The Construction of Biliterate Narratives and Identities Between Parents and Children

Bobbie Kabuto
Queens College, CUNY

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Abstract

This article highlights two bilingual families who participated in a larger study titled "Revaluing Readers and Families." Drawing on multiple theoretical perspectives to highlight the experiences of a Greek and English speaking family and a Spanish and English speaking family, this article explores how these two bilingual families created narratives and identities about biliteracy based on their perceptions of their children's bilingual reading abilities. Through a comparative analysis of multiple data sources that includes ethnographic observations, interview data, and miscue analysis data, this article investigates how the families co-constructed their children's biliterate identities by acting and reacting to their children's oral reading abilities in two languages. Instead of viewing biliteracy as an all-or-nothing enactment, the findings suggest that families generate narratives of biliteracy that allow them to define and defend their children's biliterate identities and abilities. The implications of this research for educational settings are also discussed.

Author Biography

Bobbie Kabuto, Queens College, CUNY

Bobbie Kabuto, Ph.D., is Associate Professor at Queens College, City University of New York, where she teaches courses in the areas of early language and literacy, bilingualism and biliteracy, and language and literacy in the elementary years. Her research interests include reading and writing in multiple languages, early bi/literacy, socially constructed identities, and language ideologies. She currently works with families of struggling beginning readers and writers. Her research examines the ways in which schooling discourses frame socially constructed identities and how or why families support or challenge these identities in the home.
Parents should exercise control over their children but they should not be a terror to them. Even teachers should not be a terror to their students. If children are found disobedient and indiscipline they should be corrected only gradually. If parents are very strict with them, scolding them, beating them, they may try to escape from the home atmosphere. Children's psychology is very difficult to understand. They may be suddenly moody, suddenly jovial. Only tactful dealing with the children will reform and discipline them. Image Source: freeeducationideas.com.