

CHAPTER 1

Literacy Across Languages and Cultures

Bernardo M. Ferdman and Rose-Marie
Weber

Popular conceptions tend to portray literacy as a basic vehicle for social and economic advancement as well as a means of enhancing individual lives and fostering equal opportunity. Scholars and academics, while debating the accuracy or limitations of this image and even the very definition of literacy, at the very least seem to agree that more literacy among more people is desirable. Extending access to literacy for both children and adults has become a widespread goal in the United States and throughout the world. Business leaders maintain that the workforce is insufficiently proficient in the skills that will be increasingly necessary in the future. Educators struggle to meet the needs of a changing population that has a variety of values, backgrounds, and preparations. The focus has been broadening from one on illiteracy, then, to the larger problem of how to provide diverse people with the specific and expanded literacy skills they require for full participation in a variety of social contexts, including work, school, and home. Beyond these functional needs, the linkage of literacy with personal empowerment, social status, and individual growth also drives a variety of literacy efforts.

Members of linguistic and cultural minorities in the United States, as in other multiethnic societies, often face special challenges in having these needs addressed. This is especially so given the predominant and largely unexamined tendency in the United

States to equate literacy with English literacy. The premise of this book is that focusing on such people—people whose languages and cultures are not the dominant ones in the society—is crucial if we are to learn enough about becoming and being literate to permit truly accomplishing the goal of extending literacy as broadly in society as possible. Literacy has too often been portrayed primarily in functional terms and from a monolingual framework. For members of linguistic and cultural minorities, this has meant acquiring literacy in the context of theories and practices that are incompatible with their realities and experiences or that force them into unfamiliar or undesirable molds.

Together with a growing number of literacy scholars and practitioners, we believe that changing this situation means not only concerning ourselves with diversity, but also rethinking many of our assumptions about literacy itself. Consideration of the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse people can shed new light on how to think about the many ways children and adults become (and do not become) literate and what this means for them. Thus, extending knowledge and theory about literacy is one of our goals. We are also concerned with doing so in a way that can help those who are most concerned with applications. With this volume, we would like to do our part to shift attention from limited conceptions of literacy development to perspectives that permit heterogeneity in approach and function.

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Consistent with the goal of spreading and “fine-tuning” literacy, educators and researchers have focused on developing a better understanding of literacy, literacy acquisition, and related processes. Later in this chapter, we give an overview of several major streams of research and theory on issues of literacy. While these have produced a voluminous literature, most of it concentrates on first-language and mother-tongue literacy, and in the United States mainly on English literacy. We find that insufficient attention has been given in this scholarly literature to the particular issues facing people who are immigrants, members of ethnolinguistic minorities, or cross-nationals. For many such individuals the language and culture of the educational system and the surrounding society differ from those of the home. Many such persons develop literacy

in English while already having literacy skills in their native language. Scholars are only recently beginning to consider the implications for learners of becoming literate in the context of an educational system based on a second language or an unfamiliar culture.

At the same time, growing awareness of the changing demographics of the United States and calls for broader social equity are placing pressure on educational institutions to become more responsive to the needs of diverse ethnic groups. According to the Census Bureau, the Hispanic population in 1990 numbered 22.4 million, an increase of 53 percent from the 1980 count of 14.6 million. Thus, from 1980 to 1990 U.S. Hispanics grew from 6 to 9 percent of the total population. Similarly, the Asian and Pacific Islander group in 1990 numbered 7.3 million or 2.9 percent of the total population, having increased 107.8 percent since 1980. The African-American population numbered 30 million in 1990, 12.1 percent of the total, an increase of 13.2 percent since 1980. Finally, the American Indian group numbered 2 million or 0.8 percent of the total, having increased 37.9 percent since 1980. In contrast, the growth rate for the White group during the 1980s was only 6 percent. Thus, in 1990 members of non-European groups, including African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans, accounted for 25 percent of the U.S. population.

This diversity in the racial and ethnic make-up of the United States is reflected in the data on language. According to the 1990 Census, almost 32 million people in the United States (13.8 percent) over the age of 5 reported that they speak a language other than English at home (Waggoner, 1992a). Of these, approximately 14 million indicated that they have some difficulty with English or cannot speak it at all. An estimated additional 16 million persons who now speak English at home are originally from language-minority backgrounds, in that one or both of their parents spoke a non-English language at home. The majority (54 percent) of home speakers of non-English languages reported speaking Spanish, but substantial numbers speak French, German, Chinese, Italian, Polish, Korean, and Vietnamese (Waggoner, 1992b). Approximately 6.3 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 speak non-English languages at home, and 76 percent of them were reported to live in homes that are linguistically homogeneous (Waggoner, 1992b). In large urban areas, language diversity is even greater.

Thus, language and cultural heterogeneity in the United States

are at the center of controversies regarding the role of differences in education and how these should be addressed by schools. Educators and researchers, though, cannot reach a consensus on whether there are more benefits to be gained by focusing on differences or by focusing on similarities. In large part, this is because such debates tap into value conflicts over the nature of U.S. society and the place of its component groups (Ferdman, 1990). While many argue that the role of the schools is to educate children into and by means of a common culture, others maintain that the best way to learn is by building on each child's own culture, language, and background. Still others insist that the educational system should help to attain a pluralistic society in which each group is permitted to maintain its own culture. Paralleling these debates are struggles by those groups seen as different from the historically dominant White majority to gain an equitable measure of power in education and in society at large. Because linguistic and cultural diversity in the United States typically has been associated with minority status, part of the struggle has involved attempts to eliminate the devaluation that often accompanies the perception of difference.

In recent years, language has been the focus of especially vigorous debate in the United States, as seen in controversy over English-only laws and conflicts in the area of bilingual education. Some groups, such as U.S. English and English First, actively work against the use and promotion of languages other than English in governmental and commercial spheres. Other groups, such as English Plus, oppose these efforts and support attempts to enhance bilingualism among both English speakers and linguistic minorities (Baron, 1991; Crawford, 1992a, 1992b; Hornberger, 1990; Madrid, 1990; Padilla et al., 1991; Piatt, 1990). Historically, the language situation in the country has not been shaped by official language policies. Rather, the overwhelming turn to English as the national language has been accomplished by the linguistic choices of the citizenry and indirectly by the educational policy that led to the official requirement that one condition of citizenship be literacy in English (Heath, 1985). Today, political activity by U.S. English and similar linguistic interest groups has led almost a third of the states to enact constitutional amendments or resolutions legally making English the official state language (Hornberger, 1990; 1992). These measures are often motivated by such feelings as resentment of perceived privileges accorded minorities or un-

abashed prejudice against specific groups (see e.g., Padilla et al., 1991). They also may be driven, as Nunberg (1989) has argued, by a set of untenable beliefs about linguistic diversity. These include, for example, the view that retaining a native language and corresponding values is necessarily incompatible with learning English and assimilating to the majority culture, that if their first language is available people will not learn a second language, and that linguistic diversity is more threatening to national unity than other types of diversity, such as religious differences.

Bilingual education has been another major ground for vigorous language debates. Bilingual education has become especially controversial in those few cases where programs incorporate maintenance of the native language with the teaching of English. The values represented by maintenance programs challenge the idea of assimilation and Anglo-conformity and evoke for their opponents fears of uncontrollable divisions and loss of power. Transitional bilingual education programs, which are designed to phase in English slowly while educating children in their native language, have also been attacked, perhaps in part because they are often perceived as maintenance programs in disguise or are mistakenly thought to be ineffective. Although research results show the benefits of bilingual education programs over English immersion and English-as-a-second-language approaches for eventual learning of English and for the general academic progress of language-minority students (Hakuta & Gould, 1987; Imhoff, 1990; Medina & Escamilla, 1992; Mulhauser, 1990; Padilla et al., 1991; Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1991; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1987b; Padilla, Fairchild & Valadez, 1990), controversy in this area continues. In part this may be because what is being debated is not so much the nature of the evidence but the proper role of non-English languages in an educational system largely geared towards assimilation. Huddy and Sears (1990), for example, report that opposition toward bilingual education increases among those with "antiminority sentiments, anti-Hispanic feelings, and nationalistic feelings . . . and . . . [is] even further exacerbated by a description of bilingual education as cultural and linguistic maintenance" (133).

Researchers have participated in the language debate, in part, through extensive work in the area of second-language learning and teaching (e.g., Bernhardt, 1991; Gardner, 1985; Kaplan,

1988; Ramírez, this volume). Although this work has explored variables at all levels, ranging from the individual cognitive to the macrosocietal (Hakuta, Ferdman & Diaz, 1987), it has concentrated on language and communication in general, rarely considering reading and writing in their own right (Carrell, 1988; Valdés, 1992; Weber, 1991) and tending, instead, to take them for granted. Because researchers focusing on the social, cultural, and social psychological aspects of bilingualism have tended to confound issues of literacy with other aspects of second-language acquisition and usage, it is only recently that researchers and educators focusing on literacy have begun to recognize the importance of these variables to their work.

Beyond language per se, culture and ethnicity are also gaining wider recognition as critical ingredients to any consideration of literacy (e.g., Applebee, 1991; Ferdman, 1990; Goldenberg, Reese & Gallimore, 1992; Langer, 1987; McCollum, 1991; Minami & Kennedy, 1991; Purves, 1988) and of schooling more generally (e.g., Bernal, Saenz & Knight, 1991; Fordham, 1988; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Heath, 1985; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Ogbu, 1990). One aspect of this has to do with the implications of how different ethnic groups and their members are treated in society and its schools. John Ogbu, for example, has described the connections between the status of an ethnic group in society and the outcomes of schooling for its members. Ogbu argues that castelike minorities (those ethnic groups who were incorporated into the society involuntarily) tend to display lower achievement in school than “voluntary” minorities (those arising primarily from immigration) because the castelike groups are more likely to view the schools’ demands as representing the oppressive dominant group. Another important aspect of the role of culture and ethnicity has to do with the nature and implications of ethnic and cultural diversity (Ferdman, 1992; Ferdman & Cortes, 1992). Ferdman (1990), for example, has argued that individuals’ representations of “the behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms—in short, of the culture—appropriate to members of the ethnic group(s) to which [they] belong” (182) will play an important role in literacy acquisition and activity. By seeing *becoming* and *being* literate as processes that are very much culturally framed, we can begin to consider their transactional and fluid nature. Yet in spite of this and other work, a great deal of theoretical and empirical terrain remains unexplored.

We believe that by juxtaposing and linking those approaches that focus on the study of literacy and those that accent second-language acquisition and/or cultural transitions, we can move toward a more complete understanding of literacy among diverse populations and in multicultural societies. Given the goal of developing further knowledge of how to improve the educational process that has relevance beyond members of majority cultures and linguistic groups, more cross-fertilization between these areas of study will be required. In the process of forging this link, both researchers and educators can gain new insights into basic and applied aspects of literacy. This collection takes a special look at cross-language and cross-cultural literacy to introduce and to encourage research and theory that simultaneously consider and integrate literacy, language, and culture.

The authors of the chapters in this volume focus on the social and cultural contexts in which literacy develops and is enacted, with an emphasis on the North American situation. More and more educators and researchers are discovering that cognitive approaches, while very valuable, are insufficient by themselves to answer important questions about literacy in heterogeneous societies. There has been a movement in research from an exclusive focus on individual mastery to a recognition that it is the social context that gives mastery its impetus and meaning (e.g., de Castell & Luke, 1983; de Castell, Luke & Egan, 1986; Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Dyson, 1992; Edelsky, 1991; Hiebert, 1991; Jennings & Purves, 1991; Reder, 1987; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Snow et al., 1991; Street, 1984; Wallace, 1986; Willinsky, 1990). By considering the implications of family, school, culture, society, and nation for literacy processes, the chapters in this book help raise such questions as:

- In a multiethnic context, what does it mean to be literate?
- What are the processes involved in becoming and being literate in a second language?
- In what ways is literacy in a second language similar and in what ways is it different from mother-tongue literacy?
- What factors must be understood to better describe and facilitate literacy acquisition among members of ethnic and linguistic minorities?

- What are some current approaches that are being used to accomplish this?

We believe that these are vital questions for researchers and educators in a world that has a large number of immigrants, a variety of multiethnic and multilingual societies, and an increasing degree of multinational activity. In the next section, we discuss the various types of groups affected by issues of literacy across languages and cultures.

POPULATIONS OF INTEREST

The question of literacy across languages and cultures encompasses quite a broad set of populations and areas of study. Although the authors represented in this volume have each interpreted this theme in light of his or her own particular interests, here we attempt to provide a broader view of the groups and research questions relevant to cross-language and cross-cultural literacy. All the groups discussed include both children and adults, each with their own special needs in addition to those they share.

Immigrants

Many *immigrants* to the United States, whether or not they are literate in their native language, face the task of learning not only to speak but also to read and write in English. Indeed, one prerequisite for acquiring citizenship in the United States is demonstrating basic literacy in English. Certainly, the nature and the fluency of the literacy skills that immigrants bring with them should be an important factor in the process of acquiring English literacy. Although some newcomers to this country could be considered illiterate altogether, a good proportion have varying degrees of literacy skills in one or more languages other than English. From a purely monolingual perspective, it is difficult to know the implications of such skills for English literacy development.

We can expect that a number of other factors will also influence the experience of immigrants in acquiring or improving English literacy. These factors include the availability of resources in the native language(s), the status of the language(s) in the United States and in the person's immediate social environment, the relationship of prior literacy skills to those now required, and the

perceived utility of English literacy. Also important should be the type and extent of educational facilities and the social standing and resources that are available to the immigrant (e.g., Fishman, 1966). For example, we might expect differences in the English literacy acquisition experiences of a trained engineer from Brazil who moves alone to a metropolitan community where there is a broad range of both job opportunities and educational options, and the experiences of a Cambodian farmer with no formal schooling who arrives accompanied by his and four other families to a semi-rural village that has little experience with immigrants and a limited set of job possibilities. Similarly, immigrant children who have been in school in their native country can be expected to be different in terms of literacy acquisition than children without prior schooling. Finally, we might expect that immigrants' experiences will vary depending on their motivations for coming to and staying in the United States (e.g., Ogbu, 1990) and on their current and previous social roles.

Ethnic and Cultural Minorities

Members of *ethnic and cultural minority groups* often face special obstacles on the path to literacy (e.g., Ogbu, 1990; Trueba, 1989). Among many such groups in the United States, the primary language of the home is not English. Traditional languages are maintained even though the surrounding society does not support maintenance or development of literacy with the same materials and infrastructure given to English literacy. Even in those cases in which bilingual education is offered, the school system is based on the primacy of English literacy.

Because children from linguistic minorities who start formal schooling have had different backgrounds and experiences than their peers from dominant groups, we might expect implications of these differences for the process of literacy development. Once the child is in school, the language differences between home and school can limit the ability of both to provide support for English literacy. Beyond the cross-linguistic considerations involved in becoming English literate, there are the additional issues involved in becoming literate in the home language (see, e.g., Goldenberg, Reese & Gallimore, 1992).

For adults and children from non-English backgrounds, clearly

cross-language and cross-cultural literacy are relevant. Because members of some ethnic and cultural minorities, such as African-Americans, often share the dominant language and writing system, however, it can be easy to ignore these issues and treat the process of literacy acquisition as equivalent in all individuals, regardless of group membership. Research, however, including some reported in this volume, has shown that there is extensive variation not only in the features of literacy and language within various groups, but also in what mainstream literacy as defined within the society can represent to group members (e.g., Fordham, 1988; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991; Marsiglia & Halasa, 1992; Ogbu, 1990). For members of subordinated groups, reaction to oppression may take the form of resistance to literacy as defined by the dominant society. As mentioned above, Ferdman (1990) has argued that culture and cultural identity play an important role in becoming and being literate. To the extent that this is the case, it means that we must pay closer attention to the role of cultural and ethnic variation as they relate to literacy processes.

Foreign-Language Learners

A third type of group for which cross-language and cross-cultural literacy issues are also important is comprised by *learners of foreign languages*, including those for whom English is the native language and who are members of the dominant culture. Valdés (1992) refers to such individuals as “elective bilinguals,” because they choose to learn a second language and “continue to spend the greater part of their time in a society in which their first language is the majority or societal language” (93). Indeed, a good deal of work in second-language acquisition has focused on members of this group, such as college and high-school students learning French, Spanish, and other languages (e.g., Bernhardt, 1991). Learners of English as a second language, especially those who are usually literate in another tongue (such as international students in the United States), have also been the subject of much research in the United States and are often included in this group (e.g., Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1988). This work has tended to look at reading processes and, increasingly, at writing. Finally, temporary immigrants, people who reside temporarily in another country (for example, to work or study), also can be considered part of this group.

Such learners of foreign languages are usually motivated by different factors and otherwise vary in important ways (for example, in socioeconomic class) from immigrants or minorities, whom Valdés (1992) refers to as “circumstantial bilinguals.” She points out that they, in contrast to elective bilinguals, “find that they must learn another language in order to survive” (94). We should expect that the process of developing literacy will not be the same for each of these groups.

Within and across each population described above, researchers can focus on a broad set of variables relevant to cross-language or cross-cultural literacy and literacy education. These factors can span across various levels of analysis, ranging from writing system variations to the contrasts among languages and cultures in what concepts they incorporate, what roles they assign to reading and writing, and what assumptions they make about how people learn.

RESEARCH STREAMS ON LITERACY ACROSS LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

Literacy, as a central activity in our modern society, has generated a flood of research. The large volume of extant research on literacy has followed a number of streams. Each of these considers different aspects of literacy and asks different types of questions. Here, we identify three major currents in literacy research. Language diversity in the United States has also commanded lively but largely independent scholarship. From this work, we mention four distinct approaches.

Currents in Literacy Research

The first important stream, one that draws on and contributes to cognitive psychology, focuses on the psychology of skilled reading as a visual, linguistic, and reasoning process. This perspective regards becoming literate as a developing skill of individuals, a skill that is shaped by cognitive constraints and constructive strategies emanating from or based in each learner. For example, the intricate, split-second maneuvers that take readers along at a rate of hundreds of words a minute, twice as fast as the usual comprehension of speech, are studied as a manifestation of the mind’s complexities (e.g., Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989). In this stream, the indi-

vidual learner is the basic unit of analysis, and considerations of environment, culture, and society are seen as relevant only insofar as they influence individual features or cognitive structures and processes. Whether or not this is explicitly recognized, the parameters of this line of research are culturally shaped.

A second stream of research, one that has been especially broad and turbulent, focuses on the teaching, understanding, and assessment of literacy as an educational objective in schools, essential to acquiring the knowledge and the world view represented there. Much of this research has been undertaken to answer questions about the best way to foster students' proficiency as readers and writers. For example, a current issue within this approach concerns the extent to which reading and writing, from preschool through college levels, should be taught as independent subjects through direct instruction or fostered through purposeful and authentic reading and writing from the outset (Adams, 1990; Willinsky, 1990). This question is being played out within the larger context of the social interactions that take place in school settings, the ways that schools and classrooms are organized, and the dimensions of public policy that impinge on daily activities (Barr et al., 1991). Thus, although research within this perspective is often done at an individual level of analysis, it is not restricted to it. The unit of analysis can also be the classroom, the school, or instructional approaches. In this stream, sociocultural considerations are important to the extent that they can help to clarify and improve educational practices. Much of this work, however, does not explicitly consider the role of culture in literacy acquisition.

The last stream of research, and the one most closely linked to this volume, examines literacy in society. In this perspective, reading and writing are viewed as practices occurring in a social context, guided by intention, laden with values, and taking on forms and functions that differ according to time and place. To use Scribner's (1984) terms, literacy has been variously conceived of as adaptation to the requirements of modern technological society, as the means to power in the structure of societies, and as a state of grace that societies endow to the accomplished. Some scholars taking this direction describe it as a "constructivist" approach (Hiebert, 1991) and often cite the work of Vygotsky (1978). Historians, anthropologists, and comparative educators working in this stream have cultivated an expansive view that reveals the diversity

of conceptions of literacy, of the significance it may hold, and of its relationship to social, economic, and political factors. This broader stream has been paralleled by research that recognizes the differing routes to becoming literate and to achieving different states of literacy for different social ends (e.g., Schiefflin & Gilmore, 1986; Wagner, 1987). It presents challenges to the cognitive view, which seeks, if not assumes, a universal view of reading and writing. It also runs counter to the strong current that advocates a monolithic store of knowledge that should be provided by our educational systems. This research perspective is the one that permits most clearly asking questions about literacy across languages and cultures, because it addresses most directly issues of policy, settings such as the workplace, and aspects of societal variation and complexity. Choosing a language or dialect to read and write, learning to read more than one language, and using different languages for different purposes and with different levels of proficiency are all acts that have significance of wide range and subtlety over cultural contexts.

These three streams of literacy research—cognitive, educational, and social—have not been well integrated with each other or with other approaches. Yet at some junctures they flow into one another. In particular, the social context of reading and writing has in recent times taken on greater weight, so that their status as private processes, internal to the mind, are continually under review. For example, emergent literacy, the acquisition of reading and writing skills by young children as they engage with print at home and at school, is currently being studied as an extension of language development in the social context of family and child care, with important implications for teaching in the schools. Learning to read and write is not viewed as simply knowing the letters or accumulating a stock of words but also as purposefully engaging with print over talk and using strategies that shift with expanding knowledge (Sulzby & Teale, 1991).

Currents in Research on Language Diversity

As with literacy, research on language and multilingualism has been approached from a number of perspectives. These include linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic currents. The sociolinguistic current can be further subdivided into social and societal approaches.

The first important stream of research on linguistic diversity, that of linguistics proper, concentrates on the form of American languages themselves, both indigenous and transplanted, ranging from the intricacies of the sounds, syntax, and vocabularies of the native American languages like Mohawk, to the characteristics of African-influenced English such as Gullah, to the dialects of German in America. Furthermore, this stream has examined how vocabularies, sounds, and grammar have shifted historically through contact with one another in society, as well as how these language forms influence one another in the speech of bilingual individuals (Ferguson & Heath, 1981; Turner, 1982).

A second stream of research—psycholinguistics—concerns the cognitive aspects of bilingual abilities, focusing on how individuals acquire, organize, and activate their knowledge of more than one language or dialect to greater or lesser degrees over a range of settings (Grosjean, 1982; Ramírez, 1985). An important aspect of this work has considered, in defiance of research earlier in this century, how bilingual ability may be positively related to cognitive capacities in young children (Hakuta, 1986; Hakuta, Ferdman & Diaz, 1987).

The third stream of work falls within the sociolinguistic tradition that concentrates on social psychological factors. This perspective examines how individuals put their linguistic knowledge to use in social encounters—exploring in what settings, on what occasions, to whom, and to what immediate purpose this is done, thereby giving and taking meaning from the choice of language itself (e.g., Forgas, 1985; Ryan & Giles, 1982). Closely related to this dynamic is the value that speakers place on the variation within and across languages. This area of research has also explored how such values about a language may serve to sustain cultural solidarity among its speakers and invite others to learn it or neglect it (Fishman, 1966; Fishman, Cooper & Ma, 1971; Giles & Coupland, 1991; Giles & Johnson, 1987).

Finally, the fourth stream of language research, while also following a sociolinguistic tradition, is more focused on a societal level of analysis. This perspective addresses the distribution of languages and dialects in larger society and the social forces and institutions that have contributed to their maintenance or loss through the generations (Fishman, 1989; McKay & Wong, 1988;

Sagarin & Kelly, 1985). How nations and their constituent institutions orient themselves with regards to language planning (e.g., Foster, 1991) is encompassed by this approach.

Integrating the Study of Literacy and Language

When language differences are taken into account, the questions that might be asked in literacy research proliferate. Expanded consideration of diversity can be a vibrant source of important and broader research questions for each of the currents of literacy research discussed above.

In the cognitive stream such questions include:

- How do skilled bilingual readers and writers call on their knowledge of more than one language, pass back and forth between them, keep them separate, and yet use one language to reinforce the other?
- How does learning to read a language contribute to learning to speak a language, and vice versa?
- How do people come to know more than one written language?
- How do they learn to read and write through a language they do not speak and thus learn the language?
- Are there differences between children, adolescents, and adults as their abilities mature?

In the educational stream some questions include:

- How do children construct their knowledge of spoken and written second languages even as they are developing their first?
- How can specific instructional strategies contribute to their advancement?
- In what ways do the findings of researchers lend support to the common practice of educators in guiding students toward constructing their knowledge, values, and activities with written language?
- What is the place of reading and writing when teaching a second language?

In the social stream, the following questions arise:

- How do readers from different cultures value the knowledge of one or more written languages?
- To what ends do they choose one over another?
- To what extent do they take pleasure and take pains in learning and using them? What kinds of resistance are possible?
- In what ways do they give meaning to texts and to the activities of reading and writing themselves?

The extensive research on linguistic diversity in individuals, in classrooms, and in society has not contributed as much as might be expected to answering such questions. In part, this may be because in a large proportion of studies about bilingualism, literacy is taken for granted. With respect to individual abilities, for instance, researchers ask subjects to carry out reading and writing tasks in experimental settings and draw conclusions about linguistic abilities in general. In academic settings, research on the effects of instruction in foreign languages, classical languages, and English as a second language is done through the written language, presupposing students' knowledge of how to read and write with ease. In analyses of language use in communities, where an individual's choice of language for different purposes is traced in relation to topic, listeners, setting, and other such variables, the focus has often been on the spoken language. In broadly gauged descriptions of the number and uses of the various languages in a society, the respective place of written and spoken varieties, apart from the dominant language, rarely receives more than secondary attention.

Thus, as deep as the research streams are in the many aspects of literacy, they afford relatively few insights into questions concerning literacy across languages and cultures. A good deal of research on the gap between school language and children's knowledge of it in the schools has addressed the question of achievement through bilingual education and programs in English as a second language, in order to establish a basis for policy (Collier, 1987; Imhoff, 1990). In contrast, little attention has been given to looking at the ways that learners accomplish such academic achievement or how they in fact understand and create specific written texts.

Recently, however, interest has been accelerating with respect

to a range of issues (Bernhardt, 1991; Weber, 1991). In school settings, for instance, specific studies have been undertaken on such topics as the development of word recognition across languages in early learners (Kendall, et al., 1987), the course of free-writing ability in Hispanic children (Edelsky, 1986), and the relevance of culturally specific background knowledge to the understanding of discourse (Barnitz, 1986). The particular challenge that students at the university level face when they need to be able to read English for academic purposes has gained attention (Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1988). With respect to literacy in social context, the complexities of written language use and meaning have been examined in diverse settings that reveal informal as well as formal literacy learning, varying routes of socialization into reading and writing, collaborative literacy practices, and varying knowledge of the forms, uses, and significance attached to literacy (Reder, 1987). The possibility that such social factors influence the very skill of reading has also been considered (Devine, 1988). Furthermore, the place of the written language as an expression of cultural identity has been explored (Ferdman, 1990; Fishman, 1989).

THE PRESENT VOLUME

This collection is designed to continue and to elaborate some of the new directions described above. The chapters in this volume review and fill in gaps in previous work and provide examples of innovative approaches to the issues of literacy across languages and cultures. We hope that this will add to the growing interest in linking previously unrelated areas of research and creating knowledge applicable to the experience and situation of more diverse groups. By considering at once issues relevant to a number of groups that must approach literacy cross-linguistically or cross-culturally, we believe that we can broaden the terms for conceptualization, research, and practice. The authors of the chapters come from a variety of disciplines and perspectives. It is the interdisciplinary and complex view that results from the juxtaposition of their work that we would like to suggest is the way in which the study of literacy will be most fruitful and rich.

Stephen Reder, Arnulfo Ramírez, and Nancy Hornberger, in chapters 2, 3, and 4 respectively, each take a broad perspective in

reviewing and synthesizing theoretical and empirical work relevant to understanding cross-language and cross-cultural literacy and literacy acquisition. Their chapters provide a substantial basis for framing future research, theory, and application in this area. In his chapter, Stephen Reder takes a social psychological perspective, describing literacy as a social and cultural process comprised by a set of culturally defined practices. He summarizes research showing how literacy practices vary across cultural groups within a society. Most importantly, Reder also develops a theory of literacy transmission and development that emphasizes the roles of practice and engagement and discusses the implications of this research and theory for education.

Arnulfo Ramírez focuses on learning to read and write in a second language for academic purposes by students already literate in a first language. He explores the implications for literacy of learner differences in second-language acquisition and of the characteristics of written texts. Ramírez also reviews the bearing on second-language literacy of current theories of second-language acquisition and conceptions of language proficiency. This chapter examines research and theory about the *technology of reading*, to use Reder's (1987) term; second-language reading is discussed as being done in the context of the classroom and from textbooks, as in Street's (1984) autonomous model of reading. Thus Ramírez's contribution represents an overview of an approach that is now shifting as it begins to incorporate consideration of the socio-cultural contexts of literate activities that Reder discusses.

In her chapter, Nancy Hornberger offers an integrated theoretical framework for understanding biliterate contexts, development, and media. She posits the significance of thinking about these as continua rather than as polar opposites. As contexts for biliteracy, she includes micro-macro, oral-literate, and monolingual-bilingual continua. Continua of reception-production, oral-written, and L_1-L_2 transfer are important in understanding the development of the individual's communicative repertoire. Finally, she explains how biliterates can communicate using a variety of media, ranging from simultaneous to successive exposure, similar to dissimilar structures, and convergent to divergent scripts. Hornberger's chapter provides a useful conceptual structure for linking the various approaches to language and literacy and seeing how they relate to each other.

Chapters 5–10, by Concha Delgado-Gaitan, Virginia Vogel Zanger, Barbara McCaskill, Joanne Devine, Mark Zuss, and Alison d’Anglejan, respectively, each exemplify the application of a sociocultural perspective to aspects of cross-language and/or cross-cultural literacy. The authors adopt the lenses of their particular disciplines to discuss their research programs or to develop new theoretical positions. Seen as a group, these chapters provide strong arguments for the importance of considering the unique aspects of literacy across languages or cultures.

In her contribution, Concha Delgado-Gaitan links literacy activities within ethnic- and language-minority families, in this case Hispanics in California, to empowerment in the larger community. She presents a theoretical discussion on the process of empowerment and summarizes practical experience in the steps leading toward family empowerment with an eye toward the potential of family literacy. In her sociocultural view, family literacy is not simply a tool for fostering school achievement, but is also important for internalizing new ways of social engagement. Delgado-Gaitan describes an effort to guide Hispanic parents to interact with their children over storybooks and their ensuing involvement in community activities. She links this participation in the community to the parents’ experience of shaping new patterns of interaction within the family.

Virginia Vogel Zanger’s chapter explores the relationship between members of an important linguistic minority—Hispanic youth—and the dominant culture (as represented by the school), as well as the role of these relations in the youths’ development of English literacy. Zanger shows vividly how Hispanic high school students experience their educational environment. She portrays conditions that include the school’s failure to incorporate the students’ language and culture, a racist and exclusionary school climate, and a breakdown in trust between Hispanic students and Anglo teachers, and she connects these to the Hispanic students’ limited access to the conditions that facilitate literacy development.

Barbara McCaskill, as a scholar of English specializing in African-American literature, takes a different approach from the other authors to shed more light on the implications of cultural differences and the experience of oppression for the role of literacy in individuals and society. McCaskill analyses Harriet Jacobs’s nineteenth-century narrative to show the interplay of minority—in

this case slave—status and literacy. The slave is forced to adopt “mainstream” symbols of literacy to prove herself, yet these are inadequate and must be refashioned. Jacobs’s ability to do this successfully speaks to the experience of those that find the odds insurmountable. The mainstream literacy Jacobs seems to adopt cannot do justice to her vision of life and the world around her, and so she must resolve the paradox of only being able to use a language that has no words for what she needs to say. The way she ultimately does this has important implications for today, when similar patterns continue to exist and affect members of marginalized and oppressed groups. Dominant views of literacy ensure that alternative experiences can only be described by exceptional individuals able to transcend the limitations of the images and symbols to which the dominant culture gives them access. McCaskill’s chapter also speaks to the uses of literacy and the definitions of literacy in intergroup and interpersonal relations.

In her chapter, Joanne Devine analyzes the role that power differences have in influencing the access to literacy available to groups and individuals. Using muted group theory, she shows how groups with less power have been held to different standards and must use a different voice to be heard. Such power relationships have important implications for the differential transmission of literacy in society. Building on Zanger’s and McCaskill’s contributions, Devine articulates a perspective that highlights the importance of group-level societal phenomena for individuals’ experiences as they acquire and use literacy skills.

Mark Zuss takes a theoretical view as he analyzes the role that ideology, as represented by values and subjectivity, has in influencing linguistic practices and approaches to literacy in culturally diverse classrooms. As members of different cultural groups come in contact with each other in educational contexts, the power relations between them and the roles they occupy are crucial determinants of the values that will be emphasized and enacted in teaching and learning. Zuss uses economic metaphors to show how the practices of some discourse communities dominate those of others, thus influencing the possibilities for learning available to members of minority groups.

In her chapter on current language and literacy issues in Quebec, Alison d’Anglejan takes a wide-angled view that links a number of factors usually considered separately. She examines the place of literacy in the French language policy of Quebec in light of

demographic changes, recent surveys on literacy levels, and workplace requirements, revealing the ways in which literacy has been obscured in language policy and the principles that guide it. As she discusses educational efforts in second language and literacy, d'Anglejan gives special attention to the challenges presented by recent immigrants with low educational levels and their families. This chapter also affords readers the opportunity for comparison with the situation in the United States.

The final chapter is written by Jim Cummins, who is a noted researcher and writer on aspects of bilingualism and bilingual education, and is based on his reflections of the preceding chapters. Cummins takes a forceful and wide-ranging approach in arguing for the importance of considering literacy acquisition and development across languages and cultures in the sociopolitical context of public discourse on literacy. He provides a framework for integrating functional, cultural, and critical literacies that at once considers both the micro-interactions that occur in schools between students and teachers and the macro relations of power between groups in society. Cummins advances the notion that solving the "literacy crisis" and achieving true success in literacy instruction for linguistic and cultural minorities will only happen to the extent that currently coercive power relations among groups and between teachers and students are replaced with collaborative relations of power. Cummins's chapter represents a potent call to researchers, educators, and policy makers to keep in mind the full complexity of the issues as they seek to address the challenges of literacy across languages and cultures.

REFERENCES

- Adams, M.J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Applebee, A.N. (1991). Literature: Whose heritage? In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies*, (pp. 228–236). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Barnitz, J.G. (1986). Toward understanding the effects of cross-cultural schemata and discourse structure on second language comprehension. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 18, 95–116.
- Baron, D. (1991). *The English-only question*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Barr, R., Kamil, M.L., Mosenthal, P. & Pearson, P.D. (Eds.) (1991). *Handbook of reading research*, Vol. 2. New York: Longman.

- Bernal, M.E., Saenz, D.S. & Knight, G.P. (1991). Ethnic identity and adaptation of Mexican American youths in school settings. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 13, 135–154.
- Bernhardt, E.B. (1991). *Reading development in a second language: Theoretical, empirical, and classroom perspectives*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Carrell, P.L. (1988). SLA and classroom instruction: Reading. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 9, 223–242.
- Carrell, P.L., Devine, J. & Eskey, D. (1988). *Interactive approaches to second language reading*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Collier, V.P. (1987). Age and acquisition of second language for academic purposes. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21, 617–641.
- Cook-Gumperz, J. (Ed.) (1986). *The social construction of literacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Crawford, J. (1992a). *Hold your tongue: Bilingualism and the politics of English only*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- . (Ed.). (1992b). *Language loyalties: A source book on the official English controversy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- de Castell, S. & Luke, A. (1983). Defining ‘literacy’ in North American schools: Social and historical conditions and consequences. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 15, 373–389.
- de Castell, S., Luke, A. & Egan, K. (Ed.). (1986). *Literacy, society, and schooling: A reader*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Devine, J. (1988). A case study of two readers: Models of reading and reading performance. In P.L. Carrell, J. Devine & D.E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading* (pp. 127–139). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dyson, A.H. (1992). *Whistle for Willie*, lost puppies, and cartoon dogs: The sociocultural dimensions of young children’s composing. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 24, 433–462.
- Edelsky, C. (1986). *Writing in a bilingual program: Habia una vez*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- . (1991). *With literacy and justice for all: Rethinking the social in language and education*. London: Falmer Press.
- Ferdman, B.M. (1990). Literacy and cultural identity. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60, 181–204.
- . (1992). The dynamics of ethnic diversity in organizations: Toward integrative models. In K. Kelley (Ed.), *Issues, theory and research in industrial/organizational psychology* (pp. 339–384). Amsterdam: North Holland.
- Ferdman, B.M. & Cortes, A. (1992). Culture and identity among Hispanic managers in an Anglo business. In S.B. Knouse, P. Rosenfeld & A. Culbertson (Eds.), *Hispanics in the workplace* (pp. 246–277). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Ferguson, C.A. & Heath, S.B. (Eds.) (1981). *Language in the USA*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishman, J.A. (Ed.) (1966). *Language loyalty in the United States: The maintenance and perpetuation of non-English mother tongues by American ethnic and religious groups*. The Hague: Mouton.
- . (1989). *Language and ethnicity in minority sociolinguistic perspective*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, J.A., Cooper, R.L. & Ma, R. (1971). *Bilingualism in the barrio*. Bloomington: Indiana University.
- Fordham, S. (1988). Racelessness as a factor in Black students' school success: Pragmatic strategy or pyrrhic victory? *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, 54–84.
- Forgas, J.P. (Ed.) (1985). *Language and social situations*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Foster, P. (1991). Literacy and the politics of language. In E.M. Jennings & A.C. Purves (Eds.), *Literate systems and individual lives: Perspectives on literacy and schooling* (pp. 37–50). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gardner, R.C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Gibson, M.A. & Ogbu, J.U. (Eds.) (1991). *Minority status and schooling: A comparative study of immigrant and involuntary minorities*. New York: Garland.
- Giles, H. & Coupland, N. (1991). *Language: Contexts and consequences*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Giles, H. & Johnson, P. (1987). Ethnolinguistic identity theory: A social psychological approach to language maintenance. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 68, 66–99.
- Goldenberg, C., Reese, L. & Gallimore, R. (1992). Effects of literacy materials from school on Latino children's home experiences and early reading achievement. *American Journal of Education*, 100, 497–536.
- Grosjean, F. (1982). *Life with two languages*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hakuta, K. (1986). *Mirror of language: The debate on bilingualism*. New York: Basic.
- Hakuta, K., Ferdman, B.M. & Diaz, R.M. (1987). Bilingualism and cognitive development: Three perspectives. In S. Rosenberg (Ed.), *Advances in applied psycholinguistics*. Vol. 2: *Reading, writing and language learning* (pp. 284–319). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hakuta, K. & Gould, L.J. (1987, Mar.). Synthesis of research on bilingual education. *Educational Leadership*, 45, 38–45.
- Heath, S.B. (1985). Bilingual education and a national language policy. In J.E. Alatis & J.J. Staczek (Eds.), *Perspectives on bilingualism and bilin-*

- gual education (pp. 75–88). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Hiebert, E.H. (Ed.) (1991). *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hornberger, N.H. (1990). Bilingual education and English-only: A language planning framework. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 508, 12–26.
- . (1992). Bilingual contexts, continua, and contrasts: Policy and curriculum for Cambodian and Puerto Rican students in Philadelphia. *Education and Urban Society*, 24, 196–211.
- Huddy, L. & Sears, D.O. (1990). Qualified public support for bilingual education: Some policy implications. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 508, 119–134.
- Imhoff, G. (Ed.) (1990). *Learning in two languages: From conflict to consensus in the reorganization of schools*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Jennings, E.M. & Purves, A.C. (Eds.) (1991). *Literate systems and individual lives: Perspectives on literacy and schooling*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Kaplan, R.B. (Ed.) (1988). Second language acquisition research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 9 [complete volume].
- Kendall, J.R., Lajeunesse, G., Chmilar, P., Shapson, L.R. & Shapson, S.M. (1987). English reading skills of French immersion students in kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 22, 135–160.
- Langer, J.A. (Ed.) (1987). *Language, literacy, and culture: Issues of society and schooling*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Madrid, A. (1990). Official English: A false policy issue. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 508, 62–65.
- Marsiglia, F.F. & Halasa, O. (1992, April). *Ethnic identity and school achievement as perceived by a group of selected mainland Puerto Rican students*. Paper presented at the meetings of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.
- McCollum, P. (1991). Cross-cultural perspectives on classroom discourse and literacy. In E.H. Hiebert (Ed.), *Literacy for a diverse society: Perspectives, practices, and policies*, (pp. 108–121). New York: Teachers College Press.
- McKay, S.L. & Wong, S.C. (Eds.) (1988). *Language diversity: Problem or resource?* New York: Newbury House.
- Medina, M.J. & Escamilla, K. (1992). Evaluation of transitional and maintenance bilingual programs. *Urban Education*, 27, 263–290.
- Minami, M. & Kennedy, B.P. (Eds.). (1991). *Language issues in literacy*

- and bilingual/multicultural education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review.
- Molesky, J. (1988). Understanding the American linguistic mosaic: A historical overview of language maintenance and language shift. In S.L. McKay & S.C. Wong (Eds.), *Language diversity: Problem or resource?* (pp. 29–68). New York: Newbury House.
- Mulhauser, F. (1990). Reviewing bilingual-education research for Congress. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 508, 107–118.
- Nunberg, G. (1989). Linguists and the official language movement. *Language*, 65, 579–587.
- Ogbu, J.U. (1990). Minority status and literacy in comparative perspective. *Daedalus*, 119, 141–168.
- Padilla, A.M., Fairchild, H.H. & Valadez, C.M. (Eds.) (1990). *Bilingual education: Issues and strategies*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Padilla, A.M., Lindholm, K.J., Chen, A., Durán, R., Hakuta, K., Lambert, W. & Tucker, G.R. (1991). The English-only movement: Myths, reality, and implications for psychology. *American Psychologist*, 46, 120–30.
- Pearson, P.D. & Cole, J. (1987). Explicit comprehension instruction: A review of research and a new conceptualization of instruction. *Elementary School Journal*, 88, 151–165.
- Piatt, B. (1990). *Only English? Law and language policy in the United States*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Purves, A. (Ed.) (1988). *Writing across languages and cultures: Issues in contrastive rhetoric*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ramírez, A.G. (1985). *Bilingualism through schooling: Cross-cultural education for minority and majority students*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ramirez, J.D., Yuen, S.D. & Ramey, D.R. (1991). *Final report: Longitudinal study of structured English immersion strategy, early-exit and late-exit transitional bilingual education programs for language-minority children* (Executive Summary). San Mateo, CA: Aguirre International.
- Rayner, K. & Pollatsek, A. (1989). *Psychology of reading*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Reder, S. (1987). Comparative aspects of functional literacy development: Three ethnic American communities. In D. Wagner (Ed.), *The future of literacy in a changing world*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Romaine, S. (1989). *Bilingualism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Rossell, C. & Ross, J.M. (1986). The social science evidence on bilingual education. *Journal of Law and Education*, 15, 385–419.

- Ryan, E.B. & Giles, H. (Eds.) (1982). *Attitudes towards language variation: Social and applied contexts*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Sagarin, E. & Kelly, R.J. (1985). Polylingualism in the United States of America: A multitude of tongues and a monolingual majority. In W. Beer and J.E. Jacob (Eds.), *Language policy and language unity* (pp. 20–44). Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allenheld.
- Schiefflin, B. & Gilmore, P. (1986). *The acquisition of literacy: Ethnographic perspectives*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Scribner, S. (1984). Literacy in three metaphors. *American Journal of Education*, 93, 7–22.
- Snow, C.E., Barnes, W.S., Chandler, J., Goodman, I.F. & Hemphill, L. (1991). *Unfulfilled expectations: Home and school influences on literacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Street, B.V. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sulzby, E. & Teale, W. (1991). Emergent literacy. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*, Vol. 2 (pp. 727–757). New York: Longman.
- Swaffar, J.K. (1985). Reading authentic texts in a foreign language: A cognitive model. *Modern Language Journal*, 69, 15–34.
- Trueba, H.T. (1989). *Raising silent voices: Educating the linguistic minorities for the 21st century*. New York: Newbury House.
- Turner, P.R. (1982). *Bilingualism in the southwest*, 2nd ed. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- U.S. General Accounting Office. (1987a). *Bilingual education: Information on limited English proficient students* (GAO/HRD-87-85BR). Washington, D.C.: author.
- U.S. General Accounting Office. (1987b). *Bilingual education: A new look at the research evidence* (GAO/PEMD-87-12BR). Washington, D.C.: author.
- Valdés, G. (1992). Bilingual minorities and language issues in writing: Toward professionwide responses to a new challenge. *Written Communication*, 9, 85–136.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Waggoner, D. (1992a). Census sample reveals increase in multilingual and foreign-born populations. *Numbers and Needs: Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities in the United States*, 2(4), 1 ff. [Available from Dorothy Waggoner, Editor, Box G1H/B, 3900 Watson Place N.W., Washington DC 20016.]
- _____. (1992b). Four in five home speakers of non-English languages in the U.S. speak one of eight languages. *Numbers and Needs: Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities in the United States*, 2(5), 1 ff. [Available from

- Dorothy Waggoner, Editor, Box G1H/B, 3900 Watson Place N.W., Washington DC 20016.]
- Wagner, D.A. (Ed.). (1983). Literacy and ethnicity. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 42 (complete).
- . (Ed.) (1987). *The future of literacy in a changing world*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Wallace, C. (1986). *Learning to read in a multicultural society: The social context of second language literacy*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Weber, R.-M. (1991). Linguistic diversity and reading in American society. In R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*, Vol. 2 (pp. 97–119). New York: Longman.
- Willinsky, J. (1990). *The new literacy: Redefining reading and writing in the schools*. New York: Routledge.