TEACHING AS MENTORING

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to pay tribute to Richard Ruíz by reflecting on the influence of his three orientations–language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource. The authors focus on the effect of the three orientations, not only on society, but also on each of their lives by sharing their individual and personal stories, which connect them to Ruíz's work with a metaphor of the ripple effect, which becomes visible through the act of mentoring from a Vygotskian perspective.

Like you, we were saddened to learn of the unexpected passing of Dr. Richard Ruíz, who had a long and beautiful career at the University of Arizona (UofA). We carefully followed the heart-felt tributes and accolades that were given to him, and we were proud when the UofA honored him with special ceremonies. His thinking has influenced many, including us.

Richard's legacy for language planning made us think: When kids who speak other languages come to our schools or communities, what is our perspective, our orientation, and our approach? For example, if a French-speaking student comes to class and is still in the process of acquiring English as a new language, what is our perspective? Or what if that student speaks Spanish—what is our perspective? Do we approach the student as if his or her language is a **problem**, a **right**, or a **resource**? It turns out that we are in the classroom with the students, and our own perspective/orientation matters.

Richard Ruíz (1984) argued that three social orientations toward languages occur and further explained their role in society: **Language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource.** As a nation, we have a long history of implementing language-as-problem approaches. However, much of the world approaches other languages as a resource and/or right. In 1984 and 1988, Ruíz wrote that language-as-resource offered the most social,

economic, and political benefits. Many in the world now assume that language is a human right. In this tribute piece, the authors will share their individual stories and connect them to Ruíz's work with a metaphor of the ripple effect.

Looking Back: Joan Shares

How much do I love the three orientations (Figure 1) for language planning from Richard Ruíz (1984)? Quite honestly: So much so that after his original article was published by the *NABE Journal* and reprinted by McKay-Wong, both volumes have always lived in the R's (for Richard Ruíz) of my alphabetically organized home library.
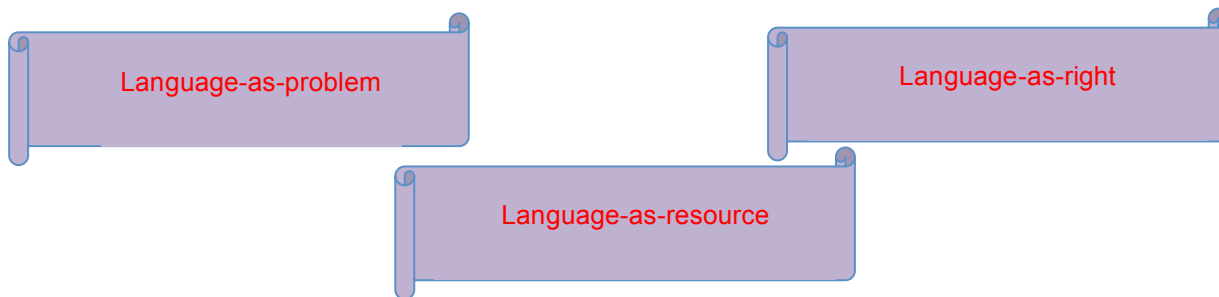
Language-as-problem

Language-as-right

Language-as-resource

Figure 1: The three orientations for language by Dr. Richard Ruíz

I was a graduate student at the University of Arizona when Richard's orientations first emerged, and the truth is that I seized them and ran. Through the years, I have returned innumerable times to the R's on my bookshelf to grab the article and share it with teachers who later were graduate students in my own classes. During all of this time, did I ever once think that I was mentoring anyone? No, I only thought that Richard's thinking connected with something the teacher was focusing on at that time.

Dare We Hope?

Initially, for me, the orientations so clearly captured the national unexamined assumption of language-as-problem. It provided me with a tool to articulate other perspectives. In those days, it almost made me light headed to look toward language-as-right or language-as-resource.

Language is a Human Right

Next, I lived through the years of the critiques of Richard's work. My heart fell, as we all struggled to move forward together in our understandings the three orientations. In his language planning orientations article, Richard addressed both abstract and legal applications of the language as a right orientation. He argued the language as right orientation evolved as a reaction against the language as problem orientation. Hence, proponents of students who spoke minority languages had at least a tentative recognition that the legal system should address this. However, in the U.S. law, there are "access" rights, but not language rights, per se. That is, language is used as a vehicle to access a particular fundamental right, such as voting, facing one's accuser in court, and/or having an interpreter. In statutory law, for instance, national origin (as a legal construct) is a proxy for language.

As I reflect, I can see that we still need to fight against the language-as-problem ideology, but I also see that now more people respect language as a resource and as a right—a human right. It seems that the original tension among the three orientations still exists, but has evolved with the passage of time. Richard's work has had a profound impact, from which so many emergent bilinguals and their families have benefitted. I so remember the day when we didn't dare hope for language to be perceived as a resource or a right.

In what follows, we will share not only my experiences/perspectives but also those of former students who have come to know Richard's work from me and have moved on to make it their own.

Richard's Legacy: The Ripple Effect

Richard's legacy continues to ripple through the lives of many, and in this article we will share our own journeys. Our goal is to demonstrate how his work moved us into deeper levels of

Lev Vygotsky's work, a theoretically applied level that changed the way many people think about language. From Ruiz's three orientations for language planning, we moved to see teaching initially about language and language orientations as an act of mentoring. We did not realize this for many years while it was happening; it is only by looking back on the legacy, and our own acts of learning, and then teaching about learning, that we now see the effect of the ripple from Joan to Le, to Chyllis, to Ruthie, and to Dawn.

This paper will link the three orientations (language-as-problem; language as-right; language-as-resource) to the notion of teaching as mentoring, also grounded in Vygotsky's legacy. Mentoring, for us, is never a one-way street; as in the dialectical nature of Vygotsky's construct of the Zone of Proximal Development, the work between student and more experienced other, is always reciprocal, dynamic, ongoing, and transformative for the mentor and the mentee. For our purposes here, we imagine this relationship as a ripple from distant mentors such as Vygotsky and Richard Ruíz, whose work touched each of us in different ways (Figure 2).
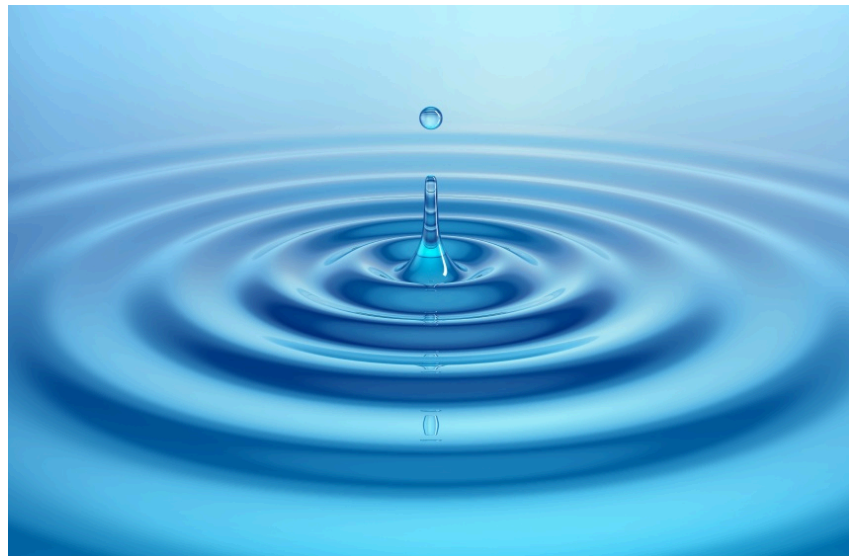

Figure 2: Mentoring relationship as a ripple.
Ripple Image retrieved from, Ripple 856x561px

Connecting the Three Social Orientations and the Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). When we connect the three orientations with the ZPD, the personal development within the zone has the potential to shrink and expand with regards to the orientation in language planning. For example, a problem orientation will naturally shrink both what emergent bilinguals can learn on their own, and it can restrict how much they can learn with support and assistance from a teacher/friend because it limits the extent to which learners can interact in meaningful dialogue. Cummins' literacy transfer theory comes into play here. If the native language is a problem (as exhibited in "English only" classroom policies), then impediments are raised that prohibit the transfer of literacy across language domains.

The rights orientation within the ZPD could shrink the Zone in the sense that it could restrict the path to appropriate legal services in language planning. In another sense, a resource orientation widens the path for development. The language itself becomes a form of scaffolding as it represents old information to which new information can grow. With an orientation towards language as resource, the student has more potentials from which to draw when trying to learn new information. Likewise, the teacher has more opportunities to support the student by building associations between old and new information that are necessary for new learning.

Connecting the Three Orientations with Mentoring

In our estimation, the language as problem and language as right orientations do not lend themselves to seeing teacher as mentor. However, a resource orientation connects to mentoring through the realization and validation of a person's inner capital, whether it be social, cultural or

human. The teacher, as mentor, acknowledges and affirms the personal capital of the learners just as a resource orientation towards native language acknowledges and affirms the value of that language as a resource for the one who possesses it.

Also, the mentor-mentee relationship is one of mutual beneficence. In a mentoring relationship, both the mentor and mentee derive value from the mutual and personal interactions. The resource orientation toward language establishes this same relationship in the classroom between the teacher and the emergent bilingual student. It positions the student in the situation of being a benefit to the class. The relationships are both reciprocally advantageous. However, it needs to be made clear that this mutuality is best understood in a Freirean, non-exploitative classroom context in which the power dynamics between teacher/student are not authoritative.

Meet the Mentees

In this section you will meet Le and Chyllis, who did their masters' work with me in California and then completed their doctorates and moved into the professorate, both at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV); Ruthie, a colleague from South Dakota, who is now working on her doctorate, and, finally my daughter, Dawn, who teaches at a community college in Santa Fé, New Mexico.

Looking back: Le shares.

I first encountered the Spanish language in homework sessions with my older brother as he was taking Spanish as a foreign language in high school. That fostered my interest in languages, and I became a student of Spanish and then French during my high school days. I followed in the footsteps of my beloved high school Spanish teacher, and I began my educational career teaching high school students Spanish. At the time, I could not imagine speaking Spanish as anything but a resource because that is how my high school Spanish teacher related it to us. I

dutifully carried on her legacy by encouraging students in my classes to see themselves as using language as a tool for communication with others, even though in rural Indiana, it was not entirely clear when we would all need to use other languages.

Fast forward a decade or so to my return to education after a move to California, where Spanish speaking was certainly more in use in the Central Valley than I had ever witnessed it in Indiana. I was returning to education after a spell in business, and I was sitting in Joan's class, listening to her talk with us about language from the perspective of various scholars. For example:

- Lev Vygotsky: Thinking and Speaking
  - Language as a tool to build cognition made sense to me, given my earlier stint teaching Spanish.
- Richard Ruíz: Three Orientations
  - Language had been approached previously as a problem, heritage language was viewed as a right by those in another country where their language may not be the "norm," and Ruíz proposed considering language-as-resource for more authentic interactions.
- Luis Moll: Funds of Knowledge
  - Working class Latino students have specialized talent and knowledge, and through their community networking, those funds of knowledge of the collective are available for pedagogical use in the classroom.

Each of these scholars brought language into focus for me, and their work pushed my understanding in new and complex ways.

I made the connection between Vygotsky's work as Joan relayed it: "Kids need to talk, using their language, in order to get smarter," with the focus being on bilingual education. I learned about heritage language: "… *one not spoken by the dominant culture but is spoken in the family or associated with the heritage culture"* (Krashen, Tse, & McQuillan, 1998, p. 3). More importantly, from Richard's work, I learned why heritage language was an important resource for us to value and to promote with students who were also learning to speak English in our classrooms.

For example, I experienced for myself the value of language as resource just the semester before when I was hired as a substitute Spanish teacher with a classroom of "first year" students that consisted of one third Latino students with high-level oral Spanish skills, and two thirds Anglo students who were learning Spanish for the first time. I pulled the Latino students into a small group, and together we rewrote the outdated Spanish textbook; they then became peer tutors, working with me to teach Spanish to the other students.

This was my attempt as a classroom teacher to put into practice what I had read about peer tutoring and reciprocal teaching, and it worked. However, it wasn't until the next semester, when Joan taught us about Vygotsky and bilingual education, that I fully realized why the enactment of Richard's work in that classroom worked for me as a teacher and for the students who worked together enacting Spanish language as a resource for and with each other. In this practice, the Spanish-speaking students took a co-teaching role in the class with the teacher, and in becoming peer tutors, they enhanced their own heritage-language learning. The language resource of Spanish-speaking students as peer tutors was a benefit that worked both ways, as the Latino students gained in their cultural and language capital, and the class became a more natural language experience for all of the students in the classroom.

Reading Richard's work helped me to understand what I witnessed as a teacher—and isn't that what teacher education and professional development is about? As teachers, we sense when a lesson is going well and when one doesn't quite hit the mark. We "know what works" when we experience it, but how much better for us and for our students when we understand the theoretical basis for what we are experiencing? That is what my master's coursework did for me as an educator. Reading Vygotsky, Ruíz, Moll, and dozens of others in Joan's classes opened a new vision of the world of languages, literacies, cognitive processes, and critical pedagogy. Their Ruíz work instilled an understanding of the political, theoretical, and pedagogical aspects of language use. Our work continues to promote the recognition of valuing the culture and languages that all of our students bring to us in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Looking back: Chyllis shares.

As a reading specialist in a rural middle school, I returned to college to complete my master's degree in Reading Education. Little did I know that my post-secondary education would offer a lot more than reading instruction; rather, it would provide lifelong lessons about teaching language, about literacy development, and about teaching pedagogy. It was during the required courses for my master's degree that I first meet Dr. Joan Wink. I recall sitting in a large lecture hall with a group of teachers, listening to this very energetic, vibrant, and, some might say, *crazy* professor talk about building a community of learners, about Vygotsky and scaffolding, and about the development of diverse teachers and learners. I vividly recall that I was intrigued by her spirit and passion for teaching. Once class had concluded, I made my way down to the front to meet Dr. Wink and to ask her a few questions. To my surprise, it was actually Dr. Wink who had questions for me: "Who are you, and how long have you been in the program?"

"Ummm, I am just taking classes," I hesitantly responded.

"What?" Joan shrieked, while she grabbed my hand and walked me across campus. We walked into the College of Education office, and she said, "Admit her," and turning toward me, she continued, "Once you are finished here, come by my office." Although it was unclear to me at the moment, this action of holding my hand and guiding me is a great example of how Joan became my proximal mentor.

Fortunately for me, our interaction and relation did not end there; it was through her teachings, classes, and guidance that I gained valuable knowledge about teaching diverse learners. Throughout my teaching experiences, Joan's mentoring did not waver; however, the type of mentor evolved from my proximal mentor to my distant mentor.

Although I was a reading specialist, my role as a reading teacher was not limited to reading instruction—that was just the tip of the iceberg. As the reading specialist, at a rural middle school, I had to find current, relevant, and engaging materials to help my students build and develop their literacy skills. No matter whether it was reading and writing or listening and language, all literacy skills were incorporated in my classroom.

It was not until I transferred to a different school that I was able to truly understand and apply the teachings from Joan's courses and the readings of Richard Ruíz, Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotsky, Jim Cummins, and lots of David and Yvonne Freeman. In my new teaching assignment, I again was the reading teacher, but I quickly learned that many of my students were emergent bilinguals. They were very bright and were developing proficiency in English. As their teacher, I struggled to teach the prescribed reading program, while also trying to keep the students engaged in the curriculum. The reading program did not fit the class of students who represented several different languages: Russian, Hmong, Portuguese, and Spanish. Critical pedagogy was foundational in working with these students. As a class of learners (myself

included), we worked to gain knowledge through literacy, literature, our cultures, and our languages.

One of my most memorable experiences with this class was developing my love for language. As my students developed their English skills, I strove to develop my skills in both Spanish and Russian. Each day that we worked on new words and vocabulary that we found in our readings, I also gained new words; the students translated the words into Spanish and Russian and placed them on a card to help them learn English. We spent time during our breaks and lunches going through the cards, developing stories, and dialoguing. Our instruction was achieved, but through our informal interactions, the students and I learned so much more.

Now, as I contribute to this piece, currently in my third year as a junior faculty member, I can see the significance of working with teachers and providing skills and strategies for them to use with all of their students; however, I also need to stress the importance of quality mentoring. Joan is the one who helped me broaden my experiences with educational knowledge, much as Richard Ruiz broadened Joan's experience. This type of mentoring relationship directly connects to the legacy of Richard Ruíz, whom I first met through Joan.

Looking back: Ruthie shares.

When Joan Wink first introduced me to Richard Ruíz's framework of language-as-problem, language-as-right, language-as-resource, we were working together at in-service teacher professional development. To clarify, this was a job that she had recommended me for based on a presentation that I gave at a conference. She was in the audience, along with three other people. Since that session, she has spent, and still spends, a great deal of time mentoring me, encouraging me, and developing my theoretical foundation and praxis. Richard Ruíz's work has been a significant aspect of her mentoring.

I was preparing to teach a course about developing literacy skills with emergent bilingual students when Joan first told me that I needed to read the work of Ruíz. The course had very practical objectives, but I believed that it was important to use the first session to lay a critical, ideological foundation, which would guide the rest of the material to be discussed throughout the course. The first class centered around the concept of subtractive bilingualism. Ruíz's work was key in this discussion, as it helped the teachers who were participating to inductively move to the key question: "What is the status of heritage languages in your classrooms?"

Many of the teachers had never been exposed to critical pedagogy. They were expecting to learn new strategies for the classroom and maybe some reading theory. They were initially shocked by and slightly resistant to the critical focus of the class. As the first discussion developed, however, the teachers warmed to the concepts.

And, as the course progressed, the question of the status of heritage language kept emerging in the teachers' explorations of new teaching strategies for emergent bilinguals. In a context without bilingual-education options, the teachers in that course began to actively seek out Spanish-medium resources for their students, creating a space for literacy skills in students' heritage language in their classrooms. This will always be, for me, the most significant aspect of Ruíz's work. It made a difference for the emergent bilingual students sitting in the classrooms of those teachers.

As I reflect on that session in this tribute to Richard Ruíz, I am amazed again, at the profound simplicity of his orientations toward language-as-problem, language-as-right, language-as-resource. In that classroom on that day, this taxonomy established a frame that guided the participants' dialog and reflective self-evaluation of prevalent discourses. As a result, it exposed the hegemonic discourse of English in a very practical way, as every teacher realized

how natural it is for native English speakers to use words such as "language barrier" and the ideological problems with this language.

With Joan Wink as a mentor, I was not allowed to become complacent about the status quo of my own educational development. She encouraged me to pursue a Ph.D. and transform an intuitive passion for social justice into sound scholarship. Doing this has led me to pursue a degree in sociology with a natural focus on sociolinguistics. Again, Richard Ruíz's work has been meaningful in my scholarly endeavors.

The question of language status, that became the focal point of teachers enrolled in a university literacy course, remains a core component to my current research. Looking at the contemporary United States of America with a sociological imagination highlights power inequalities and the hegemony of English. Clearly, English is given primacy in the current educational system, and, all too often, the overwhelming purpose of public education is to teach English as an end in itself. Knowledge is not as valuable if that knowledge is articulated in another language (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2008). This brings us to the necessity of the language-as-resource paradigm.

In *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Politics of Language (*2008), Stephen May likens Ruíz's argument to Bourdieu's notion of habitus and linguistic capital. Viewing language as a resource turns it into a form of cultural capital that can be used, like all capitals, to access various resources. When a multiplicity of languages is conceptualized as valuable capital, more resources will be open to those who possess the capital. Consequently, plurality will then become more than ideology; it will translate into tangible access to knowledge and other public resources.

These thoughts have deeply shaped my research agenda. I am very thankful to Joan's mentoring and to her presentation of Ruíz's paradigm. They have influenced the development of my career as well as my view of the world.

Looking back: Dawn shares.

While I didn't realize it at the time, throughout my childhood I was immersed in the undercurrent of ideas of language-as-problem, language-as-right, language-as-resource. Growing up on a cattle ranch along the San Pedro River in southeastern Arizona, the mingling of Spanish and English was a normal part of life and not something I gave much attention to during those years. Different languages took on prominence, depending on where we were and who we were with—when we were in Tucson, talking with our English-speaking friends, we spoke only English. When we were visiting Mom's friend, Juanita, English and Spanish mixed and mingled together to create a complementary whole. When Mom spoke with Joel, who was originally from Mexico and who worked on the ranch, they spoke only Spanish.

Interactions in stores and at school were mostly in English. The languages of conversations at social gatherings changed, depending on which group we happened to be closest to at that moment. Gathered around bonfires down the river, as we called the rural area along the San Pedro River where we ranched, songs were sung in English and Spanish. When I went to see Felipa and Armando (at the ranch foreman's home), Felipa spoke only Spanish, and I let the language flow around me as I ate her tortillas right off the *comal*. All I knew was that the language spoken depended on the context and with whom one was conversing, and one adjusted accordingly.

It wasn't until much later that I experienced language-as-problem. After a year in high school as an exchange student in Chihuahua, Mexico, two more exchange stints in Spain and

Germany, and an undergraduate degree in International Relations, I was hired to teach all-day

Kindergarten to 35 Spanish-dominant students in the Central Valley of California. I was to start a

bilingual program. The majority of my students' parents were farm workers in the agricultural

fields and farms of the Valley. I'd gone to live in Mexico, Spain, and Germany to acquire more

languages. As a speaker of the dominant language in the U.S., my own multilingualism had been

something sought after and admired.

I remember my shock the first week, after another teacher heard me speaking only

Spanish with my students, to be told, "Don't speak Spanish with them. They have to learn

English. This is America." I won't digress into all of the levels of wrong with these statements

and will focus on my first lived experience with language-as-problem. I became aware of the

hierarchy of languages in our society. If you are a native English-speaking member of the

dominant culture, it's admirable to speak other languages. If you are a member of a language

minority within a country, the other languages you speak are a detriment to society.

During my time teaching Kindergarten, I studied for my Bilingual Teaching Certificate at

night with Dr. Joan Wink, or, as I like to call her, Mom. My studies in International Relations

had focused on the importance of multilingualism, the necessity of multicultural understanding,

and the historical and political events that provide the context of peace and war around the

world. In my classes with Mom and other professors, I explored for the first time the hierarchy of

languages and heritage language. I learned that the most important aspect of acquiring additional

languages is having high levels of fluency and developing literacy in one's primary language

first. Thus, my own journey in learning Spanish and German, created on a solid foundation of

English literacy.

Ruíz's ideas of language-as-right were never abstract for me. This wasn't a theoretical idea that was discussed and written about in books–it was the experiences of my five-year-olds and their families every day. In my experience, language-as-right shone on their faces—Enrique, Natalia, Guadalupe, José, Victoria …. Language-as-right was the look on my students' faces as we wrote, laughed, read aloud, and shared in Spanish, their glee of doing homework with their families based on oral history told to them by their parents or grandparents. Language-as-right was the injustice of a school whose majority population was Spanish-speaking, and yet no one in the school office spoke Spanish, leaving parents uninformed and uncomfortable when they went to the office.

My students' parents didn't want to come to school, and who could blame them? So, I went to them. One day a week, I went to one of my students' homes, *a tomar un cafecito y platicar con sus familias.* These lived experiences during those years brought the visceral experience of language-as-right home to me every day.

Throughout those years, Mom and I talked and talked about what I was experiencing, and she gave me book after book that articulated these experiences and informed my understandings. These reflections taught me about what I could do to best serve not only my students and their families, but also the national and international conversations around these ideas. When I began working with adults, teaching teachers about language acquisition and bilingual education, language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource took on new meanings yet again. Adults responded to each of these ideas through their own lenses of assumptions and often in visceral ways on our mutual journey to understanding. It was during those years of teaching in the Central Valley that Mom and I began conversations that have continued throughout the past two decades.

Conversations that often started with, "Mom, so this happened …" and I would go on to describe what I had experienced around language …and she'd give me another book. Stacks of books by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Robert Phillipson, Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotsky, Luís Moll, James Crawford, Jim Cummins, Stephen Krashen, David and Yvonne Freeman, and so many more grew around my home. The books I received reflect the journey of ideas about language, as well as those about our own family.

Over time, photos of my three children began to appear taped to the front of her texts, "A sure way for students to return my books to me," Mom said. The toddler smiles of my now young-adult children now grin and peek out from ideas about linguistic imperialism, linguistic genocide, and language acquisition methodologies, as the photos remain taped to the front of Mom's books. It's a great combination—it reminds me of what this is all really about; it is only in hindsight that I see these conversations and discussions as reflections of Mom's mentors. For me, it has always just been talking with my mom.

In these previous stories, each has shared their recollections and connections to Richard through Joan's mentoring. In what follows we expand on the notion of mentoring and what it means to take on the persona of mentor in relation to others.

Mentoring

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is reciprocal and dynamic. It is a ripple of information, access, and opportunity. Mentoring involves an apprenticeship and a collaborative ongoing process. Mentoring is like two rivers when they join together to create a confluence of the ever-moving potential sources relating to self, others, and serendipity. Mentoring is never linear or leading only from the mentor to the mentee (Wink & Putney, 2002/2013) as it is reciprocal.

Mentoring is authentic, in that the teacher does not adopt the role of mentor. Rather the teacher challenges the student's creative freedom, thereby stimulating the construction of the student's autonomy. It is always a liberatory task, which transcends the instructive task. The primary focus of mentoring is on the total autonomy, freedom, and development of the mentee (Freire, 1997).

Richard Ruíz's three orientations pulled us forward collaboratively to establish connections among us that are related to how we view and use language in our own educational spaces, first as graduate students, and later in our right as teacher educators. In addition, working through the constructs related to heritage language and language as both tool and resource led us to new levels of mentoring in many directions, and the three orientations made us reach back to our distant mentor, Vygotsky.

What is a proximal mentor?

A proximal mentor has been defined by Gunn (2008) as "someone who was slightly more advanced, or knowledgeable, than the novice learner and was invested in the novice's learning needs" (p. 44). While this study was conducted with advanced graduate students who were mentoring incoming graduate students, this notion could apply to peers in other situations as well. As further noted by Gunn (2008), on a continuum, the novice is at one end, the distant mentor at the other end, with the proximal mentor at varying positions in between.

The supposition is that the proximal mentor has disciplinary knowledge above the level of the novice but perhaps not yet at the level of the distant mentor. The findings from this study suggest that proximal mentors (advanced doctoral students) helped novice students increase understanding through the collaborations between the novice students and their proximal mentors. The proximal mentors had recent understandings of content in the discipline and were

thus able to offer additional explanations of the content in meaningful ways beyond the readings through classroom small-group interactions and study groups. Not only did the novice students improve their knowledge of the topics of discussion, but the study also found that the proximal mentors believed that their understanding of the topics improved with their mentoring activities.

In our own work, we found Gunn's notion of the continuum to be useful, yet in our representation of the continuum, we have added the position of "less distant mentor," which will become more evident as we expand on this concept in our tribute to Richard Ruíz.

In our own work with proximal and distant mentors, we have come to view the proximal mentor in this way (Figure 3):
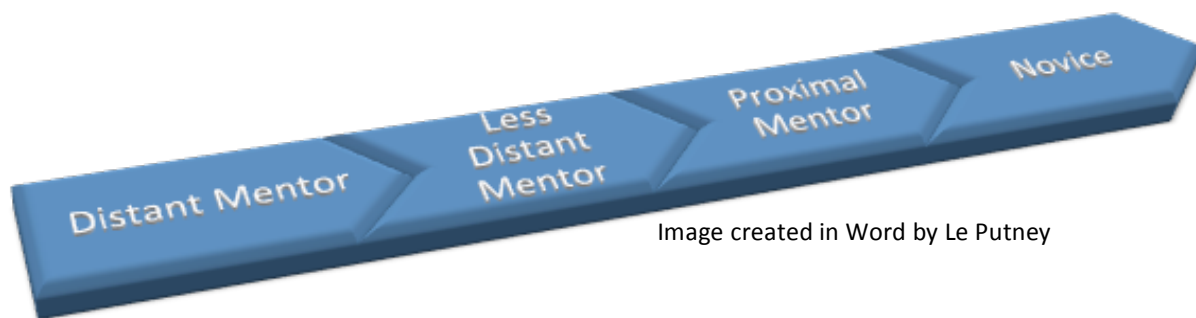

Image created in Word by Le Putney

Figure 3: The relationship of distant mentor to novice.

Proximal mentors are closer to the work that we do on a daily basis in our academic lives: They are "in the weeds with us." The proximal mentors have a micro view, noting the details of our work and our development. They can offer assistance relative to the details of our work by asking probing questions about teaching and learning, and about the constructs we are struggling to understand. They assist us in going into more depth due to their closer familiarity with our professional development and academic work.

What is a distant mentor?

We have often referred to Vygotsky as our distant mentor because his work, conceived decades ago, continues to contribute to our own present and future work in much the same way that Richard's three orientations have moved us in our work with emergent bilinguals and their classroom teachers. As we noted earlier about the continuum, we are placing ourselves on one end with Vygotsky in the furthest position at the opposite end. This places the more recent, albeit distant work, of those who have extended and expanded upon Vygotsky closer to us on the continuum, yet still beyond the proximal mentor position. Therefore, we see Richard and other scholars, such as Luis Moll, closer to us as less distant mentors because their work is closer to us in time and extends the work of the more distant Vygotsky.
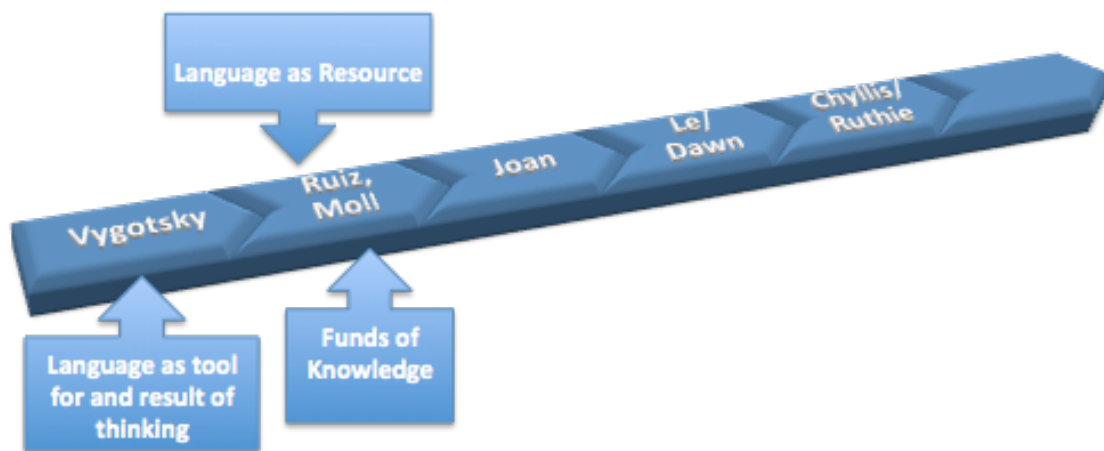

Figure 4: Distant mentors and their roles.   Image created in Word by Le Putney

The work of the distant mentors (Figure 4) contributes in ways different from the proximal mentors as follows: The distant mentors offer a broader perspective and a more macro view of the constructs with which we grapple. As we read and discuss their work, we move back and forth between our own writing, and what has been put in the intersubjective spaces for us to ponder. Distant mentors can offer assistance relative to our own professional work. However, by

nature of their position on the continuum, they will be less involved in the details of our work. The thinking and writing from our distant mentors pushes us to ask probing questions about the constructs we are studying. Reading and reflecting upon their work may require us to engage in additional reflection about our own work, relative to their theoretical stance, so that our own work becomes more theoretically grounded.

Intersubjectivity is the collective history and mutual meanings shared by a group of people (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 128).

We recognize that Richard's legacy mentored us like Vygotsky's distant mentoring. His ideas about the three orientations, which led us to consider language as a resource, are part of what binds us together now in our mentoring of each other. We continue to grapple with the ideas from our less distant and distant mentors as we continue to mentor each other and beyond. In other words, part of our mentoring relationship is related to the ideas that we share, and in sharing those ideas, we build and rebuild the ideas, making personal sense, and we go off on our own and come back together to share in new and different ways.

We are working in capacities with language-minority students and want to use the best approach, so we rely on the distant mentors for the theoretical underpinnings as a resource. We have Vygotsky, Ruíz, Moll, and scholars before us who have helped us craft our theoretical sense to guide us in our practice. If we didn't have this, imagine where we would be. It is what we have learned through their work that has made us better at our practice. This is part of the ripple effect: Our mentors keep moving us along our own development path.

When we think of how we have approached our own work, it is an expansion and extension of others' work that helps us to keep growing on our own. As we continue to revisit

works, we continue to grow, and when we share with each other, we are becoming proximal mentors for each other in our own right.

Mentoring Continues in New Ways

The notion of mentoring is not only a construct to be studied but also becomes a personal reality as we work with proximal and distant mentors throughout our careers. We weave in and out of these relationships as we reflect on our current work in relation to our past experiential learning. In what follows, Chyllis shares an autobiographical ethnographic case study about mentoring, which she is experiencing as an assistant professor.

Mentoring and mentorship is an important component that is used to support the transition from graduate student to junior faculty. Supported by the research of Borders et al. (2011), it is clear junior faculty benefit from mentoring relationships that foster guidance for the "unwritten rules that exist in the world of academia" (Miller & Noland, 2003, p. 84). While experts in other specialties have developed and assessed the support of mentoring junior faculty, specifically during the transition from graduate school to academic employment, few studies analyze the stress, demands, and expectations of the new career in education. To address this gap, this autobiographical case study describes the experience of a newly hired junior faculty through her first year of academia with the support and guidance of her mentors and senior faculty as an example of mentoring, both proximal and distant.

With an on-going support system provided through mentoring, Chyllis was engaged in her academic work through her mentors: a retired Emerita professor *distant mentor*; a current department head *proximal mentor*, and her dissertation chair and associate professor *previously proximal, now distant mentor*. Both the mentee and the mentors have PHD degrees, and with research interests in bilingual education, preservice and inservice teacher preparation. While they

have common interests and some mutual disciplinary foundations, they have differing experiences in their educational contexts at differing universities.

As an on-going autobiographic case study, Chyllis demonstrates how the mentors, at different times and in different ways, assumed varied roles that provided her support, knowledge, scaffolding, and role modeling. This role modeling occurred, not only for the teaching responsibilities, but also specifically related to research and scholarship, as well as learning to juggle and maintain normalcy in the academic setting. Opportunities for providing such mentoring characteristics occurred through formal and informal settings, including face-to-face weekly meetings, and weekly or bi-weekly email, text messaging, and SKYPE meetings. Through the data analysis, we uncovered manifest meanings that related more to career choices: offering advice about negotiating the initial aspects of the job, assistance with handling new courses, and collaboration on research efforts. The latent, or underlying meanings, related more to the psychological realm: providing a sounding board, offering questions that led to better understanding of the new cultural setting, offering advice about establishing relationships on the new job, and generally being able to help navigate the complexities of changing one's identity from graduate student to assistant professor.

These mentoring relationships occurred in different environments, and Chyllis primarily focused on the outcomes for herself as novice faculty member who benefited greatly as she gained from the opportunities and knowledge of her predecessors. At the same time, as noted by John-Steiner (1997), this process of mentoring was reciprocally favorable for the mentors as well.

Critiques of the Three Orientations and New Responses

When Ruíz (1988) describes his language planning typology as meta-theory, "orientation[s] as ... a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society" (p. 4), he is describing a new ontology of language in general and multilingualism, specifically. The focus on an ontological perspective of language is vital, as all three arguments against the typology take place at the pragmatic level. Ricento (2005) and Petrovic (2010) argue that the "resource" language had been co-opted by neoliberals to benefit the majority and maintain hegemonies.

Another criticism of the work comes in the book, *Language: A Right and a Resource,* by Kontra, Philipson, Skutnabb-Kangas, and Várad (1999), who also argued with Ruíz pragmatically, but for these authors, the problem with the taxonomy is the tension between practically promoting the place of heritage languages while removing rights language from discourse. Again, this is not a conceptual break with Ruíz; rather, it is a concern with application and implementation of the typology. To answer all of these arguments, it is important to return to Ruíz's presentation of the taxonomy as *dispositions* toward language from a transformative, ontological perspective. With this framework, the question becomes, "What is the nature of attitudes toward heritage language in this policy?" And, remembering Ricento's (2005) critique, when specifically looking at the resource discourse of a policy, we must ask, "[R]esources for whom? For what purpose or what end?" (p. 364).

If Ruíz's taxonomy sensitizes us to the necessary orientations toward multilingualism, the critics alert us to potential pitfalls of language orientations in policy. Taken together, these become a necessary step in understanding the implications of language policies in the U.S.A. and around the world. In January of 2015, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Justice

Department issued a joint "Dear Colleague" policy letter concerning "English Language

Learners and Limited English Proficient Parents." Looking at the discourse of the policy in terms

of language-as-problem, right, or resource highlights problematic language within the policy. For

example, the letter states that "Title VI prohibition on national origin discrimination requires

SEAs and school districts to take 'affirmative steps' to address *language barriers* so that EL

students may participate meaningfully in schools' educational programs." Clearly, this presents

heritage language in terms of problem, as it was reflected in the historical period of 1974 Equal

Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA), when emergent bilinguals were considered the

pejorative language of *limited English proficient*.

A complete description of the "Dear Colleague" policy letter is not appropriate for this

article. In this case, it is used to highlight the importance and relevance of Ruíz's work now in

the political and educational milieu of 2015. More than 30 years after they were first published,

Richard Ruíz's orientations remind us to be reflective and critical of whether heritage languages

are framed as problems, rights, or resources. Remembering these orientations sensitizes us to

how heritage languages are presented in our policies, our classrooms, and our own discourses.

The reproduction of social and racial inequalities will continue in a context where

heritage languages are viewed as problems and barriers to learning. While it is important to

remember heritage language as a basic human right, this orientation is not sufficient to push

policy toward transformation. We must advocate for and utilize discourses that present the

heritage languages as resources that are equal to English in their ability to be exchanged for

goods and services. While this is a dream, it is one to which we must aspire. Thank you, Richard

Ruíz, for teaching this to all of us.

Connecting Heritage Languages with the Three Orientations

The term, heritage, as in heritage languages was challenged by Ruíz, as he feared that bilingual teachers might proudly claim to be using the heritage language without thinking deeply about the implications of the concept. His concern was that heritage could have multiple meanings. Whose heritage? The heritage of Spain or the heritage of *Nana* and *Tata de México?* Richard encouraged us to assure that language, including translanguaging practices *de niños de México o la frontera,* was honored and valued. As shall be evident in the following, we heard clearly and lived passionately that which Richard was teaching. *!Qué sí, el idioma de los niños y sus familias tiene el valor más fuerte!*

The three orientations are not only theoretical constructs; they are also valuable when planning language policies to enrich the lives of heritage-language speakers.

A heritage language is the language of the heart. It is the language spoken between parent and child to express love. It is the language of childhood and family stories. Each person carries within all of the norms, stories, politics, spirituality, expectations and history of our heritage language. Experiences feel more real. For example, often Holocaust survivors cannot describe their experiences in the heritage language. The pain is too intense. They can describe these horrors only in their second or third languages. These languages, learned later, provide the necessary distance to make the words utterable. Our heritage language with all that it encompasses is a primary lens through which we experience the world. (Wink & Wink, 2004, p. 124)

A heritage language is the language spoken in the family or heritage culture but not spoken by the dominant culture. When we deny people the right to speak and develop their heritage language, we deny access to dynamic relationships between thought, speech, and

experience. We deny them their basic human right to speak their mother tongue. When development of the heritage language is prohibited, family ties, cultural and historical traditions and norms, and expressions of love are prohibited as well.

Language policymakers' assumptions about language, whether as problem, right, or resource drives language policy in the United States and around the world. Heritage language instruction strives to promote and maintain the heritage language and the heritage culture. Both language and culture are honored and viewed as enrichments to the student, school, community, and the world. The intimate and sensitive nature of the relationship with one's heritage culture is the lens through which the rest of the program is created and maintained.

Teachers reflect critically on their own assumptions and what they bring to their students and the classroom. Classrooms are noisy in two or more languages. Within sound heritage language instruction and language policies, parents, teachers, students, administrators, and the community enjoy collaborative relationships. Coercive relations of power (Cummins, 1994) assume an finite amount of power. It assumes that for someone to 'possess' power, it must be subtracted from somebody else. This assumption often drives the politics and pedagogy in schools. Collaborative relations of power view power as infinite and dynamic. When people work together collaboratively, power and energy mutually enrich and strengthen the other.

To look only at language programs and policies in isolation is to deny the social, cultural, historical, and political context of each. This hierarchy of languages is found throughout the world: Japanese and Korean; Turkish and Kurdish; English and Spanish; Spanish and Catalán; and Swedish and Finnish. The answer lies in history and the continuing effects of colonization. Or, as a teacher of Lakota said, "What you call colonization, I call genocide."

All of our assumptions follow us—like a shadow, apparent for all to see, even if we don't recognize it in ourselves. In the United States, historically, there is a pattern of marginalization toward Spanish-dominant students. Even a good bilingual program often cannot overcome the consequences of teachers' own assumptions. For example, Mónica was a student in a highly enriched dual-language program for majority and minority students. She had been in the program since Kindergarten. Her parents were migrant farm laborers who decided to settle in the university town for their children's education in this immersion program. In fourth grade, Mónica was not succeeding in school. At that time, I (Dawn) was teaching in this immersion program and frequently heard her teacher speak disparagingly in the teacher's' lounge about how lazy and unmotivated Mónica was. Mónica's experience was quite different. I was visiting with her one time in my classroom and asked how school was going. "*Las maestros piensan que los mexicanos somos sucios*" [The teachers think that we Mexicans are dirty] (Wink & Wink, 2004, p. 112), which provides a jarring example of how even children internalize language as a problem.

In honor of Richard Ruíz's contributions to the fields of language planning, multilingual education, and critical pedagogy, we embrace the dynamics he *Named* so many years ago: language-as-problem, language-as-resource, language-as-right.

> We cannot *Name* or be *Named* without language. If our vocabulary dwindles to a few shop-worn words, we are setting ourselves up for takeover by a dictator, … when language becomes exhausted, our freedom dwindles—we cannot think; we do not recognize danger; injustice strikes us as no more than the way things are, wrote Madeline L'Engle (1980, p. 39).

Ruíz's ideas keep the visceral power of language alive. "In the beginning was the Word," wrote Sabine Ulibarrí,

> And the Word was made flesh. It was so in the beginning and is so today. The language, The Word, carries within it the history, culture, the traditions, the very life of a people, the flesh. Language is people. We cannot even conceive of a people without a language or a language without a people. The two are one and the same. To know one is to know the other. (Sabine Ulibarri, as cited in Crawford, 2004, p. 13).

The three orientations of Ruíz gave the world the meaning of L'Engle's and Ulibarri notion of *Named*: What was, what is, and what might be. While the specifics of time and place have shifted over the years, these very real dynamics continue to affect the lives of countless millions in the U.S., and around the world every single day.

Richard Ruíz's endless spirit of generosity with students and colleagues, and his groundbreaking work that was based in respect and love, *named* the complex dynamics of language. In so doing, he also opened the door to the potential and power for those of us who work within language policies and planning. He emboldened us to better understand one another—and ourselves. *Mil gracias y gratitud profundo, querido Profe.*

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