

Impact of Ethnic Media on Bilingualism - Biculturalism: A Comparative Study between Chinese and Hispanic College Students

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Abstract

The demographic explosion has dramatically increased the use of ethnic media. This paper, from two mixed-method research projects, reports that Chinese participants habitually spend an average of 6 hours using ethnic media in their daily lives, whereas the majority of Hispanic participants spend 3 hours using ethnic media. Results also indicated how Chinese and Hispanic immigrants are strengthening their heritage languages and cultural values while becoming insiders or old-timers of their host culture through the effective use of ethnic media.

Keywords: Bilingual, Media, Culture

Introduction

The use of ethnic media to influence social identities in a predominantly subtractive bilingualism setting is becoming more and more widespread (Panturu, 2010; Rios & Gaines, 1998; Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005). Ethnic media portrayals and messages shape consumers' perceptions about themselves and their in-group members.

It has by now been thoroughly documented that ethnic media is a tool to support cultural awareness, including an understanding of personal and cultural values as a way of respecting multicultural diversities and cultural knowledge as well as foster ethnic socialization (Fujioka, 2005; Husband, 2005).

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For example, Husband (2005) suggests that “ethnic media are the dominant media for minority ethnic communities, and tends to deny the flow of individuals and creative capacity from the minority media sector into majority systems” (p. 462).

Although some studies focus on ethnic media and minorities, multicultural and multiethnic studies about the functioning and impact of various media outlets are still limited in number. More specifically, little research has been conducted in a predominantly subtractive bilingualism setting on how specific racialized groups perceive the ways they learn in relation to their cross-cultural and language development through the use of ethnic media. In this study, ethnic media means mass media communications consisting of traditional TV, newspapers, magazines and advertisements, digital radio, TV/ newspapers, and the Internet, and so forth. Forms of ethnic media are written, broadcast, and net-based in the native language of a racial/ethnic group (Faber, O’Guinn & Meyer, 1986; Lekgoathi, 2009; Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005; Sreberny, 2005). Ethnic media are tied to a particular minority group and have the capacity to deliver information to that specific targeted audience. The benefits of a wide ethnic media use are well documented.

On the premise that consumers need to be aware of the media outlets which they use (Fujioka, 2005), this research is an in-depth comparison of Chinese and Hispanic college students’ attitudes and perceptions toward ethnic media. Specifically, it aims at exploring the effects of ethnic media in cross-cultural and language learning by answering the following research question: What are Chinese and Hispanic graduate students’ perceptions of ethnic media and how do they impact their biculturalism and bilingualism? The structure of the paper is as follows: A review of the literature on biculturalism and bilingualism is presented prior to the description of data collection and analysis procedures. It will be followed by a discussion on research and implications for teachers. In this article, the terms dominant, majority, mainstream, and host are used interchangeably.

Literature Review

Individuals are often acculturated within two or more cultural and language backgrounds simultaneously (De Korne, 2007; Padilla, 2006). There are widely differing definitions of bilingual/bicultural. Bilingual means an individual “who possesses two social persona and identities. The person is equally at ease with members of either culture and can easily switch from one cultural orientation to the other and does so with native-like facility” (Padilla, 2006, p.471).

Hong (2010) defined bicultural as “individuals who have deeply internalized two cultural schemas. A cultural schema is a set of knowledge about values, norms, and beliefs for a given culture” (p.93). More strictly defined, bicultural individuals are ones not only who are exposed to and internalize two cultures but also ones who speak the two languages associated with the cultures (Luna, Ringberg, & Peracchio, 2008). Biculturalism and bilingualism are tightly intertwined. In Agirdag’s (2010) study, bilinguals are individuals “who are proficient speakers of both their home and host language” (p. 308). Alptekin (2010) argues that “bilinguals are both bilingual *and* bicultural, with varying levels of communicative competence and cultural knowledge of the two languages and cultures merged in their system” (p. 106).

Different studies have contributed to this body of knowledge by suggesting that bicultural/bilingual individuals are able to demonstrate social and cognitive flexibility in cross-cultural settings (Bialystok, Barac, Blaye, & Poulin-Dubois, 2010; Emmorey, Luk, Pyers, & Bialystok, 2008; Padilla, 2006; Tadmor & Tetlock, 2006; Yazıcı, Ilter, & Glover, 2010). For example, in a study of bicultural (Chinese American) and monocultural (Anglo-American) individuals, Benet-Martinez, Lee, & Leu (2006) found that bicultural individuals’ “representations of culture (Chinese or American) would be cognitively more complex than those of monoculturals” (p. 394).

Later, focusing on different bilingual groups instead of on bilinguals in general, Emmorey, Luk, Pyers, & Bialystok (2008) demonstrated insightful findings regarding cognitive control. Results showed that the unimodal bilinguals who are exposed to minority language from birth and acquire English during childhood, show an advantage in cognitive control compared to monolinguals due to their life-long experiences of constantly using and controlling two languages in the same modality.

Recently, Soderman (2010) suggests that being able to speak more than one language fluently helps bilingual children “think and express themselves in more than one language, respect for differences in others, and the confidence to move fluidly from one culture to another” (p.57).

Cross-language research suggests that bilingual individuals have been reported to show an advantage in the realms of various types of memory tasks (Kormi-Nouri et al., 2008), creativity and thinking (Lee & Kim, 2010; Torrance, Wu, Gowan, & Aliotti, 1970), language development (Alptekin, 2010; Blom, 2010; Kuo & Anderson, 2010), communication richness (Alptekin, 2010), multicompetence (Alptekin, 2010), psychological adjustment, (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Harris Bond, 2008), and conflicting problem solving (Bialystok, 2005).

Kormi-Nouri et al. (2008) compared bilingual and monolingual children on episodic and semantic memory tasks. Bilingual children scored higher overall on the scales that showed better memory performance.

Furthermore, Yazici, Ilter, & Glover (2010) concluded that bilingualism helps children “develop stronger self-esteem, self-confidence and cultural and social values, mutual respect for the cultural values of the second language and to play a more positive role in both the home and host community” (p.266). So far, a series of studies indicates the educational benefits of biculturalism and bilingualism. Furthermore, there is a large number of minorities for whom identification and involvement with their ethnic culture takes place through the use of ethnic media. For these reasons, it is important to look closely at effects of ethnic media in minorities.

Media Effects and Minorities

There is apparent significant increase in the use of ethnic media in the United States of America among minority groups. A review of the literature (Ballve, 2004; Chen, Haufler & Taam, 1999; Mastro and Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Noriega, 2004) about the effects of ethnic media revealed the following consistencies: (a) the distribution of knowledge and information and (b) the cultivation of shared perceptions. As distribution tools, ethnic media impart knowledge to minorities who are often missing from the mainstream media. In general, the world of mainstream media does not reflect the diversity that is apparent in the world of linguistically and culturally diverse individuals.

The inclusion of minorities in mainstream media is limited. Ethnic groups in the United States have been underrepresented, over-represented and negatively stereotyped depending on different minority groups (Chen, Haufler & Taam, 1999; Mastro and Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Noriega, 2004; Spoonley & Butcher, 2009).

For example, Ballve (2004) posits that mainstream media does not serve as a catalyst for communication between majority and minority groups “that [are] hungry for inclusion, information and perhaps, above all, a vehicle for self-expression” (p. 25). Mastro & Behm-Morawitz (2005) examined the frequency and quality of Latinos’ portrayals of the 2002 primetime television programs. Results showed that Latinos were under-represented compared to whites and blacks. Also, Latinos’ characteristics were portrayed less favorably than the above groups.

Unquestioningly, mainstream media has centered on the issues dealing with the majority group; there is an urgent need for minority media which can reflect the daily lives and voices of a minority group (Noriega, 2004; Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005; Sreberny, 2005). Ethnic media assists minorities in accelerating their adjustment to the mainstream American culture, locating cultural information, concepts, ideas or individuals who are familiar with the specific ethnic audiences (Caspi & Elias, 2011; Subervi-Velez, 1986). Finally, Sreberny (2005) concluded that ethnic media can “maintain, even re-invoke, attachments to old homes, they can encourage involvements with new homes and can support more ‘transnational’ or diasporic consciousness of multi-sited ethno-cultural attachments” (p.446).

The cultivation theory proposes that heavier TV viewers see more examples of the real world in ways that are consistent with the TV world when compared with lighter TV viewers (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Thus, TV has become an ideal socialization agent for minority groups to depend on, providing knowledge about the real world, contributing to cultural constructions (Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz, 2007) as well as shaping their perception (Lee, Bichard, Irey, Walt, & Carlson, 2009). However, in spite of TV’s potential in cultural learning, ethnic media tends to be used within a limited scope even though some researchers found that there is a connection between ethnic media and cultural production.

Likewise, the social cognitive theory asserts that behaviors, attitudes, and values can be learned through direct and mediated observation (Tan, Fujioka, Bautista, Maldonado, Tan & Wright, 2000).

The aforementioned scholars argued that for some minority groups who have little direct contact with their in-group individuals, television could be a powerful tool to teach minority groups and form subsequent viewer opinions.

In addition, TV content may shape ethnic stereotypes (Lee, Bichard, Irey, Walt, & Carlson, 2009). Ethnic media also has an important role to play in the development of cultural identity and promotion of respect for cultural identity and diversity. For example, Packer & Holt (2004) stated that minority language media is an important tool in maintaining cultural identity, as well as imparting and receiving information and ideas of general interest, and promoting cross-cultural understanding and tolerance, which may benefit the society as a whole.

Although a great deal of attention has been devoted to the study of cultural identity development of minorities (Lee, 2004; Park, 2009), showing that mainstream or ethnic TV was significantly associated with ethnic identity, far less is known about other media outlets. Very few have compared them, and even fewer, if any, have examined audiences' perceptions toward the use of ethnic media in relation to their home-host cultural and language learning. In addition to the above elements, minority groups spend more time using media than the dominant groups (Ward, Day, & Thomas, 2010). Thus, emphasis should be placed on different media contexts in order to understand how minorities interact and respond to ethnic media in the realm of bicultural and bilingual development in a predominantly monolingual society as well as maintain a diverse and pluralistic media (Packer & Holt, 2004).

Methodology

A partial mixed-methods approach was used to collect and analyze the data. Quantitative data was collected through a survey, while qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews. The survey aimed at providing a descriptive analysis of the perceptions of Chinese and Latino graduate students, ethnic media preferences, and the amount of time using ethnic media in South Texas. Additionally, the aim of the interviews was to further explain and supply additional information about what they have learned from the use of ethnic media with respect to their bicultural and bilingual development.

Participants

In study #1 (Feng & Ekiaka, 2010) published by the *Mextesol Journal*, twelve Chinese graduate students agreed to participate. They were originally from Taiwan and were studying at a university in South Texas. Among these participants, three were male and nine were female. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 35. Snowball sampling strategy was used to recruit participants.

That is, initial participants referred the researchers to additional participants who also met the sampling criteria identified by the researchers. Participants were selected because they met the following sampling criteria: (a) They were considered bilinguals (Chinese/English); (b) they were from Taiwan or China; and (c) they were attending graduate school.

In study #2 (Feng & Ekiaka, 2011) published by Special Edition of the Journal of Border Education Research, thirty-one Latino graduate students agreed to participate. They were from Mexican descent and were studying graduate programs at a South Texas university. Among these participants, 11 were male and 20 were female. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 37. Snowball (non-random) sampling strategy was used to recruit participants. Participants were selected because they met the following sampling criteria: (a) They were considered bilinguals (Spanish/English); (b) they were of Mexican descent; and (c) they were attending graduate school (Master & Doctorate).

Data Collection and Analysis

To get a complete picture regarding the topic of the inquiry, the researchers used a mixed-methods research design which allow them to strengthen the validity of this study's results and get more reliable findings. In study #1, a questionnaire called Chinese Ethnic Media Scale (CEMS) was prepared to reflect Chinese college students' experiences of the use of ethnic media. The questionnaire sought information about participants' media usage, their views of the ethnic media and the usefulness of ethnic media. The questionnaire was adapted from Reece & Palmgreen's (2000) Television Viewing Motives Scale (TVMS) and distributed to Chinese graduate students at a university in South Texas in the spring semester of 2010. Participants spent approximately 15-20 minutes completing the questionnaire.

The content validity of the questionnaire was established through expert reviews. The questionnaire included four-point Likert scale ranging from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). In addition, an in-depth interview was conducted with the selected participants (30% of the sample) who agreed to participate in a follow-up interview. The aim of the in-depth interview was to collect detailed data on participants' bicultural-bilingual development with the use of ethnic media. The in-depth interview lasted 30 to 40 minutes.

In study #2, a questionnaire called Latino Ethnic Media Scale (LEMS) was prepared to reflect Latino college students' experiences of the use of ethnic media. The questionnaire sought information about participants' media usage, their views of the ethnic media and the usefulness of ethnic media. The questionnaire was also adapted from Reece & Palmgreen's (2000) Television Viewing Motives Scale (TVMS) and distributed to Latino graduate students at a university in South Texas in the fall semester of 2010. Participants took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The content validity of the questionnaire was established through expert reviews. The questionnaire included four-point Likert scale ranging from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). In addition, an in-depth interview was conducted with the selected participants (30% of the sample) who agree to participate in a follow-up interview. The aim of the in-depth interview was to collect detailed data on participants' bicultural-bilingual development with the use of ethnic media. The in-depth interview lasted 30 to 40 minutes.

The results were analyzed using Kaleidagraph 3.5. Descriptive statistics, namely mean, standard deviation, and percentage were used to analyze and interpret data. Quantitative results were reviewed, along with patterns found in the qualitative analysis. Research findings were categorized into three themes in order to answer the research question. The constant triangulation analysis was used to validate accuracy of the finding themes. From the themes, we interpreted the data by reflecting on how the findings relate to previous studies. Finally, a narrative of findings was written as part of the research report presentation.

Results

In study #1, biographical data indicated that all participants are immigrant minorities. According to Ogbu (1990), immigrant minorities are those who voluntarily move to another society because they believe that the move may help them improve their economic status and in turn provide better opportunities or more political freedom. Overall, participants in study 1 reported using an average of six hours of ethnic media a day. When asked to name their favorite media outlets, participants overwhelmingly choose the Internet and TV. Ninety-two percent ($n = 11$) of participants reported that they frequently used the Internet, while forty-two percent ($n = 5$) of participants liked to watch Chinese language TV.

However, Chinese language newspapers and magazines were not popular among participants in this study. Approximately eight (n= 2) percent of the participants reported that they read Chinese language newspapers, and none of these participants would take Chinese language magazines into account when choosing the types of ethnic media they prefer. In terms of ethnic media usage motives, the participants completed the statements categorizing them into four factors on a scale ranging from 0 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree). Figure 1 shows descriptive analysis results indicating the strongest motives for using Chinese language media. The strongest motives for using Chinese language media, as indicated by the mean scores, were ethnic cultural development ($M\ 3.35, SD\ .40$), learning ($M\ 2.81, SD\ .56$), personal and bicultural development ($M\ 2.75, SD\ .35$), and mainstream cultural development ($M\ 2.15, SD\ .55$).

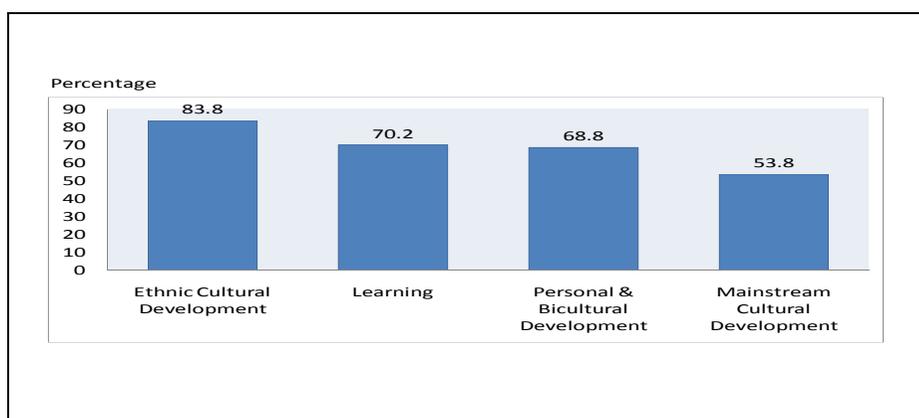


Figure 1. Chinese Ethnic Media Usage

In study #2, biographical data showed that 55 percent of participants are U.S.-born Latinos who had lived in Mexico or Latin America for the range of 1 year to 20 years. Foreign-born Latinos accounted for 45 percent of participants who had lived in the United States for the range of 6 months to 14 years. Overall, participants in study 2 reported using an average of 3 hours of ethnic media a day. The media outlets which they preferred to use were Latino radio/broadcast/music (48%) and TV/videos/movies (39%). However, they spent less time with online/print Latino newspapers/magazines (6.5%) and other Latino media (6.5%).

With regards to media usage motives, participants' answers ranged from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Figure 2 shows descriptive analysis results indicating the strongest motives for using Spanish language media. Average scores of the emerging themes are as described below: ethnic cultural development ($M 2.96, SD .13$); personal and bicultural values ($M 2.85, SD .080$), Spanish language skills ($M 2.9, SD .083$); and general local news and events ($M 2.85, SD .073$).

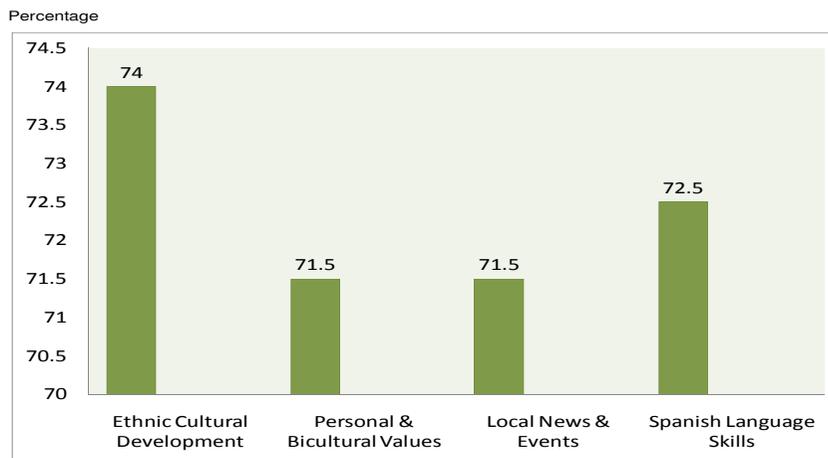


Figure 2. Latino Ethnic Media Usage

Answering the Research Question

The patterns that emerged from the interviewees were grouped into three themes in order to address the issues in this research question: What are Chinese and Hispanic graduate students' perceptions of ethnic media and how do they impact their bicultural and bilingual development?

The Roles of Ethnic Media

Participants were able to consciously clarify the different roles ethnic media play in ethnic and mainstream cultural development. Ethnic media provide the participants with opportunities to make a connection and communicate with their ethnic culture and society. In addition, in the mainstream cultural development, ethnic media provide useful tactics for living in and understanding the new environment. Overall, ethnic media function as information providers regarding the ethnic group and the mainstream cultural environment.

In addition, ethnic media not only eliminate the feelings of being uprooted from the ethnic/racial cultures, but also function as an agent of socialization that increase the opportunities to meet ethnic people locally, which helps them develop a sense of closeness and belonging to ethnic society. For example, RP (research participant) #4 (Study #2) said:

I have used and currently use all kinds of Latino media for academic, professional, and personal use. I use Latino newspapers and magazines to get the latest news in Latino issues and community topics, I listen to Latino radio everyday, listen to Spanish language music, and watch Latino T.V. and movies, which have been embedded in me since I was young. It is a part of who I am. I need to listen, read, or speak Spanish everyday somehow (quote from DII of January 15, 2011).

The responses show a generally favorable attitude toward ethnic media as important in participants' cultural and racial backgrounds. Participants generally agreed that ethnic media is interesting, enjoyable, and helpful. For example, RP #1 (Study #2) argued:

I prefer Latino TV/videos/movies because they are more interesting to me, and I watch more often in my spare time. I use Latino media for my pleasure. I can relate to it because of my Latino background. I look at my Latino culture with pride and uniqueness. Also, I am able to establish fluid connections between myself and stories (quote from DII of January 16, 2011).

Bicultural Development

Cultural dominance. The majority of the interviewees perceived themselves to have cultural dominance (Berry, 1990) (either Chinese/Hispanic or American). However, with the aid of ethnic media, interviewees were able to maintain positive ties with both cultures and ethnicities. RP # 2 (Study #2) said:

I grow up on Latino media because my dad listens to Spanish radio everyday. He is from Mexico and is a more traditional man, preserving Latino norms and values. For example, Latino is designed to be family oriented. I realized that I was very assimilated into American culture, but when I was growing older, I experience renewed interests in my Latino cultural background, and my Latino is more dominant, especially when I am together with my family and am home (quote from DII of January 15, 2011).

Integrated biculturalism. In general, interviewees found that it was easy to situate themselves in relation to minority and dominant cultures as well as integrate both identities into their daily lives regardless of the help of ethnic media. For example, RP #1 (Study #2) stated:

Both cultures are definitely integrated. I do identify with both cultures. I guess I am a woman with two nationalities. When making a decision, I think about both cultures. Also, I do not debate over my dual identities, and I do not think I struggle with issues of identities (quote from DII of January 16, 2011).

Consistent with this view, RP # 2 (Study #2) said:

I am living in two cultures, and the movement back and forth between the two is the norm after growing up. I saw two cultures in fluid and complementary terms. However, my brother did feel confused when he had a feeling he needed to choose more Latino or American (quote from DII of January 15, 2011).

Following Gudykunst & Kim's (1984) definition, our interviewees are considered cross-culturally competent, who have "achieved an advanced level in the process of becoming intercultural and whose cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics are not limited but are open to growth beyond the psychological parameters of only one culture.

The intercultural person possesses an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all humans and, at the same time, [accept] and [appreciate] the differences that lie between people of different cultures" (p.230).

Minority Language Maintenance and Development

The majority of the interviewees said that ethnic media have contributed a great deal to their minority language maintenance and development instead of the dominant language. In particular, interviewees clearly agreed that they learned more vocabulary words in their minority languages. RP # 7 (Study #2) shared her values that she placed on speaking and learning Spanish in regard to the use of ethnic media:

I feel like I have been able to build my vocabulary and learn the right pronunciation for words. I think it helps people practice and perfect their language skills.

I can use my Spanish as a tool for conveying information and communicating with people who speak the same language. Since I am growing up in an English-speaking community, I don't worry about my English. I am American also (quote from DII of January 18, 2011).

In contrast to those feelings expressed by U.S.-born interviewees in learning and maintaining their Spanish language, RP # 6 (Study #2) commented on this issue with different views:

I like Spanish language media because it makes me feel that I am home. When I listen to it, I remember my family traditions and celebrations. However, I don't need to use it all the time because I need to improve my English (quote from DII of January 17, 2011).

In summary, data demonstrated that participants possessed heightened self-awareness and understand the differences between mainstream and ethnic contexts. The reports from participants exhibit a pattern showing how ethnic media play a vital role in their daily lives in general and bilingual and bicultural development in particular, even if not at the same degree. Additionally, participants view ethnic media as a vehicle for promising applications in their minority language learning and maintenance especially for improvement of their vocabulary and exposure to the language contexts.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the two studies, the researchers extended earlier findings on the impact of ethnic media on Chinese and Hispanic groups. These findings show similarities and differences in Chinese and Hispanic college students' media use. Chinese participants have been reported to spend more time using ethnic media in their daily lives than Hispanic participants. More specifically, Chinese participants spent double the amount of quality time with ethnic media than Hispanic participants. Chinese participants expected to see their own ethnic, racial, and cultural identities, events, and/or news through the Internet and TV, whereas Hispanic participants liked to use radio, broadcast, music, TV, videos, and/or movies.

This comes with no surprise. “Today’s media consumers are expected to be more sophisticated, especially given the availability of the Internet and more interactive media (e.g., YouTube) that allow viewers to be part of the process” (Ward, Day, & Thomas, 2010, p.71).

In addition, media using motives differ between Chinese and Hispanic participants. Chinese participants were coming to ethnic media with an interest in ethnic cultural development and general learning, whereas Hispanic participants were coming to ethnic media with an interest in ethnic cultural development and Spanish language skills. These results suggested that there are racial differences in ethnic media usage motivations. Data demonstrated that rich ethnic media capture Chinese participants’ interest, and pushing opportunities as learners is effective in helping them acquire Chinese values, norms, identity, and traditions. These results are intriguing and highly consistent with previous research with minority groups from other cultural backgrounds. Minority groups like to see media including the spaces in which “they could see their own ethnic, racial, cultural, and immigrant identities reflected within the backdrop” (Mahtani, 2008, p.639) of the multicultural setting. As mentioned previously, minority groups are often missing from the mainstream media.

In general, the world of mainstream media does not reflect the diversity and stories that are apparent in the world of linguistically and culturally diverse individuals. Thus, ethnic-oriented media fills an important niche in this regard (Ward, Day, & Thomas, 2010). Moreover, minority language learning benefits especially from using Spanish language media among Hispanic participants. Similarly, Brown & Pardun (2004) found that “adolescent Black and White boys and girls in the United States are living in largely different television worlds” (p. 275).

Despite the variations found among Chinese and Hispanic participants, there are some similarities. Ethnic media plays a pivotal role in their daily lives in general, and participants are aware of the roles of ethnic media in their racial environments. Both minority groups learn more ethnic cultural knowledge than dominant cultural knowledge via the use of ethnic media. From previous research, culture-specific knowledge has the potential to be important for bicultural individuals’ self-image, self-definition, self-knowledge, and cultural adjustment (Armes, & Ward, 1989; Hong, 2010; Wang, 2006). In addition, Hong (2010) suggested that “culture-specific knowledge is the foundation of bicultural’s cultural frame switching because it is required to comprehend and decode the behavior of others and themselves” (p.99).

Culture-specific knowledge consists of explicit and tacit knowledge (Hong, 2010). Common examples of explicit knowledge are “the country’s history, its political and economic systems, institutions, and social structure” (Hong, 2010, p.99-100). Three examples of tacit knowledge are given below: “the culture’s values, and beliefs and their impact on behavior” (Hong, 2010, p.100). Thus, ethnic media help bicultural/bilingual individuals involve and socialize into the traditions and practices of two cultures with varying degrees, which influence the development of explicit and tacit knowledge.

Both groups believe that ethnic media is advantageous, and an awareness of the beneficial outcomes in terms of minority language maintenance/learning is apparent, whereas the benefit of learning the dominant language is absent. The benefits of media produced in minority language to support language maintenance and development are highly supported by a number of researchers (Balaban, Iancu, & Deac, 2009; Cunliffe & Herring, 2005; Packer & Holt, 2004). Ethnic media could encourage in-group community participation and face-to-face communication (Cunliffe & Herring, 2005; Packer & Holt, 2004) allowing more time for language exposures and practices. Cormack (2005) reminded us that bilingualism promotes cross-cultural understanding and communication, as well as prepares individuals for diverse global contexts. Especially, Chinese and Spanish are central languages which “are usually national languages, with a major role in education, the media, politics, bureaucracy and the legal system” (Cormack, 2005, p. 118 as cite in de Swaan, 2001). Similarly, Kralisch & Berendt (2005) argued that online information in minority languages plays a key role in website users’ search behaviour and knowledge comprehension.

Implication for Bilingual (Dual-Language) Education

Based on the results and relevant literature, several pedagogical implications can be suggested:

1. Ethnic media (EM) could be a valuable tool for teaching bilingual, dual-language and nonnative English speaking students. It can be used as a classroom instructional tool (Lin, 2010). For example, Lin (2010) claimed that there were improvements noted in vocabulary and comprehension when teachers provided video-based lessons to L2 learners.

Teachers learned how to facilitate students' vocabulary acquisition and comprehension via aural and visual sensory channels as well as concrete examples, such as picture-like images. As possessing multiple cultural and racial backgrounds have become more common, when a growing number of immigrants are pouring into the United States, the integration of EM in K-12 curriculum becomes important. As Taylor (1994) pointed out that "we 'live together' more and more, both 'on a world scale and commingled in each individual society'" (as cited in Sreberny, 2005, p.443). Thus, EM can serve as a catalyst for communication within those ethnic audiences, thus can improve intergroup relations.

2. Students are often more tech savvy than their teachers; therefore, adding digital native-based curricula (Prensky, 2001) is teachers' responsibility. This does not indicate that all teachers have to become wizards at media technologies. However, they do need to possess some degree of technological knowledge and skills for the grade level they teach.
3. To better teach today's digital native students, professional development is an influential factor in changing teachers' attitudes towards media technologies as well as in preparing them to effectively perform the media related lessons (Teo, 2008; Wiebe & Kabata, 2010).
4. Successful networks of teachers facilitate staff development in the area of educational technology as well as offer leadership roles (Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992). This process invites teachers to take up roles as experts in their professional development. Aside from teachers *per se*, they can solicit aid or advice regarding media technologies from their students.

Bilingual and dual language teachers should be encouraged to integrate EM in their teaching, and hence facilitate the minority cultural and language proficiency of their students, which were documented by several researchers.

Finally due to the fact that very little research data regarding the effectiveness of Spanish/Mexican-leaning media technologies on building US-born Hispanic children bilingual biliteracy skills in South Texas are available to the general public, a systematic evaluation of the power of EM in fostering children's bilingual biliteracy skills is highly recommended in order to effectively integrate EM into PK-12 language curriculum.

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