

Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism

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Bilingual Community Education and Multilingualism

Beyond Heritage Languages in a Global City

Edited by
**Ofelia García, Zeena Zakharia
and Bahar Otcu**

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Introduction

Organization, Content and Purpose of the Book

The chapters in this book are organized to show the different manifestations of bilingual community education. That is, bilingual community education is not a single enterprise, and it does not occur in just one type of space. Bilingual community education includes educational efforts organized by communities in schools, churches, temples, synagogues, community-based organizations, storefronts, playgrounds, homes, hair-braiding salons and many other places. Sometimes these activities take place in an all-day school, whether private or public, but sometimes they occur after school, in the evenings, or on Saturdays and/or Sundays. What all these efforts have in common is that they are organized by parents and communities to ensure that their American children become bilingual and develop the multiple ethno-linguistic identities that will enable them to live in a global world. Rather than viewing these efforts with mistrust, the US public school education system should acknowledge the value added that these programs bring, and collaborate with them to educate bilingual Americans.¹

All of the chapters included start by exploring sociolinguistic aspects of the language practices of the diasporic communities, including the history of their complex migrations, and of their socioeducational efforts, using the global city of New York as a backdrop. As such, all of the chapters provide multiple perspectives on these bilingual community education efforts. Most chapters, however, offer detailed descriptions of one type of program, and thus, the organization here reflects the focus that the authors have chosen.

We invite you to read these chapters with a broader lens than that which focuses on ‘heritage language’ education, for these bilingual community education efforts acknowledge the dynamic bilingualism that education in the US must encompass. Rather than focusing on specific languages of inheritance, these bilingual community education programs develop American