

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & CRIME, LAW AND JUSTICE

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION
POLICY CYCLES IN CHANGING CONTEXTS

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Spring 2010

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in SOCIOLOGY, SPANISH, INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
with honors in Sociology

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how past cultural and political contexts have affected ESL education, and aims to determine what the next major language policy for ELL students may look like in relation to modern public sentiment and current societal context. First this paper discusses the historical context that has previously shaped the policy cycle of language education reform and explores the current political and social contexts surrounding education policies of ELL students. It also briefly explains the three main approaches to ESL education: English-only, bilingual and dual language. The paper then investigates English-only education as it is related to today's political atmosphere and takes a close look at the implementation of Proposition 227, a pivotal English-only education reform that was passed in California in 1998. The paper next explores bilingual education and dual language education, both in accordance to today's values and context. The paper concludes by suggesting which education approach is ideal for ELL students and discussing the likelihood that change in ESL education policies will occur.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Dana Mitra for her patience and guidance. I would also like to thank my friends and family for encouraging me throughout the entire thesis writing process. In particular, I would like to thank Nikki Hatza, Bridget O'Malley and Farnaz Farhi for supporting me through the thick and thin of thesis writing. Special thanks are also due to Kate Stewart Cremer and Ani Hatza for their generous help with edits and revisions.

Chapter 1

Exploring ESL Education: Introduction

The United States is a country comprised of a diverse people and a unique history. Americans differ in many ways (racially, religiously, ethnically, and culturally), but one commonly overlooked factor that varies among Americans is language. Differences in language can impact the neighborhood in which an individual chooses to live, one's job prospects, and educational opportunities (Ovando & Collier, 1985, p. 267). The effect language can have on educational opportunities is of particular interest because Americans believe that a strong education enables individuals to improve their life circumstances (Deschenes, Cuban & Tyack, 2001, p. 5). Long considered the great equalizer, education has undergone many changes throughout American history. To judge the merit of these changes in context with education's responsibility for promoting equality of opportunity, one ought to examine "the extent to which they facilitate social mobility" (Wiley & Wright, 2004, p. 9). Education is the tool intended to serve and provide opportunity to underprivileged groups.

One such disadvantaged group in America is English Language Learners. In 2000, two thirds of this group was reported as having come from low-income families (Capps et al., 2005, p. 27). English Language Learners (ELL) represent the group of students who are not proficient in the English language and are enrolled in a school program to help increase their level of English language comprehension—I refer to these programs collectively as different divisions within English as a Second Language (ESL)

education. This group of students underwent a ninety-five percent increase in enrollment in public schools between 1991 and 2002 (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2002b) and currently, ELL students make up the fastest growing student group in the United States (Cosentino de Cohen, Deterding & Clewell, 2005, p. 7). How do these students, set apart because of their language differences, experience the American school system and its policies? Because ELL students comprise a larger portion of the U.S. student population than ever before, the answer to this question has become increasingly significant. The ELL student population in the United States has increased sixty percent in the last ten years, bringing the number of students labeled as ELL to over five million (NCELA, 2007). With so many students participating in English as a Second Language education, one cannot deny the need for clear guidelines on how to structure their education.

Understanding the history and culture of English as a Second Language education in the United States is crucial in determining what policy steps are likely to be taken next and what steps *should* be taken next to ensure the success of all American students, English Language Learners in particular. By understanding the way contextual changes (e.g. increased immigration, American values, the political atmosphere) play a role in determining ESL policies, and by understanding the cyclical way in which policies shift from one end of the political spectrum to the other, one can begin to recognize what the next major policy change may be for ELL students. As Sarah Deschenes, Larry Cuban and David Tyack explain in *Mismatch: Historical Perspectives on Schools and Students Who Don't Fit Them*, successfully teaching ELL students “will require a thorough rethinking of both the familiar structures of schooling...and the gap between the culture

of the school and the cultures of the communities they serve” (p. 4). The next step in American language education policy needs to approach ESL education differently than it has in the past, rather than continue the cyclical policy trend.

What should the next language education reform be? This paper explores how past cultural and political contexts have affected ESL education, and aims to determine what the next major language policy for ELL students may look like in relation to modern public sentiment and current societal context. Chapter 2 discusses the historical context that has previously shaped the policy cycle of language education reform and Chapter 3 explores the current political and social contexts surrounding education policies of ELL students. It also briefly explains the three main approaches to ESL education: English-only, bilingual and dual language. Chapter 4 investigates English-only education as it is related to today’s political atmosphere and Chapter 5 takes a close look at the implementation of Proposition 227, a pivotal English-only education reform that was passed in California in 1998. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 explore bilingual education and dual language education, respectively, both in accordance to today’s values and context. Chapter 8 concludes the paper, suggesting which education approach is most ideal for ELL students and discussing the likelihood that change in ESL education policies will occur.

Chapter 2

Cyclical Change—an Overview of ESL Policy in the United States

As noted researchers Tyack and Cuban explain, though the context affecting policies changes, policies themselves actually tend to be cyclical, repeating over time and routinely returning to the fundamental practices and original ideas and theories. In addition, Tyack and Cuban mention the way policy reforms in one area (education, perhaps) often interact with separate policies in the same area. By acknowledging that governmental policies impact more than the specific issue itself, and that they can affect the way change is implemented in the future, one can appreciate the need for well thought-out reforms of the highest standard. Interestingly, however, policies tend to cycle from one end of the spectrum to the other. In ESL policy trends, the cycle seems to begin with a firm English-only approach, followed by less regulated bilingual education, but ultimately returns to stricter English-only programs. By charting the cyclical change of ESL policies within historical context, one can better understand the complexities, as well as the recurring ideological patterns, of ESL education in the United States.

Negative attitudes toward the use of non-English in schools have flourished since the beginning of our country's history, and the perceived importance of the use of English over native languages is one trend that reappears throughout American history. The initial emergence of this trend, and the first deliberate step in directing language education, was in dictating the education of the American Indians. Controlling the language used by American Indians clearly demonstrated which group in the country held

the power. Equating language-use with power thematically reappears throughout history; in this instance, the drive to eradicate the native languages was used to “domesticate” the American Indians and encourage their compliance with society’s new structure (Wiley & Wright, 2004, p. 6). Guided by English-only sentiment, the United States government decided to take over the education of American Indian children in 1871. After ending treaties that permitted the Cherokee Nation to educate their own children, Congress required American Indian children to attend schools run by the United States government. Children attended boarding schools where speaking and learning in English was mandated—use of the native tongue was against the rules, even outside of class (García, 2009, p. 161-162).

Unlike the education of American Indians, the education of the children of European settlers during the same time period initially faced less animosity. By recognizing the advantage of access to *certain* foreign languages in a global, multicultural setting, the support for these settlers’ languages showcases a separate, recurring trend in education—appreciation and backing of particular foreign languages. In contrast to the government’s opposition to Native American languages, Euro-centric languages (e.g. German, French) were initially thought to be beneficial in facilitating trade and commerce for the country (García, 2009, p. 160). Believing that knowledge of a second language (when that second language represents power and not weakness) can be a positive attribute is one trend that, while short-lived during this time in history, would later reappear.

Speaking English soon became representative of a person’s loyalty to and level of patriotism toward the United States. As a result, sweeping English-only rationale

overtook education policies and practices in full force. As immigration to the United States increased, the acceptance of any language other than English diminished. Accordingly, the use of non-English languages in schools began to cause alarm. In 1891, the National Education Association (NEA) announced that the different ethnic groups forming in the United States were essentially “destroying distinctive Americanism;” to combat this destruction it was a child’s right to attend an English-speaking school (Salomone, 2010, p. 24).

Also affecting the rejection of non-English languages was World War I, which caused increasing tensions with European-based languages. Highlighting this English-only sentiment, in 1915 Theodore Roosevelt said, “We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house” (García, 2009, p.165). This English-only attitude was further evidenced in 1919 during a conference of the Bureau of Education, in which P.P. Claxton, the Commissioner of Education declared, “Without knowledge of English one can never begin to know the American people and American ideals,” and supported the notion that all schools should teach and accept work only in English (Salomone, 2010, p. 33). Following the advice of the Commissioner, by 1924 thirty-four states had created policies requiring that English be the only language used in public schools (Wiley & Wright, 2004, p. 7). English-only programming, set into place because of the nationalism linked to the English-language during the war, continued to govern school policies and public opinion until the 1950s when other factors began to challenge this policy (García, 2009, p. 168).

The first concrete sign that the United States was beginning to recognizing the benefits of knowing a language other than English came in 1958, with the passing of the National Defense Education Act, a policy that called for school funding to be directed at foreign language instruction. After a century-long period of English-only education reform, policies legislation began to shift in support of pro-language policies. The shift came as a response to Russia's launch of Sputnik and the United States' fear that it was falling behind the rest of the world in science and language education (García, 2009, p. 168). This time, rather than being viewed as a detriment, languages other than English represented power and triggered a shift in language education in the United States.

After the Immigration and Naturalization Services Act of 1965 changed the restrictions on the permitted levels of foreign immigration into the United States, the number of immigrants coming from non-western countries greatly increased (García, 2009, p.168). Coupled with the civil rights movements of the time, new language policies created an environment of acceptance surrounding ESL bilingual education. This allowed for the emergence of the principal ideas that understanding different cultures and using "foreign," native languages in schools were important student rights, meant to be guaranteed to each US citizen. Citizens started to question the "culturally monochromatic environment of most schools" in conjunction with America's increased diversity, and governmental efforts were made to consider and acknowledge these differences in the classroom (Deschenes, Cuban & Tyack, 2001, p. 537).

In 1968, with the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the U.S. redefined the expectation of ESL education in public schools. In keeping with the new language theory, Title VII of the ESEA, known as the Bilingual

Education Act, acknowledged the need for better ESL education and set aside funding for schools looking to promote cultural diversity and second language usage to develop bilingual education programs (García, 2009, p. 169). Demonstrating the United States' then-current recognition of the value of other cultures, one distinguishing aspect of the bill was its support for programs that included teaching the histories and heritages associated with the native languages of the ELL students (Salomone, 2010, p. 111). At this time the Civil Rights Movement was gaining momentum across the country; the resulting education reform that expanded the rights of minority students was a product of the movement's successful push for and support of equal rights.

Unfortunately, the Act lacked clear-cut guidelines, which made it difficult for educators to understand their role in bilingual education: Should they be focused on helping students develop only in English, or should they aim to help students become fluent in both languages (Wiley & Write, 2004, p. 13)? Though it would be rescinded in 1971, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare clarified the parameters by stating that the "ultimate goal of bilingual education" should be a student "who functions well in two languages on any occasion" (Salomone, 2010, p. 113). However, the revised version of this statement returned to teaching English as the ultimate goal for bilingual education programs (Salomone, 2010, p.113).

The hesitation to designate both languages in a bilingual program as equally important likely stemmed from the historical connection between the English language and patriotism. Because of Congress's reluctance and inability to agree on the definition and objective of bilingual education, the Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized and redefined six times over the course of fourteen years (Salomone, 2010, p. 113). During

the 1970s, the United States' efforts to integrate schools through mandatory bussing fostered resentment towards bilingual education, and support for English-only education grew once again.

During the reauthorization of the bill in 1974, a group of Chinese-American parents filed a lawsuit against the San Francisco School District for their failure to provide equal education to immigrant students. The case, *Lau vs. Nichols 1974*, brought before the U.S. Supreme Court, challenged the then-current English-only education programs set up in San Francisco. This was the first time in history that a minority group objected to an ESL policy and acted according to their beliefs. García documents the effects this court case had on ESL education in the United States in her book *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century*. Under the premise that their children, who were participating in English-only programs, were receiving lower quality public school educations than the average English-speaking student, the parents argued that because the majority of students in the school spoke Chinese, teaching them in English was unjust and insensitive to their needs as an entire group. The parents believed the school district was in violation of the Equal Protection Clause set forth in the Fourteenth Amendment. The Supreme Court agreed and decided that English-only education violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. This decision eventually led to the creation of the Lau Remedies and also to a settlement in the court case *Aspira of New York vs. Board of Education* that determined how to place students in bilingual education programs. García explains the outcome of the New York case,

All children entering New York City schools who were of Latino background were tested in English, and if found limited, were

subsequently tested in Spanish. All children who scored higher on the Spanish test were then put into bilingual education programs (p. 170).

Despite the courts' support for bilingual education, the US Department of Education refused to mandate anything specific for the education of ELL students without proof of the effectiveness of bilingual education over English-only education.

Paving the way for another wave of English-only education support and policies, in 1981, researchers Baker and Kanter, "concluded that there was no consistent evidence for the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education" (García, 2009, p. 171) and that "immersion programs in English-only [should] be given more attention" (García, 2009, p.171). These findings and suggestions, based on modern research, would further promote the same English-only tendencies that had previously existed within the United States. After taking office, President Reagan reiterated this pro-English-only sentiment, announcing that he believed "it is absolutely wrong and against American concepts to have a bilingual education program" (García, 2009, p. 172). Despite the political climate, many groups fought for bilingual education, and continued to seek support for what they believed to be the most effective type of ESL education.

In stark contrast to the strict English-only policies of the Reagan administration, the subsequent decade and a half was markedly ambivalent in the bilingual vs. English-only policy debate. This lack of rigid policy resulted in a focus on state and student rights during the Bush Sr. and Clinton administrations, and very few federal policy and legislation changes were made with regard to ESL practices across the country. With significant research and data supporting both bilingual and English-only education being published during this time period, much debate and conflict arose with little to no

resolution. Disagreements over superior methods of ESL education and the lack of federal regulations allowed states to decide individually how to approach ESL education for the remainder of the 1980s and 1990s. States and local school districts determined which method was best suited for their particular schools and students. It remained this way until 2002, at which time the George W. Bush administration introduced the No Child Left Behind Act, reinstating federal government-imposed education policies for states and students across the country.

As evidenced above, determining the appropriate approach to ESL education in the United States has proven to be a complicated issue. The country's changing values, affected by swells of immigration, education research, the economy and many other factors, play a major role in shaping societal attitudes and actions toward ESL practices. To understand today's ESL dilemma, one must consider the conflicting and competing values that exist in our society.

Chapter 3

Current Context and ESL Approaches

The balance of upholding accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act, trying to catch American students up academically with others around the world, and allowing states to determine their individual education programs, demonstrates a combination of American values that do not clearly indicate how ESL education will be structured in the future. Unlike periods in the past where clear English-only or bilingual preferences existed, there is no obvious policy approach at the present time; currently affecting this period of confusion are national trends for accountability (which encourages English-only education) and globalization (which backs bilingual education).

As globalization becomes a major contributing factor to our education policy, the decline in U.S. rankings is beginning to worry legislators. The 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment, which compares students from thirty developed countries, ranked American students at twenty-first for science literacy and twenty-fifth in math achievement. As competition in the world market grows, such rankings do not bode well for the future of the nation. In response, the Obama Administration created the “Educate to Innovate” initiative, a program intended to improve American student achievement in math and science. To ensure America’s status as a world power in the future, it is critical that all young Americans—including the increasing number of ELL students—receive the highest possible quality of education.

The focus of ESL education remains an important, ongoing debate in the education circuit. In her book, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*, Ofelia García outlines approaches to language policy in three different frames. She believes policies can respond to language as a problem, as a right, or as a resource (p. 14). Knowing how these approaches correspond to modern ESL options and by understanding today's political and global context, one can decide which approach to ESL education seems most appropriate for America's students. Consequently, the agenda one believes meets the purpose of language policy, will also affect the condition and tone of ESL education in the United States. For those who approach language policy under the concept that foreign languages should be considered problems, English-only programs seem most logical. Under English-only programming, ELL students solve the problem of not speaking English by immersing themselves in the language, in hopes of quickly obtaining fluency. Within this framework, language differences are seen as obstacles that need to be overcome rather than diversity that should be embraced.

If one believes that language policy should aim to protect native language as a student right then bilingual education policies provide a fine alternative. Pedagogies and policies that include lessons on heritage and culture and that maintain the native tongue, while introducing the student to English, successfully treat a student's native language as a privilege—something to be proud of rather than a hindrance.

Finally, if one considers language as a resource for the country, programs that tap into ELL students' native languages and spread both English and other languages to all students are appealing. Dual language approaches recognize the benefits of bilingualism. By utilizing language instruction in a manner that acknowledges language fluency as a

tool for global success and advancement, dual language programs help both ELL and English-speaking students to develop bilingually. By reviewing these three ESL options in detail and understanding how they have been implemented in the past, it is possible to create an atmosphere of success for ELL students and to determine what the next step for ESL education in America ought to be.

Chapter 4

English-Only Education

Of the three approaches to ESL education, the English-only approach has recently garnered wide-spread support throughout the country. This chapter will discuss the nuances of English-only programs within the context of current education policy. Advocates of English-only education believe that having a command of the English language is essential for student success. This belief has been reiterated many times throughout history, in the rhetoric of past presidents and other English-only proponents. By immersing the student in the standard, English-speaking classroom, the student is encouraged to learn the language, rather than rely on outside sources for understanding. Many times, parents of ELL students support English-only programs (Salomone, 2010). Viewing English as a tool for success, these parents want to ensure that their children leave school with a clear grasp of the language. English-only programs vary significantly from school to school. Sometimes programs will include additional tutoring or help for the ELL student, but other times, this extra attention is neither required nor available. Though English-only programs typically practice quick immersion into English-speaking classrooms, some do permit occasional instruction in other languages (Salomone, 2010). Waves of support for English-only education tend to arise when the country sees an increase in immigration, or is facing such challenges as a struggling economy or military conflict.

There has been an increase in English-only programs and policies within the last ten years, due to new national education policies, as well as an increase in ELL students in U.S. classrooms and currently about sixty-percent of ELL students experience this type of education (Jost, 2009). The strictest English-only programs have been adopted in states like California, Arizona and Massachusetts, where an English-only advocate or promotion group campaigned for legislative reform (Jost, 2009). Under pressure from No Child Left Behind, schools are now mandated to bring all students—including English Language Learners—to a level of proficiency by 2014. With tests distributed in English and a drive to eradicate the achievement gap, English-only programs have gained support as logical, direct paths to rapidly achieve student success.

The promise of accountability is one characteristic that makes English-only programs popular (Jost, 2009). When ELL students are included in the mainstream classroom, it is purportedly more difficult to ignore their needs or shortcomings. If they are separated into a different classroom, there is no way to ensure that the students are being held to the same standard of learning as students in traditional classrooms. English-only education supports quick language acquisition and maintains the same standards for each student. Holding all students to the same standards is crucial under No Child Left Behind. The promise of accountability exists within No Child Left Behind because for the first time in the history of American education, test results are disaggregated, allowing progress to be charted within smaller focus groups. Knowing that schools will be measured based on the improvement of all student groups—which prevents the scores of high-performing students from concealing the scores of struggling students—makes the guarantee that all students are successful more important to schools than ever before.

Taking into account that the students are tested in English, and the fact that test results can potentially affect school funding, it is not difficult to understand why teaching English quickly to ELL students seems so imperative (Edwards, 2010).

By placing students in the standard classroom, English-only programs are believed to have two resultant benefits. The first is that ELL students are required to achieve at the same level as their English-speaking peers. The second benefit is that students grow accustomed to the structure of a mainstream classroom. Learning the culture and routine of a classroom allows students to feel more comfortable in school. By keeping ELL students in the traditional classroom, the need to readjust to different classroom settings and styles is eliminated. However, studies have shown that many times ELL students are prematurely placed in mainstream classrooms. These students tend to flounder in their schoolwork and do not achieve at the same level they could have, had they remained in an ESL classroom (Salomone, 2010, p. 159). Teacher bias can also become a problem in English-only classrooms. Studies have shown that teachers are more likely to associate negative personality traits with non-fluent students (Edwards, 2010, p. 157). Placing students in classrooms with teachers who stereotype against them (whether this stereotyping is intentional or not) is detrimental to the students' acceptance in the classroom and to their overall success.

Another reason schools may be attracted to English-only education is that English-only programs are perceived as more affordable than bilingual education options. While schools searching for ways to cut costs and balance budgets are able to incorporate English-only programs at a lower cost than *some* bilingual education programs, they are not universally cheaper. English-only programs can reduce the material costs of

educating ELL students because they lessen the need for bilingual educators, who are often paid more for their services, and because the costs of extra classrooms and different curriculums are eliminated. The claims that English-only programs are significantly more affordable, however, do not go unchallenged. In her book *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century*, Ofelia García draws a different conclusion about the costs of bilingual education programs. She writes, “A study commissioned by the California legislature in the U.S. examined a variety of well-implemented program models and found no budgetary advantage for English-only approaches” (p. 392). She goes on to state that because there is such variance among bilingual education programs, it is difficult to generalize about their costs (p.392).

One of the strongest arguments against English-only education is that it lacks concern for developing thought processes of students, and focuses solely on developing English literacy skills (Jost, 2009.) Therefore, while some research *has* shown that English-only programs diminish the achievement gap early in a student’s education, research also shows a reappearance of this gap later on in schooling (Collier & Thomas, 2009). Because the critical thinking skills necessary for success are not developed at a young age, when ELL students are confronted with more difficult material or a faster paced education in high school, they often cannot keep up.

In his book *Language Diversity in the Classroom*, John Edwards suggests that English-only programs, often referred to as “immersion” programs, are in reality “submersion” programs. Edwards explains that, “‘Immersion’, then, suggests that one is dipped into a new linguistic pool, but comes to the surface again with original capacities still intact. ‘Submersion’, as already implied, means that something original is being

drowned and lost” (p. 258). Rather than encouraging students to gain knowledge, these programs seem to encourage blocking out the knowledge of another culture and language. A close look at the passing and implementation of Proposition 227—a law mandating English-only education in California—can help us understand the reality of English-only education and the lasting effects this type of policy can have on students, teachers and future education reforms.

The disconnect between an English-only policy’s image and its reality is the most disconcerting aspect of this programming. English-only policies are hypothetically created in a way that holds that which is in the best interest of the student at the forefront. Historically, however, periods of English-only education tend to arise at points on the ESL policy cycle that are accompanied by other anti-immigration politics. For example, just four years before the approval of California’s Proposition 227, voters in the state passed Proposition 187—a law that denied public services (health care, welfare and public schooling) to illegal immigrants. A policy framed with good intentions, even if it has undertones of injustice, is difficult to challenge. Unlike Proposition 187, which was declared unconstitutional by a judge in 1999, because Proposition 227 is not blatantly anti-immigrant, it is still guiding the ESL practices in public schools in California today. García draws attention to the hidden message of Proposition 227: “Proposition 227, outlawing bilingual education in California, could be considered an example of insecurity-based language policy, as voters acted on their Hispanophobia,” (p. 86). The xenophobic motivation for the policy, in conjunction with the bill’s façade of improving student achievement, has brought about an atmosphere of wariness in the classroom. Salomone references the hidden curriculum of Proposition 227 as well, stating that

“[b]arely beneath the surface of the surrounding debate lay intense anti-immigrant feelings” (p.153). The perceived connection between these opposing intentions creates a negative, unwelcoming environment for ELL students and their parents.

English-only education programs could be effective only if they were designed in a way that guarantees students feel completely welcome and comfortable in the classroom. In their present execution, however, students are uncomfortable, and therefore less likely to be actively involved in the classroom. This initial hesitation is unlikely to disappear as children grow older, regardless of how greatly their language improves. According to some studies, English-only programs “result in negative consequences for psychological development, intergroup relations, academic achievement and health service delivery to limited-proficiency English populations in the U.S.” (Barker et al., 2001, p. 4). In addition, by isolating non-English speaking parents, English-only policies make it difficult for parents to get involved in their student’s education. Parental involvement is a proven indicator of student achievement—a higher level of parental involvement correlates to higher levels of student success—and without it, the student is left at a greater disadvantage. (Abouchaar & Desforjes, 2003).

Also problematic is that denying a high-quality education to a group of underprivileged students is a type of systematic discrimination, an opinion shared by Rosemary Salomone in her previously referenced book. The language barrier that ELL students face can be a cause of discrimination both in and out of school. Hispanics acknowledge this discrimination. In a 2006 national survey, forty-six percent of Hispanic adults “believe that language is the prime source of discrimination against them, even more than immigration status, income/education, or skin color” (Salomone, 2010, p.

195). Yet, despite the language-based discrimination, results from the same survey show that eighty-eight percent of Hispanic adults also think that it is important for public schools to assist students in maintaining their native language (Salomone, 2010, p. 196).

Upon review, one can see that English-only education falls short on two levels. First, there is no data confirming the effectiveness of English-only education over other systems of English acquisition, leaving students susceptible to continued language discrimination. Secondly, these programs fail to help students preserve their native tongue (Salomone, 2010, p. 192). Without a proper education, marginalized ELL students fall behind in school and are not able to fully participate in the “American Dream.” Education has long been considered the great equalizer in America. Students go to school believing that if they work hard, they will be able to achieve. For the United States to continue ensuring this opportunity for its students, policies need to keep the best interests of all students in mind—not just the students in the majority. Minority groups in America are rapidly becoming the majority, at which time the United States will be forced to address the drawbacks of English-only education (Barker et al., 2001, p. 5).

Chapter 5

Proposition 227

In order to understand how public opinion can affect language policy, a look at Proposition 227 is necessary. Proposition 227 represents the start of a national trend towards extreme English-only policies and demonstrates the consequences of a movement that gains momentum and support in the media. Looking at the bill's rhetoric, it is also striking to see how the law became ingrained into California legislation. In comparison to their bilingual education counterparts, once English-only programs gain popular support and are written into law, they tend to have a very permanent presence; it is nearly impossible to amend the law. Proposition 227 is a window into the way in which extreme language policies are passed, and also how the implementation of these laws affect not only schools and students, but communities as well.

Proposition 227, an initiative passed in California in 1998, mandated English-immersion as the primary approach for educational instruction of ELL students. The policy mandates that “all children in California public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible,” and that the students are placed in classrooms “in which the language of instruction used by the teaching personnel is overwhelmingly the English language” (Proposition 227, Article 1f & Article 2b). Though some citizens believe that English-only legislation is shaped by anti-immigrant attitudes (Even Salomone himself believes anti-immigrant sentiment is at the heart of Proposition 227), courts have decided otherwise (p. 153). A court decision determined that Proposition 227

was based on concerns for education, not race (Salomone, 2010, p.156). It is interesting to consider that at another point in the policy cycle, Proposition 227 could have just as easily been overturned in court. If public favor and policy bias had been indicating support for bilingual education at the time, rather than English-only education, it is likely that a different decision would have been made. The then-current political context in California, however, had already paved the way for Proposition 227.

Controversial laws or policies, like Proposition 227, can be difficult to pass. How is it possible then that a majority of sixty-one percent would pass the initiative? All that was required to pass Proposition 227 was the correct policy window; as soon as the right context presented itself, English-only advocates were able to take advantage of the opportunity and begin their campaign for statewide English-only education. The policy window—a concept first described by John Kingdon in 1984, is a short period of time when the likelihood that a certain policy will be passed is increased. Understanding when a policy window actually opens can be difficult, but waiting for the ideal time to push forward with these goal-specific policies? is critical for the success of a policy campaign. A policy window can be affected by numerous factors—political changes, the state of the economy, local traditions, current events, etc. In the case of Proposition 227, the policy window presented itself in the form of a pre-established anti-immigrant atmosphere, created by the earlier policies Proposition 63, Proposition 187 and Proposition 209. Understanding when the public's attitude toward immigration was optimal for the introduction of Proposition 227 was the first step in gaining support for the initiative. Those campaigning for Proposition 227 capitalized on the vilification of bilingual education—the common alternative to English-only education. In R. Michael Alvarez's

article, *Why Did Proposition 227 Pass?*, he mentions that “fear about the spread of Spanish might have fueled some of the opposition to bilingual education programs” (p. 18). By exploiting this fear and manipulating false claims that bilingual education causes higher drop-out rates, the negative attitudes felt toward bilingual education ultimately fostered support for English-only education (Willey & Wright, 2004, p. 151).

Ron Unz headed the “English for the Children Initiative,” and the policy passed with sixty-one percent of votes in favor of the law (Salomone, 2010, p. 153). Unz had previously been politically involved in opposing Proposition 187 in California, an initiative that denied undocumented immigrants access to public school. The main reason for Unz’s adamant resistance to Proposition 187, and subsequent support of Proposition 227, was his belief that assimilating immigrant groups into mainstream America could best be accomplished in the classroom—where students not only learn to speak and understand English, but, in echoing sentiments of the past, also come to understand what it means to be American (Salomone, 2010, p. 153). This justification for Proposition 227 calls Unz’s credibility into question because despite efforts to frame the initiative in a caring light, the desire to teach students to be American implies racial and ethnic prejudices (Alvarez, 1999, p. 6).

In addition, while it appears that the policy was passed with a significant majority of the votes, controversy lies within the breakdown of the vote. According to García, Latinos in California voted two-to-one against the initiative (p.183). By ignoring the opinion of the group most affected by the policy—according to a report by the American Institutes for Research, ELL students in California are overwhelmingly Spanish-speaking—the law created a challenging paradox for the schools: that is, working within

the language of law while simultaneously appeasing the parents of ELL students. Another challenge of the law was determining the most efficient implementation strategy; the law was passed by voters in June of 1998 and implemented in schools the following September at the beginning of the 1998-1999 school year (Parrish et al., 2006, p. 50).

At the time that Proposition 227 was passed, there were also a number of other education reforms in California that played a role in shaping the education of ELL students. Each of these reforms would create a foundation for the others and would ultimately effect the implementation of subsequent policies. First, a few years prior to Proposition 227, in 1996, California legislators passed a policy mandating that class size be reduced to no more than twenty students per class from kindergarten through third grade (Parrish et al., 2006, p.23). In addition, new statewide tests administered in 1998 that charted student progress in all California schools, combined with new 1999 guidelines specifying which skills were needed for an ELL student to be considered proficient in English, provided accountability pressure in schools similar to the pressures created by No Child Left Behind. The combined focuses and efforts of these laws, in conjunction with Proposition 227, had teachers and administrators agreeing on one positive aspect of this legislation—there was more focus than ever before on ELL learners and their achievements (Parrish et al., 2006, p. 44). Funneling this focus into productive change, however, was a difficult task for school employees as they scrambled to interpret and incorporate Proposition 227 into their classrooms.

Interestingly, the push for English-only education already existed in California. The majority of California's ELL students were already participating in structured English-immersion programs, while only thirty percent of California's ELL students were

enrolled in bilingual-education programs at the time of the bill's passing (García, 2009, p.183). If the majority of students in California were already enrolled in English-only programs, then one must question the real motives behind the initiative. Was "English for the Children" a policy really interested in students' wellbeing or was it, as Barker suggests, "the response of the dominant English-speaking majority to what is perceived as the increasing vitality of Spanish-speaking groups" (p. 4)? Because so many schools were already implementing English-only instruction, a majority of schools (forty-five out of sixty-three) in the Parrish study, an extensive five-year evaluation of Proposition 227, believed that the policy had an overall positive impact, and only eight schools felt that it had had a negative impact (p.44) . The main issue facing the majority of schools was not supporting English-immersion tactics, but rather guaranteeing that their specific programs fit the requirements of the legislation. After interviewing a number of school officials, García and Curry-Rodriguez note in their 2000 article, *The Education of Limited English Proficient Students in California Schools: An Assessment of the Influence of Proposition 227 in Selected Districts and Schools*, that "even though all districts reported thorough implementation of Proposition 227, they also consistently reported substantial pressures and confusion in developing and implementing a plan prior to the beginning of the 1998-99 school year" (p.7).

The pressure to comply with this law was, in part, due to the specifics of the law itself. Section 320 in Article 5 of Proposition 227 states:

Any school board member or other elected official or public school teacher or administrator who willfully and repeatedly refuses to implement the terms of this statute...may be held personally liable

for fees and actual damages by the child's parents or legal guardian.

To avoid being held legally responsible, administrators worked to ensure that their school implemented Proposition 227 correctly. The ambiguity in the law, however, and the rush to incorporate it into curriculum structure, led to a less than uniform ESL approach in schools (Parrish et al., 2006, p.41). This initiative was meant to standardize education for ELLs across the state, but in actuality it only created obstacles for bilingual education. Schools were still able to individualize their approaches to the legislation, so long as they worked hard enough to get through the policy's red tape (Salomone, 2010, p. 156). In particular, teachers were able to shape the manner in which the law was incorporated in schools; depending on their own opinions on the policy, its integration into the classroom ranged from "defiance to acceptance" (Johnson, 2009, p. 2). One such example that Salomone notes is the understanding of Section 305 under Article 2 in the policy. This section reads, "[c]hildren who are English learners shall be educated through sheltered English immersion during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed one year." Salomone writes that some schools "have interpreted the one-year English immersion mandate as a minimum rather than a maximum" (p. 156). The root of this open interpretation lies in the law's lack of instruction on how an appropriate English-only program should operate. One interviewee in the Parrish report sums up this aspect of the confusion saying, "It says what you can't do, but it doesn't say what you can do or should do."

As previously mentioned, Latino voters rejected the proposed legislation by a two-to-one ratio, setting the stage for conflict between parents of ELL students and

schools. The law cites the desires of these parents as supportive of the policy, stating that “[i]mmigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire a good knowledge of English, thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement” (Proposition 227, Article 1, Section 300b). However, the majority of these parents had voted against the initiative and many were unsatisfied with the resulting policy and programming in their schools. Salomone writes that “[i]n the wake of Proposition 227, parents of California’s immigrant children descended upon the state capitol in Sacramento” (p.155). It is difficult to interpret the implementation of Proposition 227 without considering the anti-immigrant sentiment that likely played a major role in its passing; for a majority group to impose and mandate a law that essentially only affects the minority group (who opposed the policy), seems undeniably discriminatory.

One portion of the law permits parents to request waivers for their children to be placed in alternative ESL programs (Proposition 227, Article 3). This section of the law, seemingly meant to appease parents or proponents of bilingual education, is actually inconsequential since it was designed in a way that discourages parents or schools from taking advantage of the option. Additionally, the law does not require schools to provide this information to parents. Many schools, unsure if providing parents with details on waivers or if providing alternative ESL options would make them liable in court for not complying with Proposition 227, simply refused to do either (Salomone, 2010, p.155).

Though failing to make the information available is problematic, the actual options available to ELL parents are even more disappointing. Despite the waiver information, their options are severely limited by the legislation’s guidelines. According

to the legislation, in order for students under the age of ten to qualify for bilingual education, they must already be considered proficient in English, a requirement that seems not only illogical, but also contradictory to the purpose of bilingual education. Parents who are determined to submit a waiver still face challenges in the complexity of rules governing how exactly the waiver needs to be written. One such difficulty is in the requirement that parents physically visit the school to submit the waiver, frustrating for many because school hours interfere directly with their work hours. Another complication is that requests do not carry over from grade to grade and instead must be made anew each year (Salomone, 2010, p.155).

For schools that wish to encourage alternative programming, overlooking these strict requirements is one option. Salomone mentions schools that simplify the rules by allowing parents to mail in waivers, by ignoring the request for detailed documentation of the need for bilingual education, and by permitting teachers to encourage parents to seek out alternative programs (p.155).

One strength of the policy is that it provides funding for adult-English literacy programs. The policy provides fifty million dollars of funding annually for family members or other community members interested in improving their English in order to help tutor ELL students (Proposition 227, Article 4, Section 315).

In reviewing Proposition 227, the primary questions are whether or not it has been effective in improving ESL education in California (to show whether or not there is strong evidence for English-only education) and also how the policy was passed (to understand how local and historical context interact with policy). While Proposition 227 has not seemed to have a negative affect on actual student achievement, it certainly has

not solved the problem. Achievement gaps still remain between ELL students and their English-speaking peers, but there has been evidence showing increased success in test scores for ELLs in California (Parrish et al., 2006, p. 203). One must consider this evidence, however, in context with the increased test scores of the English-speaking students. Rather than changing the achievement gap, Proposition 227 has only managed to perpetuate it (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 4). Furthermore, it is likely that the improved student scores are the result of the combination of changes of all the education-based policies enacted around the same time in California.

It is also important to note that the studies and interviews do not take into account the effect English-only education may have on student identity—a piece of the ESL education puzzle that is often overlooked when discussing a program's success. The law was passed at a time when anti-immigrant sentiment was at a high in California and it was this policy window that allowed for the initial passing of Proposition 227. The passing of Proposition 227 advanced the English-only movement to Arizona and Massachusetts, starting a national trend toward limiting bilingual education. The subsequent passing of the No Child Left Behind Act would solidify this national trend in its support for English-only education and removal of the term 'bilingual' in any reference to language policies.

Chapter 6

Bilingual Education

Bilingual education, the programming that promises to protect and develop both a student's native language as well as English, is serving approximately forty percent of the nation's students (Jost, 2009). Within bilingual education there exists a more traditional bilingual approach, referred to as transitional bilingual education, and developmental bilingual education, popularly referred to as dual language education. The structure of bilingual education varies between programs, but always includes the use of two separate languages in the classroom. ELL learners in bilingual classrooms are taught both in their native languages and in English.

In transitional bilingual education, students are first taught to read in their native language and then English reading instruction is slowly incorporated in the second or third years. Advocates of this form of ESL education believe that it builds a stronger educational base for ELL students because they are confident in two languages rather than one. James Crawford, president of the Institute for Language and Education Policy, in his 2009 article, *Bilingual Education vs. English Immersion: Which is Better for Students with Limited English?*, believes that “[b]uilding on—rather than discarding—students’ native-language skills creates a stronger foundation for success in English and academics.” The reality, however, is that there are no studies proving that one type of ESL education is more effective than another in terms of academic achievement (Zehr, 2010).

By understanding how bilingual education programs are incorporated into the classroom, however, one can see that the benefits of this type of education go beyond test scores. In her book, García explains four structures of transitional bilingual education. The native language can be distinct from English based on time constraints, language-specific teachers, place-determined separation, or by subject-controlled language use (p. 292). Bilingual classes based on time allot a predetermined amount of time spent learning one language before moving onto to the next. The school day can be split up as a routine—following the same pattern of language use each day at the same time, or it can be divided sporadically, ensuring only that the same amount of time is allotted to each language, but not specifying when each language will be used. The other three versions of bilingual education separate the languages in similar ways. In each, language use is designated to one particular teacher, subject or place. Students are able to absorb both languages because they are able to associate and expect the correct language at the correct time. Using these techniques, students eventually achieve a full understanding of each language (p. 294).

Because there are so many options available for bilingual programs (and within each of those options, even more possibilities exist), combinations of the different bilingual education structures are common (p. 295). This openness and variety of bilingual education reveals its place in the historical policy cycle; bilingual education is normally representative of a time in which the government imposes less strict regulation. This correlation is innate since heavy regulation would be difficult to monitor and would require specifying which cultures to study, which cannot be made without knowledge of the student body. This immense variation makes generalizing characteristics about

bilingual education programs difficult. There are, however, a few benefits in bilingual education that are common to each program.

By far, one of the strongest advantages to bilingual education is its inherent ability to incorporate student heritage into the classroom, a quality that has reappeared in policy since the sixties. As Edwards suggests in *Language Diversity in the Classroom*, “programs of bilingual education are seen (by their supporters) as potential agents of social change, as bulwarks of ethnolinguistic pluralism, [and] as forces for group identities thought to be at risk” (p. 272). By interweaving the native tongue into the classroom, bilingual education effectively connects a student’s culture and home life with education. An environment that encourages use of both languages helps students learn to balance both parts of their identities, allowing them to come to an earlier understanding of their biculturalism (p. 248). Many times, students have trouble accepting their ethnic backgrounds during their years in public school and are unable to connect with their families’ cultures until college—at which point, many students come to regret the delay in understanding the relationship between family heritage and popular American culture (Salomone, 2010, p. 92). Helping students to develop and understand their identities is an aspect of bilingual education that is often overlooked, but is equally, if not more important than student test scores. As Edwards writes, “[b]ilingualism and multilingualism implicate biculturalism and multiculturalism.” If students speak multiple languages in school, then it is also more likely that they will accept a mix of cultures as part of their personal identities.

Another benefit of bilingual education is that it allows students to maintain their native tongue more naturally than immersion programs. Both globally and domestically,

knowledge of a second language is helpful. Students who are not enrolled in a bilingual education program are not as prepared to utilize their second languages in comparison to those who participate in bilingual-education programming. In contrast to bilingual-education students, those participating in immersion programs, according to Edwards, are not able to communicate as well as the typical native speaker. He considers “Spanglish” an appropriate example of how immersion students learn a language (p. 260). While they are able to communicate well with family members, or perhaps even minimally with others, they do not have full competence or control over their native language.

One drawback to bilingual education is that it assumes every student (and the student’s parents) would like to maintain both cultures and both languages. In many instances, students want to break away from their home culture and embrace mainstream America (Edwards, 2010, p. 260). In other instances, parents are the people encouraging students to get involved in the American culture (Edwards, 2010, p. 262). In either case, if parents or students are more interested in joining American culture, why should they be required to continue learning and speaking in both English *and* their native tongue? Bilingual education is meant to protect a student’s right to language—not to force any type of unwanted education onto the student. As previously mentioned, bilingual education is generally associated with looser regulations, thus, the goal is to assist the students with their own ESL education choice, whatever that may be.

Another disadvantage to bilingual education is the separation of ELL students from typical English-speaking students. By taking students out of the typical English-speaking classroom and placing them in bilingual programs, ELL students may feel set apart from the typical student; a disconnect that may prove detrimental to student

identity. Bilingual education also disregards the needs of the English-speaking students; left unbothered and unaware in mainstream classrooms, these students miss out on an opportunity to learn another language and are less likely to connect with a sub-culture that exists within their community.

Though times of bilingual education are more student-centered overall, not just for those in the majority group, there are a few shortcomings in its implementation in schools. First, while bilingual education programs do a good job of incorporating culture and heritage into the curriculum for *some* students (i.e. the ELL students), it obviously does not consider the typical English-speaking student, who is not exposed to the bilingual aspects of education. To truly connect the entire community to the idea of multiculturalism, it is necessary that all students are involved in learning the school's languages and understanding the different cultures of the students. In the case of traditional bilingual education, a portion of the community—the English-speakers—are not asked, nor offered, to play an active role in the bicultural community. When English-speakers tire of playing such a passive role in ESL policy, the cycle normally phases back to English-only education policy trends. If English-speaking players could be included in the organization and participation of bilingual education, however, perhaps the policy cycle surrounding ESL education would be altered. By resolving these issues and expanding the expectations of the policy cycle, dual language education has slowly been gaining momentum in schools around the country over the last decade, and hopefully we will continue to see increased support as time goes on (García, 2009, p. 185).

Chapter 7

Dual Language Education

Dual language instruction is a type of bilingual education that aims to teach all students—both ELL and native English speakers, two languages. Up to this point in history though, it has not been a strong component of the policy cycle. While this style of education can focus on the combination of any two languages, dual language schools in the United States most commonly teach English and Spanish (García, 2009, p. 191). Ideally, in dual language classrooms, students simultaneously learn to understand two or more languages without any linguistic preference or favoritism showcased in the classroom. The approach to dual language education is similar to some transitional bilingual educations, except for the fact that it includes English speakers. Teachers in dual language classrooms can split language use by time of day or by subject focus. Dual language is a growing trend because it takes into consideration the importance of understanding a globalized world, while also supporting the camaraderie between different groups in local towns and communities (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 11).

In America dual language programs are frequently offered through charter schools, rather than as part of the mainstream public school curriculum (Wiley & Wright, 2004, p. 152). As the trend grows nationwide, however, many states are adopting school programming in dual language instruction. These states include Texas, Maine, New Mexico, New York, Washington, Illinois and even, surprisingly, California (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 17). One of the most extensive, mainstream school dual language programs exists in Texas, where this type of ESL education is available in the typical

school. Involving a student in this type of education in Texas requires no outside work or enrollment since it is through the public school. For parents to enroll their children in dual language programs in charter schools, there are generally many more steps to follow. As of 2002, there were fifty-two dual language elementary schools in Texas (Collier & Thomas, 2004, p. 6). Though there are no laws mandating dual language education, nor very many schools offering it due to language requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act, dual language programming does seem to be increasing.

The main appeal of dual language education is that it not only helps American students understand the importance of being bilingual, and helps them to actually achieve bilingual status, but that it helps to close the achievement gap between ELL learners and the mainstream student. When comparing dual language with both English-only and bilingual options, Collier and Thomas found that, “this is the only program that actually closes the gap” (p. 1). In a world where the global economy and international events become more important for the average citizen every day, dual language education helps to prepare students for their future roles as citizens of the world, not just of the United States. Salomone puts it nicely when she says, “Linguistic skills and transcultural sensitivities are essential. . .as the nation pushes the bounds of another frontier, this time with global dimensions” (p. 240). This global outlook, still current to modern day experiences, was previously obsolete and separate from the majority of education policy concerns. However, now that society needs to consider global impact and cooperation, dual language may become an important part of the policy cycle.

Speaking from personal experience, knowing two languages (English and Spanish) has helped connect me not only to my neighbors at home in Reading,

Pennsylvania, but also with the people and culture of Ecuador during a study abroad experience. It is common for citizens of many other countries to learn multiple languages from the time they are young—it is now time that America follows the trend and begins educating its students in foreign language(s) from the beginning of their school careers. Dual language programs treat languages not as problems or as rights for certain students, but rather as tools that can be used to effectively participate in world events.

Another benefit to dual language education that may be a bit unexpected is that it ensures (and essentially requires) parental involvement. Salomone, in her description of dual language programs, writes that “[p]arents typically must agree to keep their children in the program for a certain number of years and to remain actively involved in the school” (p. 192). Presently, in public school education in the United States, curious parents must actively seek out schools that offer dual language instruction, guaranteeing that they have a vested interest in the programs they choose (p. 192). After enrolling their children in these programs, parents must then agree to let their children remain in the schools for a number of years so that the students and the students’ classmates can benefit from the dual language education. Since dual language programming can be difficult, this parental support can be uplifting both for the student and for the school. Additionally, Collier and Thomas found that in dual language programs, “parents of both language groups tend to participate much more actively in the school, because they feel welcomed, valued and respected, and included in school decision-making” (p. 12).

Dual language fosters close relationships between students in the minority group and the English-speaking students. In a way, it creates a safe place for the children in the minority group because it provides them with a group of friends in the majority group.

According to Salaberry, these programs help student minorities to “survive and perhaps even thrive” in new communities (p. 189). Creating these friendships positively enhances students’ school experiences and also emphasizes the need to communicate with diverse groups of people. In dual language education, students learn about community through the use of languages. If dual language has no effect on community values, then at the very least, students from both groups learn to appreciate one another and their roles in the community.

Dual language is still an up and coming type of programming, however, and there are a number of obstacles preventing its emergence as the preferred ESL approach. To begin with, there is the concern that teachers might spend more quality time teaching in one of the languages, showing bias for one language over the other (Salaberry, 2009, p. 188). Another similar apprehension regards the language bias of the student. If the teacher divides the school day into Language One study subjects and Language Two study subjects, there is a good chance that students will gravitate toward the subjects taught in their primary language (p. 189). This unintentional student bias could potentially have an effect on what a student chooses to study in college, or in deciding which clubs and activities a student will join. Avoiding these two biases is critical for ensuring that students receive an equally strong education in both languages. To truly become bilingual through dual language education, students need to be exposed to the languages in a way that emphasizes the equal importance of each language and in a way that helps students grow in confidence in both their primary language and secondary language.

Another obstacle of dual language education is that while teachers, students, and parents in these classrooms likely value bilingualism and biculturalism, it can be difficult to transfer these general ideas to society as a whole (Salaberry, 2009, p. 189).

Communities in America may be slow to change; however, global perspective on bilingualism can be a source of encouragement for dual language scholars. Additionally, if incorporating dual language trends into the policy cycle is possible, societies will begin to naturally anticipate dual language policies and thus may be quicker to accept this ESL approach. Education in a dual language classroom “can provide children with a more encompassing cultural viewpoint that neither a mainstream educational approach, nor a minority language educational program could ever achieve on their own” (Salaberry, 2009, p. 193). This unique education offers its students a window into the global future, providing them with the foundation of a bilingual education, regardless of English-speaking status at the start of their education.

There is some concern for the potential cost of dual language programs, described by Salaberry in Chapter 9 of the book, *Language Allegiances and Bilingualism in the US*. She cites both the hiring of bilingual teachers and the continued training of these teachers as one potentially costly aspect of dual language education (p. 191). Another tricky piece of the dual language model is finding a balanced number of students from each linguistic group. As it is currently employed, dual language classrooms in the United States seem to be overwhelmingly comprised of Latino students (p. 190). Finding and transporting the right balance of students cannot only prove to be difficult, but may also incur extra expenses (p. 191).

Despite the challenges of a dual language classroom, the focus on becoming bilingual is important in today's world. I have witnessed firsthand one example of dual language education and was very impressed with the ease at which so many students could communicate in two languages. During a summer working as an outreach intern with the Reading Public Library, I spent time traveling, bringing library books and crafts to daycares around the city. The Reading Area Community College (RACC) daycare functioned in a dual language manner, setting aside certain activities and songs for the Portuguese language. It was also linguistically diverse in the employment of staff; some spoke only English and other staff members, only Spanish. It was fascinating to see the pre-schoolers (The children in this classroom ranged from ages two through four) interact with and understand all of the teachers in the classroom, regardless of the language in use.

A few changes can be made to dual language education that will make it both successful and desirable for future students, parents, educators and legislators. It is more effective when students are taught from a very young age in dual language classrooms. The younger a student is when exposed to a second language, the more easily a school can successfully balance the languages, without losing focus on the academics of subjects as a response for having to spend extra time explaining the language (Salaberry, 2009, p. 188). Additionally, policy changes are needed to encourage a shift in public sentiment away from English-focused approaches. By running public service announcements, or changing the requirements of federal policies, the government could play a positive role in encouraging second language acquisition, not only for ELL students, but for every student. The ultimate goal of dual language enthusiasts should be to overtake a portion of

the ESL policy cycle (a rotation normally shifting between English-only and traditional bilingual programs) in order to ensure that dual language programs will exist within our society, regardless of temporary policy changes.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

As one considers the United States of America's current place on the policy cycle of ESL legislation and trends, it is exciting to note that our country may finally be on the brink of incorporating a fresh approach to ESL education—not only for ELL students, but for English-speaking students as well. In reviewing the history of ESL education, our country's uncertainty regarding the best method of ESL education for ELL students is evident, and debates are ongoing. ESL approaches are constantly shifting from one end of the policy cycle to the other and, as society's values change, ELL students should expect to experience more modifications to ESL education. Rather than falling back into the pattern of alternating between English-only education programs and traditional bilingual education programs, the United States will hopefully see a boost in dual language programming. Ultimately, the hope is that the policy cycle expands from rotations between the current two main types of ESL education to include dual language instruction as the desired, primary method. This potential change in the policy cycle is possible because the current education climate presently rests on middle ground.

The contrasts between the strict regulation of the NCLB Act and the flexibility of the Race to the Top funding allocations, offer no clear indication as to what attitude or atmosphere will define ESL policy during this administration, thus, it is the perfect time to try something new. Obama's "Blueprint for Reform," which explains the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and was released in

March 2010, highlights a few goals of the Department of Education in regard to the education of English Language Learners. First, the bill calls for formula grants to help provide “high-quality language instruction” to English Language Learners, and while all types of ESL education are mentioned as options, dual language programs are the first type of programming referenced, suggesting a possible preference. By including all methods of ESL approaches in the list of potential grant-winning programs, however, there is a chance that schools will maintain or rework pre-existing English-only or bilingual programs rather than attempt to begin an entirely new program. This report also calls for funding for research in “developing effective practices to improve English Learner outcomes.” As research broadens the extent to which ESL education is understood, this country will be able to abandon ineffective ESL methods and implement instruction that actually works.

One recent, fundamental finding of ESL research demonstrates that bilingual education and English-only education work equally well and this finding may create the ideal policy window for legislators and school administrators to begin investing in and encouraging dual language education programs (Slavin et al., 2010). Another development in today’s current context, which is mentioned in Obama’s “Blueprint,” and that promotes dual language learning, is the rate at which technology is advancing and the growing influence of the global community. As international communication continues to increase and more professions require global relations, the need to speak and understand more than one language will be undeniable. Dual language education teaches all students, not just minority student groups, to speak a second language, something that will undoubtedly be useful later in life.

To best restructure the nation's education system, policy-makers need to consider how education affects all student groups. As ELL students continue to make up a large portion of the American student body, education programs that help students mature in both language acquisition and their sense of self-worth are crucial. Dual language programs are able to incorporate multiple languages into the mainstream classroom, simultaneously teaching language skills and appreciation for student backgrounds. While further research investigating both the long-term effects of dual language education on student achievement, and the best means of implementing these programs is needed, current research supports the effectiveness of dual language programs. Historically, the effort to limit language use to English has been in an attempt to unite the diverse populations of this country; dual language programs have a similar aim, but, rather than rejecting immigrant culture and language, they promote unity through understanding. Unlike English-only and bilingual education, dual language programs connect students growing up in multicultural settings, ultimately strengthening communities and encouraging global awareness.

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