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Misinterpreting School Reform: The Dissolution of a Dual-Immersion Bilingual Program in an Urban New England Elementary School

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Misinterpreting School Reform: The Dissolution of a Dual-Immersion Bilingual Program in an Urban New England Elementary School

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This article explores local state bilingual-education policy vis-à-vis pervasive dominant-language ideologies about language-education policy and practice. State-level language-education policy, especially for English Language Learners (ELs), spans a wide range, from states that through policy legally require some form of bilingual education to states that have made bilingual education virtually impossible in lieu of English-language immersion. This research is part of an ongoing ethnographic case study of a large urban elementary school in Connecticut that explores the dissolution of a dual-language immersion program due to a school reconstitution, despite the state policy requiring bilingual education. This article examines the interwoven contexts of Connecticut bilingual-education policies, the language-education policies of the school, and how they are interpreted and enacted by teachers. We find on the one hand, official state policy calls for transitional bilingual education in specific EL contexts; on the other, the teachers within the school exhibit deficit perspectives toward bilingual education and develop erroneous perceptions about how to implement that policy, including their use of languages other than English in their classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores local state bilingual-education policy vis-à-vis pervasive dominant-language ideologies about language-education policy and practice. State-level language-education policy,

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especially for English Language Learners¹ (ELs) in the United States, spans a wide range, from states that through policy legally require some form of bilingual education (i.e., Connecticut) to states that have made bilingual education virtually impossible in lieu of English-language immersion (i.e., Arizona, California, and Massachusetts). While states that have passed English-only language-education policies have recently been the sites of research on bilingual-education policy for ELs (E. J. De Jong, Gort, & Cobb, 2005; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Haas & Gort, 2009; Stritikus, 2002), states that do allow for bilingual education are important to explore since, despite official policies that promote bilingual education, the dominant national discourses around English-only education affect how these policies are actually implemented in practice.

This varying language-education policy landscape has important implications as the percentage of English Language Learners rises in all states. Between 1995 and 2005, nationwide enrollments of ELs increased by 57%. Five million EL students, representing approximately 10.5% of the overall school population in the 2005–2006 school year, were being educated in K–12 public schools (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007; Maxwell, 2009). Although almost 80% of these students are native Spanish speakers, overall these students represent a diverse population, including students from more than 450 language backgrounds (Payán & Nettles, 2006). This demographic shift is occurring as the English-only movement is also on the rise at both the national and state levels (Moore, 2008), which has made the maintenance of bilingual-education programs increasingly challenging for local educators. As the presented research will demonstrate, even in states like Connecticut where maintenance or immersion bilingual education is possible, we see diverse and growing communities of ELs with limited access to successful and viable bilingual-education programs.

The presented research is part of an ongoing ethnographic case study of a large urban elementary school in Connecticut. Drawing from Yanow's (2000) interpretative policy analysis framework, this research explores the dissolution of a dual-language immersion program due to a school reconstitution despite the state policy requiring bilingual education. This article examines the interwoven contexts of Connecticut's bilingual-education policies, the language-education policies of the school, and how they are interpreted and enacted by the teachers. We explore questions regarding the power of explicit versus implicit language-education policy and how dominant English-only ideologies affect the implementation of bilingual education in a large urban public elementary school in Connecticut. We find, on the one hand, that the official state policy calls for transitional bilingual education in specific EL contexts; on the other hand, the teachers within the school exhibit deficit perspectives toward bilingual education and develop erroneous perceptions about how to implement that policy, including their use of languages other than English in their classrooms.

¹For the purposes of this article we use Connecticut's definition of English Learner that defines students as English language learners or fluent based on how they score on state standardized tests. Standardized achievement tests that have been constructed for mainstream students do not take into account the special needs of English learners and that the impact language background variables have on students' achievement outcomes undermines the legitimacy of using only these tests to measure language learners' abilities (Abedi & Gándara, 2006). We realize that, as Celce-Murcia's (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell, 1995) model of communicative competence suggests, language learning is in fact a complex process that interacts with many different sociocultural factors. Students are not simply English learners one academic year and not English learners the next, as our current terminology might suggest.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is situated within three intersecting bodies of literature: United States languagepolicy research, dual-immersion bilingual-education research, and language ideologies about bilingual-education research. A key aspect of all three areas of research is a sociocultural perspective on language policy that directly informs our understanding of how and why policies are implemented (or not) in practice, as well as the ideologies and attitudes associated with those policies and pedagogical practices.

Language Policy Research

Crawford (2004) notes that, "the United States has never had a language policy, consciously planned and national in scope. It has had language policies—ad hoc responses to immediate needs or political pressures—often contradictory and inadequate to cope with changing times" (p. 55). Crawford's point brings home the different experiences of the linguistically diverse groups in the United States. Language policy is a reflection of different social relationships in each local context. The lack of an official language has resulted in constant debates and changes over public use of language and language rights. In a classic treatment of the subject, Ruiz (1984) introduced language orientations to explain the role of language(s) in society that are "largely unconscious and prerational because they are at the most fundamental level of arguments about language" (p. 4). The orientations include: language-as-a-problem, the positioning of linguistic difference from a deficit perspective; language-as-a-right, the often contested negotiation of language rights; and language-as-a-resource, the cultivation of linguistic democracy and pluralism. The language-as-a-problem orientation is a hallmark of U.S. bilingual policy, which aims not to produce bilinguals but to promote linguistic assimilation and improve presumed deficits in children learning English as a second language. Leibowitz (1971) and Wiley (2000) are also quick to point out that local language policies most likely reflect social and political perspectives on immigration, race, religion, and ethnicity. Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) put forth that restrictive language policies are most often developed when a perceived threat to a unified national identity develops. Ovando (2003) further connects these perspectives on language policy directly to bilingual education. He writes,

Such antipathy, especially toward strong forms of bilingual education, is rooted in nativistic and melting pot ideologies that tend to demonize the "other." Because bilingual education is much more than a pedagogical tool, it has become a societal irritant involving complex issues of cultural identity, social class status, and language politics. (p. 14)

The sociocultural and political implications associated with language have also redefined how policy research is conducted. Traditional definitions of policy have referred to official overt acts and documents. In the field of language planning and policy, policies were specifically connected to the language-planning activities for the purposes of nation building (Fishman, 1968; Wright, 2004). These definitions have been expanded to include a combination of these official acts with implicit meanings and/or practices associated with language. While it is easier to point to a specific act of legislation as policy, it is often the institutional practices and pervasive ideologies

about language that in fact shape both de jure (law) and de facto (practice) language policies (Schiffman, 1996; Wiley & Wright, 2004). Language policy is now being defined as a:

socio-cultural process that includes official acts and documents as well as everyday language practices that express normative claims about legitimate and illegitimate language forms and uses, and have implications for status, rights, roles, functions, and access to languages and varieties within a given polity, organization, or institution. (Skuttnab-Kangas & McCarty, 2007, p. 9)

This expanded definition of language policy addresses both covert/hidden and implicit/ official components of policy inherent in both official documents and everyday social practice.

Recent language-policy research has embraced sociocultural definitions of language policies to provide a more complete and complex picture of the ongoing process of policy formation and implementation both within government institutions as well as "on-the-ground" local contexts (Freeman, 2004; Hornberger & Hult, 2008; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2010: Menken & García, 2010; Stritikus, 2002; Stritikus & Wiese, 2006; Warhol, 2011). This research reveals the many sociocultural and ideological factors that contribute to the development and enactment of language policies and how official policies are appropriated and interpreted by local actors. For example, Johnson (2010) explores the enactment of bilingualeducation policies in the school district of Philadelphia post-NCLB. Local district officials developed and implemented a local language policy that not only included salient Englishfocused language from Title III of NCLB, but it also promoted, created, and maintained implementational spaces for various types of bilingual programs. Even though official policy was promoting transitional bilingual education, local actors were able to implement the policy in a way that also maintained their own interests and support for maintenance and immersion-language models. Thus, by embracing a sociocultural approach to language-policy research, policy formation becomes dynamic, interactive, and process-oriented (Menken & García, 2010).

Dual-Immersion Bilingual Education

Since the enactment of the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, the subsequent passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, and state-level policies like Prop. 227, Prop. 203, and Question 2 in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts respectively, transitional models and sheltered/structured English-immersion have gained prominence (Ovando, 2003). Recent research has discovered that local implementations of these English-only policies have inadequate language support in schools, limiting ELs' opportunities to access core academic curricula (Gándara & Rumberger, 2009; Haas & Gort, 2009; Johnson, 2010; Stritikus, 2002). This is occurring in the shadow of 30 years of bilingual-education research demonstrating that quality bilingual programs can improve academic achievement for EL students (see, for example, August & Shanahan, 2006; Crawford, 1997; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

We recognize that there currently exist many definitions and bilingual program models, including various dual-immersion models. The program model established by the case study school presented in this article was labeled a "dual-immersion bilingual" program by school

staff. We understand the type of dual-immersion model in our case study school as a type of bilingual education in which all students develop full proficiency in their first language and high levels of proficiency in a second language. A balance of students between minority-language and English native speakers is maintained in each classroom (E. De Jong & Howard, 2009). They receive 50% of their instruction entirely in Spanish and 50% in English—a "balanced" immersion model (Palmer, 2007). Typically students are taught by a team of one English-only-speaking teacher and one Spanish-only-speaking teacher, thus interacting only in one language at a time. Also called "two-way immersion" programs, dual immersion presents an enrichment model of instruction rather than a remedial, transitional, or compensatory instructional model, as it is an additive bilingual environment in which students add a second language to their native language instead of replacing their native language with the second language. Research on dual-language programs highlights success for both language-majority and language-minority students. More so than any other bilingual-education program, dual immersion has had the greatest impact on academic achievement for English-language learners (E. De Jong & Howard, 2009; Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 2002), yet it is often not the chosen or recognized model for ELLs by schools and districts.

Bilingual-Education Ideology Research

Research on language-policy implementation and bilingual models is connected by research on language ideologies and attitudes. We define *language ideology* as sets of beliefs about language(s) that link language, identity, and power relations (Heath, 1989; Woolard, 1998). This ideology can be a representation of a cultural system or a product of sociocultural processes. Central to both positions of language ideology is the idea that culture, society, group membership, and individual identity occur through language use. This is particularly relevant to our research, as schools have been the principal instruments in promoting a consensus regarding the alleged superiority of certain standardized languages (Tollefson, 2002).

Research on bilingual education that explores language ideologies demonstrates that dualimmersion programs frequently do not espouse equal importance to each language or they imply that there is still a preferred language that is demonstrated in the language use in and out of the classroom (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000; Martínez-Roldán & Malave, 2004). Even when models are faithfully adhered to, they are still challenged by an external English-dominant environment (Palmer, 2007). Research on teacher certification programs suggests that these programs produce varying attitudes across participants, where bilingual certified teachers are supportive of using other languages (i.e., Spanish) in the classroom but regular education teachers are supportive of bilingual education in theory but not in practice (García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005; Karathanos, 2009). Research has also demonstrated that dominant attitudes among teachers toward ELs include strong monolingual propensities and misperceptions about how students learn and acquire language (Faltis & Hudelson, 1998; Walker, Shafer, & Liams, 2004). These negative attitudes have been shown to have a trickle-down effect that impacts students' attitudes toward school and their academic achievement (August & Hakuta, 1997; Díaz-Rico, 2000; González & Darling-Hammond, 2000). As such, understanding underlying language ideologies is a key aspect of language policy implementation research.

Drawing from these understandings that bilingual-education policies are both official and de facto, and are both ideological and part of a sociocultural process, research questions for this study include:

- 1. What are both the explicit and implicit language-education policies in Connecticut (CT), a large urban school district in CT, and a neighborhood elementary school?
- 2. What are the pervasive ideologies about language education at the state, district, and local levels?

In these contexts, understanding both implicit and explicit policies, as well as the role of teachers' language ideologies and how they influence policy implementation is crucial.

METHODOLOGY

This article draws from an ongoing ethnographic case study being conducted in this elementary school in a large urban district in Connecticut. Initially, this research began as part of a larger ethnographic study that was exploring and evaluating the pilot of an adaptive comprehensive school reform model in eight schools in Connecticut. This larger study is supported by a national education association that had contracted the state flagship university to conduct research on the efficacy of the model. While that larger research project is ongoing, the authors, as members of the research team, became particularly interested in language-education policies and programs in Connecticut and chose to conduct a qualitative policy analysis on Connecticut bilingual-education policy and the past and current language-education programs at the case study school.

Specifically, we draw from Yanow's (2000) framework of interpretative policy analysis that advocates for using qualitative research methods for policy analysis. Yanow's approach to policy analysis "focuses on the meanings of policies on the values, feelings, or beliefs they express, and on the processes by which those meanings are communicated to and 'read' by various audiences" (p. 14). The goal of interpretative policy analysis is to uncover the ideological underpinnings that inform policy making and policy implementation from the perspectives of the policy makers and of the groups/communities affected by policy. In this way, the focus turns to the policy actors and their underlying intentions and goals. Thus, we as researchers are interested in Connecticut's state-level bilingual-education policies as well as how these policies are implemented by local actors in practice.

Per Yanow's framework of interpretative policy analysis, ethnographic research was conducted from 2008–2011 and included interviews, document analysis, and participant observation. To date, we have collected in our case study school over 60 interviews, 50 hours of participant observation, and 600 student and faculty surveys. The interviews were conducted with the school faculty, community, and district representatives. Interviews were voluntary. Interview questions explored the process of comprehensive school reform (CSR) as well as teachers' reflections and perspectives on the dual-immersion bilingual-education program. In particular, we asked teachers to discuss their thoughts on the efficacy of current and past language-education models in their school as well as their knowledge regarding the current district- and state-level requirements for ELs. Participant observation was conducted in classrooms, teacher meetings, school events, and district events. Document analysis included state- and district-level policies, the school's current and past curriculum, and relevant achievement data. Data were triangulated and verified from these sources, informing the emergent categories established by the authors. Drawing and verifying conclusions emerged throughout the data reduction and analysis process. For these procedures, NVivo 8 was used for examining and interpreting text data. Preformed codes based largely on the research questions yielded a first-level, working set of codes. We then conducted second-level or pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which involved grouping coded data into smaller sets of recurrent and emergent themes. From this second-level coding, we also did a third round of codes, which allowed us to identify salient and specific themes across the second-level coding. Throughout this process, the authors provided a vital check on each other's interpretations.

When we entered the school in 2008, the dual-immersion program had already been dismantled, thus we used the archival documents and interview data to understand how the dual-immersion program had been implemented. One of the limitations of our study is that we cannot verify with classroom observations how the dual-immersion model was actually being implemented when it was in place. As such, we have instead chosen to focus our data analysis on the perspectives and ideologies of the school community around bilingual education to better understand why bilingual education has little to no role in a school with a high EL population where state policies mandate bilingual education.

Research Positionality

Part of our interest in the topic stems from our own position as advocates and supporters of bilingual education and state and federal policies that support maintenance and dual-immersion bilingual programs. The authors' academic training includes critical perspectives on language-education policy. Although a first-language English speaker, the first author has had the opportunity to study seven other languages and live abroad in multilingual environments. She has also long been involved with community and school-based language-education programs for Native American and other minority languages, primarily in the Southwest. The second author grew up in a multilingual household as a child of eastern European immigrants in a western state. She taught ESL and world languages in K–12 public schools before entering academia. Given our own multicultural/multicultural backgrounds, when we entered the school to examine the comprehensive school-reform model that was purported to engage salient issues in the community and academic achievement gaps, we were surprised and disheartened to see the lack of bilingual education in the school.

FINDINGS

Connecticut and Case Study Context

Connecticut is a linguistically diverse state with the linguistically diverse communities centered in the urban, high-poverty areas. The state department of education currently documents 148 languages being spoken by students in the public school system (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2009). The community where the study is taking place was predominantly Spanish-speaking. However, due to a local nonprofit organization, recent refugee groups are being relocated to this neighborhood and their children placed in this school. In 2008, home-language survey data indicated 16 different languages spoken in the homes of this school's children, and ELs accounted for 30% of the student population.

This elementary school was a dual-immersion bilingual school in Spanish and English from 1998–2008. In 2008, the school was in crisis: After more than five years of not meeting No Child Left Behind Annual Yearly Progress standards, district administrators forced the school community to choose between reconstitution and the adoption of a state-approved school-reform model. Because teachers wanted to keep their jobs, a majority of teachers voted against reconstitution, and in favor of the district-approved reform model. In place now is a comprehensive school-reform model where language education plays a minor role, if any at all. While bilingual education is still possible under state and district language policy (and we would argue mandatory given the high percentage of ELs), the teachers of the school have interpreted this shift away from the dual-immersion model as a shift away from bilingual education altogether.

The following presents a case study of students' language education in a linguistically diverse elementary school where dominant societal discourses have made bilingual education obsolete, despite the fact that a dual-language program existed there less than three years ago. Findings are presented on two levels. The analysis of official state and district language-education policies are presented first to determine the parameters and adequacy of available language education services for ELs in Connecticut and the availability and efficacy of bilingual-education programs. Second, we present findings from the case study at Coyote Elementary School (CES) to explore how these policies exist and are implemented at the local level.

State Bilingual-Education Policies

Like many other states across the nation, Connecticut's number of ELs is growing more quickly than the state's English-only students. From 1998 to 2008 English-only enrollment grew 8.6% while the percentage of ELs grew 54% (from 19,503 to 30,001). ELs are now about 4% of the total student population. However, these figures alone do not accurately represent the diversity of the state. In Connecticut nearly 75,000 students' dominant home language is not English. While many may imagine Connecticut as a place where students attend bucolic rural and suburban school districts (80% of the state's total population is White), the state is also home to some of the nation's poorest urban areas. These cities, home to only 29% of the state's students, serve 75% of the state's ELs. While Connecticut may be home to many exemplary educational programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010), most immigrant students reside in urban areas where the schools are large, have few resources, and face a shortage of teachers qualified to offer programs for EL students.

Spanish is spoken by many of the state's immigrants, and Spanish speakers are 69% of the state's ELs. Portuguese speakers, the second-largest language group in the state, make up only 3% of the total EL population. While the EL students are increasing, the number of bilingual teaching positions in the state have decreased 11%, and the number of TESOL positions has increased 16% since 2002. Currently there are 873 full-time positions for bilingual and TESOL-certified teachers in Connecticut. State data from 2002–2010 suggest the state annually faces shortages in qualified TESOL and bilingual teachers, with half of the available positions filled by individuals with temporary permits in any given year.

State policy mandates that schools provide three types of services to students classified as EL: bilingual-education programs, Language Transition Support Services (LTSS), and English as a Second Language supports. The state has had bilingual-education legislation since 1977. This legislation, last updated in 2010, specifies detailed guidelines school districts must follow:

To ensure ELs receive specialized services to meet their language and academic needs, the state recognizes that bilingual instruction can provide a foundation to enhance students' native language and academic achievement while developing proficiency in English. These programs allow students to receive culturally responsive instructional curriculum and pedagogy and to develop English language skills while using their native language to succeed academically. (http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/board/esl.pdf)

The language policy in Connecticut is more similar to that of Texas than of Arizona, California, or Massachusetts. Connecticut policy has not been influenced by privately funded ballot measures that resulted in restrictive language policies (Gándara & Rumberger, 2009). Like Texas, Connecticut requires districts to offer bilingual programming in schools where there are at least 20 students who speak the same language in the same building. Given the number of small schools (<200 students), and the shortage of qualified bilingual teachers, one way for many districts to implement this policy would be to group EL students together in one school so that the maximum number of students could receive bilingual programming. Districts are prevented from moving all of their EL students to one school building by a state statute requiring districts to maintain racial balance at each of their schools. One district dedicated to offering bilingual programs for their EL students must transfer EL students to school across the district three times between Pre-K and sixth grade so that the district can meet the requirements of the racial balance statute. An administrator in this district reports that he is not sure that the emotional costs to these students and their families outweigh the academic benefits of the bilingual programs (M. Cardona, personal communication, May, 10, 2010).

According to Connecticut statute, EL students may remain in a transitional bilingual program for only 30 months, unless they are enrolled in a two-way or dual-language bilingual program. Students may remain in these programs for the duration of the program. The school must transfer a student who has not reached language proficiency in 30 months to LTSS. The students may remain in LTSS until they reach English proficiency. Policy governing the types of services schools must offer students enrolled in LTSS is far less specific than the bilingual statute. Official state documents show that these programs often take the form of pull-out ESL instruction in the early grades and sheltered English classes and mainstreaming in the middle and secondary classrooms. There has been very little systematic research done to document the full range of services schools offer to ELs in Connecticut.

Notably, the state law does not specify the type of bilingual program. However, the policy does advocate for transitional bilingual education:

the continuous increase in the use of English and a corresponding decrease in the use of the native language for the purpose of instruction within each year and from year to year and provides for the use of English for more than half of the instructional time by the end of the first year. (Section 10–17e(2) (c) of the C.G.S.)

In Connecticut, ELs are redesignated based on a test score. They must score at level 4 on LAS Links (a 30-minute oral proficiency test that determines placement of English Language Learners into appropriate instructional programs) (CTB McGraw-Hill). Students in grades K–2 must also

achieve appropriate grade-level standards on a developmental reading assessment that involves reading passages orally and then retelling stories. Students in grades 3-12 must score at the proficient level in math and reading and at basic levels on the writing portion of the state standardized test, the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT; fourth generation), covering grades 3–8, and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT; third generation), in grade 10. How ELs are actually faring in these programs compared to English-only students is very difficult to measure. These state tests are also used not simply just to measure students' academic performance but also to reclassify them as fluent English proficient. In 2008, 48% of ELs were enrolled in ESL services, 30% were in bilingual programs, and 19% were served by Language Transition Support Services. In 2008, 897 students declined all services. State reports indicate that while the number of students eligible for bilingual programs increased 6.9%, the number of students enrolled in bilingual programs decreased 3.8% between 2004 and 2008. During this same period the number of students in LTSS increased from 17% to 19.3%. According to a recent state report, it appears that the academic achievement of ELs by program varies. Students enrolled in bilingual-education programs across the state are about half as likely as other ELs who receive ESL services and are enrolled in mainstream classrooms to score proficient on state reading tests (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2009). Reports like the one we just referenced seem to be reporting unbiased data on EL students' achievement and likely contribute to educators' perceptions that bilingual programs are not effective. From our more critical perspective, the authors of this report in fact misrepresent EL student achievement by comparing bilingualprogram participants, students who by definition have been in U.S. schools less than 30 months, to students who are in ESL programs, students who have been transitioned out of bilingual programs because they have been in U.S. schools for over 30 months. We believe that this sort of limited understanding of EL students at the state department level contributes to the attitudes present among Coyote staff.

This analysis of Connecticut's bilingual-education policies demonstrates that the state is largely in line with the bilingual-education policies from what are now called the Lau remedies (the bilingual-education mandates that emerged from the hallmark bilingual-education Supreme Court Case, *Lau v. Nichols*). While these parameters are in place, most districts are not enforcing them, nor do they seem to have the appropriate resources in place to support maintenance or even transitional models of bilingual education. In general, it appears that bilingual-education models are poorly implemented, which we will explore more in the next section. Also, the revised bilingual-education policy promotes competing ideologies. On the one hand, it supports maintenance bilingual education and its positive impact on student academic achievement; on the other, most district programs are set up to implement transitional or pull-out ESL programs. Also, while not in complete contradiction, the comprehensive school reform model adopted by the state also in no way addresses the bilingual-education policy of the state, despite several of the schools in the pilot study having high EL populations. We believe that these inconsistencies and contradictions impact and produce many of the ideologies we explore in the next section as well as produce the declining number of bilingual-education programs throughout the state.

Case Study at Coyote Elementary School

Our case study findings present how these state policies are interpreted and internalized at a linguistically diverse, large K–6, urban school: Coyote Elementary School (CES). CES is one of

the larger elementary schools in Connecticut, with over 800 students in grades K–6. It is located in an urban district that traditionally has had a high Hispanic/Latino population, a high number of ELs, and low socioeconomic status. Contrary to trends in inner-city urban schools, CES has a high teacher-retention rate, with many of the teachers having taught at the school for over 15 years. Of the 84 teachers at the school, 27% identify as a minority on state surveys. Close to 100% of the students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

In 1998, CES received what was then a Title VII Bilingual Education grant to implement a dual-language immersion program in Spanish and English. While district administrators never explicitly stated that their intention was to dismantle the dual-language program at CES, our data suggest that district administrators' willingness to allow the program to be eliminated during the first year of CSR implementation sent the message to teachers that the district supported the dual-language program's dissolution. One teacher related in an interview, "If we hadn't chosen to do [the comprehensive school reform model], we probably would still have the failing bilingual program" (monolingual teacher, interview, April 20, 2010). We learned through our interviews that many teachers, both bilingual and English-only, saw the adoption of the comprehensive reform model as an expedient way out of bilingual education despite the high number of ELs and the state policy that mandates bilingual education in schools like CES. This opting-out also is highly ironic since the CSR model specifically advocated for building off of local community strengths and resources, which should have included incorporating the students' home languages and cultures.

As discussed, we entered the school within the context of the comprehensive school reform model so we were unable to observe how the dual immersion was being implemented. Our understanding of the program comes primarily through the interviews with the teachers, district administrators, and review of curricula no longer in use. When discussing the former immersion program with the school leadership and teachers, one teacher briefly described how the program was set up:

What they had exactly is, you have a partner. You had pairs. You would have a Spanish-speaking teacher and an English-speaking teacher. When the kids were in with the Spanish-speaking teacher, they would get 100% of their instructions in Spanish and a 100% in English, and it was a 50–50 split. (Spanish bilingual teacher, interview, March 16, 2010)

Other teachers also described a similar system, although there was little consensus on how the 50–50 split actually happened. Some teachers mentioned having the same group of students for an entire week; others exchanged student groups on a daily basis or every other day. Our interviews with district administrators suggest that what we heard were the teachers describing how the dual-language program actually evolved over time, as the pressure to meet Annual Yearly Progress benchmarks grew. District administrators said that across the district teachers felt they had to deliver more and more instruction in English because they thought this would improve students' standardized test scores. Because the school served a large Latino population, classes did not have an even number of both Spanish and English speakers. One veteran bilingual teacher related that the school faculty had never received any professional development on how to implement the dual-immersion program:

I was doing dual language in third grade with a partner, and we were basically not able to execute dual language that way. And there was no training that I remember. And my discussions with teachers

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who had been doing dual language for a number of years, lent no clarity, gave no clarity as to what we were supposed to do. And it was unclear to me what I was supposed to integrate or not integrate in Spanish. Also, my students would all be Spanish speakers when I should have had half of the class as English speakers. (Spanish bilingual teacher interview, April 20, 2010)

Former Dual-Language Program Teachers Redefine the Dual-Language Model at CES

So while the school had a program referred to by district administrators, the principal, and teachers as a "dual-language model," it is not clear the teachers were following any sort of research-based dual-language model. Data suggest neither the English-only or the bilingual teachers had received appropriate professional development, nor were school leaders monitoring the program as it was implemented across classrooms and grades. The integration of refugee communities over the years, students who were neither Spanish nor English speakers, further complicated the way teachers implemented the dual-language program. Bosnian and Somali students were placed in the dual-immersion classes without regard to those particular students' needs. Data suggest that both the school and the district were either unable or unwilling to handle the linguistic diversity of the community or provide the necessary teaching support and materials to properly implement the dual-immersion programs as the needs of their students changed. The dual-language program in place at CES became unfeasible as the demographics of the ELs in the school changed.

Despite the dissolution of the dual-language immersion, some teachers and school leadership still labeled their classes as bilingual, although we came to discover that no form of bilingual education was occurring in practice. The bilingual label has now become strictly associated with the student's home languages, and these labels very much espoused a language-as-problem orientation (Ruiz, 1984). One teacher, when discussing her class, clearly labeled it as a bilingual class because of the students language abilities alone, not because of her teaching methodology. She related:

I have 20 students. I have a bilingual class, which means the children—I have all different levels of language learners. So my new arrivals, I have a girl that just came from the Dominican Republic, she knows absolutely no English. I have a girl that came from Guatemala, five months ago. And then I have the others, they have some language problems and then I have some that are fluent. I teach them in English. I use Spanish to clarify or explain things orally. But nothing written, and they don't read any books in Spanish. All I teach is in English, all of my subjects. (Spanish bilingual teacher, interview, May 10, 2010)

Another teacher related that when the principal dismantled their bilingual program, he also dismantled their bilingual department. This teacher claimed that he was now not even *allowed* to speak Spanish when he was teaching:

Now we don't have a bilingual department. We [the teachers who speak Spanish] are spread across the grade levels, one in each grade. I feel really isolated now; before we used to work together. And now I have—my classroom is a mixed bilingual. I have students who are recently arrived from South America or Puerto Rico that know English. I have students like [student name], know some Spanish. I have a mixed bag. I have students who are reading in seventh grade as well as no reading at all. So my class is a little jungle that I had to deal with in a regular daily basis. I have people who are helping. Of course they have put a person to help with the Spanish. I cannot actually—I'm not supposed to speak Spanish to them, but I use it when I need to clarify. (Spanish bilingual teacher, interview, April 20, 2010)

And yet another teacher even offered us her classroom materials:

I have tons of Spanish books that I don't even know what to do with them. And if you know somebody who needs these Spanish materials, I'm more than willing to give them to another teacher because that program was cut and these are beautiful materials. We don't know what to do with them. (Spanish bilingual teacher, interview, April 20, 2010)

These sentiments were heard frequently among the teachers in our interviews, and when we observed classrooms, English was the primary language of instruction with little Spanish or any other language heard. The fact that the Spanish-fluent teachers felt that they were not allowed to use Spanish or any other language was a surprising finding. First, state law technically mandates that teachers are required to provide primary language support to EL students during their first 30 months in school. Second, part of the comprehensive school reform model that the school was implementing gives teachers freedom to make curriculum decisions. According to the CSR coach, teachers had the ability to keep or develop a different bilingual program model if they had chosen to do so. Third, when we asked the school leadership if they had directed the teachers not to continue using bilingual materials or use Spanish during instruction, they related that they had not. Leaders said that the primary language-education support model since the adoption of the CSR model was the pull-out English Language Development model; however, they also said that the teachers were allowed to teach in Spanish if it made sense for their class. Clearly there was not only a disconnect between policy and practice but also between the school leadership and the teachers. It was clear that the teachers had interpreted the shift away from the duallanguage program to the extreme-they were now not permitted to even use their former medium of instruction.

What Explains the Shift Away from Dual-Language Models at CES?

Through further analysis of interview data, we posit why this development happened. Pervasive throughout all the interviews were language ideologies that demonstrated that the teachers and the school leadership are part of the dominant discourse endorsing the ineffectuality of bilingual education and essentialness of English for students' academic success.

Bilingual education doesn't work. The current principal, who started at CES in 2006–2007 related:

So when I came in, I looked at a lot of data, particularly our [state standardized assessment] data and particularly the subgroup data, and it was evident that the dual-language program wasn't enhancing instruction, I mean it was hindering instruction. (principal interview, May 14, 2010)

The principal's statement was exemplary of a sentiment popular among monolingual teachers at the school. The school's failing status was largely attributed directly to the bilingual education by these teachers. Interviews with the external CSR coach and program documents revealed that the CSR model could have easily accommodated a bilingual instructional program. The

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CSR model adopted by Coyote was a form of the Accelerated Schools Plus, whose theory of improvement suggests highly effective schools need to have a distributed system of governance that builds on the schools' and local community's strengths and resources. Teachers and administrators participate in data-driven inquiry projects that in turn drive the acceleration of student learning. The following are statements taken from Accelerated materials given to teachers at Coyote (Byrd & Finnan, 2003):

Teachers are expected to assess the learners' life experiences, knowledge, goals, and interests and use this (sic) data to design learning activities that apply to student real-life situations or issues. Student learning is accelerated by building upon students' strengths rather than focusing on students' deficits. Instruction includes the cultural and family traditions of the students and/or community. Teachers view students' culturally diverse backgrounds and skills as strengths and use them as resources.

The Accelerated model clearly views and advocates the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as a resource to be incorporated into school-improvement plans. Yet based on our review of data related to the process of adopting the CSR model, we found monolingual and bilingual teachers relied more on their own perceptions of the effectiveness of bilingual education as the reason they chose not to implement any form of bilingual education or incorporate the community's linguistic resources.

In addition, monolingual teachers at CES frequently voiced their thoughts around bilingual education during our interviews. This position was all-encompassing. Rarely was it positioned as their program didn't work because it was badly implemented or that other bilingual-education models might work. These teachers equated bilingual education with "confusing" the students. The excerpts below represent a sample of what monolingual teachers related:

I think it's definitely in our best interest [that CES is no longer dual immersion]. Our kids weren't learning. I think they were totally confused. When we had bilingual, they would be taught just to say the alphabet in Spanish and how to say it in English, the confusion, I would see it, the confusion in the kids. It's not a popular belief, but I think everyone needs to learn English. In order for our scores to improve, we just need to teach in English. (monolingual teacher, interview, May 14, 2010)

Teachers also referred to "students" as a homogeneous group, which relates to teacher beliefs that learning a second language is the same for all language groups (Dubin, Eskey, & Grabe, 1986), even though this was not actually the case. It is not clear which students were actually confused by the instruction in Spanish. Despite the fact that the dual-immersion program was in place for almost a decade, the school leadership and the monolingual teachers never had any professional development to challenge their deficit perspectives around their students and bilingual education as an effective model for student achievement and bilingualism.

Learning English is more important than anything else. The other predominant language ideology that emerged from the interviews was that even though using Spanish might be permissible to explain something, English as the primary medium of instruction was essential for students' academic success as well as their success later in life. Any discussion around maintaining the students' first language placed that onus on their parents and the home environment. One teacher related: It's a predominantly English classroom and students are given supplemental support in Spanish, if they don't understand the concept of a tape recorder, they'll be explained in Spanish but the teacher will continue to lesson in English—we know the importance of getting them to learn English as the primary language in this country because everything is driven by that, their applications, their driver's license, all those things. (Spanish bilingual teacher, interview, April 20, 2010)

Other teachers related:

Also I know if they are immersed in English, the more they are hearing English a better result for them. So I do explain things in Spanish, but I keep on talking in English because that's the way. (Spanish bilingual teacher, interview, May 14, 2010)

We've had a huge influx of Bosnian children coming in with no English, but you just put them in English-speaking class and they're like sponges. They learned English so fast, where if we did that years ago with our Spanish-speaking kids, my opinion we wouldn't be in the situation we're in right now [that they don't know English]. Just put them in English-speaking classrooms, let them learn English, they will not lose their ethnic background. They will not lose that language because the majority of our parents speaking Spanish at home. (monolingual teacher, interview, May 14, 2010)

The second teacher is comparing the Spanish-speaking ELs with the recent influx of refugee EL students who have moved into the area. She attributes the Bosnian students' academic success to their being immersed in English and not attempting any form of bilingual education to support their first language. It is clear that among the teachers, even the former bilingual teachers, the prevailing ideology is that having EL students learn English as quickly as possible, with no emphasis on their home language, leads to better academic success.

These research findings show that the school also was never able to successfully adapt the dual-immersion program to incorporate the growing number of students speaking other languages, like Bosnian and Somali. Interview data also reveal how former bilingual and nonbilingual teachers are internalizing the prevailing language ideologies about language education, rather than following state statute or principles in the CSR model. Teachers' interpretations of the new school model included removing all forms of bilingual education from their classrooms, although according to the district representative, the principal, and CSR external coach, they are permitted (and, one could argue, *required* per state policy) to use bilingual education based on their students' needs.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The article speaks to the current context of public education that is occurring throughout the United States. States, even ones that traditionally don't have high EL populations, increasingly need to accommodate growing EL populations, especially in their urban areas. What this research has demonstrated is that in terms of bilingual education, there is a lack of "real" stateor district-level support, despite the state official policy and the increasing EL population in the state. This research has also demonstrated that for bilingual education to be successful, whatever the program model, it needs to be correctly implemented. District- and school-level administrators must support a sustained process of implementation that includes monitoring and evaluation (Mayer, 2010). While it is important for federal funding to support languageeducation models, proper support, materials, and resources are essential elements of this financial support. Implementing bilingual-education programs must also include supportive professional development that addresses pervasive language ideologies against bilingual education that mirror the dominant English-only discourse.

Given our inability to observe how the dual-immersion program was being implemented prior to 2008, we can only draw from current data to speculate why it was unsuccessful. Was the lack of consistency and adherence to the program model due the deficit-oriented language ideologies that the teachers espouse? Or was it due to lack of district support and relevant certification that led to poor program implementation and the teachers to their current language ideologies? Does the lack of state support stem from low achievement scores? Or is the low achievement a result of the minimal support and training needed to implement a successful model? Our data demonstrate that none of the staff interviewed had any knowledge of current state bilingual policy and mandates, and school leaders revealed no plans to change the teachers' incorrect assumptions about whether they could use languages other than English in their classrooms even after we had discussed our interview findings with them.

One could argue that the state bilingual-education policy itself is limited as it doesn't contain any penalties for failing to adhere to it. The bilingual-education policy also contradicts other state policies, like those that mandate a racial balance in schools and districts. The bilingual-education policy also does not address how to implement a bilingual program in changing EL demographics in Connecticut, like we saw at Coyote Elementary School, where refugee immigrants were entering the school but not being offered bilingual education in their native languages. Also, the CSR model adopted by the state in no way addressed or endorsed the state bilingual-education policies. While no one policy ever addresses every possibility, there should be complementary, not contradictory, policies that stymie local attempts at bilingual-education model fidelity.

Specific recommendations that emerged from this research advocate for all states that are experiencing growing ELL populations to take steps to ensure that there are viable program models in place that include appropriate resources, teacher training, and professional development. Teachers themselves also need to be more cognizant of their local state-level policies and what is possible to implement in their schools. They, as the local agents, have the power to act as change agents (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2010) to support maintenance and immersion models. University teacher training programs and/or professional development should specifically address the dominant language-as-problem orientations and ideologies that are prevalent. The teachers in our study demonstrated strong ideologies against incorporating the important resources of students' home cultures as well as the research-proven efficacy of bilingual education.

This policy context in Connecticut demonstrates a somewhat disheartening example for advocates of bilingual education. While bilingual education is very feasible under state policy, no one seems to really want to or even know how to do it in practice. It is the implicit policies, not the explicit ones, and the pervasive dominant-language ideologies (Tollefson, 2002) that more directly impact the education that is offered to ELs in Connecticut. This research demonstrates that it is critical to develop language-education policies to meet the needs of these students, especially as discourses privileges English dominate. These policies must include professional development to counter already-existing deficit perspectives about home languages and their impact on student achievement and even success later in life. This research poignantly demonstrates that having official policies is not enough—it is the implicit policies and practices that become pervasive and hinder possible opportunities for effective bilingual-education programs to be developed. We as researchers and supporters of bilingual education need to continue to advocate and promote maintaining and using models that support students' linguistic and academic achievement and combat dominant ideologies that promote an English-only monolingual agenda. As some state and federal policies continue to dismantle bilingual-education models, states and schools where bilingual education is in fact possible need to take advantage of producing and maintaining models that continue to demonstrate the efficacy and importance of these programs.

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