

English-Only/Official vs. Bilingual Education/Bilingualism: A Critical Examination of Language Policy and Language Planning in the United States

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Abstract

Linguistic diversity, a phenomenon that has existed in the United States since the beginning of its history as a nation, has become a highly contentious issue in recent decades. As a result of the continuous controversies over English-only/Official vs. bilingual education/bilingualism, language policy and planning have often come to the forefront of political debates in the United States. This paper critically examines U.S. language controversies within several dominant theoretical frameworks of language planning and policy. The examination indicates that under the tremendous impact of the dominant language-as-problem orientation, standard English, and English monolingualism, U.S. language policy is largely restrictive in nature, and heavily encumbered by politics and ideology. The real agendas underlying the language policy debates of the early 21st century are not about language *per se*; rather, they are more about immigration. Specifically, the source of language controversies lies in the more fundamental problems regarding social stratification and inter-ethnic competition, rather than the increased language diversity in the contemporary American society. This paper concludes with several proposed avenues to shape a more supportive and positive language policy in the U.S..

Keywords: bilingual education, English-only movement, English Official, language policy, LEP

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Introduction

Historically the United States has been a nation of immigrants. The American linguistic mosaic has constantly undergone changes by flows of immigration during different time periods throughout its history. Although an English-speaking nation comprised of people from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the United States has never designated English in its Constitution as the country's official language and a symbol of American identity. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the number of people immigrating to the U.S. was higher than during any other decade of U.S. history, and such high levels of immigration have sustained during 2000-2004 (Capps et al. 5). The recent dramatic demographic shifts, like those that took place decades earlier, have raised serious concerns among language policy makers and the general public regarding the impact that this growing linguistic diversity may have on the U.S. as a unified country.

Linguistic diversity, a phenomenon that has existed in the United States since the beginning of its history as a nation, did not become a major theme until the beginning of the twentieth century. With the influx of sharply increased immigrants between 1880 to 1920, the Americanization campaign arose and language restrictionism flourished in response to fears that these newcomers were resisting assimilation into the American mainstream and unwilling to learn English (Wiley, "Heritage" 252). The resurgence of battles over language along with a new wave of language restrictionism, as manifested in the English-only movement since the 1980s, has brought language policy issues into controversial prominence up to the present.

The ongoing English-only movement, albeit still unable to achieve its ultimate goal of a constitutional amendment making English the official language of the United States, has successfully led to the adoption of English-only or Official English measures by 23 states during the past two decades (Crawford, "Language Legislation"). Moreover, in recent years, several states, including California (Proposition 227), Arizona (Proposition 203), and Massachusetts (Question 2), have passed ballot initiatives that impose English-only instruction and substantially restrict bilingual education (Rolstad et al. 573). At the federal level, similar restrictive policies for English language learning (ELL) students also are embedded in the recent educational reform measure known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, which emphasizes the acquisition of English and the rapid transition to English-only instruction (Rolstad et al. 590). Meanwhile, due to the rise of the English-only campaign in the political and the educational spheres, Wiley and

Wright argued that “there has been a steady *undertow* of resistance to bilingualism and bilingual education” (143). Such resistance, in effect, has exerted a tremendous impact on those involved in the education of ELL students nationwide, especially those professionals and practitioners in the field of bilingual education.

Despite the fact that around the world bilingualism, as well as bilingual education, is a prevalent phenomenon, development of bilingual competency in the United States, however, is often treated with scant regard and even viewed with disfavor. A recent survey has indicated that 52.7% of Europeans speak both their native language and another language fluently, whereas in the United States the percentage drops to only 9.3% (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). Bilingual education in the American context is commonly regarded as remedial programs for linguistic minorities who are often the poor and the disadvantaged (Ruíz, “Orientations” 6-10). Underlying many arguments against bilingual education is the assumption that proficiency in English is equated with political loyalty to the United States and what it means to be an “American” (Wiley, “Comparative Historical Analysis” 26; Lessow-Hurley 143). The use of a minority language besides English in bilingual schooling, therefore, has not just been attacked as a barrier to the learning of English, but also viewed as a threat to national unity (Crawford, “Anatomy” 6).

Proponents of bilingual education, on the other hand, argue that maintenance of ethnic language and culture is a fundamental human right and the logical outcome of true democracy (Wolfson 240). Moreover, research has provided considerable support for the effectiveness of bilingual education programs. A recent meta-analysis of program effectiveness research by Rolstad et al. has demonstrated that bilingual education is consistently superior to English-only approaches in promoting language minority students’ academic achievement (590). By meeting the special learning needs of children who are limited English proficient (LEP),¹ Crawford argued that bilingual education enhances educational opportunities for LEP students and provides them with an equal chance to succeed in the mainstream society (108-110).

As a result of the continuous battles between English-only/Official and bilingual education/bilingualism, language policy and planning have often come to the forefront of political debate in the United States. Though relatively young as an

¹ The terms LEP and ELL are in general synonymous and are often used interchangeably. They both refer to children who come from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and have insufficient proficiency in English to succeed in an English-only classroom. LEP is the official term used in the law but it has a deficit connotation (Wiley and Wright 163; Capps et al. 37).

academic field, language policy and planning has experienced significant growth during the past several decades (Wiley, "Language Planning" 103). For example, Ricento and Hornberger indicated that scholars from various disciplines have continuously contributed new insights into this field and helped broaden and deepen its scope of inquiry (401-402). Also, several theoretical approaches have been developed and elaborated to provide richer descriptions and explanations of how political, cultural, and socioeconomic variables influence the language planning process (e.g., Ruíz; Tollefson; Donahue; Ricento and Hornberger; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas; Christian; Wiley; Crawford; Barker and Giles).

Although the contention between English-only/Official and bilingual education/bilingualism in the U.S. has been discussed in a rich body of literature, rarely has its recent development been inspected from the language policy and planning perspective. This paper critically examines language policy issues in the contemporary U.S. within several dominant theoretical frameworks of language planning and policy. The paper is divided into five sections. The first section addresses basic concepts underlying the study of language planning and policy. In addition, it discusses major theoretical orientations and approaches to research on language planning, including three scholarly views of language: Ruíz's orientation framework, Kachru's world Englishes paradigm, and Tollefson's neoclassical vs. historical-structural approach. The second section provides an overview of the vicissitudes of language policies in U.S. history, with special emphasis placed on a discussion of language restrictionism and its development in the early 21st century. The third section describes and analyzes the dominant ideologies and contradictory philosophies that have shaped the contexts for language policy and planning in the U.S. The fourth section examines a number of arguments and agendas underlying the controversies over current U.S. language policy. Finally, the paper concludes with several proposed avenues to shape a more supportive and positive language policy in the U.S..

I. Basic Concepts and Dominant Theoretical Approaches to Language Policy and Planning

Language policy, according to Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas's definition, refers to "the decisions on rights and access to languages and on the roles and functions of particular languages and varieties of language in a given polity" (434). Language policy deals with language matters at the collective level and is guided by overall policy considerations. The practical and operational concerns for the formulation and implementation of a language policy are the major tasks of

language planning. The primary components commonly found in various definitions of language planning are “a conscious and deliberate language change” and “to solve communication problems,” as explicated in the following definition proposed by Weinstein:

Language planning is a government authorized, longterm, sustained, and conscious effort to alter a language’s function in a society for the purpose of solving communication problem. (56)

Language planning conventionally consists of three types: corpus, status, and acquisition planning. Corpus planning concerns the changes within the language itself; status planning deals with the relationships between languages; and acquisition planning is concerned with the users of language (Ricento and Hornberger 402-403; Fishman, “Sociolinguistic Foundations” 9; Wiley, “Language Planning” 108-110). Weinstein highlighted two major forces involved in the deliberate attempt to make or impose language decisions: governmental language planners and influential individuals (“language strategists,”² is the term he uses) (62). In decentralized countries such as in the U.S., language decisions appear to be more open and language policies tend to be shaped by the convergence of various forces coming from unofficial but influential practices (Wiley, “Language Planning” 111). In other words, unlike official, explicit policies that are prescribed by the government, the unofficial, implicit language policies in the U.S. context, although unwritten in law, are embedded in institutional practices. For example, despite the fact that the U.S. has never declared English as the official language in law, its official status in public affairs and government operations has been widely-recognized and well-established (Kachru and Nelson 78; Ruíz, “Language Policy” 111). Moreover, even without an explicitly formalized language policy at the federal level, U.S. language policies toward the use and learning of English and other languages are manifested through implicit actions in the forms of legislation, budget allocations and regulations (Christian, “Federal Education Legislation” 117-118). In contrast to “written laws” which can be contested as unconstitutional if perceived as violating basic national values, Heath and Mandabach argue that it would be much more difficult to contest language restrictions that are imposed through unwritten and implicit laws. More discussion of restrictive language policies will be provided later in this paper.

² Language strategists are those influential individuals who “innovate linguistically in order to promote political, social, or economic interests” (Weinstein 62). These individuals include cultural elites such as writers, translators, poets, missionaries, publishers, and dictionary makers.

Although language planning basically attempts to solve communication problems, Wiley has pointed out that it can also cause communication problems and language conflicts when one group imposes language policies upon another (“Language Planning” 112). These problems occur because in competition for power and dominance between groups, language is often the surface surrogate for other nonlinguistic factors underlying language conflicts. These conflicts, by and large, “incorporate symbolic struggles over cultural, religious, ethnic, or national identity” (Crawford, “Anatomy” 10). To uncover the underlying factors that lead to communication problems or language conflicts, we now turn to three theoretical frameworks of language policy and planning: Ruíz’s orientations model, Kachru’s world Englishes paradigm, and Tollefson’s neoclassical and historical-structural approaches.

1. “Language as Means” vs. “Language as Sentimental Attachment”

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Ruíz identifies two scholarly views of language that are at the basis of language planning: Tauli’s “language as means” and Kelman’s “language as sentimental attachment” (4-6). As a means, language is viewed not only as an instrument of communication, but also as an instrument to political power, economic attainment, and social prestige (Tauli 49; Ruíz, “Language Policy” 111-112). Wiley and Lukes elaborate on this view and indicate that in discussing underlying factors affecting language policy formation, a growing number of scholars have focused on language as an instrument of social control (e.g., Leibowitz, Weinstein, and Tollefson) (516). From this viewpoint, language policy and planning are seen as mechanisms for “locating language into social structure so that language determines who has access to political power and economic resources” (Tollefson 16).

Given that people’s language affiliations compose a significant aspect of self-expression and self-identification (Kachru and Nelson 89; Ruíz, “Orientations” 12), the formation of language policies, therefore, can be based on people’s sentimental attachments to their languages. However, the view that U.S. English speakers have developed toward their language, according to Fishman, is strongly instrumental (“Language Policy” 516). That is, they view English as a *lingua franca*, an instrumentality, rather than something to take pride in or be sentimental about. Ruíz further notes that this viewpoint has been elaborated into a tendency of seeing English as an instrument of social power, as reflected in the popular belief that mastery of English leads to social mobility (“Language Policy” 111).

2. Orientations in Language Planning

The three orientations proposed by Ruíz—language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource—represent three basic typologies underlying people’s attitudes and dispositions toward language and its role in society (“Orientations” 6-17). Language-as-problem orientation tends to see language diversity as problematic not only because it hinders the incorporation of linguistic and cultural minority groups into the dominant society, but because it also causes social problems and leads to social divisiveness and political instability (6-10). Language-as-right orientation, on the other hand, advocates that language is a basic human right (10-14). The denial of a people’s use of its native language, Hernández-Chávez argued, “is a denial of its participation in society and of its very peoplehood” (45). A third orientation, language-as-resource, views minority languages as resources for the entire society that should be managed, developed and conserved (Ruíz, “Orientations” 14-18).

In view of the different orientations lying hidden in people’s attitudes toward language, it is to be expected that many conflicts over language issues can be attributed to the contradictions among these three orientations. Considering U.S. language issues within this orientation framework, Ruíz points out that many problems of bilingual education in the U.S. result from the conflicts between the “problem” and “rights” orientations (“Orientations” 16). He suggests that the development of a language-as-resource orientation could hold some promise for alleviating some of the conflicts of the other two, and thus, is vital to the interest of language planning in the U.S. (17-18).

3. The World Englishes Paradigm

With the diffusion of English among speakers of linguistically and culturally diverse groups across the globe, English is by now the most widely taught, learned, and spoken language in the world (Y. Kachru and Nelson 9). The estimated percentage of English users worldwide ranges from 18 to 36 percent, with nonnative users of English vastly outnumbering native users (B. Kachru 452). Because of the diverse localized varieties into which it has transformed and the multiple identities it has adopted, English has in reality become a pluricentric language that has “more than one accepted standard and set of norms for creativity” (B. Kachru and Nelson 71). To conceptualize such pluricentricity, Braj B. Kachru constructed the “world Englishes paradigm” more than two decades ago by identifying the different varieties of English around the world within the concentric-circle schematization:

the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles³ (Y. Kachru and Nelson 27-29; B. Kachru and Nelson 77-78). The three circles model not only acknowledges the great variety of users and uses of English today, it also provides sociolinguistically realistic interpretations of the status and functions of contemporary Englishes in its diverse pluralistic contexts.

Language policy and planning under the world Englishes paradigm challenges the very concepts of “standard English” and “native speaker ownership.” From the world Englishes viewpoint, the term “language” represents an idealization. Individuals do not in actuality speak a “language;” rather, they speak a “variety” of a language, or a “dialect,” with standard English being “one particular dialect among many hundred” (Strevens, qtd. in B. Kachru and Nelson 74; Y. Kachru and Nelson 10). Moreover, the world Englishes paradigm resists the hegemony of a monocentric view based on native speaker standards, but it in effect advocates a pluricentric view based on local or regional norms (Jenkins 160-162). Given that people who hold the notion of “native speaker ownership” regard English as the linguistic property that belongs to its native users (or the old Inner-Circle users), they construe any difference in a nonstandard variety of English as deficiency or mistake (Jenkins 171; Y. Kachru and Nelson 33). Nonetheless, the belief in “native speaker ownership,” Bolton argues, ignores the sociolinguistic reality of local Englishes’ use and contributes to the stigmatization of local language users (78). In view of its multiple identities and its widespread use around the globe, B. Kachru maintains that English should no longer be regarded as the exclusive property of the Inner-Circle users, but as an immense linguistic resource shared by all members of the world Englishes community (455).

4. Neoclassical and Historical-structural Approaches to Language Planning

In examining the ideological assumptions underlying approaches to research on language policy and planning, Tollefson contrasts the neoclassical approach with the historical-structural approach. The fundamental difference between these two approaches is that the neoclassical approach focuses on the rational decisions of

³ Braj B. Kachru introduced the concentric-circle schematization of world Englishes as follows: The Inner Circle comprises the old-variety English-using countries such as the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where English is the first or dominant language. The Outer Circle represents countries such as India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, and Zambia, where English is institutionalized. The Expanding Circle comprises countries such as China, Japan, and Korea where English has limited roles in the public life and very restricted functions in the personal domain (B. Kachru 453; B. Kachru and Nelson 77-78; Y. Kachru and Nelson 27-29).

individuals, whereas the historical-structural approach emphasizes the sources of the constraints on individual decision making (22-42).

Guided by the research on learner variables in the field of second language acquisition, the neoclassical approach assumes that factors affecting language learning and language use reside within the individual. That is, learners' characteristics (such as their attitudes, values, and motivation) determine their success in acquiring a second language or assimilating into the dominant culture. This model also assumes that individuals affected by language policies analyze and weigh the costs and benefits of alternatives and then make a rational decision based on such an analysis (Tollefson 31-32). The sociohistorical, political, and economic factors that constrain individuals' decisions, however, are outside the scope of the neoclassical approach. In the same vein, Ricento and Hornberger have noted that this approach assumes that decisions by planners and policymakers are also based upon a cost-benefit analysis of competing language plans without taking into account the historical and structural pressures that lead to particular policy decisions (406).

The historical-structural approach, in contrast, emphasizes broader historical and structural forces that influence language policy and planning. The primary goal of policy research is "to examine the historical basis of policies and to make explicit the mechanisms by which policy decisions serve or undermine particular political and economic interests" (Tollefson 32). According to Tollefson, this approach assumes that all language policies and plans serve to maintain the sociopolitical and economic interests of the dominant groups. In addition, this approach tends to view language as a mechanism of social control by dominant groups and language planning as an instrument to sustain social inequality (Wiley and Lukes 527-530). Within the historical-structural approach, language problems are seen to result from social stratification, and social stratification is seen as being rooted in the history of institutions and group relationships. Therefore, Wiley argues, if the origins of conflict that lead to language problems are to be understood, the history of the social relationships between groups with unequal power must be examined ("Language Planning" 117; "Comparative Historical Analysis" 19-20).

By locating language planning and policy within broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, the historical-structural approach uncovers implicit ideologies underlying language policy formation, and thus, provides richer explanations and descriptions of conflicts over language policy issues than the neoclassical approach does (Ricento and Hornberger 406-408; Wiley, "Comparative Historical Analysis" 19). In the rest of this paper, the historical-structural perspective will be adopted in an examination of the debates over current U.S. language policy. In light of the importance of history to an understanding of conflicts over language issues

from a historical-structural perspective, it is necessary to review the vicissitudes of language policies in U.S. history.

II. A Historical Overview of U.S. Language Policy

Historically and presently, the United States has been a predominantly English-speaking nation and linguistic diversity has always been part of its national heritage. However, it is not until recently that a growing awareness arises among Americans at the national level that the country is multilingual (Wardhaugh 359), partly because the nation never has a comprehensive language policy. The vicissitudes of language policies in the U.S., Hernández-Chávez notes, have “reflected the political and economic conditions prevalent in an era, and the popular attitudes that these have engendered” (49). A review of U.S. history reveals that the nation’s language policy has developed along a cyclical or spiral pattern, in which languages other than English have been tolerated and even officially recognized at one time but restricted and even legally forbidden at another (Cartagena 11-24; Marshall 7-75; Molesky, 44-63; Crawford 9-27). In the account that follows, I modify the chronological framework developed by Marshall and divide the history of U.S. language policy into four major periods for discussion: the early decades of national America to 1860; 1861 to 1922; 1923 to 1969; and 1970 to the present (7-22). Special emphasis will be placed on the historical-structural factors that affect the formation of language restrictionist policies and their development in the early 21st century.

1. Early Decades of National America to 1860

The early decades of the republic were characterized as a period of tolerance toward linguistic diversity. That the Constitution did not declare an official language for the U.S., according to Heath, was not an oversight of the Founding Fathers but a deliberate and conscious policy decision (6). Such decision was made partially based on the need of the new nation to attract immigrants so that it could grow (Marshall 10-11). It was also based on the democratic spirit upon which the new nation was founded, and the British tradition of viewing language as a matter of individual choice instead of something mandated by laws (Heath and Mandabach 7; Marshall 11). During this period, national attitudes toward multilingualism were positive, and there was little concern about the possibility of national disunity caused by linguistic diversity.

2. 1861 to 1922

The first wave of language restrictionist policies arrived in the mid-nineteenth century (Cartagena 13). With the influx of large numbers of immigrants during this period, attitudes toward multilingualism began to change, and language restrictions emerged and served to exclude and discriminate against various minority and immigrant groups (Hernández-Chávez 45-55; Wiley, "Comparative Historical Analysis" 29). Because the majority of the newcomers were darker-skinned peoples coming from southern and eastern Europe who were often non-English-speaking and non-Protestant, their arrival evoked strong xenophobic reaction and nativist sentiments among those earlier immigrants from northern and western Europe (Molesky 44-53). With increasing concerns expressed about the loss of national unity due to linguistic diversity, the Americanization movement arose in the early twentieth century to promote English supremacy and social assimilation. To exclude immigrants from economic and political participation in American life, laws began to favor an English literacy requirement for immigration, employment, and voting (Marshall 11-15).

With the country's entry into World War I against Germany in 1917, anti-German, as well as anti-foreign, feelings reached their peak and language restrictionist sentiment extended to include all languages other than English (Lessow-Hurley 140-141). By 1923, thirty-four states had passed laws restricting instruction in elementary schools to English only (Leibowitz, qtd. in Molesky 42). Concomitant with language restrictionist policies were restrictive immigration laws that aimed to control the number and racial distribution of immigrants. The Quota Law established in 1921, for example, favored ethnic groups from northwestern European countries but limited the entry of non-English-speaking Europeans and virtually excluded all Asians (Crawford, "Anatomy" 22). The years from 1861 to 1922, therefore, can be characterized as a period of language and immigration restrictionism during which language was often the surface surrogate for hidden racial discrimination, religious intolerance, and political hostility toward non-English populations.

3. 1923 to 1969

The period between 1923 to 1969, as Marshall indicates, experienced "the swing of the pendulum away from antipathy and toward promotion of language rights" and marked a relaxation of restrictionism and a move toward tolerance and linguistic accommodation (20). In 1923, the Supreme Court effectively ended language restrictive laws enacted in the previous period by ruling in *Meyer v. Nebraska* that prohibition of the use or teaching of a foreign language was unconstitutional (Cartagena 13). In addition, the experience of World War II not only heightened the awareness among Americans of the importance of foreign

languages as national defense resources, but also raised the consciousness of minority groups about their own status and rights (Lessow-Hurley 118-120; Marshall 18-21). The increased ethnic self-consciousness triggered minority group struggles for civil rights and voting rights in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which, in turn, paved the way for the legislation of language rights in education.

In 1968, the passage of the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) was significant not only because it symbolized the first legal and federal acknowledgement of the special educational needs of students whose native languages were not English, but also because it had a positive effect on the political climate for the establishment and implementation of bilingual programs. Prior to the Act, minority language background was largely ignored in the schools and LEP students were placed in mainstream all-English programs (Wiley and Wright 163). Although the Act did not mandate bilingual education for all LEP students, and despite the fact that the services offered were encouraged by the availability of funds and were not intended to be comprehensive, it did, in effect, evince a national policy of accommodation regarding special instructional services for LEP students (Christian, "Federal Education Legislation" 124). More importantly, the Act, along with the subsequent court ruling in *Lau v Nichols* and the judicial guidelines *Lau Remedies*, reflected the significant impact that the sociopolitical climate and the civil rights movement exerted on the change in language policy toward language minorities during this period.

4. 1970 to Present

Once again, the previous period of tolerance and accommodation for linguistic diversity has alternated with a period of linguistic restrictionism. An increasingly hostile political climate engendered by a new wave of immigration restrictionism has led to a backlash against bilingualism and has reversed the achievements of the civil rights movement in education for LEP students. Ever since the Immigration Act of 1965 abolished the national origin quota system and discrimination against Asians, massive waves of immigrants from all over the world have come to the United States. At the turn of the millennium, immigration flows reached the highest number in the U.S. history, and such high levels of immigration have sustained during 2000-2004 (Capps et al. 5; Suarez-Orozco 349). Unlike those who came prior to 1965, the most recent post-1965 wave of immigrants has come not from Europe or Canada but from mainly Latin America and Asia. This rapidly rising immigration has resulted in dramatic demographic shifts in U.S. elementary and secondary schools, as demonstrated in a sharp increase in the enrollment of students of immigrants and LEP students in schools nationwide. Between 1994 and 2005, the total K-12 student enrollment increased only 2.59%, whereas LEP student

enrollment during the same period grew by 60.76% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs). Such demographic shifts have further increased the already great linguistic diversity of the nation, greatly altered the linguistic profile of the nation's student population, and significantly fuelled strong anti-immigrant sentiments and language restrictionism.

Opponents of immigration contend that the growing language diversity brought by immigrants threatens the hegemony of English and inevitably leads to political separatism (Wiley, "Heritage" 252; Crawford, "Anatomy" 6). Moreover, the provision of bilingual services for government business was attacked for being "both as a drain on the country's economy and a crutch for immigrants who refused to learn English" (Cashman 45). Driven by these anti-immigrant and anti-bilingual sentiments, along with factors such as economic frustrations, anxieties about cultural change, and perceived threats engendered by the new immigrants, the modern English-only movement began in the early 1980s as a backlash against bilingualism and bilingual education. With its ultimate goal of designating English as the national language of the U.S., the English-only/Official movement has continued to push for language restrictionist policies at the state and federal levels. Although the proposals of constitutional amendment have never come to a Congressional vote so far, the movement has gained remarkable support on the state level. Since the 1980s, 23 states have adopted English-as-official-language laws prohibiting the use of languages other than English for governmental business (Crawford, "Language Legislation").

With the rise of the English-only movement, the advancements made under the Bilingual Education Act to transform the way of educating LEP students soon came under attack. For example, despite the fact that federally-funded bilingual education programs served less than 30% of California's 1.4 million LEP students, anti-bilingual activists charged that these programs performed poorly in educating LEP students, resulting in the persistence of high failure and dropout rates, especially among Latino students (Wiley and Wright 150; Crawford, "Political Paradox" 94-95). In other words, these bilingual education programs were condemned for the widespread educational underachievement of LEP students even though the majority of them did not even receive any bilingual instruction. Furthermore, the passage of Proposition 227 in California (1998), Proposition 203 in Arizona (2000), and Question 2 in Massachusetts (2002) has substantially restricted bilingual education in these states by imposing English-only instruction (Rolstad et al. 573).

At the federal level, language education policy for LEP students has changed dramatically as the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was repealed and replaced with the English Acquisition Act concurrently with the passage of the No Child Left

Behind (NCLB) Act. NCLB, as Capps et al. define, is “the landmark 2002 federal law that holds schools accountable for the academic performance of limited English speaking children and other groups that include many children of immigrants” (1). NCLB also has set a 12-year timetable for closing the persistent disparities in academic performance between White and non-White students by 2014 (Stiefel 528). Although NCLB does not directly eradicate bilingual education, Wiley and Wright argue, the law no longer mandates or even encourages the use of native language for instructional purposes (162). Rather, it emphasizes the attainment of English proficiency with virtually no regard to native language development and, with its newly imposed accountability measures, it pressures schools to emphasize rapid transition to English-only instruction (Rolstad et al. 573).

As a result of the political backlash and hostility toward bilingual education, coupled with the implementation of Proposition 227 and NCLB that promotes all-English approaches, the availability of bilingual education for English language learning students has been on a downward trajectory in California. Based on the source from the California Department of Education, Crawford reports that in 1997-1998, one year before Proposition 227 took effect, the percentage of ELL student enrollment in bilingual programs was 29.1%. The percentage immediately plummeted to 11.7% the following year. After NCLB launched a series of national reform efforts in 2002, the percentage of ELL students receiving bilingual instruction in California schools dropped to 6.1% in 2005-2006 (Crawford, “The Decline of Bilingual Education”). In view of the statistical results and the dominance of language restrictionism, coupled with the 12-year educational reform measure NCLB that promotes all-English instruction, to reverse the decline of bilingual education is a prospect that seems rather unlikely in the near future.

An inspection of the vicissitudes of language policies in the U.S. history as delineated above reveals that language conflicts in the U.S. have mostly occurred during and after the arrival of large waves of immigration. This, according to Wiley, is because “people who had previously enjoyed privilege and high status feel threatened by a newly mobilized language minority group” (“Language Planning” 106). With the growing Spanish-speaking population in the U.S., Barker and Giles argue that the dominant Anglo-American majority may feel a sense of threat by the encroachment of other heritage languages and seek legal protection for English, even though such perception of threat is not based upon objective fact but upon sheer supposition (“English-only Policies” 79). In response to public agitation against immigrant participation in the American society, language restrictionist policies have been formulated and imposed by the dominant group upon linguistic minorities mainly in the forms of literacy requirements and legal protection of a unifying official language.

The motivation to impose English literacy requirements has been based on the “degree of hostility” that the majority group holds toward the language minority group “usually because of race, color, or religion” (Leibowitz, qtd. in Wiley, “Comparative Historical Analysis” 25). Literacy requirements were in fact used as gatekeeping mechanisms to exclude immigrants from obtaining citizenship (Cartagena 14; Wiley, “Comparative Historical Analysis” 25). Similarly, because not all groups are treated equally or afforded equal access to power and resources, designating English as U.S.’s official language would provide a legal basis to discriminate against those who are already the objects of cultural and racial prejudice, thereby blocking them from entering the social and economic mainstream (Crawford, *Bilingual Education* 58-59). From the historical-structural perspective, the restrictionist language policies in the U.S. can therefore be viewed as instruments of social control that serve to maintain the interests of the dominant group and sustain unequal social boundaries among ethnic groups.

Restrictions on the use of languages other than English in the U.S. have been imposed not only through official policies in a number of states but also through implicit sanctions and the unwritten laws of institutions (Heath and Mandabach 101; Ruíz, “Language Policy” 118-120). For example, by mandating that schools be held accountable for improving LEP students’ English proficiency, NCLB’s accountability measures implicitly urge schools to abandon bilingual instruction in favor of English-only approaches. What underlies these unofficial practices and the official decisions on language use are ideologies toward language diversity that are widely accepted in popular thought (Wiley and Lukes 512). In other words, these dominant ideologies shape U.S. language policies at the most fundamental level. To portray a clearer picture of current debates over English-only/Official and bilingualism/bilingual education, an analysis of the dominant ideologies affecting U.S. language policy-making and planning is called for and illustrated as follows.

III. Dominant Language Ideologies in the United States

1. Linguistic Assimilation, Anglo-conformity, and Cultural Pluralism

One dominant ideology that motivates U.S. language policy-making and planning decisions is linguistic assimilation (Wardhaugh 358). The assumption underlying this ideology is that everyone, regardless of origin, should assimilate into the mainstream culture by learning the dominant language of the society. This ideology is also reflected in the classic “melting pot” image commonly used to characterize American society. In the melting pot, all the elements are expected to

go through the process of Anglo-conformity by accepting the English language and being socialized into the English-oriented cultural patterns and values (Paulston 475). The ideal of Anglo-conformity is easily identifiable in the idea of an English language amendment promoted by the English-only/Official movement.

Given that the Anglo-conformist view obscures the diversity of cultures that constitutes the foundation of the nation and the efforts of various ethnic groups to preserve them, a cultural pluralist view that encourages acceptance of cultural and linguistic diversity has emerged (Crawford, *Bilingual Education* 65). The most common metaphor for the cultural pluralist view is the “salad bowl,” in which all the ingredients are thrown together to make contributions to the whole, but each one retains its original distinctive character (Lessow-Hurley 147; Marshall 33). Proponents of cultural pluralism argue that society should encourage the maintenance of mother tongues and assure cultural and linguistic rights of minorities (Leibowicz 108).

Consistent with the language-as-resource orientation and the pluricentric view advocated by the world Englishes paradigm, the cultural pluralist view emphasizes the social value of conserving and developing minority language competence. Albeit popularly embraced by advocates of bilingual education, cultural pluralism is constantly marginalized politically and attacked by supporters of the English-only agenda (Crawford, “Political Paradox” 90-91). From an ideological perspective, the conflict over bilingual education/bilingualism and English-only/Official can therefore be viewed as residing in the underlying controversy between cultural pluralism and Anglo-conformity.

2. Monolingual English Ideology and Language-as-problem Orientation

Parallel with the dominant ideologies of linguistic assimilation and Anglo-conformity is the ideology of English monolingualism. The assumption underlying this ideology, according to Wiley, is that “English monolingualism represents an ideal natural state, whereas multilingualism represents a temporarily abnormal condition” (“Language Planning” 105). Although around the world bilingualism is more the norm than the exception, a widely held view in the U.S. presumes English monolingualism to be a natural and ideal condition. The dominance of the monolingual English ideology can be attributed to the preponderance of language-as-problem orientation since the 1960s.

Due to the coincidence of the need for language training for linguistic minority groups with a general social concern for the disadvantaged in the late 1950s, language issues became linked with the social problems characteristic of these groups (Ruíz, “Orientations” 7). These social problems included poverty, handicap,

low educational achievement, and little or no social mobility. Because of their lack of English language proficiency, linguistic minorities have commonly been viewed as having a linguistic barrier that should be overcome through transition to English monolingualism. This language-as-problem view of language diversity still prevails in contemporary U.S. language policy. In this view, maintenance of heritage languages poses a hindrance to the learning of English and even a vital threat to social integration and national unity, whereas English monolingualism is prescribed as the primary remedy for problems caused by multilingualism.

3. Ideology of Individualism

Problem-oriented attitudes toward language are not only manifested in the monolingual English ideology as outlined above, but are embodied in the popularly accepted ideology of individualism. The ideology of individualism, according to Wiley and Lukes, is the ideology of social mobility through individual ability and effort (516). A commonly held belief related to this ideology is that English is an equal opportunity language, and thus, mastery of English through education is seen as the means to social mobility (527). Like the neoclassical approach to language planning research noted previously, the ideology of individualism assumes that the causal variables in language learning are located within the individual. Based on such an assumption, educational failure and English language deficiencies are seen as individual problems caused by factors such as motivation and attitudes, rather than as a result of “systematic, institutional inequity between groups” (Wiley and Lukes 517). Moreover, due to the prevalence of a culture of inequality in U.S. society and a tradition to “blame the victim,” the undereducated and the poor are blamed for their own educational underachievement and poverty (Lewis, qtd. in Wiley and Lukes 517; Kjolseth 44). By the same token, educational deficiencies relative to English are blamed on those who fail to master English, rather than on the programs and the educational system in which the failure occurs, or on the inequalities that are rooted in the social structure.

4. Standard English Ideology

The aforementioned assumption that links mastery of English to social mobility does not always hold true, especially for those who speak the “non-standard” varieties of English or varieties of world Englishes. Owing to the dominance of a standard English ideology in the U.S. that emphasizes “the importance and superiority of the standard, ‘literate,’ or ‘unaccented’ variety of English” (Wiley and Lukes 514), an implicit bias has existed against speakers of non-dominant varieties of English such as African American Vernacular English and Hawai’i Creole English. For linguistic minorities, because their languages or regional and local

varieties are not reflected in the literate, school-taught standard English, their proficiencies relative to the standard have become a means by which others use for gatekeeping and status ascription (Wiley and Lukes 524-529). For example, it is common to find that schools assign ELL students or speakers of non-dominant varieties of English to remedial or special educational tracks based on their performance on language and achievement tests designed in standard English (527). As a consequence, their deficiencies in standard English are used as the basis of ascribing a lower or deficit status to them, while their abilities in other languages or varieties of English are ignored. In addition, because those tests in standard English serve as tracking and gatekeeping mechanisms that prevent these students from accessing institutions of the dominant society, they are barred an equal chance for social mobility.

5. Conflicting Philosophies: Group Bilingualism vs. Individual Bilingualism

An examination of U.S. language policies indicates that there are two conflicting philosophies toward bilingualism that remain prevalent to the present. On the one hand, national programs previously and presently have invested a great deal of public money in the promotion of foreign language study in the schools, especially at the post-secondary level. Christian further points out that one significant problem that the U.S. now faces is a lack of linguistic resources in languages other than English to meet its various needs, especially when individuals with linguistic prowess in certain languages and domains are called for (“Charting a Path” 271). Consequently, a recent U.S. Senate Resolution even designated the year 2005 as the “Year of Foreign Language Study” to promote foreign language education (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). On the other hand, schools have continuously ignored or actively discouraged the maintenance of native languages of minority groups through insistence on a rapid transition to English-only instruction.

The root of this contradiction, Wiley and Lukes note, is that these policies are designed for two different populations (511). Foreign language instruction has historically been intended for an educational elite from a monolingual English background who are seen as being aided and elevated by their bilingualism. By contrast, bilingual education has traditionally been intended for students from linguistic minority backgrounds whose bilingualism is generally regarded as an academic handicap. This apparent paradox corresponds to what Kjolseth’s calls the bilingual double standard in American society: individual bilingualism vs. group bilingualism.

Kjolseth argues that American society tends to admire and praise individual bilinguals and imagine them as persons from the higher and more advantaged social

classes “who add to their English mother tongue a formal, standard variety of a foreign language” (43). Nevertheless, Americans commonly view group bilinguals with disparagement and despising. They see them as members of ethnic groups from the lower and disadvantaged strata of the society who have limited English-language skills of a low variety. The logic underlying this bivalent view of bilingualism in the U.S. reflects the assumptions of the dominant standard English and English monolingualism ideologies stated before. As Ruíz points out, it is the “world standard” languages that one is expected to learn through formal schooling for the purposes of personal enrichment or international understanding, not the “inferior vernaculars” spoken by group bilinguals (“Orientations” 16). What is believed to be the best for group bilinguals, Ruíz explains, is to transform them into English monolinguals by discouraging use of the heritage language, with the hope that one day they will be able to relearn it in a formal, standard form in high school and college foreign language classes (“Orientations” 16). This is, however, unlikely to happen in practice, given that a statistic from *Foreign Policy* magazine reports that 92% of U.S. college students do not study a foreign language (*Foreign Policy*, qtd. in *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*).

Although the dominant language ideologies illustrated above may be largely subconscious, they form the basis of popular and scholarly attitudes toward language diversity and shape the official and institutional language policies and practices in the U.S. From a historical-structural viewpoint, these ideologies and the policies shaped by them serve as instruments which the majority group uses to maintain its interests and sustain social inequality. They serve to maintain the majoritarian interests by glorifying and promoting the dominant, standard English, making the learning of the standard at the expense of other varieties or languages seem “not only instrumentally functional but beneficial to and for the dominated” (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 437). Members of language minority groups may internalize and accept the dominant ideologies and undervalue their ability to speak another language as a shame or even at worst as a sign of disloyalty (Cashman 43). As instruments deployed to sustain social inequality, language policies derived from these dominant ideologies are usually developed to address more than just language agendas, as will be further delineated in the next section.

IV. Other Arguments and Agendas Underlying Current U.S. Language Policy

Though multilingualism and multiculturalism have historically been part of the demographic landscape of the United States, Americans have never felt at ease with

cultural and linguistic diversity (Fillmore 376). Attitudes demonstrating such unease with diversity still prevail in the contemporary American society and constitute a national context characterized by “strong pressures on nonnative English speakers to accommodate and acculturate and equally strong negative attitudes toward English dialect variation” (Hornberger 461-462).

Within such a national context, the majority group’s perceptions about linguistic minorities and their patterns of language use have been reflected in many of the arguments put forward by advocates of the English-only/Official movement. One most common argument is that linguistic minorities are “getting the wrong message” when the government serves them in languages other than English, a message that there is no compelling need or obligation to acquire English, and nor is there a need to abandon their heritage to be considered American (Fishman, “English Only” 130; Crawford, “Anatomy” 27). English-only/Official advocates often allege that today’s immigrants, unlike those of the past, are resisting assimilation into the American mainstream and seeking recognition for their own languages (Wiley, “Heritage” 252; Crawford, *Bilingual Education* 59-60; Tollefson 122). Further, they condemn bilingual education for delaying assimilation by maintaining heritage language development and failing to solve the problems of English deficits and academic underachievement among LEP students.

English-only advocates often claim that English is an equal opportunity language (Crawford, *Bilingual Education* 64). They argue that by eliminating bilingual services such as bilingual education and bilingual ballots, the designation of English as the official language of the U.S. helps immigrants to learn English as soon as possible, and thus, ensures an equal opportunity for them to succeed (Cartagena 15-16; Tollefson 19-23). Moreover, viewing the use of separate languages as inherently disunifying, they argue that official designation of English will secure the supremacy of English and help maintain a unified nation (Tollefson 122).

Empirical evidence and research findings, however, run counter to the arguments stated above. Crawford reports that immigrants’ rates of linguistic assimilation have increased throughout U.S. history, and today they are even higher than before (“Anatomy” 6). According to recent statistics, about 92% of U.S. residents speak English “well” or “very well” (U.S. Census 2000). Research by Veltman shows that all immigrant groups in the U.S. are approaching a two-generation model of language shift (native language monolingualism → English monolingualism), rather than the three-generation pattern typical of immigrant groups in the past (native language monolingualism → native language and English bilingualism → English monolingualism) (qtd. in Crawford, *Bilingual Education* 60).

The accusation regarding the seeming ineffectiveness of bilingual education programs to promote academic achievement among LEP students is indeed ill-justified. Empirical evidence from research has increasingly demonstrated that bilingual education is superior to English-only approaches in improving measures of LEP students' academic achievement in both English and in the native language (Rolstad et al. 583-590; Crawford, "Political Paradox" 84-85). These research findings confirm the pedagogical benefits of bilingual education and prove that cultivation of academic competence does not interfere with development of bilingual proficiency. Nevertheless, for the broader public, Crawford notes, the empirically-based pedagogical rationale for bilingual instruction seems too complex and counter-intuitive to comprehend clearly ("Political Paradox" 96-97). Critics often misinterpret "bilingual" and assume that bilingual education emphasizes native language instruction at the cost of English, while, in fact, "bilingual" education in the U.S. includes English, and English acquisition is a de facto goal of bilingual programs (Wiley and Wright 151; Krashen).

Although English-only advocates maintain that the attainment of English proficiency provides equal opportunity to succeed, Fishman points out the truth found in the experiences of many African Americans and anglophone Hispanics is that mastery of English does not ensure upward social mobility ("English Only" 131). As for non-English speakers, laws declaring English the official language do not seem to help them learn English. In Arizona, for example, Wiley argues, the same politicians who attack current immigrants for not acquiring English fast enough have frequently declined support for legislation to increase funding for English learning ("Heritage" 252). This contradiction suggests that their real intention is something other than English.

The real agendas underlying the language policy debates of the early 21st century are not about language per se, but rather are more about immigration. With President George W. Bush's call for a comprehensive overhaul of U.S.'s immigration laws in 2003, immigration has become a highly contested issue on the nation's political agenda. Anti-immigration advocates, like proponents of English-only/Official, contend that increased language diversity among immigrants threatens the hegemony of English (Wiley, "Heritage" 252). Given the ideological affinity between the two groups, it is not surprising that the organizations advocating English-only/Official movement, such as U.S. English and English First, are closely connected to anti-immigration organizations (Crawford, "Anatomy" 23; Barker and Giles, "English-only Policies" 79). Barker and Giles further provided empirical evidence showing that, among Anglo-Americans, those who supported English-only policies were likely to support social limitation of immigrants and minorities (e.g., tighter immigration controls or denial of social and health services to illegal

immigrants) (81; “English Only Movement” 364-366). The real driving force of such support, in fact, lies in a sense of insecurity among Anglo-Americans due to a perceived rise in Latino’s demographic presence, sociopolitical power, and economic status, whereas language mainly serves as surrogate target of attack (79). Upon scrutinizing the intrinsic linkage between immigration and language politics, Crawford unravels the agendas underlying the modern English-only/Official campaign as follows:

“[M]otives in this campaign are often mixed. Seldom does today’s nativism take the form of a pure and undiluted hatred of foreigners. Rather, it is a volatile brew of anxieties and animosities, insecurities and prejudices, which flow from class as well as ethnicity.” (“Anatomy” 24)

According to Crawford’s analysis, the source of modern language controversies resides in the more fundamental problems regarding social stratification and inter-ethnic competition, rather than the increased language diversity in the contemporary American society. Therefore, language policies formulated to address problems that are presumed to result from language diversity will not solve them. Moreover, because immigration alters the existing structure of power and social order, researchers have suggested that English-only measures represent tactics undertaken by the dominant Anglo-American majority to divert the public’s concerns from the more fundamental social problems in order to sustain the status quo in terms of wealth and power (Donahue 133-138; Wiley and Wright, 149; Barker and Giles, “English-only Policies” 79).

Conclusion

The critical examination of language policy controversies in this paper indicates that the U.S. language policy, under the tremendous influence of the dominant language-as-problem orientation and English monolingualism, is largely restrictive in nature, and heavily encumbered by politics and ideology. The influence of the dominant language orientation and ideological assumptions does not only prevail throughout the twentieth century, but still dictates much of the language policy decision-making in the early 21st century. The consequence is, ironically, a paradoxical language policy that aspires to promote foreign language study through various legislative initiatives, while at the same time endeavoring to dismantle native language instruction through the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act and various ballot initiatives.

What the U.S. needs to strive for in the best interests of the nation is a more positive, adequate, and fairer language policy, which requires a change in attitudes

toward multilingualism and multiculturalism. First, the dominant ideologies and attitudes toward language diversity should be subjected to critical reassessment. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent, it is important to promote a “language-as-resource” outlook that views multilingualism as an invaluable national resource and capital that deserves cultivation and development. Policymakers need to be made aware of the paradox inherent in the existing language policy legislation at both the state and the federal levels and seek out ways to reformulate the law and regulations in a manner that values the study of languages other than English. All citizens in the U.S., children and adults, language minorities and the English-only speaking majority alike, should be encouraged to develop proficiency in other world languages in this era of globalization.

Second, in order to meet the needs of speakers of non-dominant varieties of English, a world Englishes viewpoint that acknowledges the pluricentric nature of the English language in today’s world should be adopted in place of the standard English and monolingual English ideologies. Given that the monolithic view of English as the exponent of communication in English-using countries does not represent the current global state of the language, it is of prime importance for all English users, native and nonnative alike, to overcome the notion of “native speaker ownership” by viewing English as an immense linguistic asset shared by all members of the English-using communities. Moreover, it is also necessary to incorporate the concept of world Englishes into teacher education in order to not only remove the stigma of lack of proficiency from non-standard varieties of English, but raise teachers’ awareness of the diversity of English, thereby providing more equitable instruction for speakers of varieties of world Englishes represented in American schools at all levels.

Finally, empirical evidence and research findings regarding the superiority of bilingual education over all-English instruction need to be communicated to the public more effectively. Owing to a general lack of understanding among the public about the pedagogical rationale for bilingual instruction, anti-bilingual advocates have continued to present many of their arguments based on stereotypes and misconceptions about bilingual education rather than on objective facts. To create a national context for the development of a more positive language policy, it is essential that the public should be better informed of findings from empirical studies.

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美國語言政策與語言規劃之探究 ——從「唯用英語」運動和雙語教育 政策之間的衝突談起

許文僊*

摘要

在近數十年來的美國社會，「語言多樣性」一直是個充滿爭議性的話題。自一九八〇年代「唯用英語」運動興起以來，即在各州積極推動將「英語為官方語言」明訂為州法，與聯邦政府的雙語教育政策形成對立衝突。本文採用語言政策和規劃的理論觀點，從美國語言政策之歷史演進切入，深入探討此一語言政策衝突，並進一步分析導致該衝突形成之主要意識形態。結果顯示，造成衝突的癥結並非是語言多樣性本身，而是肇因於大量移民湧入後，對原有的社會政治及權力結構所可能引發之衝擊和改變而產生的效應。文末並對未來美國語言政策之規劃方向提出建言。

關鍵字：語言政策 語言規劃 雙語教育 語言多樣性 「唯用英語」運動

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