Article Summary: Hornberger 2000

Title: **Revisiting the Continua of Biliteracy: International and Critical Perspectives**

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Source: Language and Education, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2000

http://www.gse.upenn.edu/~hornberg/papers/RevisitingContinua2000.pdf

Main questions:

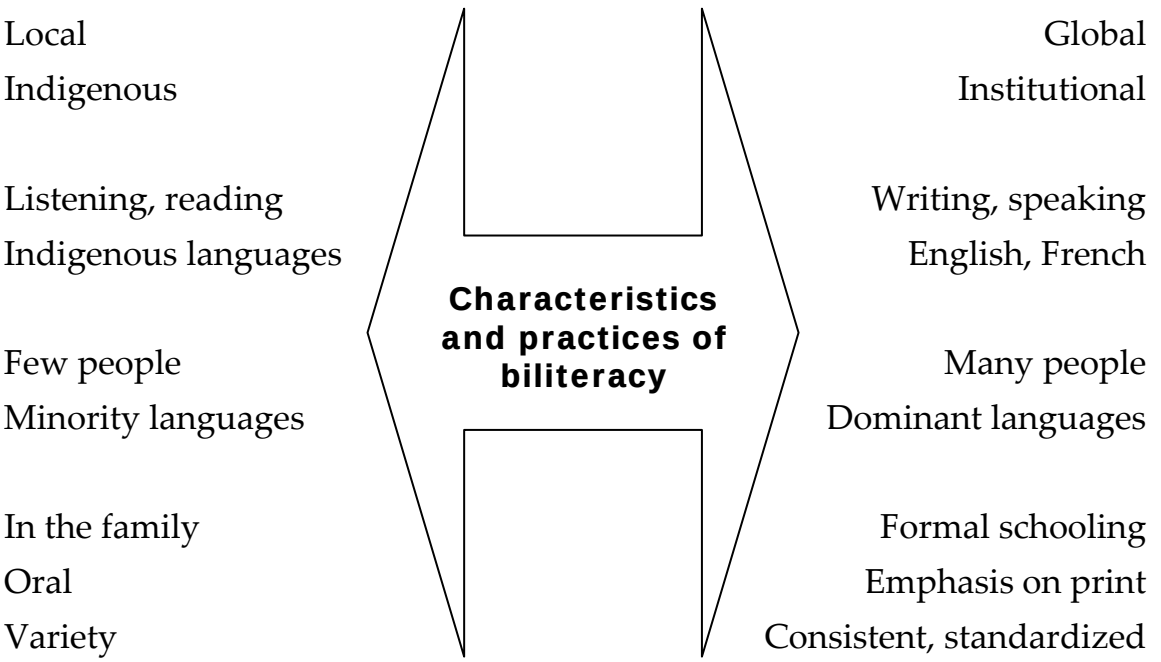
- What is biliteracy?
- What is the continua of biliteracy?
- What power relationships exist within the continua of biliteracy?
- What school policies and practices can we use to change the power relationships within the continua of biliteracy?
- What policies and practices ensure students have a voice; that students can 'make a difference' with the languages they speak?

Some background ideas:

- Biliteracy means people communicate in two or more languages.
- The continua of biliteracy is a model that shows how four different, interconnected continuum affect biliteracy. Each continuum represents characteristics and practices that relate to things such as how, why, and where people become biliterate; and who becomes biliterate. Each continuum symbolizes an unbroken range of characteristics and practices that move continuously from the less powerful to the more powerful.
- The table below shows the power relationships that exist within the continua of biliteracy. Education policies and practices give one end of each continuum more power than the other.

Power relations in the continua of biliteracy

Less powerful ⟷		**More** powerful
Local		Global
Indigenous		Institutional
Listening, reading		Writing, speaking
Indigenous languages		English, French
Few people	**Characteristics and practices of biliteracy**	Many people
Minority languages		Dominant languages
In the family		Formal schooling
Oral		Emphasis on print
Variety		Consistent, standardized



- We need to pay attention to both ends of the continua and all points in between. The more learners draw on all points, the greater their chances for full biliterate development.

Main comments and conclusions:

- Teachers, administrators, researchers, policy makers, community members, and students themselves must challenge and question the traditional power structure of the continua.
- To provide fair, unbiased education for all students, we need to explore and expose the invisible screen that hides the power relationships in schools.
- Educators and students need the opportunity to critically examine issues related to their experiences and identity.

- Educators need to give students an opportunity to examine the assumptions and lies that form the basis of the dominant group's identity. Together educators and students need to take apart the myths we pass from one generation to the next.
- Inclusive education practices must apply three basic ethics: treat people equally, respect all people, and use practices to help people benefit as much as possible.
- The only ethical way to educate students with different languages and cultures is to give them voice and agency. Voice means students have the right and ability to express their opinions and their will in their own language(s). Agency means students have the opportunity, means, and place to use their voices and to make a difference.
- Educators need to challenge the traditional power structure. They need to use oral, bilingual school language practices, language socialization practices, and literacy practices.
- A cultural practice model of literacy allows learners to use their first language oral, receptive skills as well as their second language written, productive ones.
- Bi- and multi-lingual students need texts that give voice and agency to the ways people use and speak minority languages, different types and styles of dialect, and to different cultural activities and ways of knowing and learning.
- Education structures and approaches need to create strength, rather than weakness, from learners' criss-crossed, simultaneous acquisition of and exposure to two languages and literacies.
- Individuals from many different groups, including educators and policy makers, need language planning to give agency and voice to those who most need it – learners and education practices that have traditionally been at the less powerful end of the continua.

- Language planning[1] is a series of coherent actions to develop, implement, and evaluate medium to long-term strategies. Language planning aims to maintain or alter language - either the language itself or language status and use.

  Language planning can target any aspect of language in community:

  - ✓ Develop modern vocabulary.
  - ✓ Pass language laws.
  - ✓ Build awareness of language loss in the community.

  Language planning involves a series of interconnected actions:

  - ✓ Evaluate the current situation.
  - ✓ Set goals and develop a plan.
  - ✓ Implement programs and policies.
  - ✓ Evaluate how effective

[1] Tulloch, S. 2004. *Inuktitut and Inuit Youth: Language Attitudes as a Basis for Language Planning*. Département de langues, linguistique et traduction. Universite Laval. Ph.D.