Cultural Autonomy and Cognitive Autonomy: Teacher Positioning and Motivational Practices for Emergent Bilinguals

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Abstract
The current study examined 10 urban middle-school teachers' positioning and autonomy supportive practices for emergent bilinguals in reading-intervention classrooms. Our findings showed that the teachers' social and cultural positioning of their students, analyzed from a critical race theoretical framework, was associated with their different types of practices to support the autonomy of their students, who were mostly emergent bilinguals. The teachers' positioning of themselves and their students as cultural beings by rejecting dominant narratives was associated with their provision of autonomy support on managerial and cognitive levels that were frequently combined with cultural levels of autonomy support and cultural relevance. The findings indicate that we need to pay critical attention to the positioning of teachers in the classroom in order better understand their practices to motivate and engage emergent bilinguals in social, cultural, and political contexts.
Keywords. Urban Middle-School Teachers; Identity Positioning; Critical Race Theory; Emergent Bilinguals; Autonomy Supportive Practices; Reading-Intervention Classroom

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Table Summary of Findings

	Positioning of Students	Positioning of Oneself	Autonomy Supportive Practices for Emergent Bilinguals
Culturally and Cognitively Autonomy Supportive (Pattern 1)	- Students' systemically underrepresented cultural or linguistic backgrounds were considered assets and to be voiced (culturally powerful) - Students positioned as capable to teach their underrepresented cultural and linguistic assets to their teachers and peers (interpersonally powerful)	- Teachers positioned themselves in their cultural, linguistic, or racial contexts - Teachers positioned themselves as facilitators and motivators who have flexibility	- Supported students' autonomy to choose words to work with, book to read, or research questions; Supported students' co-construction in class objectives or class rules - Supported students' autonomy to think, share, and construct and defend own meanings, by being dialogic and questioning - Nurturing competence, by positive feedback and recognition
	- Students and teachers connected by intentionally learning and sharing each other's cultural linguistic backgrounds; Initiated multicultural and/or multilingual community		*The practices above were frequently combined with:* - Supported cultural autonomy by asking for voicing underrepresented linguistic or cultural assets - Supported cultural relevance by modifying curriculum responding to students' cultural assets
Cognitively, but *Not* Culturally, Autonomy Supportive (Pattern 2)	- Students' underrepresented cultural or linguistic backgrounds were not recognized (culturally not recognized) - Students were views based on individual assets and positioned as collaborator capable of learning, improvement, growth (interpersonally powerful)	- Teacher positioned herself in the absence of cultural, linguistic, or racial contexts - Teacher positioned as a role model, facilitator, and multidimensional supporter having low authority	- Constantly supported students' co-construction in class objectives or class rules; Supported students' autonomy to choose words to work with - Constantly supported students' autonomy to think, share, and construct and defend own meanings, by being dialogic and questioning - Constantly nurturing competence, through positive feedback and compliments on wide ranges of participation
	- Students and teachers connected through psychologically safe and flexible space and through compliments; Students are seen as members of monolingual community		- Limited evidence of supportive of cultural autonomy or cultural relevance, although curriculum was academically relevant

Less Cognitively, and *Not* Culturally, Autonomy Supportive (Pattern 3)	- Students positioned in the absence of cultural, linguistic, or racial contexts (culturally not recognized; supported assimilation) - Students positioned as recipients of knowledge (interpersonally less powerful); Students were viewed as capable of developing narrowly defined competence—English proficiency from high-stakes testing performance	- Teacher positioned themselves in the absence of cultural, linguistic, or racial contexts - Teachers positioned themselves as models for English literacy, guides, and facilitators with high authority	- Class objectives and rules were presented by teachers; Limited support of students' autonomy to choose words to work with or book to read - Limited support of students' autonomy to think, share, and construct and defend own meanings; Used modeling with structure and directive scaffolding, for transmission; Used questioning for close-ended answers for narrowly defined competence—correct answers - Nurtured competence, through positive feedback and praise mostly for the narrowly defined competence—correct answers
	- Connected through compliments, safe space and affective filter, sarcasm/humor, singing and dancing, and laughing; Students are seen as members of monolingual, high-stakes testing community		- Limited evidence of supportive of cultural autonomy or cultural relevance; Limited academic relevance to real world, but for performance and testing
Neither Cognitively *nor* Culturally Autonomy Supportive (Pattern 4)	- Students were stereotypically positioned in their cultural or linguistic contexts; Students seen as deficient for not possessing English-speaking middle-class backgrounds (culturally deficient; less powerful) - Students positioned as being "wrong" coming from a "broken home" (interpersonally lacking power); Students positioned less capable because their "deficient background" would hinder their learning to read English	- Teachers positioned as possessing superior cultural and linguistic backgrounds - Teachers positioned as being "right" and as the norms, models, and leaders; Inexperienced in teaching literacy	- Class objectives and rules were rigidly presented by teachers with frequent directive and behaviorally controlling remarks; Minimally supported students' autonomy to choose groups to work with, book to read blindly, or where to sit - Limited support of students' autonomy during cognitive engagement; Used heavy modeling with rigid structure and frequent directive scaffolding; Used questioning for closed-ended answers for narrowly defined competence (for the limited correct answers) - Nurtured narrowly defined competence (for the limited correct answers), through positive feedback and praise
	- Connected through cared correcting; Students are seen as members of monolingual, high-stakes testing community		- Limited support of cultural autonomy or cultural relevance; Limited academic relevance (e.g., use of not relevant examples; simple topics).