. In a typical Spanish-speaking school, children cover the curriculum designed at the federal level in 4½ hours every day. At a bilingual school, children cover the same ground in 3½ hours. For this reason, children are sent home with a lot of homework, so that they can complete all the assignments in the Spanish, math, natural science, history, geography, civic and ethics formation, and physical and artistic education textbooks. In addition, bilingual schools do not escape the recently implemented federal standardized test (called *ENLACE*) in Spanish². Hence, and in order to maintain a high status among the private schools, children are pressured to do well in these tests.

The English curriculum is no less demanding and challenging academically. During kindergarten and first grade, children are able to deal with the difficulty of using materials designed for English-speaking children since the language input is basic and the academic skills are comparable for their age. During this stage, Oaxacan children learn basic vocabulary and grammatical structures in English and their Spanish literacy skills and strategies keep them afloat while reading and writing in English. However, the problem begins in second grade where the reading texts contain higher vocabulary and grammatical structures beyond their language level, and is compounded in subsequent grades as texts become more difficult. Teachers have little time to scaffold the texts since they must complete all the exercises included in the reading exercise workbook, the spelling textbook, the phonics textbook, and the science textbook. Both the school administrators and parents expect teachers to have all these expensive textbooks completed at the end of the year.

Discussion

Bilingual schools are prevalent around Mexico (see Smith, 2003 for an extensive review of elite bilingual schools). At least since the 1930s (Tapia Carlin, 2009), many private primary schools have marketed themselves by claiming to be bilingual. In this sense, a private bilingual school may be among the elite schools that offer English as the medium of instruction—some of like Antequera Valley School are modeled after (one-way) *dual language bilingual programs* (Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000) in the United States—or it may be one that simply includes English as a foreign language in its curriculum. “Bilingual” is clearly one of the selling points for parents as well, since the tuition and cost of books at private schools represents a major financial burden for many aspiring middle-class families. The website of one such school explains that they create a “bilingual

community” and promises parents that their children will “obtain a high level [of English] to get a good score in TOEFL,” About 10% of schoolchildren nationally attend private schools, and almost all include English. In reality, there is a continuum of bilingual private schools, from the most expensive, English-medium institutions to those that include a few hours weekly of English-as-a-foreign language instruction.

The discourse of English in Mexico links proficiency to greater economic opportunities and social mobility. However, schools that produce bilingual graduates—generally those incorporating English as a medium of instruction—charge tuition fees well above the means of ordinary Mexicans, and hence access to effective bilingual education in English became part of a de facto policy of elite bilingualism. As a desired form of linguistic capital in Mexico (Clemente, 2007), access to acquiring English has historically both reflected and reinforced divisions of social class. Moreover, the language ideology that equates *bilingualism* in Mexico with “Spanish–English,” at the same time entails an *erasure* (Gal & Irvine, 1995) of other forms of bilingualism, and indeed other languages, from the country’s linguistic ecology (see Case 3 below).

Public schools

In many public elementary schools in Mexico, the Parents Committee organizes the hiring of an English teacher to give extra-curricular classes either before or after school. Parents pay a few *pesos* (about 15 U.S. cents) per child per class, and the teacher, someone from the neighborhood who speaks some English, will improvise classes, usually without books or materials. In the 2000s, a few states began formal English programs in public primary schools, and in 2009 the Ministry of Education initiated the National English Program for Basic Education (NEPBE, or PNIEB in Spanish) as part of the national curriculum. The program has expanded English instruction to cover all preK–12 grades, and is now being implemented, to varying degrees, in all 32 states.

Case 2: Preschool in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Pre-escolar Benito Juárez

On the outskirts of Mexico’s second largest city, Guadalajara, population 8 million, there is a large military base. The base’s public preschool is near the southern gate, and serves both the military and affiliated civilian families living on the base, as well as nonmilitary families living near the base. The concept of preschool education is still somewhat new in Mexico, but has been expanded to include three grades from ages three to five: first, second and third grade of kindergarten. Preschools are usually separate from the primary schools that serve grades 1–6.

For schools that are part of the national English program, English is taught starting in third grade of kindergarten (five-year-olds). Classes follow the national

curriculum, which is based on a “sociocultural approach” that was adopted in 2006 as part of a wider educational reform of the basic education (K–9) system. This curriculum emphasizes competencies, and the units are organized around social practices. For preschoolers, these include learning to follow routines and instructions in English, singing songs and nursery rhymes, learning to describe themselves, health and hygiene, and so forth. So, on a Wednesday morning in the school in Guadalajara, as in preschools across the country, classrooms of kindergarteners are enthusiastically singing “Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees, and toes...”

After the morning warm-up song to review the parts of the body, the teacher begins the first activity, to cut out and label pictures of common objects from their workbook. Students are seated in circular tables in groups of four. The teacher, speaking in clear English, asks the day’s helper to come get the supplies. She asks each student: “Gloria, how many scissors do you need for your group? Count the people in your group.” “Four,” replies little girl in her red school uniform. “Yes,” the teacher says, “there are four people in your group. Today you are the yellow group, so you will use the yellow scissors.” The teacher is a young woman who is a recent graduate from undergraduate program in English teaching at the local public university. Her English is quite good, but she has never travelled outside of Mexico. Other teachers are graduates of the Mexico *Normales* or teacher training schools, and have varying levels of English proficiency, and other teachers are children of migrant returnees who studied in the United States, or graduates from programs in tourism or business who speak English but found a job in education.



Figure 37.1 The English program in public schools emphasizes early biliteracy development.

The activity continues and, after cutting out the pictures to make vocabulary cards, the children practice copying the words from the board onto each card. Children begin literacy skills in kindergarten, and the teacher says that some parents are concerned that learning to read and write in English before the children have learned Spanish will confuse them because the languages are pronounced differently. However, the teacher thinks this biliteracy approach is good, and she feels that acquiring literacy simultaneously in both languages gives more reinforcement and actually helps the children learn faster. The English teacher finishes her lesson, and rotates to the next class as the regular Spanish-speaking classroom teacher returns.

Discussion

Mexico's adoption of Primary English Language Teaching (PELT) in 2009 followed other developing countries in Latin American (notably Colombia and Chile, see de Mejía, 2004; Matear, 2008) in including English as part of the national curriculum for public primary schools. This effort has been framed as an economic argument, that average Mexicans need English proficiency in order to make the country globally competitive. The PNIEB curriculum explains the general goal of the program:

By the time students complete their secondary education, they will have developed the necessary multilingual and multicultural competencies to face the communicative challenges of a globalized world successfully, to build a broader vision of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world, and thus, to respect their own and other cultures (SEP, 2011, p. 22, authors' translation).

The document explains that English is needed to accomplish the country's National Development Plan 2007–12, and that knowledge of English allows Mexicans to “participate in society and resolve practical problems, improving living conditions and co-existing in a society that is ever more complex” (p. 10).

On the one hand, the PNIEB is premised on a discourse that Pennycook (2007) terms the “myth of international English,” the belief that globalization makes English necessary, and that its acquisition leads individuals and countries to greater social and economic prosperity. On the other hand, Mexico is clearly an emerging market with stronger ties to the United States, and there is a consensus that it makes sense to emphasize English both as a global and regional language.

The educational side of the argument for English is based on the folk theory of second language acquisition that earlier is better. The “more and earlier” also mirrors other countries adopting PELT (Spolsky, 1996). It should be noted that there is not a general consensus amongst researchers about the relative benefits of early-versus-later introduction of a foreign language (Larson-Hall, 2008). In second language acquisition (SLA) research the determination and nature of a *critical period* (called the “critical period hypothesis”) and the fundamental question about the effect of age on L2 learning have long been debated (DeKeyser & Larson-Hall,

2005). Recently, researchers have also begun to look at PELT in Mexico not just in terms of the linguistic gains students make, but also the impacts of such programs on the education system and students' learning more generally (Sayer & Ban, 2013), including connections that support learning across the curriculum, and for students of transnational families.

What is interesting about the PNIEB in Mexico is that it blurs what has traditionally been a line demarcating *bilingual education* from *foreign language instruction*. Whereas SLA and applied linguistics has generally been focused on adult or adolescent second language learning, the introduction of English in preschool and primary school recasts the "foreign language learner" as an "emergent bilingual" (García, 2009). Questions about the effect of early biliteracy, the effectiveness of the socioculturally oriented curriculum, and the overall impact of learning English on young children's education are especially compelling in the Mexican context.

Intercultural-bilingual indigenous education

Mexico has historically been a culturally and linguistically diverse country, in which Indigenous peoples have resisted language and educational policies whose goal have been the erasure of Indigenous languages and the acculturation of Indigenous peoples (Garza Cuarón, 1997; Maldonado Alvarado, 2000). Nevertheless, due to Indigenous educators' continuous resistance and political activism, there have been some bilingual (Spanish-Indigenous language) primary schools established in different states with varying degrees of success since the 1970s. In 2003, due to international pressure and Indigenous activism such as the Zapatista movement (Hamel, 2008), Mexico constitutionally acknowledged its pluricultural and plurilingual reality. Along with these reforms, different educational and social projects have emerged to maintain or revitalize Indigenous languages such as the "Language Nests" project in Oaxaca (Meyer & Soberanes, 2009; for other projects see the General Coordination for Bilingual and Intercultural Education <http://eib.sep.gob.mx/cgeib/> and National Institute of Indigenous Languages <http://www.inali.gob.mx/>). In the next case, we portray an Indigenous bilingual school.

Case 3: Indigenous school in Puebla, Escuela Bilingüe Niños Heroes

The town of Nealtican is on a fertile plain at the edge of Mount Popocatepítl, an active volcano in the south-central state of Puebla. The quiet farming community is close to two major urban centers: it is about an hour away from the state capital, the city of Puebla, and three hours away from Mexico City, one of the largest metropolises in the world. Townsfolk are mostly farmers, work in small local cement block and brick factories, or commute into the city to work. Near the town's central plaza, there are many cement houses in various states of being built, a testament to the many migrant families working in the United States who send remittances home.

There are two primary schools in the community: the “general” school, which follows the regular national primary curriculum, and the bilingual school. The bilingual school has about 215 students in grades one to six, and teaches classes in Spanish and the local Indigenous language, Náhuatl. Náhuatl, properly called *mexica* or *mexicano*, is a Uto-Aztec language, and was the dominant language of central Mexico at the time of the Spaniards arrival in 1529. For several centuries it continued to be the main language spoken in many communities; however, in the twentieth century language shift accelerated. Whereas Náhuatl has 1.54 million speakers (INEGI, 2010) and continues to be spoken as the primary language in many isolated, rural communities, towns like Nealtican that are well connected to urban centers and have seen significant diaspora due to out-migration have experienced rapid language shift in the last 50 years. None of the students in the bilingual school speaks Náhuatl as his or her primary language, though some of the students who are children of migrant returnee families are fluent English speakers. In fact, even many of the parents do not speak Náhuatl, and it is mostly the grandparents who are first language speakers of the communal language. While Náhuatl is still spoken by the elders in the community and used for ceremonial functions at cultural events, there has been significant *intergenerational disruption* (Fishman, 1991) of the transmission of Náhuatl from parent to child. Therefore, in this context the teachers see their role as part of a *language revitalization* effort.

On a typical Monday morning at the bilingual school, children gather in the school patio to sing the National Anthem and recite the Flag Pledge in Náhuatl. The signage about the school reminds the children “No pushing” and “No yelling” in Spanish and Náhuatl. The students return to their classrooms, where they study mathematics and science in Spanish. Later comes the Náhuatl block, and the teacher asks the students to take out their Náhuatl notebooks. All the teachers are Indigenous: some of the teachers are strong Náhuatl–Spanish bilinguals, while others have varying degrees of proficiency in Náhuatl. The primers used in bilingual-intercultural schools are developed by the Department of Indigenous Education of the national Ministry of Education, but are designed for students who are Náhuatl-dominant, second language speakers of Spanish. The level of Náhuatl is much too high for the students here though, and the teachers prefer to use simplified Spanish–Náhuatl storybooks (a popular one is called *El Perico Lector*) or materials they create themselves. The third grade students are reviewing basic vocabulary from the story and creating a word wall in Náhuatl: flower, house, tree, sun. They discuss the activity with their partner in Spanish, before producing the word in Náhuatl.

Most of the students are not conversationally fluent in Náhuatl, even by the time they finish sixth grade and go to the general, monolingual *secundaria* (middle) school. However, they do know many words in Náhuatl, can read and understand stories, and can sing songs and recite poems. Also, besides the linguistic knowledge, the bilingual school also approaches other subjects through an Indigenous cosmology. For example, students learn how to read the Aztec calendar, a complex combination of solar and lunar calendars, as well as how to use their fingers as an abacus in the Aztec base-20 counting system. The pedagogical approach also

reflects the community's cultural and discursive practices. The third grade teacher presents a situation to her class: they are going to plan a cultural festival called a *mayordomía*. She begins by leading a whole-group discussion, in Spanish, about what students can remember about the festival. Some students are asked come to the front to act out certain sequences. Then students form committees, and each committee is charged with organizing an aspect of the festival: the food, the music, the costumes and so forth. While some terms are used in Náhuatl, almost all of the discussion is in Spanish; however both the content of the lesson and the pedagogical approach reflect the community's cultural values and heritage.

Discussion

The intercultural-bilingual education system is run as an independent department within the Ministry of Education, and was created in response to political pressure during the 1960–1970s to reverse centuries of ethnic and linguistic discrimination against Mexico's Indigenous peoples. Indigenous schools are currently run as *language developmental maintenance bilingual* programs in communities where the local language is widely used, as well as *language revitalization bilingual* programs in areas where the local language has been largely displaced by Spanish. Hamel (2006) notes that in isolated, rural communities, where the vitality of the local Indigenous language remains high and most children arrive at school as monolingual speakers of their mother tongue, the non-bilingual elementary school is often a harbinger of language shift. He notes that “the primary school has definitely found its place as an institution of prestige which nourishes the expectations of social mobility and integration through the transmission of Spanish and other skills of mainstream society” (Hamel, 2006, p. 54).

However, even for the Indigenous schools, the question of the role of schools and schooling in reversing language shift and preserving Indigenous language in the Americas is a polemic one (Hornberger, 2008). Hamel (2008) explains that, even within the bilingual-intercultural education system and for students who are proficient in the mother tongue, the Indigenous language has a reduced role: “The curriculum and teaching practices [in most bilingual schools in Mexico] do not profit from a central and widely acknowledged feature of any bilingual programme: the learners' capacity to transfer cognitively demanding skills from one language to the other, a process which could bring about significant academic growth in both languages” (p. 317). Although some local efforts have recorded success in developing fully bilingual and biliterate students, such as the project initiated by two P'urhepecha schools in Michoacán reported in Hamel and Francis (2006, and see also Hamel, 2011), generally, the Indigenous curriculum and materials is still organized and implemented top-down from the Ministry of Education. Therefore, communities have little control over developing programs that suit the many diverse and complex contexts of language maintenance and revitalization that exist in Indigenous communities throughout the country. In Oaxaca, for example, Hernández Díaz (2000) notes that, while most teachers in the Indigenous system are themselves Indigenous, they are not necessarily from the same ethnolinguistic

group; hence despite working in a community where most students arrive as monolingual speakers of Mixe, a teacher who is Chatino cannot provide instruction in her students' home language.

In Mexico, Indigenous languages have coped with the hegemony of the Spanish language, usually referred to as *castellanización*, influenced by schools, official institutions and migration. There are 68 Indigenous languages officially recognized as national languages (INALI, 2008). This number, however, obscures the fact that many languages counted as "one" have different mutually unintelligible varieties, which should be considered as different languages. For instance, in the state of Oaxaca 16 Indigenous languages are officially recognized; nevertheless, Díaz Courder (2003) argues that, depending on the linguistic criteria used, the number of languages in Oaxaca could be up to 100. Despite the current linguistic diversity found in Mexico, most Indigenous communities are experiencing language shift due to *castellanización*, the imposition of Spanish as the national language. The *castellanización* of Mexico's Indigenous communities started with the arrival of the Spaniards, but its biggest impact was carried out by Mexican teachers, including Indigenous teachers, who after being indoctrinated into the discourse of modernity and Spanish-equals-success (Maldonado Alvarado, 2000) arrived in Indigenous communities and perpetuated this ideology. Not only have schools been foci for *castellanización*, but other official institutions such as the Church, municipal government, and clinics have also contributed to the ideological domination of Spanish. These institutions mainly operate in Spanish; hence, Indigenous peoples must learn Spanish if they want to have access to social programs. In addition to the institutional influence, national and international migration has impacted the language shift in Indigenous communities. Indigenous families have become transnational, diasporic families. In the new residing contexts, the dominant languages (e.g., Spanish and English) displace Indigenous languages. As in the case above, Indigenous children born in these new contexts typically do not learn the Indigenous language (see Stephen, 2007 for Indigenous people's transborder lives).

In spite of the complex and adverse scenario, Indigenous maintenance and revitalization educational initiatives have shown success in reversing language shift and promoting Indigenous ways of knowing even though they still face different challenges and dilemmas. Some educators have attempted to develop their own curricula and materials, which reflect the distinct languages and cosmovisions of the Indigenous peoples. For instance, Indigenous schools in the Zapatista territories in Chiapas have developed grass-roots curricula, whose aim is to co-construct new citizens and to even teach the world lessons on Mayan ethics and citizenship (Bertely Busquets, 2009). In Michoacán, Hamel (2006) has shown the success of a P'urhepecha school in developing high rates of biliteracy and academic achievement. This project has also shown how academic success impacts positively on students' identities³. Another successful case was the creation of intercultural universities in different states in Mexico and the *Escuela Normal Bilingüe Intercultural de Oaxaca* (Normal School for Indigenous Teachers). These higher education institutions have the responsibility

to prepare academics who respect, value, and build upon Indigenous languages and ways of knowing.

These successful initiatives, however, are still facing difficulties due to lack of institutional support. The development of materials and primers for each of the different language varieties is a monumental task, especially due to shortages of teachers in many languages. Another challenge is the adaptation and replication of these projects. Most of these successful projects represent local efforts, which are many times unknown by the general public or other Indigenous communities. Finally, one of the biggest dilemmas for Indigenous educators, especially the ones educated with a linguistic purist perspective, is the evolving nature of Indigenous languages. Many Indigenous children living in urban centers continuously transform their Indigenous languages by adding words from Spanish and even English (López-Gopar, Núñez Méndez, Sughrua & Clemente, 2013). This can alternately be seen as butchering the language or enriching it. Indigenous education projects must deal with this issue, especially if the materials are still produced at the federal level.

Conclusion

As the three cases illustrate, bilingual education takes several forms in Mexico. The types of bilingual education reflect, on one side, the country's close ties to the United States and the perceived need to acquire English as the international language in order to compete in global markets. On the other side, bilingual education in Indigenous communities is an effort—albeit largely symbolic as critics would charge—to recognize the value of Mexico's ethnolinguistic diversity and the rights of Indigenous peoples to educate their children in their own language, as well as to ameliorate the oppression of colonial policies of eradication of autochthonous languages.

Where students bring many mainstream forms of cultural capital to school, bilingual programs in Mexico—in particular elite private English–Spanish programs—generally do a good job of giving children access to acquiring English; this is true sometimes even in spite of the adoption of bilingual models from the United States whose applicability to the Mexican context may be dubious. In other cases, such as the introduction of English in public primary schools, the language hierarchy and linguistic ideologies are aligned to favor the global language. The early adoption of English as part of the public curriculum seems to combine elements of both a foreign language and bilingual program. The national program is still new, and its large-scale implementation is a massive and complex endeavor, so it remains to be seen what the long-term results will be.

In the third case, bilingual intercultural education for Indigenous children, the vision of creating a bilingual education system to reorient the relationship between dominant and oppressed languages and peoples has been difficult to realize in practice (Hamel, 2008); true success stories are the exception rather than the rule (Hamel & Francis, 2006). As in other postcolonial contexts (e.g., Mozambique, see

Chimbutane, 2011), bilingual education certainly creates potential spaces for minoritized peoples to educate themselves in and through the community's local knowledge, practices, and languages. In this sense, bilingual education clearly offers advantages over the general, monolingual-cultural curriculum that has historically oppressed, marginalized, and assimilated Indigenous peoples. The challenge, however, is how to achieve these transformative goals while working through educational structures that are inherently aligned against them. Stable diglossic situations that have allowed Indigenous languages to be maintained for centuries since colonization have shifted in recent decades, and the loss of language diversity is accelerating. It is unclear to what extent bilingual education programs as a formal part of the Mexican education system can reverse this tendency.

Dell Hymes, in the foreword to Heath's (1972) *Telling tongues: Language policy in Mexico, colony to nation*, writes that: "this case study [of Mexico] will be of considerable interest, because the ingredients of the case recur so widely. Official policy versus local interests; generalized values versus efficacy in some particular task; uniformity and integration versus respect for existing difference and identity—just such questions arise in many cases in which policy toward language is an issue" (p. vii). Certainly "language" could be re-written in the previous quote with "bilingual education," as one of the main educational policies through which these tensions are confronted. In Mexico, we see that bilingual education is a means of propagating both global and local languages, and in its various forms has the effect of both accentuating and redressing social inequities.

NOTES

- 1 All school names are pseudonyms.
- 2 Mexico is increasingly moving toward more standardized testing, especially after the results of the 2006 international PISA test ranked Mexico last in science and reading amongst OECD member countries.
- 3 There is a video documentary Hamel (2011) and see also one of the students at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vyft7i4xBQ&feature=youtu.be> (accessed November 28, 2014).

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