

The "English Only" Movement:
More Than Just a Loss of Tongues

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*“We die.
That may be the meaning of life.
But we do language.
That may be the measure of our lives.”*

--Toni Morrison

Acknowledgements

It is hard to imagine that a yearlong project of research, interviews, writing, and analysis has come to an end. I remember sitting in Sharon Morgenthaler's "Teaching, Literacy, and Community Action" class last spring. We were reading Jonathan Kozol's Savage Inequalities. I remember being so angry that we were sitting in a comfortable Georgetown classroom bubble discussing educational policy while inner-city children survived abhorrent school conditions and programs each and every day. This imbalance frustrated me to the point of deciding to write a thesis about such inequalities. I started with the idea of educational injustice. A few weeks later, the topic narrowed to the economic and social discrepancies of standardized testing in public schools. Something deeper was itching inside, me however. Something about language and the reasons why multilingualism in America is so threatening to our power dynamic structures. Early in the fall semester, Professor You-me Park suggested I take a look at the English-Only Movement as a sub-section of my thesis. After reading a few articles about the movement, my thesis topic was decided. That some Americans thought it their duty and privilege to abolish other languages and cultures fascinates me.

I take great pride in this thesis paper as the most substantial piece of work I have produced thus far in my educational career. I am grateful to so many people who each made this project a realization in their own ways. Thank you to my parents for their encouraging words, even if from a distance. Thank you to my friends for their patience and for understanding how important this paper is to me. Thank you to my two mentors, Dr. Patricia O'Connor and Dr. You-me Park for hours of advice and guidance. Finally, I hope this paper is not an end but merely a beginning for open discussions about language policy and multiculturalism triggered by our very own contested "American-ness."

CHAPTER I: Introduction

In Toni Morrison's Nobel Lecture (1993), she recounts a tale of a blind griot. The woman, although old and incredibly wise, has never enjoyed the gift of sight. Tales of her foresight have traveled far, however. A group of young students do not believe a person can bear the power to retell the past and predict the future. The youngsters decide to go in search of the woman. They devise a plan to craftily trick the old guru. One of them asks, "Old woman, I hold in my hand a bird. Tell me whether it is living or dead." The wise woman does not know the answer, for she is blind. She does not know their color, gender or homeland but nonetheless is certain of their motive. The prophetess replies, "I don't know whether the bird you are holding is dead or alive, but what I do know is that it is in your hands. It is in your hands." Morrison unfolds the story's multiple dimensions in her lecture: The bird, she asserts, is language.

Morrison speaks of language, the language in which one dreams, as ultimately inseparable from the beings who form it. Language is a complex human system. Dependent on human agency, the power of language is literally suspended in the hands and whims of the young students. If they decide to suffocate the bird, the language will die. A dead language, one no longer written or spoken, is "one content to admire its own paralysis" (Morrison 11). It can no longer tolerate new ideas, shape thoughts, tell stories, or fill silences. While language does not replace experience of humanity, it is a fundamental tool of communication. With language people "arc towards the place where meanings may lie." Today words are discredited because they are critical or erased because they are alternate. By silencing marginal ideas or words, we might someday obliterate any sort of diversity in exchange for one solitary way of being, of experiencing human existence. The responsibility to preserve culturally sublime and generative words is ours—those who live through language. "Language makes meaning that secures our

difference, our human difference” (Morrison 22). Once linguistic freedom and diversity are usurped by the very people who unknowingly depend on it, once we let go of something so fundamentally deep and true, stories and histories will be forgotten, songs will remain unsung, and poems unspoken—the human experience will mourn the loss of a fundamental dimension.

Theoretical Experiences of Language

A language encompasses so much more than merely a medium of communication. With language, we master reality: our history, interpersonal relations, and most intimate emotions. “Anybody who learned to love in one language,” for example, “will never be able spontaneously to translate his expressions of affection into a language acquired later” (Montaner 164). We experience jealousy, anger, faith, and desire through culturally loaded words often not translatable. A tone of voice, a deep inflection of sound, or a body gesture reflect linguistic cues solidified throughout maturation. Both personal and communal language fosters identification within a family, group, or society. One’s manner of speaking may reflect his/her social experience. Collectively, language harbors the power to demonstrate broader currents of identification within a society. Changes in the linguistic status quo, therefore, can potentially produce serious personal or social disruption.

Many Americans wrongly assume that the English language is the official tongue of the United States of America. On the contrary, America has never declared one primary language. Occasionally throughout our history, some Americans have felt urgently about declaring English official. During the past two decades, this attempt for monolingualism has been particularly strong. Triggered by recent surges of new immigration, those trying to deem English official seek action through amending the Constitution of the United States. The current movement is

known as the English Only Movement—a movement adamantly trying to pass an English Language Amendment (ELA) in Congress. A seemingly harmless reiteration of a fact all citizens accept—English is the primary language of this country *de facto*—might produce an anti-immigrant, nativist, and even neo-colonialist trend in practice. Linguistic assertions undoubtedly reflect a cultural and political view. The very language used to discuss such a linguistic debate bears sociopolitical elements. Despite what proponents of English Only might claim, legislating an “official” language will not dilute racial, ethnic, or social tension within our society.

Historically, two diametrically opposed images of cultural diversity have been engrained in America: acceptance and rejection. America prides itself on its ethnic richness, which produces international cuisines, music festivals, Chinatowns and Little Italies, sports heroes, and entertainment megastars. Immigrants generate America into a multicultural Mecca. Even after generations of residence in the United States, however, immigrant peoples are stigmatized as “different” and ultimately “un-American” because of their language or appearance. The hierarchy of “American” and “Immigrant” is much deeper than two-tiered. “Immigrant” is not a unitary category like we might be lead to believe. Frankly, it is easier for some to be accepted as “American.” Physically, immigrants from Western Europe can mesh with stereotypically “American” features of light skin and blond hair. “Newer” immigrants from Asia and Latin America will never attain this “look.” The sole use of English as a common language ideologically becomes a leveling ground on which different groups of immigrants feel compatible. Any non-English language, therefore, stigmatizes one’s “un-American-ness,” one’s unwillingness to conform to U.S. immigrant procedures. Denying immigrants multilingual luxuries they now enjoy—bilingual ballots, road signs, education, public services—for the sake

of speedy assimilation, however, might only serve to broaden the gap between those within and outside America's institutions—the “haves” and the “have-nots.”

An Attempt to Begin

The language debate is theoretical, ideological, and practical—together a complicated matrix of American experience. Language struggles incorporate symbolic clashes over cultural, religious, ethnic, and national identities. They represent contending philosophies of pluralism and what “Americanism” has come to mean. The conflicts are also tangible—struggles for social and economic status. A critical inspection of the English Only Movement seems necessary, forcing us to dissect our accepted and rarely contested “American-ness.” Who are the “we Americans” that this paper addresses? There are certainly implicit requirements—physical, economic, educational, ethical—which grant some access into the privileged “we.” Historically, which groups have been denied inclusion? A call for reflection proves urgent, especially in the recent months since the tragic developments of September 11, 2001. In Morrison's guru's world, children have bitten their tongues off and use bullets instead to “iterate the voice of speechlessness, of disabled and disabling language” (Morrison 15). Without multiple languages of communication to express deep personal and social sentiments, people revel in their own exclusivity and even dominance. Complacency in our “American-ness” could be detrimental. Discussions about national inclusivity or exclusivity must occur in private and public forums. An open discussion about language policy and the implications of deeming English the official language is a necessary beginning for an identity debate.

In this paper, I hope to critically explore the current English Only Movement: its history, proponents, opponents, and social implications. This chapter stages a framework for the debate

by introducing the reader to theoretical aspects of language and a brief history of linguistic policy in the U.S. Directly following, I lay out the debate positions and the significant terms used throughout my research findings. In chapter II, I recount the history of multilingualism in this country. The debate positions prevalent today are very much echoes of earlier encounters with many tongues and peoples. Chapter III is an analysis of the reasons and motives for wanting official language legislation. I track primarily *U.S. English*, the organization most adamantly seeking an official language. Chapter IV explores the positions of those opposing official English. Since bilingual education is the most highly contested aspect for official language advocates, the chapter focuses on types of bilingual education, successes and failures of different programs, and successful strategies for English acquisition. Finally, chapter V deals with the ideological and practical implications on our society were an English Language Amendment to pass.

Suppressing language ultimately thwarts all sorts of human potential. The old guru prophesized, “When a language dies, out of carelessness, disuse, indifference and absence of esteem, or killed by fiat...all users are accountable for its demise” (Morrison 14). Oppressed languages are so much more than representations of cultural violence—they are cultural violence. The passing of an English Language Amendment would be detrimental to America’s already socially fragmented society because of its perpetuation of oppression and ultimate stagnation of human possibility.

A Brief History

Over two centuries ago, the first settlers of America never declared an official language within the founding documents. Linguistic monopoly, they believed, was too reminiscent of the

aristocratic tyranny in Europe from which they fled. In this new land of freedom and true democracy, a multiplicity of voices from around the world would create a strong and unique social fabric. The gates opened. Immigrants poured into the United States. Between 1901 and 1910 alone, over eight million immigrants arrived (Ricento). The imposition of the English language was fundamental to an aggressive program of Americanization aimed at reconstructing this flood of immigrants from their “ethnic” trends to our American democratic principles. A New York official told immigrants in 1916: “You have got to learn our language because that is the vehicle of the thought that has been handed down from the men in whose breasts first burned the fire of freedom” (Nunberg “Lingo Jingo”). While the nation prided itself on a multicultural identity, a shared tool of communication was key.

The most recent call for English has been the most explicit, funded, and influential. This new “nativism,” as it is often called, is very different from the Americanization techniques used early in the twentieth century. The English Only advocates want to make English politically official via apolitical propaganda. The English language, language proponents claim, is the only “social glue” or “common bond” Americans bear. Ironically, of all the fundamental documents declaring America’s democratic principles, young Americans often only learn the Pledge of Allegiance or the national anthem. “Memorizing” these declarations of American-ness as a “common bond” does not translate to “understanding” the meaning of the language. School children mechanically recite the words and perhaps derive meaning more from the non-linguistic symbol of a flag than from the principles of freedom represented by words. Why, then, should immigrants be required to speak a new language if they feel the meanings of freedom and democracy in their own tongue?

The Debate Positions

Despite the recent push for English Only legislation, the United States remains largely monolingual. Ninety percent of persons five to seventeen years old and close to 89 percent of persons eighteen and over speak only English (Baron 178). In practice, English Only proponents seem to have already won the battle for a national language. Therefore, pushing further legislation seems quite unnecessary. Furthermore, English remains a strong international language of trade, technology, and diplomacy. Seventy-five percent of the world's mail and 80 percent of its computer data are written in English. Three hundred and sixteen million people speak English as their first language and another 300 million acquire it as a second language. The language is official or at least semi-official in more than 60 countries around the world (Baron 178). The English language obviously faces no threat of losing its global or American prominence any time in the near future (see Appendix A).

Proponents of the English Only Movement fight for motives beyond language retention, however. Pro English citizens resent that taxpayers spend billions of dollars on multilingual governmental and educational materials and programs. Passing legislation local, state, and national levels to declare English the official language would have multifaceted effects: Government agencies would be required to cease conducting any official business in languages other than English. Bilingual ballots, driving licenses, social services, emergency operators, court interpreters, job training, welfare services, and even AIDS-prevention education would be directly affected. English would also be enforced for civic requirements and naturalization. English proficiency for immigrants would become a national priority. English Language Amendment proponents insist that an ELA is necessary for the cultural and ideological assimilation of immigrants into the U.S. Denying an immigrant practical motives for quickly

acquiring English, proponents argue, would only rob him or her from a true American experience.

Opponents of the ELA do question whether a mastery of English is truly a prerequisite for a commitment to American ideals of democracy, freedom, and individuality. Anti-English Only people believe an ELA would perpetuate cultural fragmentation across America. Nonanglophones would be shunned from political participation, justice in courtrooms, educational opportunities, and thus fundamentally a sense of being “American.” A language monopoly would represent yet another system of tyranny implemented by the white Anglo-majority. Americans against the ELA sensed the discrimination latent in an ELA and practically proposed another constitutional amendment, the Cultural Rights Amendment (CRA). This amendment aimed to ban discrimination on the basis of minority language and culture (similar to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which legally restricted discrimination on the basis of national origin).

Significant Terms

My deeming the subject of this paper an investigation of the “English Only Movement” is significant. Although I do not advocate English Only legislation, the proponents of official English enjoy a hefty slant over the language used to discuss the movement. While English-Only proponents have coined the term “English Only”¹ as their official stance, opponents of official English as known as just this. They have not deemed a similar term to summarize their perspective. Calling them “Pro-Bilingualism” might be inaccurate since an official language

¹ The term “English-only” was originally introduced by supporters of a 1984 California initiative opposing bilingual ballots, a catalyst for other official-language measures. Leaders of the movement rejected the label later on, since they had no objection to the use of foreign languages in private life. Throughout recent decades, however, the heated linguistic debate has undoubtedly affected private as well as public life (Nunberg “Jingo Lingo”).

bears implication beyond bilingual education. Were the movement to be called “Multicultural Appreciation through English,” for example, ideological allegiance and political motives might cultivate vastly alternate results. Key-phrase, common-sense terms such as “English Only” directly influence public opinion. Very few citizens would decide “No” if asked whether or not English should be the official language of this country. Simply language masks the political, ideological, and social baggage attached to accepting English as the primary language.

“Immigrant” is a very broad term I use throughout the paper. I in no way condone that all immigrants enjoy equal treatment in America. Again, physical appearance and cultural precedence has much to do with the status different groups experience. Immigrants from Europe, for example, “we” presume to carry a rich cultural, historical, and linguistic advantage, which could only enhance America’s claim to multiculturalism. On the other hand, “we” classify Latin or Asian immigrant as tainted for a reluctance to dispose of their cultural and linguistic heritage to which more “western” immigrant can hold on. Likewise, I assume throughout the paper that “bilingualism” bears many forms despite my seeming unitary use of the word. A bilingual or trilingual linguistic identity from a western culture is an instant social and even economic advantage. Linguistic variance among immigrants from South America or Asia or even within English-speaking American peoples is perceived as threatening to a “unified” America. “Bilingual education” as a stance is often placed in direct opposition to English Only. The positions are not binary. For the sake of simplicity and cohesion, however, I will assume that proponents of English Only and those in favor of bilingual education express dissenting opinions within the language debate. The paradoxes and double standards of the language used within this debate are substantial material for an entirely different investigation.

In order to further facilitate the reach of this paper, I focus on Hispanic immigrants as representative of language minority Americans. As the third most widely spoken language in the world, Spanish is fundamental to a linguistic debate. Spanish speakers comprise the greatest language minority group in the U.S. (*League of United Latin*) while Hispanic immigrant children are the principal victims of monolingual education, bearing the lowest test scores and highest dropout rates. My focus on Hispanic immigrants should in no way lessen the importance of other language minority groups as well as the relatively brutal effect an ELA would impose on them. Although in this paper I assume that minority-language speakers bear an immigrant status, linguistic terrorism occurs at all levels of American society. Native Americans and Black Americans—both century-long inhabitants of America—are affected as deeply by Official English legislation ideologies as newcomers to America.

Chapter II: A Brief Linguistic History of America

A Multilingual America

Although English is America's national language de facto through its profuse use in everyday life, the Constitution of the United States nowhere declares an official language. American language policy is both fragmented and inexplicit because of its contradictory history in which a call for an official language was both suppressed and encouraged. Prior to the arrival of Europeans in America, more than five hundred languages were spoken in this country (Castellanos 13). These languages lost through coercion represented peoples, cultures, and stories. Particularly many Native American cultures were affected: Apache, Navajo, Cheyenne, Pawnee, Crow, Taino, Carib, Choctaw, Creek, Cherokee, Ottawa, Mohawk, Delaware, Seneca, to list just a few. Unlike other colonial powers, England did not consider the formalization of a united language pressing when determining the policies to be adopted in the America colonies. Not only were there no previous linguistic programs to build upon but also British leadership assumed no dispute about the sole use of English, as a means of communication in the New England would arise. The United States, however, naturally divided into linguistic pockets following European immigration with the Germans holding a steady majority of a quarter million throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Castellanos 16).²

In response to early immigration pressures, the laws in several American states authorized schooling and commercial interaction in several European languages. The knowledge of two or more languages, after all, was advantageous for trading, teaching, diplomacy, and spreading religious beliefs. Multiple languages, the early settlers believed, would help preserve

² In 1787 German Americans represented a proportion of the population comparable to that of Hispanics today (8.6 percent versus 9.0 percent) (Crawford 1992: 177).

and strengthen America's new democracy and place this new system in complete contrast with the political aristocracies of Europe. In America's fragile new state after the Revolution, an unnecessary repression of native tongues might have led to resistance. America had implicitly agreed on a "policy not to have a policy" (Crawford 1992: 10) when it came to linguistic issues. Language choice, therefore, was perceived as an individual matter for those whose recent colonial experience convinced them that state regulation of cultural ideals was too reminiscent of a monarchy.

Native Americans

Libertarian attitudes of multilingualism in America did not extend to indigenous, Native American peoples. Colonists absorbed images of native savageness prior to their arrival on U.S. soil and thought it their religious and social duty to "civilize" through edicts of western civilization. Language was a primary tool by which to "anglicize" and "civilize" American Indians (Crawford 1992:10). Indian children were stripped from their families and bound to reservations. There, the children would not only forcibly learn to accept a culture other than their own but also come to reject and dissociate completely from their own roots and traditions. Speaking solely English was strictly enforced and usually maintained through physical punishment such as a threat of a stroke from a leather strap (Reyhner 42). Native students resented the regimented life and dreaded learning English, "the tongue of their despised conquerors" (Reyhner 42). Once the child graduated from the reservation school, he or she was expected to blend into mainstream America even though matriculation into normal, "American" life was rarely possible. Those who attempted to live in white America immediately faced social and economic prejudices resulting in lifetimes and generations of menial labor tasks—the only

option open for Native Americans. This cultural disintegration implied devastating side effects—poverty, alcoholism, and educational failure. The forced linguistic assimilation of one culture into another is so tragic because it obliterates agency. Vital elements of a person’s connection to family, history, and legacy disintegrate. Morrison reminds us that cultural preservation is “in our hands” like the bird in the youngsters possession. When coercion floods the cultural picture, however, language maintenance is seemingly impossible. John Collier, commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933, addressed the ills of forced assimilation. Modern society, he said, “Lost that passion and reverence for human personality and for the web of life and the earth which the American Indians have tended as a central sacred fire” (Reyhner 45).

In contrast to the government’s reservation approach for teaching Native Americans English culture and language, some mission schools allowed instruction in a native language. For example, at the American Mission Boarding School, the Dakota dialect was primary and all books were written in Dakota. After a mastery of Dakota, children were given bilingual books with illustrations. This method fostered a holistic approach of questioning and acquiring both languages. This success was a useful example of the possibilities of bilingual programs in the United States. Some bilingual educators today maintain that a solid knowledge of a native language helps develop vital cognitive skills at the appropriate age. Once a native language is mastered, a transition to a second language is both easier and more effective.

Language policy bears implications far deeper than language acquisition, however. In 1887, J.D.C. Atkins, the federal commissioner of Indian Affairs during the first Grover Cleveland administration addressed the parallel between linguistic and political ideology. Privileging a native language, he writes, is an insult to the English culture. Atkins’ sarcasm is biting. He mocks that mandating English among Native American tribes might infringe upon

sacred rights: “Is it cruelty to the Indians to force him to give up his scalping-knife and tomahawk” (51)? His language ignorantly devalues Native traditions, emblems, and histories. Because native peoples may not understand progress in the same manner as the Anglo mainstream, Atkins deems them barbaric and their traditions needy of reconsideration. Atkins’ bias illustrates a political agenda of white supremacy in matters beyond language and towards assaulting a different culture or way of life.

Early English Language Proponents

A multilingual America—even one defined by prominent, European languages—was not without its opponents. Many early Americans feared that a diversity of tongues would dislocate the rights, powers, and privileges enjoyed by the majority. In 1753, Benjamin Franklin expressed his fear of the Germans outnumbering Americans: “They will soon so out number us, that all the advantages we have will not, in My Opinion, be able to preserve our language, and even our government will become precarious” (19). Several of the “founding fathers” supported recognized Franklin’s position. For example, John Adams added that the declaration of a sole American language would serve as a pragmatic tool to elevate America as a legitimate, world power. Language, therefore, was also understood to be an institution of manipulation through which the state would propagate nationalistic ideals.

In order to advance a sense of unity through language, the founders of the country debated about whether or not to establish a new language—American—as separate from its English parent. Proponents of such a linguistic policy looked disapprovingly to Europe as babbled with complexity. “American,” they thought, would represent a coherent nation whose people would “speak like children of the same family” (Webster 35). These “founding fathers”

spoke as privileged men of the majority. The ideology of the nation was not only in their hands but also in their favor. Speaking a unified tongue was plausible because it was **their** tongue and **their** tradition. John Adams called for the formation of a Language Academy to set official standards for American English versus British English (32). Adams and other proponents of establishing English looked to private efforts to set a linguistic standard. Noah Webster, for example, wrote a series of textbooks (a speller, grammar, and reader) imprinting American spellings, names, and authors to replace those of the British past. He focused on the sameness of pronunciation for social purposes and relinquished dialectic prejudices. His goal was practical; he wanted to saturate all states with “American.” In the end, Webster compromised his plea for Federal English and supported a common heritage between England and the New World by calling his 1828 lexicon *The American Dictionary of the English Language* (Baron “Federal English”).

The Americanization Movement

The question of language policy in the United States was revisited at the end of the nineteenth century and through World War I when Americans felt a growing nationalistic impulse. The official movement was called Americanization. A surge of eight million newcomers catalyzed a pressing need to define America’s stance on immigration. Traditionally, two stereotypes of dealing with immigrants prevailed under Americanization: Anglo-Conformity and Cultural Pluralism. Under Anglo-Conformity, immigrants supposedly rejected mainstream life and lived in ostracized ethnic communities. On the other hand, Cultural Pluralism saw immigrants as willing conformers to an American way of life. Inundated with nationalistic anxieties, adherents of Americanization urged for new patriotic hereditary societies (such as the

Daughters of the American Revolution), which tried to indoctrinate the foreigner with a love and loyalty to America. In a time of national crisis during the early twentieth century, nonanglophones looked un-American. Webster defined the term “hyphenated-American” (Mexican-American, African-American) as a person withholding of full allegiance to the adopted country. U.S. policy attempted to use this derogatory reference towards people of foreign birth as a motivation for them to assume a more Anglicized American identity. Language became crucial to an individual’s nationality. Prominent scholar of the English-Only Movement Dennis Baron writes that language became “a literal shibboleth of nationality, a badge of true Americanism, and anything less than fluency in English [was] perceived to threaten national security and subvert a national ideal” (7).

Early Opponents Not For Long

Due to the deep cultural gap between the haves and have-nots in 1890s America, Americans believed the government owed immigrants greater efforts towards facilitating their social integration within the larger American framework. Such early opponents of a linguistic monopoly deemed integration not so much about changing the newcomer but rather about offering him/her a new, receptive environment in which his/her heritage might flourish. Ideally, linguistic and cultural diversity would strengthen U.S. society under this premise. This normative model of encouraging mother-tongue maintenance presumed a need for federal assistance for bilingual programs, multilingual ballots, etc. After 1915, a great shift occurred from this humanitarian welcoming of immigrants, to one of forcing newcomers to cut their ties with the old world for the promise of learning the American culture. America’s linguistic ideology shifted from “Many Peoples, but One Nation” to “American First” (Higham 78). America’s entry into

the World War solidified feelings of Americanization especially since victory depended on the help and loyalty of foreigners. The propaganda offered new immigrants an opportunity to belong to the great crusade of a great nation. It was their chance to “do something” to help win the war. As the movement grew, thousands of agencies engaged with Americanization principles including schools, churches, and trade unions.

The wartime push for unity naturally promoted the use of the English language. In his 1917 wartime appeal, Theodore Roosevelt expressed, “The greatness of this nation depends on the swift assimilation of the aliens she welcome to her shores. Any force which attempts to retard that assimilative process is a force hostile to the highest interests of our country” (85). In 1919, fifteen states declared English their sole language. Furthermore, several states mandated that public school teachers attain citizenship before teaching and that all public meetings be held in English. In 1920, the movement began to fade with the onset of an economic depression and the passing of the Red Scare brought on by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

During and after World War II and the Vietnam War, Americans revisited feelings of anti-immigration with a heightened anti-Italian, anti-German, and anti-Japanese fervor. Like traditional patterns of immigration, waves of newcomers reached an apex after these wars. Most sources on the English Only Movement and linguistic history in America skip the middle of the twentieth century intentionally because a national language agenda debate was not furthered in significant ways. Although the heightened levels of immigration added to the multicultural population, this fuel for the language policy dialogue was not ignited until several decades later.

Aside from the few surges of desired English legislation over the past two centuries, proponents of English remained pacified by de facto English until relatively recently. In the 1980s, some citizens began to feel an urgency for deeming English America’s first and primary

language even though English was spoken by all but 2 percent of United States residents over the age of four (Crawford 1992:1). In 1981, Senator S. I. Hayakawa, a Republican from California and adamant critic of bilingualism and bilingual voting rights, introduced a constitutional amendment to make English official. Considering his surname and Japanese dissent, some might think him an opponent of English legislation. His immigrant status has been a critical propaganda technique to encourage people that loose immigrant policies and substantial leniency towards America's language could have a devastating effect on the country. Hayakawa's amendment was ignored and died without hearing in the 97th Congress.

In 1983 Hayakawa founded *U.S. English*, a powerful and highly funded lobbying effort, backed by many important national personalities. Before long, this lobby became associated with right-of-center convictions. Within five years, *U.S. English* had a membership of 400,000 people and an annual budget of over six million dollars. Over twelve versions of Hayakawa's amendment, The English Language Amendment (ELA), have seen Congress since his initial proposal. By 1990, seventeen states had adopted statutes of amendments declaring English official (see Appendix B). A national language debate with heated controversies fired up. Two decades the English Only Movement have been pregnant with fervor and contentions, triggered by appeals to patriotism and other sentiments replicating those of the Americanization movement (see Appendix B).

Chapter III: The English Only Movement

English Only Basics

The English language is tantamount to Americanization, or so proponents of Official English believe. If language reflects certain social ideologies and cultural understandings, the “United” States should stand together and reflect one common, democratic, political and social vision. Only through understanding English can one truly comprehend the spirit of America’s founding documents—the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights. Even American currency ignites feelings of unity: The coins read “E Pluribus Unum”—out of many, one.³ The English-Only movement has been so successful because it uses symbolic means to highlight dissatisfaction with a range of unsettling social phenomena such as immigration, affirmative action, and public assistance. It is not fair that in order to become a United States citizen, immigrants need not speak English but simply present some paperwork. It is not just that in California, driver’s license exams are available in thirty different languages. The government should not be expected to provide public services in all 329 languages spoken in the United States (“*U.S. English Website*”). These and other statistics on the *U.S. English Website* suggest that multilingual federal policies are not only baffling and unnecessary but also ultimately harmful.

The Old Testament moral myth of the Tower of Babel demonstrates the dangerous linguistic vision that English-Only proponents aim to topple. The conventional wisdom of the Tower of Babel story is that multilingualism was a great misfortune: The weight of many language precipitated the towers fall. One monolithic language advocates of English claim,

³ It is ironic that an urgent fight for “American” identity preservation hails a classic Latin phrase culturally significant.

would expedite the construction of the American experience. Proponents juxtapose Babel and the Golden Age of Eden when one pure, dialect-free language was spoken. Morrison struggles with Babel's implications as well in her Nobel lecture. "Whose heaven" were the builders seeking to reach, she wonders, "And what kind?" She wonders whether or not an achievement of Paradise—or one, national, democratic identity—was too hasty since no one was or is taking the time to understand or preserve other language, cultures, narratives. This view of heaven is more complex, for sure. Morrison is certain that aside from the struggle, it would be "a view of heaven as life," true human, interactive experience (19).

The birth of the English Only Movement in the early 1980s held a certain temporal irony: "The English movement...advocates a return to a mythic era of English monolingualism in the face of growing demands for multilingual abilities in the world marketplace" (Draper 89). In a time of global mobility and transcontinental communication as norm, English Only Americans fear liberal immigration policies and surges of international aliens will oust a solid American way of life.⁴ Proponents regard language as one of America's last sources of unity and thus seek to legalize American English before it too is melded into the so-called "melting pot." Hayakawa captures the intangible threat: "Foreigners are always aliens in England. No one becomes English...No one becomes Japanese...No one becomes Nigerian. But Nigerians, Japanese, and English become Americans" (94). One need not speak flawless English to be considered an American. Actually, one need not even speak English. By acknowledging such aliens as citizens, Hayakawa and his supporters argue, America condones people's rejection of the English language.

⁴ In the decades 1901 to 1910 8,795,000 and 1981 to 1990 7,338,000 immigrants arrived in the U.S. These numbers are more than any other ten-year period since the census has been conducted (Ricento).

The guiding principles of the English Only groups are multifaceted. First, proponents believe that a pluralistic nation should enjoy unity rather than division of a culture and language. Second, public schools face the responsibility of teaching non-English speakers English speedily. After English is acquired, foreign languages can be studied. Third, candidates for American citizenship should demonstrate their ability to understand, speak, read, and write simple English as well as have a basic knowledge of our system of government. Meanwhile, private groups still hold the right to establish institutions functioning in languages other than English. Perhaps private organizations are less threatening to English only citizens because of their economic subsistence. Scholar Gary Imhoff and former *U.S. English* director Gerda Bikales write how linguistic diversity is welcome in private life:

The English Language Amendment will alter very little in the lives of most Americans. Elegant French restaurants will continue to print French menus; seminaries will continue their Latin studies; Jewish youngsters will continue to attend Hebrew school; Opera lovers will continue to hear their favorite works in Italian, German, or French; as before, immigrant families will continue to protect free speech, as it always has and always must. (73)

We cannot ignore that Hispanic or Asian languages and cultures are excluded from this idealistic praise of what English Only proponents believe multiculturalism in America to be. Finally, by passing an English Language Amendment, they hope repeal laws of multilingual ballots and voting materials⁵ and inundate immigrants with outlets to learn English. In order to make an informed decision about governmental elections, all voters should be competent in English. Advocates argue that if people can acquire driver's licenses and vote without English, then there is no incentive among immigrants to engage with the host culture.

⁵ Naturalization for U.S. Citizenship does not require English literacy for people over 50, and/or who have been in the U.S. for 20 or more years. Thus, many elderly immigrant citizens have limited English ability and cannot exercise their right to vote without bilingual ballots and other voter materials.

The English Language Amendment (ELA), proponents urge, would send a clear message to immigrants encouraging them to join into America's structures rather than pull away and create isolated linguistic pockets. They base this idea on the premise that English is an essential tool of social mobility and economic, educational, political advancement in this country. Proponents insist that recent immigrants are less eager to assimilate than previous generations because they have higher demands of the American government in terms of handouts, voting rights, and educational rights. Linguistic scholar Dennis Baron explains, "For most advocates of official English, competence in a minority language reflects a divided political loyalty" (xiii). His study on language policy in the United States concludes that little has changed in the past two hundred years in terms of social conditions—even more "generous" treatment of immigrants—to produce a need for official English.

The English Only stance appeals mostly to conservatives because it ideologically returns to a time when they assume the United States was less complex, a time when everyone believed in the same values, traditions, and notions of a cohesive family. Such nostalgia seems quite contrary to America's claim to progress. A "nuclear" family for example, bears completely different connotations today than it did fifty years ago. Various expressions of "mother," "father," "lover," etc., prevail in the twenty-first century. Ironically, "direct governmental intrusion into individual rights" is an "anathema to many conservatives" (Judd "The Federal English") because such action invades the forefathers' decisions of U.S. policy. The ELA, therefore, appeals to neoconservatives rather than traditional ones. An initial 400,000-person membership to *U.S. English* has grown today to 1.5 million advocates. Steadfast loyalty to groups such as *U.S. English* reveals an incredible politically conservative support of English Only ideologies.

U.S. English

Gerda Bikales, former *U.S. English* director, writes, “There is a price to entering the social and economic and political mainstream. In return for freedom and opportunity, one learns English...Cultural displacement, cultural loss, is extremely painful. It doesn’t come free. No one can be excused from paying it...If anyone has to feel strange, it’s got to be the immigrant—until he learns the language” (quoted in Crawford 1999: 66).

U.S. English is the national leader in the English Only Movement. Founded in 1983 by Hayakawa, *U.S. English* has grown into an organization of 1.5 million people. *U.S. English* has spent millions of dollars—\$28 million from 1983 and 1990 (Crawford 1992: 4)—to promote the passage an English Language Amendment (ELA). This particular lobbying organization is split into *U.S. English Foundation* and *U.S. English Inc.* The former seeks to find opportunities for minority Americans to access and develop complete competency of the English language while the later focuses on passing legislation to secure government documents in English.

Like Hayakawa, *U.S. English Foundation*’s chairman and CEO Mauro Mujica uses his immigrant status to the foundation’s advantage. In an article about the way a lack of English skills demotes safety, Mujica writes, “As an immigrant from Chile, I know firsthand the obstacles facing non-English speakers and understand that knowing English is the key to unlocking opportunity and realizing the American Dream” (Mujica). The foundation’s mission is threefold: To help improve English language teaching, to student international policies as a means of better understanding our own strengths, and finally to raise public awareness of the linguistic debate. In terms of bilingual policies, the foundation urges English instruction should be short-term and transitional⁶ in nature because “English is the key to full participation in the opportunities of American life” (“*U.S. English Website*”).

U.S. English Inc. focuses on official legislation at the national level. Making English “official” implies that business at all levels—public documents, hearings, legislation, official

⁶ *U.S. English Foundation* maintains an English as a Second Language (ESL) national database.

ceremonies—must be conducted solely in English. The use of other languages for more practical applications in private life including public health safety, foreign language instruction, and promotion in tourism, is supposedly acceptable. The more heated the debate becomes, the more language policies infringe upon private life. In 1996, *U.S. English* played an instrumental role in passing The Bill Emerson English Language Empowerment Act, which made English official in the federal government. It passed 259 to 169. The Senate did not act on the bill before the end of session, however, and so it died. Currently, *U.S. English* is working with members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, namely Representative Bob Barr of Georgia and Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama, to help pass official English legislation in the 107th Congress. Twenty-six states have deemed English official thus far. Mujica explains, “We’re not suggesting that people shouldn’t hold on to their national language. We just don’t believe the government should spend money providing services in multiple languages when money could be better used teaching new immigrants English” (“*U.S. English Website*”).

On the official Website, *U.S. English* denies certain misconception of the official-English movement. The naturalization of English, for example, would not deny emergency services or basic civil rights to language minorities. Likewise, mother tongues would be used to help newcomers learn English. Norman Shumway, former representative of California confirmed, “This is not an effort to stifle private freedom; it is an effort to clarify public policy” (123). *U.S. English* rejects the movement’s xenophobic stereotypes. On the contrary, proponents suggest that current **multilingual** policies are discriminatory against immigrants. While requiring English for success in America’s mainstream, the government provides ballots in many languages, a service promulgating a self-destructive dependency on other tongues. *U.S. English* has also been blamed for coining bilingual programs as “linguistic welfare” (Nunberg “Jingo Lingo”). In defense,

proponents answer that bilingual education programs in America, while originally aimed to help immigrant children keep up with studies in a new English environment, currently work only to foster yet another linguistic dependency (see chapter IV). They add that English acquisition is necessary if newcomers plan on being principal players in an international community, since the English language is the most popular communication medium worldwide. Finally, Americans question why pro English groups do not heed the example of America's founding fathers that decided against official language policy. Advocates answer that while there is no proof that the founders of America deliberately decided to promote English, there is definite evidence against multilingualism.⁷ In addition, had we taken the founding father's notions as a guide to all social policies, they extrapolate, women today would still be denied the vote and African Americans would be inferior citizens ("*U.S. English Website*").

Although *U.S. English* proclaims proponents strive to indoctrinate a common language, the organization's policy fully supports the rights of Native Americans in preserving their own heritage, culture, *and* language. The group recognizes Native Americans' unique situation in the political framework of the United States as a people speaking their own language before the arrival of Europeans in North America. Furthermore, since native tongues are spoken nowhere else in the world, the threat of extinction is severe. While English proficiency is still encouraged for its ability to offer economic opportunities in America, *U.S. English* even supports governmental funding for the study of Native American languages as primary to English in native schools. The juxtaposition between this liberal cultural retention policy and the treatment

⁷ After 1789, not one single example of Congress approving multilingual publications existed. Six years after the Constitution took effect, Congress rejected a request to publish copies of federal laws in German as they thought a multiplicity of language might prove confusing. In 1811, President Madison signed the Louisiana Enabling Act, which allowed Louisiana to become a state only if the laws and official proceedings were written in English and not French. An official language may not have even occurred to the founding fathers since all fifty-five delegates of the Constitutional Convention spoke English.

of Native Americans within America highlights institutional discrepancy. Professor Ralph Fasold, a sociolinguist at Georgetown University, says in an interview that Native Americans are perhaps the only U.S. inhabitants who have successfully managed to preserve their cultural heritage. He continues, "...and just look at what we've done to them" referring to treatment on reservations and their direct experiences with alcoholism and poverty (Fasold). In an attempt to clarify contradiction between the ideological and practical treatment of Native Americans, *U.S. English* answers, "*U.S. English* is trying to preserve the historic language and culture of the United States of America. These goals are not in conflict, and *U.S. English* stands ready to work together with Native Americans to ensure that their rights are protected" ("*U.S. English* Website").

U.S. English's political agenda has become explicit over the past two decades. Co-founder John Tanton had long been interested in restricting immigration into the America, particularly from countries south of the border. In 1979, Tanton founded the *Federation for American Immigration Reform* (ironically FAIR), serving as chairman until 1987. *U.S. English* was essentially a spin-off of FAIR, sharing personnel and funding sources, and most importantly a common ideology of restricting non-white immigrant groups from America's mainstream. Following some accusations of a nativist agenda, *U.S. English* hired Linda Chavez as president in order to dispel any anti-Hispanic, anti-immigrant bias. This strategic tactic boosted the group's credibility until a 1988 scandal, which instigated Chavez's resignation. In 1988, the *Arizona Republic* published portions of a confidential internal memo written by Tanton revealing his fear of a Hispanic takeover. Tanton wrote:

Will the present majority peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile?...Can *homo contraceptives* compete with *homo progenitiva* if borders aren't controlled?...Perhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down!...As whites see their power and control

over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion?... Will Latin American migrants bring with them the tradition of the mordida (bribe), the lack of involvement in public affairs... Is assimilation a function of the educational and economic level of immigrants? If so, what are the consequences of having so many ill-educated people coming in to low paying jobs? (quoted in Crawford 1992: 151)

Financial records of *U.S. English* showed that the organization had received \$680,000 between 1982 and 1989 from the *Pioneer Fund*, an organization dedicated to “race betterment” through eugenics. While these and other revelations have damaged *U.S. English*’s reputation, the group has rebounded and continues to promote an ELA as fundamental to American society.

Other English Only Groups

Although *U.S. English* is by far the most vocal and prominent group striving for official English legislation, several other groups work to promote the standardization of English in public life. *English First* is a national, non-profit grassroots lobbying organization. Founded in 1986, it focuses on eliminating costly and ineffective multilingual policies. Over 150,000 Americans have joined the organization. Most members express frustrations with seeing the governments use their tax money to “divide America” (*English First Website*). This group warns that unless English is made the official language, nothing will prevent the U.S. from dissolving into a balkanized collection of ethnic collectivities, led by power-hungry ethnic leaders (Ricento). Similarly, the English Language Advocates founded *Pro English* in 1994 to enact official English laws. Their mission is also political and includes opposing mandatory multiculturalism, multilingual ballots, and multilingual policies between employers and employees. They push for the right of employers in the United States to use English exclusively. The government, they exclaim, should foster and support the similarities that unite America, not institutionalize the differences (*Pro English Website*).

Ron Unz started *English for Children* to ban bilingual education in California after its thirty-year history (see chapter IV). Similarly, the *Center for Equal Opportunity* founded by Linda Chavez,⁸ specializes in research about the failures of bilingual education. This group works to teach, design, and evaluate English immersion in the classroom. *The English-Speaking Union of the United States* is an educational non-profit working to promote scholarship and advancement of knowledge through the effective use of English. With seventy-seven branches throughout the U.S., this organization offers a “National Shakespeare Competition” to spread the love of English literature as well as “English in Action,” a one-on-one tutoring program between a native English speakers and a minority-language students. Finally, the *Institute for Research in English Acquisition and Development (READ)*, founded in 1989, supports research on English Language learning and for language minority children. This organization has received large grants from *U.S. English*.

The way in which most of these groups solicit participation is via the Internet. Citizens are encouraged to write testimonials of their personal experiences regarding English as a common language. Furthermore, they are urged to say why it is important for official legislation to secure a single tongue. Any anecdotes about multicultural policy failures are encouraged. Groups urge Americans to contact their elected officials and ask for ways to support the cause or send in government documents such as multilingual ballots or official letters written in other languages. Oftentimes petitions are also available on their Websites. In order to discourage multilingual policies, many of these groups look to other societies in which many languages have fostered confusion and even violence. Canada is often the most cited example of such a linguistically split society.

⁸ Chavez was also the head of the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

Multilingual Example: Canada

Current proponents of the English Only movement point to Canada (among other nations) as an example of a problematic linguistic debate. In the 1970s, the French Canadian Separatists culturally threatened the French Federation. Quebec is an inaccurate example of multilingual tension for several reasons, however. First, only 2 percent of native French speakers in Quebec become primary speakers of English while 60 percent of Spanish speakers in the U.S. adopt English as their usual language (Leibowicz 104). Unlike the French speaking Quebecois, Mexican American leaders favor the acquisition of English along with Mexican cultural maintenance. Mexicans also harbor no feelings of defeat or animosity towards Americans. While the French-speaking population of Canada retained a majority and were thus expected to react negatively to the repression of their language, in no state or U.S. region do Hispanic speakers constitute a majority. The ultimate difference between the United States and Canada as linguistic models is in the core of the nation's ideology. Unlike Canada, the United States supports political, religious, and social systems, which are integrationist rather than separatist in nature. Likewise, most immigrants readily accept the importance of English as a vehicle to American success. Canada's tension was graver in that it had to conglomerate two powerful, separate cultural identities into one nation.

Maxwell Yalden, the commissioner of official languages for Canada remarks of his country, "We do not have the separatist problem in Canada because we have two languages. We have the problem because we refuse to give status to the other [French] language" (Leibowicz 105). Ironically, Yalden's sentiments of the Canadian example could be used as defense from the opponents of the English Only movement. Canada experienced political strife because of the government's reluctance to acknowledge French as an expression amidst a substantial portion of

the population. The status of English has never been threatened as a majority tongue both in America or abroad. Advocating so urgently and politically for an unnecessary change two hundred years later might **actually** result in Canadian-like turmoil if language minority cultures and peoples are so easily disregarded.

Sentiments Towards Hispanic Immigrants

Hispanics cultures in the U.S. have experienced the majority of anti-immigrant sentiments. When the United States annexed a third of Mexico's territory following the Mexican War, nearly 77,000 Mexicans became U.S. citizens. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Article 9 (see Appendix C), it was agreed that residents in the territory would enjoy the protection of the U.S. Constitution although not specifically language rights.⁹ These "citizens," however, were discriminated against and denied voting rights, excluded from adequate jobs and education, and experienced physical violence. Signs reading "No Mexican's Allowed" abounded (*League of United Latin*). Mexicans could work the farms, railroads, and mines but not apply for citizenship. During the Great Depression, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans applied for relief from the so-called "Mexican Bureaus" where they were repatriated without regard to American status. Like animals, they were stuffed into cattle cars and shipped back to Mexico. From 1939-1934, more than 400,000 Mexicans were repatriated, even those native to the U.S.

"Spics." This derogatory term is a racial reference with a linguistic history. "No Speak English." "No Spic" "Spic" (Vilanueva 77). According to scholar Victor Vilanueva from

⁹ Historically, the United States government has generally withheld statehood from territories until they contained an English-speaking majority. Louisiana is the exception state. It became official in 1812 with a French-speaking majority. The French were not protected by the state, however. In New Mexico, statehood was withheld for sixty years because of a nativist fear that Mexican Americans along with their native Hispanic tongues would become dominant. Furthermore, state boundaries in the Southwest (Colorado, Arizona, Nevada) were drawn to ensure an English-speaking majority.

Northern Arizona University, this term originates from Anglo sentiments against the second wave of immigrants in the early twentieth century. Vilanueva researched predominant stereotypes of Mexicans: “Their minds run to nothing higher than animal functions—eat, sleep, and sexual debauchery. In every huddle of Mexican shacks one meets the same idleness, hordes of hungry dogs, and filthy children with faces plastered with flies, disease, lice, human filth, stench...” (Vilanueva 78). Hispanics constitute more than half of the legal and illegal immigrant population in America. They are the fastest growing minority group and America is quickly becoming the third largest Spanish speaking country in the world with a 90 billion dollar industry catered to Hispanic needs (“What are the Costs”). Hispanics are often stereotyped as reluctant to assimilate. Gerda Bikales blames the multitude of Hispanic outlets—Spanish media, road signs, education programs—for delayed assimilation. Hispanics today actually assimilate to the English language and culture substantially faster than previous generations because they know how important English is as a tool to success. Once monolingual in English, immigrants are denied the promises of citizens: English competence does not guarantee Hispanics better salaries or greater job opportunities. Apparently the discrimination against American Hispanics is deeper than language alone (Baron 23).

Hispanics and Assimilation

The Center of U.S.-Mexico Studies (1995) found three distinct patterns of assimilation for new arrivals from Mexico and Latin America.¹⁰ The first group tends to join large Latin communities in urban areas like Los Angeles, California. They prosper within this community’s economic and social life. These Latinos often acquire English to the extent that it is necessary for their practical needs. The majority of their lives, therefore, are lived within the Spanish-speaking

¹⁰ One out of every four foreign-born Americans is from Mexico (Mora).

community. Their children are often bilingual but hold onto their Spanish because it is prevalent in the every-day. The second type of Latino immigrant assimilates quickly into the Anglo middle class. This process is usually completed within three generations. They lose their ability to speak their Spanish language and loosen ties to their homeland very quickly because both cultural signifiers bear no context in their everyday American lives. Finally, the last group is the most worrisome to advocates of English Language Amendment. This group tends to assimilate into an almost permanent lower class. These Latinos often rebel against their parents' linguistic and cultural heritage. While they become monolingual in English, they are not proficient enough to escalate into American institutions. These youths get poor education and often live separate lives in ghetto-like spaces. They are absent from both the Latino and Anglo communities.

Assimilation entails very different experiences for these general segments of Latino immigrants. The first group tends to distrust assimilation and enjoys American freedoms within their own ethnic community on the periphery. The middle group sees assimilation as a challenge—the Anglo immigrants did it, so can we—because of strong economic, educational, and occupational factors. Lastly, the third group rebels against the concept of assimilation because they predict it will offer them no rewards in the end—an empty promise. The most tragic element of assimilation, Sociologist Jill Mora says, is the immediate distancing from the native community values and language, which once lost can never be re-found.

Chapter IV: Opponents of The English Only Movement and Advocates of Bilingual Education

Bilingual Educational History

Bilingual Education started as a small \$7.5 million federal experiment for Mexican-American children, half of whom could not speak English upon entering the first grade (“*Center for Equal Opportunity Website*”). The program was based on the good intentions of helping these immigrants grow quickly accustomed to their adoptive English heritage. Without this language base, it was clear that immigrants could not partake of America’s upward mobility, economic structures, and educational advancement. James Crawford, a prominent scholar arguing against the English Only Movement explains the temporal irony: Political and popular support was stronger in the 1960s when the concept of dual education was virtually untested than in the 1990s when research documented substantial benefits (12).

On January 2, 1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed The Bilingual Education Act into law. It was reauthorized in 1974 with virtually no opposition. In this document, the U.S. government signaled its first official commitment to addressing the needs of students with limited English skills. The law was compensatory in nature, an attempt to aid disadvantaged youths. Also called Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), this new act authorized resources to support educational programs, train teachers, develop and disseminate dual-language instructional materials, and encourage parent involvement in children’s education. By May of 1970, the U.S. government under the direction of J. Stanley Pottinger, director of the federal Office for Civil Rights (OCR) sent a memorandum to school districts with more than five percent minority-group children informing them of their obligations

under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. This Title VI outlaws discrimination in federally supported programs.

Under the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, federal funding had been available to programs that maintained and developed languages other than English although it did not require multilingualism. In 1978, however, Congress amended this law to emphasize the goal of competence primarily in the English language and thus restricting federal support to transitional language programs only. Funds for native language maintenance were depleted. In 1979, the President's Commission of Foreign Language and International Studies released a report on America's incredible lack of foreign language ability. Not one state had a foreign language requirement for high-school graduation and many schools failed to even offer foreign language instruction. Unfortunately, today this precedent continues. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, "Only 3 percent of American high school graduates, and only 5 percent of our college graduates, reach a meaningful proficiency in a second language—and many of these students come from bilingual homes" (Crawford 1999:117). Several court cases throughout the twentieth century paved the way for the current positions of bilingual education in the United States.

Legal Precedents for Bilingual Education

In *Meyer v. Nebraska* (1923), the earliest Supreme Court decision regarding rights of linguistic minorities, the court relied heavily on the Fourteenth Amendment's due-process clause in striking down a restriction, on foreign language teaching. Because the case was ruled during a period of great anti-German xenophobia, the court did not completely prohibit language-based discrimination. English as a primary medium of instruction was left in tact. The ruling did

recognize language as a barrier interfering with a children's constitutional right to acquire knowledge, however. Several decades later in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), a San Francisco poverty lawyer learned that one of his client's sons was failing school because he could not understand English. Children were clearly being denied "education of equal terms," the court standard after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Justice Douglas recognized that so-called equal public education was actually a "mockery" if it meant that English-only instruction would be the only means through which children who could not understand the language were meant to learn. Justice Douglas expanded, "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." Such language-minority children, Justice Douglas ruled, were entitled to special assistance in learning English. The court order stopped just short of requiring bilingual education (Baron 11).

With *Meyer* and *Lau* as precedent, along with the minority influx in the Southwest, the English Only Movement in the 1980s blatantly attacked bilingualism as a symbol of national decline and ethnic divisiveness. Bilingual education, opponents argued, meant tremendous funding, restructuring of school programs, hiring and training of more qualified teachers, and denying English only children proper English language instruction since the majority of resources helped foreign students. The flood of Latino and Asian immigrant children cannot be ignored in America's education programs. A quick glance at a recent census shows that Asian and Hispanic immigrants have been and continue to increase. In 2000, these groups represented 15.7 percent of the population and are estimated to represent 22.7 percent by the year 2020 (Crawford 1999:17) (see Appendix D). Bilingual education, English Only proponents argue,

plays no role in the sink-or-swim struggle of any immigrant in a foreign country. The statistically daunting possibility of having thousands of displaced immigrant children in our society looms.

Bilingual Education:

Past immigrants had to survive via the “sink-or-swim” method of English language complete submersion. In 1911, the U.S. Immigration Service found that 77 percent of Italian, 60 percent of Russian, and 51 percent of German immigrant children were one or more grade levels behind a school compared to the 28 percent of American-born white children (“From its Inception”). To the contrary of English-Only statistics, the vast majority of Latino and Asian immigrants are learning English substantially faster than previous generations. Some research studies show that over 95 percent of first generation Mexican Americans are English proficient and more than 50 percent of the second generation have lost their native tongue entirely. Census data show that nearly 90 percent of Latinos five years or older speak English in their households and an astounding 98 percent of Latino parents felt it “essential” that their children learn to read and write English “perfectly” (“From its Inception”).¹¹ Furthermore, those children who managed to survive and “swim,” lived in a time when language proficiency was not demanded since agricultural and factory job opportunities abounded. In a “high-tech” world today, the sink-or-swim method seems highly inefficient and improbable if the goal is to educate youths to the point where their English skills are more an asset than a burden. Today, estimates show 2.4 million children eligible for bilingual English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Bilingual

¹¹ Not enough education resources are available to children and parents alike. Over 40,000 people are on waiting lists for over-enrolled adult English classes in Los Angeles, California. Ironically, English-Only laws do not increase resources for these demanding needs (“From its Inception”).

education alone costs over \$5.5 billion. New York City spends \$400 million annually on its 147,500 bilingual students, a cost of \$2,712 per student (“Center for Equal Opportunity”).¹²

Elliot Judd of the University of Illinois writes an interesting critique about the speed at which bilingual education insist children acquire language. Without sound, community-specific programs, Judd fears that the English language may not be achieved. Furthermore, most people who try to attain a secondary language never reach pure fluency without three important factors: motivation, need, and time (Judd “English Only”). While students have the motivation and need for more educational and job opportunities, bilingual education programs do not offer the optimal time for language growth as they often sacrifice quality for speed.

Bilingualism Statistics

Pro English groups issue that 40 million American are not proficient in English (Nunberg “Jingo Lingo”). In reality, only 1.8 million residents over five years old are foreign born. More than 97 percent of U.S. residents, therefore, speak English “well.” Professor Ralph Fasold of Georgetown University supports, “If the problem is learning English, the problem is solved. Only three percent of Americans don’t speak English” (Fasold). Furthermore, immigrant groups have never posed a threat to the mainstream language. Immigrant parents support English and undoubtedly want their children to pursue the language in which opportunity for mobility lies. In 1986, *U.S. English* published a propaganda survey of 161 constitutions from around the world and reported that 64 designated an official language. What the report failed to mention, however, is that of these 64 countries, all but 17 protected the right of linguistic minorities by deeming more than one official language or via other anti-discrimination guarantees. Of the 14 countries

¹² Such exact statistics are likely skewed because assessing English “proficiency” is extremely subjective. Moreover, each district bears different standards and criteria for proficiency.

that call English their official language, not one deemed English their sole official language (Ricento).

Statistics show that immigrants are in fact learning English faster than previous generations, despite English Only claims of the opposite. There are many reasons for immigrants' heightened sense of language responsibility: First, immigrant students experience an increased sense of mobility, both social and geographic. Second, English-only media fosters a need to learn English quickly. Finally, because of the demands of the urban workplace, students recognize a need for English if they wish to succeed in certain professions. The new immigrants should not be equated with previous generations where certain immigrant populations, especially Hispanics, remained in language ghettos and survived sufficiently without acquiring English skills. In a debate with Gerda Bikales, former *U.S. English* executive director, Joseph Trevino, former executive director of *United Latin American Citizens* asserted that Hispanics have fully accepted that success comes from English. Trevino continues, "It's a given and it's frivolous to try to change the Constitution. We're all here for the love of democracy and freedom, not the love of language" ("What are the Costs and Benefits").

Similar to Trevino's assertions, *The American Civil Liberties Union* (ACLU) opposes English Only because such laws would be contrary to the very spirit of tolerance and diversity embodied in the Constitution. An English Language Amendment (ELA) would "transform the document from being a charter of liberties and individual freedom into a charter of restrictions that limits, rather than protects, individual rights" ("From its Inception"). Multiple language use has never historically caused political fragmentation but such an amendment might trigger violent opposition and divisiveness (Judd "The Federal English").

United Latin American Citizens poignantly suggests that America's language diversity should be viewed as a "natural resource" not something that stifles our community ("What are the Costs and Benefits"). The very term "melting pot" is contested within the language policy debate. While supporters of English Only deem that immigrants should learn English in order to meld into America's larger community, opponents of the movement suggest a "salad bowl" multicultural metaphor instead. Within a "salad bowl," diverse elements and cultures of the final product maintain their original flavor while contributing to the larger mixture of America. *U.S. English* advocates argue that since Americans are not unified by race or religion, we must resolve differences and homogenize subtle cultural nuances on linguistic lines.

Bilingual Education Program Descriptions

Bilingual Education efforts to help immigrants attain American access to our institutions do not function under one archetype appropriate for all students. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights outlines several terms and definitions of bilingual education ("Evaluations of Current Bilingual Programs"):

Submersion. Limited English Proficient (LEP) children are placed in classrooms where only English is spoken. No special attempt is made to help them overcome language problems since the child's first acquired language is not used for any type of instruction. Theorists deem this method the "sink or swim" technique. Many Hispanic bilingual educators graduated from this type of program.

Structured English Immersion (SEI). Similar to the submersion method, instruction is provided to LEP children in English. In SEI, however, teachers must understand the child's first

language. The children can use their native language to address the teacher but the teacher will always respond in English. The goal remains the learning of English

English as a Second Language (ESL). Developed in the 1930s, this method originally met the needs of foreign diplomats and university students. It is now prescribed to language-minority in the form of “pullout classes,” and is structured for learning a second, acquired language. ESL students are placed in mainstream, English classrooms for most of the school day. During part of the day, however, they receive extra instruction in English where the child’s native language is used in ESL classrooms for informal, non-instructional purposes. An ESL teacher is not required to speak or understand the child’s native language. Since ESL teachers need not be minority-language capable, this system is both cheaper and highly adaptable to sudden shifts in the cultural mix of the student body. This method is unpopular with both ethnic cultural advocates and foreign-language teachers since neither is necessary for such programs. Mary Hynes, an active member of the Arlington Country School Board, confirmed the problems with this program: “Kids learn English but not any other context and when they join the mainstream classes, they are very far behind” (Hynes).

Structured Home Language Immersion. Children are instructed exclusively in the native (home) language for extended periods of time under this method. English is introduced after the children have a mastery of their native language. Several sociologists agree with this method of instruction, because of a strong belief that once a child learns basic literacy and cognitive skills, they are easily transferable to another language.

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE). This form of bilingual education has developed under the federal funds provided by Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968. Subject matter is taught in the native language until the student’s

proficiency in English is sufficiently developed to allow the child to participate in an English Only classroom. ESL methods and techniques supplement the child's learning and the speech at which English is attained. Over time, the child speaks less and less of his/her native language until English is the child's primary tool of communication. Unlike the Structured Home Immersion Program, TBE allows the native language for only a small part of the school day.

Two Way Bilingual Immersion. This style offers the benefits of additive bilingualism for both groups of students involved. Both English and Spanish-speaking students learn the other language. This type of program is a recent development for bilingual education as it stemmed from dissatisfaction with traditional transitional programs. The goal is to turn the school's linguistic diversity into an asset by developing a fully bilingual curriculum from grades Kindergarten thru sixth grade by having one Spanish-speaking teacher and one English-speaking teacher in each classroom.

Gradual Exit Program. This programs introduces children to subject matter in English as soon as it can be made comprehensible through a combination of ESL instruction, sheltered subject matter teaching, and primary language instruction. "Sheltered" programs serve as a bridge between education in the native language and the English tongue. Non-English students receive core subjects in their primary language along with ESL instruction. As soon as students understand sufficient English, students receive sheltered instruction in less abstract subjects (math or science) in order to maximize English exposure. Once fully capable in mainstream classes, students take advanced classes in their first language so that it too can be mastered.

Groups for Bilingual Education

Although the most vocal lobbying and non-profit groups in the area of language acquisition support English Only, some non-profits promote the continuation of bilingual education and the maintenance of native cultures in the United States. Perhaps most prominent, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) works to improve communication through a better understanding of language and culture. Their network of publishers, researchers, and public educators adamantly fight for the preservation of ESL, immigrant education, and cross-cultural communication. The *National Association for Bilingual Education* (NABE) similarly enhances education for minority students in America. National research council chair Kenji Hakuta asserts, “Important areas are ignored, such as how to enable these students to meet rigorous standards. Rather than choosing a one-size-fits-all program, the key issue should be identifying those components backed by solid research findings that will work in a specific community...” (“National Association”). The *U.S. Department of Education Office of Bilingual and Minority Language Affairs* has recently taken a practical measure to alter the language used to describe the children bilingual programs aim to reach. Instead of calling minority language students “Limited English Proficiency” learners, a term implying stagnation, they hope to replace the LEP term with an ELL term—English Language Learners (“U.S. Department of Education”). Likewise, the *U.S. Department of Education* hopes to raise the standards for these students instead of relying on unfounded assumptions that they are prone to linguistic and social failure. One method of attaining this goal is placing heightened levels of accountability on schools.

Bilingual Education Successes

The Oyster School in Washington, DC was one of the earliest experiments of two-way bilingual education. Frustrated with the way Spanish students were losing their native language while struggling to acquire English, one Spanish teacher and one English teacher presided over each classroom, using roughly proportionate hours of teaching. Teachers had to work hard to make a subject matter understandable to one group and interesting to the other since classrooms are completely mixed. The Oyster's school enrollment is currently 60 percent Latino, 20-25 percent white English speakers, 15 percent black, English speakers, and 2 percent other minority students. Aside from celebrating diversity, the practical goal of the Oyster school is to help students grow conceptually in their native tongues. This method is unique in that kids are taught basic literacy skills (learning to read letters) in both languages so by the first grade they can handle storybooks in both languages. Oyster students have had tremendous success in nationwide math and reading tests. Waiting lists are extraordinary because of the school's success, says principal Paquita Holland in an interview with James Crawford (1999: 216).

Although Oyster has had tremendous results, the likelihood that such programs will be replicated is slim because of the enormous cost of restructuring the entire process of learning. Also, the District does not offer public school programs that allow English-proficient Spanish-speaking students to continue their Spanish education. Upon graduating sixth grade, therefore, the Spanish language is no longer accessible in schools everyday. Hispanic students enter a period of struggle between loving and hating their native language. Nonetheless, longitudinal studies tracking the careers of the original Oyster graduates from the 1970s show that many English-first and Spanish-first speaking students have pursued Spanish careers in college and beyond and several have moved to Spanish-speaking countries (Crawford 1999: 217).

Carlota Bernal, a secondary immersion teacher at Silver Spring International Middle School in Montgomery County, Maryland, shares similar stories of success. The goal of her program is to integrate the English language into a certain context. For her eighth-graders, the school designated “history.” The students have been taking Spanish lessons since the first grade so Bernal teaches them U.S. History entirely in Spanish. While the English-speakers in the class succeed in learning history through Spanish instruction, the native Spanish-speakers often resist their home language. Bernal says, “They argue with me every day, saying things like ‘Why do we have to do this, we *know* Spanish already’” (Bernal). Bernal makes it her purpose everyday to cultivate a love of Spanish language in her class. She reinforces that her life is so much fuller as a trilingual speaker and that the students’ native tongue will only help them in the future.

The Francis Scott Key Elementary School / Escuela Key in Arlington, Virginia is another example of a highly successful bilingual program¹³. Arlington County has speakers of over sixty languages with a rather balanced demographic breakdown: Forty percent white, 32 percent Hispanic, 17 percent Black, and 10 percent Asian (“Arlington County”). Seventy percent of the students are Spanish-speaking.¹⁴ Twenty-one percent of children enrolled in Arlington’s public elementary schools have limited English proficiency (Craig 1). The dual language program at Key School is referred to as a Partial Spanish Immersion Program because it was started as a foreign language program for English speakers. Every student fully participates in the program. The program is designed to teach children a second language in a natural way through everyday conversation and subject content. While participating in elementary curriculums, the students at Key School/Escuela Key learn to appreciate other cultures. Much like the Oyster School, the children learn from both an English-speaking teacher and a Spanish-speaking teacher. The

¹³ Key School was one of the first Arlington Schools to meet the state’s new accreditation standards (Hynes).

¹⁴ Spanish is the main language in Arlington Public Schools (Craig email).

students again use one another as language models since each class is balanced between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking children. Many students at Key come from countries that speak neither English nor Spanish but learn to speak both. By the fifth grade, all students are able to communicate well in both languages (“Arlington County”).

Barbara Craig, a former Georgetown student and current director of Bridges Across Cultures, a multicultural awareness business in Arlington, wrote her dissertation on the Spanish Language Immersion program at Key School. Her study tracks Arlington as an example community addressing linguistic problems of delivering efficient English-medium instruction to a multilingual population. Almost a decade after its bilingual-program initiation, Craig asserts, the Key School “illustrated how the grassroots involvement of parents enabled community leaders to develop and implement a language plan that responds to the particular sociolinguistic needs of the local population” (Craig 2). Craig deems traditional bilingual education a type of “top-down” language policy, through which federal or state decisions drive local education without concern about attitudes in a particular community. “In many instances of traditional top-down language policy and planning, power elites or counterelites use language planning as a means of pursuing an ideological, political, social, or economic interest” (Craig 16). Arlington is successful, she notes, because of the more basic “bottom-up” approach in which average citizens are directly involved in instruction planning and school events.

Bilingual educators and activists by no means insist that the programs are without difficulties. For one, questions of language variety plague even the most successful of programs. There is a substantial difference between Hispanic Spanish, Spanish Spanish, and Puerto Rican Spanish. Likewise, Chinese, Vietnamese, Lao, and Samoan children are all pushed into the same bilingual education because of possible ignorance on educators’ parts or because of lack of

facilities. Barbara Craig adds, “LEP students from small minority language groups can only communicate with one another through language so their success is more from necessity than from pedagogy” (email). The struggle aside, these children manage to attain the primary goal of their education: to communicate in the same language. Both Anglocentricism and a need to meet state standards play prominent roles in working to equalize children from clearly different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Mary Hynes explains that the primary goal of public schools, at least Arlington Public Schools, is to help all second language students prepare for state-mandated tests in third, fifth, and eighth grades. These tests are given in English and require a high level of academic proficiency. Hynes adds, “This is different from the oral proficiency that lets you operate on the playground of with your friends. Academic proficiency is a much higher standard” (email).

Perhaps the most delicate problem with several bilingual educational programs is the psychological effects English Only fosters in children and young adults. Crawford writes, “When children are painfully ashamed of who they are, they are not going to do very well in school, whether they be taught monolingually, bilingually, or trilingually” (1999: 35). Ruben Salazar, former news director of KMEX-TV in Los Angeles and columnist for the *Los Angeles Times* interviewed many Hispanic children in the late 1960s during the peak of Civil Rights activism. Edgar Lozano of San Antonio High School told Salazar, “I mean, how would you like for somebody to come up to you and tell you what you speak is a dirty language? You know, what your mother speaks is a dirty language” (330). For many Hispanic children, Spanish is the only language they ever hear at home from parents and grandparents. To enter higher education in their new country and be bombarded with images and words of hate towards their native culture proves extremely oppressive and damaging. A fact often marginalized by educational policy

discussants is that monolingual English speakers would also benefit tremendously from effective bilingual programs. A multicultural nation needs compromise from both foreigners and natives for the most effective system. The English Plus method seeks to address this compromise.

English Plus

The English Plus (see Appendix E) resolution holds that the national interest can best be served when all members of a society have full access to effective opportunities to acquire strong English language proficiency **plus** the mastery of a second or multiple language. Individuals are encouraged to improve native language skills.¹⁵ Similar to the Dual-Language immersion program, this method promotes bilingualism among native English speakers and non-native speakers. Ideally, this program fosters equal education opportunities regardless of linguistic backgrounds. The goals of English Plus are threefold: to foster an informed debate on language policy in the United States, to produce greater public awareness of the problems with English Only movement, and to promote positive alternative policies to English Only. Although Mary Carol Combs, former director of EPIC and director of English Plus projects of the *League of United Latin American Citizens*, deems the program extremely successful, she questions its future role in linguistic dialogue since it is not as well exposed as official English or bilingual educational programs. Oftentimes English Plus is confused with English Only because of the parallel terminology (Combs 224).

English Plus's history is politically loaded, as it was first conceived in response to a speech in 1985 by the former Secretary of Education William Bennett (1985-1988). William Bennett delivered a speech on September 26, 1985 favoring the use of Bilingual Education Act

¹⁵ Other communities mimicked The English Plus founding documents. In 1989, an English Plus resolution was written by the New Mexico legislature. In 1990, a Native American Language Act recognized the language rights of American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in U.S. territories.

funds to finance alternative, nonbilingual approaches to teaching LEP students. Bennett, never having stepped into a bilingual classroom prior to this speech claimed:

The responsibility of the federal government must be to help ensure that local schools succeed in teaching non English-speaking students English, so that every American enjoys access to the opportunities of American society. (Lyons 364)

After seventeen years of federal involvement, and after \$1.7 billion of federal funding, we have no evidence that the children whom we sought to help—that the children who deserve our help—have benefited. (Lyons 364, Crawford 1999: 83)

A Miami-based civil rights and education group, the *Spanish-American League Against Discrimination* (SALAD) responded to Bennett’s claims. SALAD expressed, “We fear that Secretary Bennett has lost sight of the fact that English is *a* key to equal opportunity...English by itself is not enough” (Combs and Lynch 105). James Lyons, then-executive director of the *National Association for Bilingual Education* (NABE), upon hearing Bennett claim bilingual education “a failed path...a bankrupt course,” rebutted that no one had ever denied Secretary Bennett’s definition of bilingual education. A child who has mastered English but has not learned any math, history, geography, civics, or other subjects taught in schools, however, is certainly not “educated” or ready to enter American society (364). Lyons and other proponents of bilingual education suggested that language acquisition retarded English success were failures of educational policies, not of the education itself. John Travina, legislative attorney for the *Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund* added, “The secretary only supports flexibility when it goes in one direction” (Crawford 1999: 84).

Established in 1987 in Washington, DC, as a joint project of the *National Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Forum* and the *Joint National Committee for Languages, English Plus Information Clearinghouse* (EPIC) declared a pressing need to defeat any legislative initiative on the federal, state, or local level which would mandate English as the official language. Today

EPIC is a coalition of more than fifty civil rights and educational organizations opposed to official English. EPIC strives to provide opportunities for informed public debate on language policy and language rights in the U.S. while promoting this positive English Plus alternative to English Only policies. The *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages* (TESOL) fully supports English Plus as a group pledges to “support measures which protect the rights of all individuals to preserve and foster their linguistic and cultural origins.” EPIC, they confirm, “is a reaffirmation of cultural and democratic pluralism” (“Teachers of English”). Ultimately, it is English PLUS, not English ONLY, which holds the greatest promise for a unified society in which no one group feels threatened. Many proponents of this recent trend deem it a means to success in an interdependent and international world where linguistic and cultural differences are a positive resource rather than a detriment to national cohesion.

Bilingual Education Tension in California

U.S. English first put a referendum before voters in California to propose English the official language of the state. This campaign was known as Proposition 63. It is not surprising that California was the first state tested for an unilingual prospect. Between 1990 and 1996, the state’s population increased by 2.6 million. Nine out of ten of these new Californians were Latinos or Asians (Crawford “Prop 227”). Both new immigration and higher birthrates in language-minority communities catalyzed this rise. Forty percent of the nation’s limited English proficient students reside in California. One out of every four California residents (26 percent) was born outside the United States and more than one third of the population (38.6 percent) speaks a language other than English at home (Mora). In 1987, California’s bilingual education law (The Chacon-Moscone Bilingual Bicultural Education Act) was vetoed for renewal and

allowed to “sunset.” This law mandated that a bilingual classroom be set up where at least ten Limited English Proficiency (LEP) children came from the same linguistic background. To avoid segregation, one-third of the bilingual classroom was comprised of English speaking children. Furthermore, bilingual teachers had to meet rigorous standards and pass exams of the second language in order to qualify to teach. Despite the expiration of the California bilingual education law, which was essentially a “bill of rights” for minority-language children, many schools refused to relinquish bilingual programs after its “sunset.” A decade later, only five of California’s 1085 school districts had moved to replace bilingual programs with English Only methods.

In 1997, California was as much a leader in bilingual education as it was initially. The *California Bilingual Education Organization* (CABE) continues to support educational excellence and social justice for all its minority-language children. CABE has 7,000 members with over 60 affiliates working to diversify cultural achievements in California’s schools. Their mission is straightforward: “Biliteracy and Educational Equity for All” (“CABE Website”). They promote and publicize excellence in bilingual education through services available to children, youths, and adults in both the community and educational institutions throughout the state. CABE sets high standards for professionals in bilingual education who work towards the deeper understanding the cultural needs of language minorities. Like many other organizations promoting bilingual excellence, CABE vows to spend considerable efforts in expanding quality research in the field of bilingual education.

Despite California’s progressive attitudes towards bilingual education, it is also the state which harbors many organizations pushing for English-Only. *The National Immigration Forum* published information suggesting that in the early 1990s, when America was entering a period of

anti-immigration activism, California was fully supporting this “nativist trend” (“Cycles of Nativism”). The political conditions of a widening gap between rich and poor, and concerns about crime and racial tensions ate away at community ties. Anti-immigration activists successfully capitalized on public fears. Proposition 187 was approved by state voters enforcing public agencies (schools, law enforcement, social services, health care) to determine the legal status of those they suspect are undocumented and report them to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). (The higher courts rejected this initiative). These anti-immigrant trends set the stage for Proposition 227, a tremendous setback for bilingual education in California and ideologically, the nation.

Proposition 227

In early 1996, a group of Spanish-speaking parents pulled their children out of school to protest its failure to teach their children English. These parents blatantly blamed bilingual education. The boycott lasted almost two weeks and received extensive media coverage promoting a “shift in Latino attitudes.” This demonstration interested Ron Unz, businessman and former candidate for Republic governor of California. Although he had no children in California schools and had not once stepped foot in a bilingual classroom he insisted that parents should not have to picket to get English instruction for their kids. Unz advocated, “all children be taught English by being taught in English” (Crawford 1999: 242). On June 2, 1998, a 61 percent majority of California voters elected to impose an official version of Unz’s English Only methodology on public education by passing Proposition 227. This law was triggered by an “English for the Children” initiative banning bilingual education and the use of languages other

than English, for any instruction public schools. Proposition 227 was virtually the most significant setback in bilingual education since World War I.

In 1997, Unz cleverly recruited many prominent Latinos to help spearhead his ballot initiative first called “English for Children.” He spent incredible amounts of money to secure a minority support following. His most powerful tool was his simple and innocent—although implicitly political—language, similar to English Only tactics. No parent would want to vote against “English for Children.” His pitch:

Begun with the best of theoretic intentions some twenty or thirty years ago, bilingual education has proven itself a dismal practical failure...Enormous numbers of California children today leave years of schooling with limited spoken English and almost no ability to read or write English. (Crawford 1999:253)

Unz craftily shaped the debate so that bilingualism was set polar opposite of English acquisition. Journalists published his message without further investigations. Like his Official English colleagues, Unz manipulated figures. For example, since the early 1990s, about five to seven percent of LEP students had been “redesignated” as fluent in English each year. Unz deemed this statistic a false indication of a “95 percent annual failure rate” of LEP students (Crawford “Prop 227”).

Proposition 227 (see appendix F) requires all public school instruction to be conducted in English with initial short-term (less than a year) placement in intensive sheltered English immersion programs for LEP students. The arguments for the proposition plays on parents’ and citizens’ weaknesses informing them that languages are clearly easier to acquire at a young age. In this manner, immigrant children will leave school knowing how to speak, read, and write in English so as not to be injured in economic and social American life. Proposition 227 proponents insist that it will not support sink-or-swim methods of instruction nor will it cut special funding for children learning English. Most importantly, such an initiative will lower costs for parents

and taxpayers and increase jobs for English rather than Spanish-speaking teachers. Opponents of the proposition argue fear that it will place LEP students of all ages and languages into one classroom. Also, teachers can be sued for helping a child by using the child's native language. Sadly, new English teaching methods in progress will be instantly terminated. Finally, Proposition 227 triggered one of the most heated facets of American education—local versus state control. Like Barbara Craig, most opponents believe school districts should decide for themselves instead of having state statutes deem what is best for their own communities. Rather than having distant legislators determine the linguistic future of their youth.

Opponents to Bilingual Education

Opponents of Bilingual Education, usually English Only proponents, argue that the methods of teaching minority language pupils are both extremely costly and ineffective. Linda Chavez, former *U.S. English* president and currently involved with the *Center for Equal Opportunity* (CEOUSA) writes how bilingual education not only evolved monstrously from its limited mission to teach children of Mexican descent in Spanish while they learned English, but was thrust upon families who did not wish their children to learn bilingually. Chavez cites many stories of parents furious with mandatory bilingual programs. “We don’t even speak Spanish at home,” argues Miguel Alvarado of Sun Valley California after his daughter Emily was put in a bilingual class. Rita Montero’s son, Camilo, was bored with the slow academic pace of his first-grade bilingual class because the “kids were doing work way below the regular grade level” (“Center for Equal Opportunity”). Chavez argues that many students are thrust into bilingual classes just because they have Hispanic-sounding surnames. Even a Spanish-speaking grandparent may be enough to trigger placement in bilingual classes. While some outspoken

parents with good English skills have the ability to remove their children from bilingual classes, “most parents—especially immigrants—aren’t so lucky,” continues Montero (Chavez).

The New York Times (Jan 4 1993) told a similar story of a Hispanic-surnamed child who spoke only English. Vanessa Correa was assigned to a Spanish-speaking class (thus the reversed situation of Kinney Lau was before the *Lau* Supreme Court decision). Correa did not speak Spanish at home. The school followed the rules of bilingual programs: Vanessa’s scores were below average and so was assumed a Spanish speaker. Her parents complained and she was bumped up into an ESL class. Given the strict and often unfounded rules of bilingual education, she couldn’t enter a class in which her native language—English—was spoken. Both proponents and opponents to bilingual education might discuss that an emphasis on programs more tailored to individual needs as opposed to sweeping general guideline is necessary.

Furthermore, the amount of time dedicated to English, Chavez and other opponents to bilingual education argue, is minimal if the children are to learn English within a set timeframe. Spanish cannot possibly be taught four to five hours a day while expecting children to acquire the English language. Those against dual-language acquisition often cite teachers who have been unsuccessful with the program. Gail Fiber, an elementary school teacher in Southern California writes, “In more than seven years experience with bilingual education, I’ve never seen it done successfully” (Chavez). The overwhelming number of English Only proponents declares it is the family’s duty—not the schools’—to maintain the native language and culture at home.

English-Only officials also worry about the threat Spanish-speaking teachers pose on the American educational system. By granting equal status to other languages, predominantly Spanish, in a publicly funded institution such as public schools, minority educators bear greater decision-making authority than traditional English teachers—“the true representatives of

American cultural values” (Mora). Some fanatic opponents to bilingual education border on paranoia by saying that bilingual educators should be legally suspect as having ulterior motives for promulgating their cultures. Proposition 227, many Official English proponents believe, would protect the power of monolingual teachers and let them decide the best method for instructing LEP students.

Richard Rodriguez is a Mexican American writer best known for his 1982 autobiography Hunger for Memory. In his book, he recounts his struggles to learn English without bilingual education. Despite his educational toil, he went on to become a prominent figure in English literature and a successful writer. He is the most highly quoted critic of native-language instruction. Hispanic people too easily buy into the notion of bilingual education, he argues, because it wrongly emphasizes the romance of a dual cultural identity: A myth suggesting that because both languages can be equally attained and respected. Rodriguez is particularly affected by the way in which bilingual education proponents fail to recognize the way bilingual programs mainly affect the lives of working class immigrant children. His autobiography highlights the class issues latent in an English Only discussion. “Foreign language acquisition is one thing for the upper-class child in a convent school learning to curtsy. Language acquisition can only seem a loss for a ghetto child, for the new language is psychologically awesome, being, as it is, the language of the bus driver and Papa’s employer” (Rodríguez “The Romantic Trap”). Bilingual education, he insists, confuses the child with a conglomeration of images and the values. He never denies the lure of bilingual education, however. “I would have felt much less afraid of my teachers and I would have trusted them and responded with ease. But I would have delayed—for how long postpone?—having learned the language of public society” (Rodriguez 19).

Ultimately, he finds no reason to perpetuate such a temporary, costly, and essentially destructive system of developing identity.

Bilingual Education Research

English First, a foundation aiming to legislate English as official, says that many social scientists see the division as binary: “Any policy that ignored the mother tongue in favor of English is racist, and any policy which maintains the mother tongue, however inadequately, is equitable” (“*English First Website*”). Stanford University law professor Charles R. Lawrence II in his article on “Unconscious Racism” argues that social science methodology is often inadequate because judgments are based upon correlation of “observed phenomena” (“*English First Website*”) Observation requires a fair element of subjectivity and participation in the choice of categories that are correlated or the selection of samples selected for data-gathering. In addition to biased bilingual educational research is the often-slanted media coverage of bilingual education. Tabloids in the New York Times during the past few decades have read, “Throw away the Crutch of Bilingual Education” or “In U.S. Schools, A War of Words.” Although studies and media coverage are often inconclusive and fail to reach minimal standards of educational research, public eyes and opinions are easily manipulated by loaded language, which often unfoundedly distorts notions of the safety of the English language.

During the early 1970s after the passing of Title VII, Congress appropriated \$500 million for bilingual programs; only one-half of one percent went to research, resulting in extremely poor quality of program evaluations (Crawford 1999: 103). The burden of proof to deem a program successful falls unjustly into the hands of bilingual education advocates as the measures of success is skewed since no success is assumed until proven otherwise. The “successes” are

also extremely broad and individualistic. Leading theorist of second-language acquisition, Stephen Krashen writes, “The level of evidence demanded is extraordinary. It’s hard to do the perfect experiment” (Crawford 1999: 108). Critics of bilingual education have enjoyed the tactical advantage, therefore, in this debate of effectiveness. Opponents of bilingual education argue that those evaluating bilingual programs are often passionate advocates of bilingual education for political or ideological reasons. Furthermore, most politicians judge success based on the speed of language competence rather than the quality of learning.

The American Institute for Research (AIR) began a study in 1968 (ending in 1977) evaluating the accomplishments of Title VII bilingual education programs. The study found that bilingual program students were doing worse in English language arts on average than their Hispanic counterparts not participating in such programs. Rossell and Ross, another research institute, reviewed programs from the 1960s through 1984. Of the 35 sound studies, only eight found that Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) actually helped students learn a second language quicker than submersion programs. *English First* reports no difference between methods and six found TBE to have a negative impact on students (“*English First* Website”). Opponents to bilingual education argue also that research reviews add superior performance in Spanish language arts as one of the research findings to make TBE programs superior.

Looking to the Future

According to bilingual education proponents Portes and Runbaut, “...forced English immersion promotes dissonant acculturation with negative consequences that can far exceed the alleged benefits of such programs” (quoted in Mora). Dissonant acculturation occurs when immigrants confront discrimination where the messages about one’s culture and language are

negative and demeaning. This inevitably leads to a sense of skewed assimilation where the host culture will perpetually remain more valued than the native one. These feelings of inferiority are projected throughout life as immigrants are often segregated into lower socio-economic neighborhoods, jobs, and opportunities. Unlike earlier immigrants in the twentieth century, today's immigrants from Mexico and Latin America are fully aware of the social and economic motivations to learn English. A policy such as Proposition 227 and other English Only initiatives unnecessarily denote lack of language acquisition with cultural shame. When the odds are placed side-by-side as to the sacrifices from the minority or majority, it is clear that minority-language speakers would greatly suffer were official English legislation to be passed for public schools. Guadalupe Valdez (1997) poignantly asserts, "Bilingual education is something that the minority wants, but the majority seems not to want them to have it" (Mora).

Eugene García of the University of California at Berkeley presented findings from a series of case studies of exemplary schools throughout the United States compiling their greatest assets. First, schools with successful bilingual educational programs fostered English acquisition through the development of mature literacy. In other words, students developed strong literacy expertise in their native tongues and later transferred these skills into English learning. Second, the schools made sure to deliver grade-level content and not sacrifice challenging material for fear that students could not keep up. More often than not, students preferred lofty goals as something towards which to strive. Without a challenge, many kids become bored and complacent with inadequacy. Third, children responded best to innovative ways of teaching; teachers might stay with students for more than one term or children could work in groups and get promoted collectively. Fourth, beneficial programs often extended their English-instruction time whether through after-school programs, computer learning, or summer classes. Fifth,

teachers enjoyed expanded responsibility and a heightened say in the curricular development of the school. This may include finding alternative ways to ascertain minority-language students since standardized tests often lack the ability to attain required information. Sixth, the school community is involved in addressing the social and emotional needs of the student body. Since many of these kids come from low-income homes, planning family-oriented sessions about substance abuse or violence often helps children voice concerns which may be in some way impeding their language acquisition. Finally, good programs tend to increase parent involvement through field trips, school festivals, etc (García 96).

Chapter V: Implications and Conclusions

“ELA legislation is no more than a Band-Aid applied to already existing ethnic tensions in an unequal society that likes to think it has made many strides, when it has not” (Espinosa-Aguilar 281).

The question now remains as to what the ideological and practical implications would be were an English Language Amendment to pass. Would the change be merely legally formal or actually practical? Considering the implicit and explicit political agendas behind groups such as *U.S. English* adamantly pushing for English Only legislation, I am unconvinced that an ELA would affect only few communities. Mauro Mujica, president of *U.S. English*, argues that the English language is our cultural glue: “It has the power to put all people in this country on the same level, giving them equal opportunity for success” (Mujica). Throughout this paper and our day-to-day experiences, it is blatant that although language is an essential tool for communication and American social opportunity, it is by no means a guarantee for such advancement—especially when race, ethnicity, class, and even gender complicate the law.

Rhetoric of the English Only Movement

The language used within this war on language allegiance is pivotal in understanding both the proponents and opponents of the English Only Movement. Why, for example, is the question of linguistic law named “The English Only Movement?” Does this official title not elevate the position of Official English advocates even slightly? Donald Macedo of the *Education Researcher* writes of the colonial nature of the language movement. He coins the call for English nothing less than “an ethnic and cultural war.” He refers to several incidents in Los Angeles against Mexican communities in which these immigrants are called “border rats,” “wetbacks,” “aliens,” “illegals,” “welfare queens,” and “non-White hordes” (Macedo). This derogatory language becomes engrained because the media condones and perpetuates its use.

The words not only dehumanize U.S. immigrants but also serve to justify the violence, segregation, and abuse perpetrated against such groups. Macedo believes that bastardizing another social group with such abhorrent terms is a political tool, which inevitably sets the social scene for passing propositions such as 227 or 187 with an overwhelming majority. Without clearly understanding the terms of the debate, average citizens blindly side with the group trying to rid American society of such “social degenerates.”

Elizabeth Frick’s analysis of the terms used to describe immigrants in America portrays a similar trend resulting in public fear and dismay. She analyzes the profuse water images and water metaphors used in reporting English-Only issues: “Flow of illegal arrivals,” “Flood of immigrants,” “Tide of newcomers,” “Waves of illegal immigrants,” and “Swamps of immigrants” (27). While water words in literature tend to express cleansing images of birth and rebirth, the connotations within the English Only Movement symbolize the catastrophic. The symbols recollect disaster and possibly even death by overwhelming, uncontrollable numbers. By hearing “flood” rather than concrete numbers of recent immigrant arrivals, American citizens worry that their social space may be contaminated or even swept away, their power diluted. This propaganda tool slyly guarantees a serious consideration of English Only proposition ideas at the very least.

Among the main reasons why Americans support the ELA is a fear of power or status loss. Therefore, a resuscitation of nativism via Americanization techniques is justified. Gender, income, and educational backgrounds all play a significant role in who supports the ELA. Those experiencing the most comfortable life-style—often people who have acquired significant income through education and job promotion—fear losing their status to new immigrants. Furthermore, studies show that women are more sensitive to the needs of minority language

people than men. Perhaps this statistic reflects the fewer women than men in positions of legislative power such as judges, lawyers, politicians, or business leaders (Espinosa-Aguilar 274). To avoid being stigmatized as xenophobic, *U.S. English* masks their agenda in seemingly non-racist language. They rely heavily on political-correctness and diversity in their boardroom, which is a strong tool to recruit supporters from both inside and outside the ethnic communities. Tragically, the politically correct language often manipulates minorities to support inherently racist premises without realizing it. *U.S. English* uses language that plays into the mainstream fear of power or status loss. For example, in a *U.S. English* poll, they ask, “Do you feel it is the U.S. taxpayer’s obligation to pay for providing government services for everyone in the language of his choice?” Few would answer, “yes” to a question with such loaded language. Using the terms “obligation,” “providing,” and “everyone” vocalizes a non-existent threat from minority-language immigrants encroaching upon America. Had they asked, “Do you think U.S. taxpayers should support government services promoting multiculturalism,” more citizen might be prone to answer “yes” even without extensive knowledge of linguistic research. To foster a sense of “we” versus “them,” *U.S. English* poses their questions or polls with “**our**-language.” No one would want to be excluded from language decisions of their own country and side against an “our” question. Finally, the *U.S. English* Website employs manipulative techniques. The site asks, “Does official English imply that there is something wrong with multilingualism?” The answer is “no.” Elsewhere, the site states, “However, it is both inefficient and expensive for the government to be required to function in multiple languages” (“*U.S. English* Website”).

As the most highly funded and influential lobbying group for English Only laws, *U.S. English* also maneuvers tools of rhetoric to get their message across to millions of Americans. Amanda Espinosa-Aguilar from the University of Wisconsin conducted a study on *U.S.*

English's rhetoric and the reasons why their language so deeply appeals to Americans unjustifiably threatened by a fear of power loss. Espinosa-Aguilar blames “star power” and media coverage for U.S. *English's* deep influence. Several media celebrities such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Saul Bellow have supported official English policies in theory and financially (many refused support after the Tanton memorandum incident). While wealthy citizens and stars donate great sums to such lobbying groups, educators and scholars looking to preserve bilingual education and multilingualism in America face severe budget cuts. Minority groups are particularly high-risk victims of star power, she argues. For example, when Linda Chavez, a Hispanic American, took over presidency of *U.S. English*, several Latinos admired her political advancement despite the negative repercussions of her position for the Latin community.

Ideological Implications of an ELA

Most of the states in which English Only laws have passed have had either a significantly small or large minority population. In both cases, it seems the ELA fosters a type of protectionist feel. If there were few “illegals” within a certain state, English laws would protect this purity. If there were too many, however, English Only would force a loss of their “difference.” The notion of a dual-identity is completely foreign to American politics, despite public rhetoric claiming otherwise. If citizens are hyphenated Americans (Italian-American, Mexican-American), it is the “American” part which assumes precedence. Such notions of identity eventually expand to imply that the part not American is wrong or inferior in some way. Linguist Fasold deems this cultural policy abhorrent: “It is a policy where children will come to know less than their parents” (Fasold). While immigrant parents bear a cultural foundation and identity, their children shun

both traditional heritage and their newly found environment. This conflict of identity leaves the children essentially displaced. ELA laws would undermine the spirit of tolerance and pluralism upon which the Constitution itself is fashioned. After Craig's study about the Key School successful bilingual education program, she feels ELA legislation "would only serve to formalize prejudice into legislated discrimination" (Craig email).

James Crawford has formulated a "language loss hypothesis" which explains the theoretical reasons behind linguistic shifts in current minority populations. Like Toni Morrison's story suggests, much of the burden of language loss is on the speakers of the language themselves. A language shift, Crawford supports, although facilitated by outside pressures, is very dependent on the language bearers. Languages ultimately die in complex ways, Crawford writes, through the assimilation of speakers into other cultures. Especially as people grow older and more dependent on their linguistic and cultural past, displacing a community tongue is like extinguishing the most elemental system of belief. This loss, however, must be consensual: "Language is the ultimate consensual institution" (Crawford 2000: 68). Such decisions, of course, do not take place in a vacuum void of economic and educational concerns. Second, because a language choice often reflects social and cultural values, a shift in language indicates a fundamental displacement or alteration of these values. For example, Hispanic American communities value the larger group much more heavily than the individual. In American society, however, individualism prevails as an ideological system. Likewise, American emphasis on materialism and pragmatism has destructive effects on native linguistic traditions. Finally, language shifts cannot be reversed by any outsiders but only from within. If an ELA were to pass, therefore, a return to culture is nearly impossible.

One of the most interesting theoretical questions about an English Only Amendment is its blatant paradox of intentions. Millions of dollars each year are spent in attempting to get high school and college students to learn Spanish, operating under the assumption that mastery of a second language can only be beneficial to individuals and the country. Under this premise, why are millions of minority-Americans forced to abandon their languages for better chances of success later on? Many factors that play into this complex paradigm: For one, implicitly some languages are favored over others, reflecting the hierarchy among immigrants.

Minority speakers are encouraged to abandon their native tongues and become monolingual in order to demonstrate patriotism and loyalty solely to America. If they do this, America “promises” economic and educational advancement. After minority-speakers have essentially lost their native culture, ironically, Americans are encouraged to expand their horizons and learn other languages in order to strengthen the larger U.S. as an international force. The common denominator behind this paradox seems to be class. It is the poor and working class immigrants who are taught they must forget their native pasts since these linguistic handicaps might doom them to failure. These immigrants are not tomorrow’s diplomats according to the American story. It is the middle class Americans who need to go to college, learn Spanish and other languages, in order to develop linguistic mobility. Instead of creating effective bilingual programs in which both cultures are equally rewarded with linguistic gain, American structures perpetuate this trend of language loss by some and language expansion by others. If a student acquires Spanish from an American institution such as a college, the language is legitimate because the power remains in the hands of the country. If a native brings Spanish into the country, however, the very same language is illegitimate on grounds of an “unbalanced” power dynamic. Once native Hispanics have given up their cultural roots and sought to relearn Spanish

in a “legitimate” context, their connection to something historical, personal, and cultural is already lost.

The question of a “legitimate” medium through which to attain language greatly affects the current Ebonics debate permeating linguistic discussions. An official backlash accompanied the Ebonics controversy in 1996 when the board of Oakland, California passed a resolution declaring Ebonics the native language of its African American children. This statement confirmed Ebonics a separate language rather than a dialect of English. Defining a tongue as a language rather than a dialect of a larger language threatens many political and ideological views discussed in this paper, something to which Americans will not easily concede. The heat, which this resolution flamed proves how closely language is held to a personal and national identity. Although African Americans have inhabited America for three centuries, Anglo America refuses to passively allow a “minority” language to gain proper status. The Ebonics debate is a subject extremely important in any language discussion about the United States but beyond the scope of this paper.

The Honorable Noel Fidel applies a literary analysis to ideological significance of a national language movement. He looks to Robert Frost’s *Mending Wall* (1949) (see Appendix G). Frost writes:

Before I built a wall, I’d ask to know
 What I was walling in or walling out,
 And to whom I was like to give offense.
 Something there is that doesn’t love a wall,
 That wants it down. (Adams and Brink 302)

Official English proponents know what they seek to “wall in” or “wall out” through this movement. He questions whether mainstream Americans take the time to wonder to whom they might “give offense” with an official language decree. How can the person, language, culture on

the other side of the “wall” have no say in America’s building a wall? If language works well without being constitutionalized, then why seek an enormous shift? Since the beginning of America’s history, most groups of immigrants and now Native Americans, Hispanics from the Southwest, and Black Americans have pushed to learn English without ever denying its importance in this country. As a justice, Fidel advocates the importance of determining the political goal of an ELA. Without a clear vision of what an ELA seeks to achieve in theory, “if it does not know itself what is trying to wall in or wall out but simply conducts an emotionally charged battle over the symbolism of language, the legal system cannot possible function to protect majority or minority language speakers in a consistent and fair manner (Fidel 305). Ideological focus, then, is necessary in order to clearly understand the practical possibilities.

The preeminence of English as the public language of America has never been challenged at any time in U.S. history, including the present day. Once immigrants make strides to assimilate, however, they realize that upward mobility via English is by no means a Constitutional guarantee. Were an English Language Amendment to be passed, it seems that several threatening types of monolingualism might result. Minority peoples might turn inwards and reconnect with their native language groups by rejecting the larger framework. On the other hand, as Morrison warns, native speakers might simply be forced to concede to the greater power of coercion. Furthermore, once English is mandated, the slippery slop of deciding **which** English to prefer would ensue. Members of non-standard English communities—Black Americans, Chicano Americans, American Indians, and Appalachian Peoples—might experience similar denial of social or economic opportunities in their own country because of the same nativist fear of status or power loss.

Practical Implications of an ELA

Professor Mark Rom of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute insists that ideological implications of political agendas are not very useful. He continues, “We need to see the concrete impacts on educational opportunity or job opportunity to see whether or not English Only legislation should be passed” (Rom). English Only scholar James Stalker developed a hypothetical study of the aftermath of the ELA were it to pass in Arizona. He studied Arizona because, like many states across the nation, Arizona relies on both state and federal laws to protect the civil rights of minorities. An ELA would have practical implications for voting rights, employment access, court interpretation, and of course, bilingual education.

First and foremost, an ELA might threaten basic tenants of America’s guaranteed Constitutional rights. Several amendments would no longer hold, including the following:

Fourth Amendment – The rights to confront witnesses, to have assistance of counsel, and to understand the nature of the charges and the proceedings brought by the government against individual citizens. *Fifth Amendment* – The rights to not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law. *Fourteenth Amendment* – The rights to procedural due process and equal application of the law¹⁶. *Fifteenth Amendment* – The right to vote. *Right to Equal Access* – The rights to equal access of an educational and work environment free of discrimination.

¹⁶ The Harvard Law Review addressed whether or not Official English would violate the Equal Protection Clause (EPC) of the Fourteenth Amendment. As a symbolic gesture, the article states, it would not. In practice, however, the EPC would be violated. The EPC permits states to take actions that treat some groups differently from other as long as the action is “rationally related” to the achievement of a valid public purpose. In other words, those bringing the case must show that the decision makers of an ELA declared Official English at least in part “because of” not merely “in spite of” the act’s adverse effects on a particular group, creating a heightened review procedure for the case. Legally, therefore, it would be very hard for a minority-language citizen to prove that there was an “invidious” or harmful intent on the part of the state or federal government when passing Official English legislation (Crawford 1992: 291). Considering minority language people’s lack of government power already, proving that the government had malicious intent when passing an ELA would be nearly impossible.

Voting Rights. Bilingual ballots established through the Voting Rights Amendment of 1975 would be instantly repealed. This ban would inevitably curtail the significant gains made in Hispanic voter registration in the past several decades. From 1976 to 1980, for example, the five Southwestern states experienced a 44 percent increase of Hispanic votes. Were an ELA to pass, the Hispanic voter electorate would either vote as uninformed citizens or refrain from participating entirely. In either case, elected officials would not represent a truly democratic majority.

Employment Access. Non-English speakers would be denied from several occupational opportunities without employers who can speak multiple languages and translate job requirements. Furthermore, discriminatory treatment in the workplace against minority-language speakers would be allowed under the ELA. If an ELA became federal law, by extrapolation, the governments and courts would theoretically sanction such attitudes.

Court Interpretation. Established by the Court Interpreters Act of 1978, linguistically qualified court interpreters would no longer be available. This act was aimed to protect the procedural and substantive due process rights of minority citizens. Language minorities would be denied due process and equal protection under the law because of an “inability to communicate” (U.S. Commission 1970). Unequal treatment in our legal system would violate guaranteed by Fifth and Sixth Amendments rights to understand the nature of proceedings, to confront witnesses, and to have assistance of counsel would be denied. More importantly, such infringements on citizen rights would be a tremendous setback for immigrant status in the U.S.

Bilingual Education. All the strides bilingual education has made in recent decades would be obliterated. According to Stalker’s Arizona study, more than 60 percent of Arizona’s state school-age population children in urban centers who are linguistically/culturally diverse

would be affected (Stalker 62). Even worse, children would be psychologically punished for speaking in their native tongue. Because teachers would not be able to use special methods to communicate with Limited English Proficiency students. Only transitional ESL classes would remain intact. Years of study in school for intensive English training would have to be extended to take place in order to reach the desired level of fluency necessary to survive in an English-only classroom. An increase in school-time might imply an increased number of dropouts. In addition, more English-only classes for adults would be necessary in order for them to conduct their daily affairs.¹⁷

Minority-language students are not the only demographic population would be affected by an ELA. English Only initiatives strike at the very heart of teaching principles: to educate children through common visions goals in order to make them better international citizens for tomorrow. English teachers are implicitly and explicitly *for* English but should not be forced to make a decision that divides, rather than unites, their students. Furthermore, bilingual educators are cultural mediators who have the power to facilitate the assimilation of language minority students (Mora). They cannot possibly work under the legal threat of liabilities for exercising their professional judgments.

Teachers throughout America would be a great “at-risk population” were an ELA to pass. Because of this multicultural threat, several teachers strongly promote the English Plus ideals. They work for a time when multilingualism will not only be tolerated but also admired as a national asset. Multiple languages, teachers believe, enrich the intellect and broaden cultural ranges for individual, communities, and nations alike. There is a great deal of pressure on

¹⁷ A study by the RAND Corporation shows that 40,000 adults in Los Angeles are signed up on waiting lists for English classes. This number could run as high as 50,000 adults in L.A., 170,000 in Texas, 65,000 in Illinois, and 60,000 in New York (Stalker 62). These figures are a blatant indication of a denial of equal access to English language opportunities.

teachers to educate themselves and display multilingual enthusiasm within their classrooms and beyond. For this reason, teacher input in multicultural curriculums is essential and possibly the only way change can be procured from within. Their sentiments again raise issues about who controls education and whether or not local control is favorable to federal control. There is no doubt that moving further away from an internationalization and towards a xenophobic Standard English medium would be indicative of a nativist trend (Stalker 66).

Outside the realm of schools, the passage of an ELA might result in increased violence towards minority communities. The symbolism of ELA laws is pejorative of immigrants, especially with the fabrication of many myths about bilingualism and immigrants disseminated by groups favoring English Only. While the ELA attract a hefty group of bigots and immigration opponents, its implementation into the Constitution might justify poor treatment and only add to the already negative climate for minority language maintenance. Such devaluation of other cultures would probably further impede the difficult transition into America's mainstream and just broaden the gap between the have and have-nots in America. Discrimination could take the form of verbal or physical abuse. Even more devastating, however, is the ideological abuse received by such communities. By teaching children and parents that their tradition is invalid within the United States, mainstream Official English advocates foster and consolidate a sense of futility and inferiority not easily erased, even with the mastery of the English language. Generations of minority-language individuals, therefore, are set up for failure within the social structures: politics, education, and corporate America.

Instances of discrimination against minority-language communities need not be monumental to have a concrete, detrimental effect in everyday life. English Only laws do not simply disparage the native language but also assault the rights of the people who speak the

language. In Monterey Park, California, for example, a city with an Asian majority, the mayor tried to prevent the public library from accepting a gift of ten thousand Chinese books on the ground that “English is the law of the land” (Baron 20). Also, while ELA laws would primarily apply to government programs, such laws would inevitably affect private businesses. For example, several Southern California cities have passed ordinances that forbid or restrict the use of foreign languages on private business signs. Some English Only advocates oppose telephone companies’ use of multilingual operators or directories as well as the licensing of Spanish radio stations and bilingual menus at restaurants. Native language use is fundamental for basic human needs might be curtailed. In 1987 the Washington Times reported that a 911 dispatcher was able to save the life of a Salvadoran woman’s baby who stopped breathing by giving the mother instruction on mouth-to-mouth and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation in Spanish until the paramedics arrived (“From its Inception”).

Proponents of an ELA worry about the slippery slope of language rights. Were Spanish-speakers to be protected as having equal access to bilingual education program, voting rights, etc., small minority language groups should and would demand equal benefits. If Spanish speakers can attain driver’s licenses in Spanish, for example, Greeks or Koreans or Albanians should also be offered forms in their respective tongues (Weinstein 277). From a legal perspective, it is nearly impossible to convince the courts that one language should have precedence over another even if Spanish is statistically more widespread. Lawyer James Weinstein believes that state control over official English legislation is ideal. State legislation, he argues, allows flexibility among states as well as more say from average citizens (278).

Solutions: Moving to the Future

While it seems plausible that an ELA would make legal what happens anyway, a need for a more concrete and open-minded discussion is essential if the United States hopes to continue boasting its multicultural makeup. The effects of an ELA may not be immediate, whether ideological or practical in nature, but in the near future, entire histories and stories could face extinction. Children are denied their roots and heritages and even worse, made to think their culture inferior until voices from the edge will be assimilated completely and forever forgotten. Passing an English Only law for a lover of language, Fasold says, “is like passing a law that tells a physicist that gravity no longer holds” (Fasold). It can no longer be the case that teaching immigrant children about their native language and culture is futile because their roots bear no context or importance in America. At the rate English Only sentiments have grown throughout the past twenty years, America is in serious danger of becoming a monochrome nation. Our diversity is threatened because of the rates of native children speaking English only are on the incline, the practical uses of native languages in which the tongues were secure (church, home, school) are decreasing, and a growing number of parents fail to teach their children the native language (Crawford 2000: 66). Without a steady flow of immigration, Linguist Fasold says, within sixty years America will no longer be able to claim its multilingualism (Fasold).

In order to preserve our multicultural heritage and pay homage to our esteemed American mosaic we must openly discuss the contributions made by immigrant groups in are society. We must disavow those who slander immigrants whether through rhetoric or practice. Like many of the theorists and activists cited in this paper, linguistic plurality is and should be valued as a tremendous cultural resource. This plethora of languages can help America develop as a nation and become more a well-informed, stronger international player. Americans must recognize that

immigrants face a very difficult task of constantly negotiating hybrid identities. At home they recognize the power of their cultural heritage while the very same heritage is demeaned and rejected in the public sphere as foreign and “wrong.” While trying to assimilate as Americans, most English-learning Latinos/Latinas are excluded from consideration as true Mexican or Hispanic people. Despite the fact that immigrants gain luxuries here in America not found elsewhere, mainstream Anglos and our elected officials must acknowledge minority sacrifice. Without compromise, we can forget multiculturalism in the near future.

One way of accepting different languages as “cultural capital” (Aparicio 272) is through successful bilingual education programs exemplified by the Oyster School and Key School. In order for a bilingual program to be successful, it must be meaningful. Bilingual education cannot be a means to an end but rather a process of learning to value multiple identities and experiences for both native and English speakers. There cannot be a rigid timeframe in which children should be forced to master a language and prove “success” on a standardized test. Language acquisition is a life-long process requiring energy, exposure and practice. Developing strong learning skills in a native language has proven again and again to be a successful method of later acquiring another language. Essential to a strong program is professionally educated teachers who construct programs in which the child is assessed in various creative ways and encouraged to pursue greater goals. Learning should be both conversational and formal, written and computerized—the more outlets for practice, the better. Furthermore, in order to properly assess teaching methods, effective research techniques must be followed and disseminated throughout educational communities. For example, research should be must more longitudinal rather than short-term; Students are not test subjects but individuals with varying degrees of learning capacity.

Another essential element of looking forward with multiculturalism as a social and cultural paradigm is by our expanding social notions of “normal.” Throughout the past several decades, Americans have made tremendous leaps in shifting perspectives of what is acceptable in terms of family, gender, race-relations, and homosexuality. Likewise, Americans must acknowledge that multiculturalism is more than language-deep. Americans are beings with complex matrices of identities. Language sometimes has just as much to do with race and class as it does with ethnic background. An informed debate about language, therefore, must deconstruct oppressive binary systems. One of the greatest assets of our democratic system is that average individuals bear the power to employ change. This advantage can become a serious drawback when polar ideas of mainstream versus periphery, American versus minority, or English versus native language are set up, accepted, and eventually ingrained in American psyches.

While this paper focused on Hispanic as the affected immigrant group, the implications of the paper are by no means exclusive to one linguistic minority. The ideas are just a starting ground from which, I hope, an informed debate about the deeper implications of language policy in this country can stem. These ideas may cultivate an acceptance of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as a legitimate linguistic element in American society or a reevaluation of standardized tests as a measure of immigrant children’s ability to acquire English. English Plus seems a strong educational proposition working actively to break down the English Only versus Bilingualism juxtaposition. Furthermore, as Barbara Craig evaluates in her dissertation of the Key School, the policies of one state or local community may not be appropriate for all of America.

I have grown up completely bilingual as a first-generation Greek-American. Having experienced anti-immigrant tensions as a “hyphenated” America throughout my life, I find

myself struggling to negotiate my dual cultural loyalty each day. Although as a youngster, I read Greek poems and was sung Greek lullabies, my loyalty to America, our flag, or Star Spangled Banner has never lagged. Throughout my education, teachers have pulled me aside in classrooms and told me that I might want to consider extra help in the English language. Through my elementary years, my parents have received report cards stating my poor English abilities. So, I have done what any determined person might do: I became an English major.

Despite my bilingual experiences in this country, I am in no way an expert of the anti-immigrant hostility and bias around which this paper revolves. I cannot claim to understand discrimination in the way many youngsters do today since I was lucky enough to engage with a home language venerated in many school curriculums as the basis of much of the English language. I include myself in the “privileged” immigrant community from European countries from which America seems to unjustly derive more “cultural” substance than other minority language groups. Although I cannot relate to the immigrants to whom I refer in this paper, I strongly believe that a linguistic debate about our multicultural heritage is a necessary beginning if oppressive binary structures and hierarchies of peoples are to be broken.

When asked whether or not the bird in the young student’s hands was dead or alive, Morrison’s griot shifted her attention away from his assertion of power to towards the instrument through which the power was exercised: the bird. As a practiced writer, Morrison reveals the bird as representing language for her. The bird symbol can be interpreted in a myriad of ways. Morrison writes, “We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives” (20). Whatever we choose to have the bird signify, its suspense between life and death does not subside. Language expresses the most personal and communal experiences. It harbors the greatest power of all—the potential for change.

Appendix A

Language Spoken at Home and Self-Reported English-Speaking Ability, U.S. Residents, Age 5 and Older - 1980, 1990, and 2000

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
All speakers, Age 5 +	201,247,455	230,445,777	254,762,734
English Only	187,187,415	198,600,798	209,817,282
Language other than English	23,060,040	31,844,979	44,945,452
Speaks English "very well"	12, 879,004	17,862,477	25,419,219
... "well"	5, 957, 544	7,310,301	9,012,410
... "not well"	3,005,503	4,826,958	7,169,798
... "not at all"	1,217,989	1,845,243	3,344,034
Total U.S. Population	226,545,805	248,709,873	281,421,906

Source: United States. Bureau of the Census. Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for United States, Regions, and States. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2001.

Appendix B

Timeline of English Only Movement

1980:

- Dade County, Florida voters approve an “anti-bilingual ordinance” prohibiting public funds for the use of any language other than English. As a result, Spanish marriage ceremonies and fire safety pamphlets are prohibited. Bilingual public transportation signs are also removed.

1981:

- Senator S.I. Hayakawa introduces a constitutional **English Language Amendment**.
- Virginia legislature declares English the state’s official language making English the language of public instruction.

1982:

- Senator Alan Simpson, Republican of Wyoming, introduces the first version of the **Immigration Reform and Control Act**. This would provide amnesty to illegal immigrants who have resided in the United States for a period of time. The bill passes the Senate, but makes no progress in the House.

1983:

- Senator Hayakawa and Dr. John Tanton found *U.S. English*.
- The California Committee for Ballots in English sponsors **Proposition 0** in San Francisco, calling for an end to bilingual ballots. The measure passes with 63 percent of the vote.

1984:

- New York State passes sweeping education reforms, including foreign language requirements for all students.
- Indiana and Kentucky adopt English as their official state language.
- Tennessee declares English the “official and legal” language of the state. The statute further requires all official documents including ballots and public instruction to be in English.
- An immigration bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives requires a “minimal understanding of ordinary English” to qualify for permanency residency under the amnesty program.
- **The Education for Economic Security Act** becomes law, authorizing federal funding of the improvement of foreign language instruction.

- In extending the Bilingual Education Act through 1988, Congress creates several new programs.
- California voters approve **Proposition 38**, “Voting Materials in English Only,” sponsored by Senator Hayakawa and other leaders of *U.S. English*. California is in opposition to the bilingual ballot provision of the federal Voting Rights Act.

1985:

- Secretary of Education William Bennett delivers a speech questioning the effectiveness of bilingual education over other methods including “sink or swim” learning. He calls for eliminating the requirement that schools use native-language instruction to qualify for most grants under the Bilingual Education Act.
- In response to Bennett’s speech, the Spanish-American League Against Discrimination (SALAD) coins the term ***English Plus*** in describing the goals and benefits of bilingual education.
- In a Miami survey, 98 percent of Hispanic parents say it is “essential for their children to read and write English perfectly” (as compared with 94 percent of Anglo parents). A Rand Corporation study reports that more than 90 percent of U.S.-born Mexican Americans are proficient in English and more than half of their children are monolingual English.

1986:

- Two more lobbies for Official English are organized. ***English First***, a project of the Committee to Protect the Family, is founded by Larry Pratt, a former Virginia state representative and president of Gun Owners of America. Lous Zaeske of Texas organizes the ***American Ethnic Coalition*** “to prevent the division of America along language or ethnic lines.”
- Congress passes the **Immigration Reform and Control Act**, including the English proficiency requirements for amnesty. Before final passage, a section declaring English to be the nation’s official language is removed.
- **Propositions 63** passes in California with 73 percent of the vote, the first Official English measure passed by ballot initiative.
- Norman Cousins resigns from the *U.S. English* advisory board on learning that 40,000 people in Los Angeles are on waiting lists for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes. He criticizes the “negative symbolic significance” of Proposition 63 and warns it could lead to discrimination against language minorities.
- Georgia declares English the state language.

1987:

- Official English measures are considered in 37 state legislatures. They pass in five: Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, and South Carolina.
- North Carolina mandates foreign language instruction for all students in kindergarten through the fifth grade.

- A **Cultural Rights Amendment** (CRA) to the U.S. Constitution, recognizing “the right of the people to preserve, foster, and promote their respective historic, linguistic, and cultural origins,” is proposed by Louisiana Democrats, Senator John Breaux and Representative Jimmy Hayes. Congress takes no action.
- Linda Chavez, former staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and director of public liaison in the Reagan White House, is hired as president of *U.S. English*.
- The **English Plus Information Clearinghouse** (EPIC) is established in Washington, DC as a coalition of education, civil rights, and ethnic advocacy organizations seeking to centralize information on the Official English/English Only Movement.

1988:

- In *Gutierrez v Municipal Court*, a case striking down English-only rules in the workplace, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals declares Proposition 63 to be “primarily symbolic.”
- The House Subcommittee of Civil and Constitutional Rights holds hearing on five English Language Amendments proposed in the 100th Congress, but takes no further action.
- Congress passes a bill affecting elementary, secondary, and adult education. It increased to 25 percent the portion of Bilingual Education Act funds available for “alternative,” nonbilingual programs.
- The **English Literacy Grants Programs** support adult ESL instruction.
- An internal anti-immigrant memorandum by Dr. John Tanton, the chairman of US English, surfaces in the press. These revelations prompt the resignation of several leaders and members of the group including Tanton, Chavez and Walter Cronkite.
- Voters pass Official English amendments to their state constitutions in Arizona (50.5 to 49.5 percent), Colorado (61 to 39 percent), and Florida (84-16 percent). Afterward, a rise in the incidents of discrimination against minority language speakers is reported.

1989:

- New Mexico becomes the first state to endorse the policy of **English Plus**. Washington and Oregon will soon follow with their own English Plus resolutions.
- Voters in Lowell, Massachusetts, approve a nonbonding resolution requesting their state legislature and the U.S. Congress to declare English the official language.
- Defying a well-financed lobbying campaign by *U.S. English*, the New York State Board of Regents votes to extend eligibility for bilingual education by raising the “exit criteria” for graduation from bilingual programs from the 23rd to the 40th percentile in English proficiency.

1990:

- U.S. District Judge Paul Rosenblatt strikes down Arizona's Official English amendment as unconstitutional. The measure's requirement that state officers and employees "act in English and no other language" is ruled to violate free speech guaranteed under the First Amendment.
- Alabama voters, by a margin of 89 to 11 percent adopt English as their official language. Official English measures have now passed in a total of 17 states.

1991:

- President George Bush signs the **National Literacy Act**, which in part promises increased funds for services to the limited-English-proficient population.

1992:

- Rhode Island endorses the policy of English Plus.

1993:

- In *Garcia v. Spun Steak Company*, the Ninth Circuit Court reverses a lower court's decision that an employer's English-only rule violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. It finds that bilingual English and Spanish-speaking workers were not unduly burdened by the rule since they could speak English fluently.
- Congress passes the **National Security Education Act** for the purpose of providing American intelligence agencies and diplomatic posts with more personnel proficient in foreign languages. The Act provides scholarships for undergraduates to study abroad, grants to colleges and universities to improve cultural and language training, and fellowships for graduate students to study in other countries.
- The **Language for All Peoples Initiative** is introduced in Congress. It declares English the official language of the government. It provides a tax credit for employers who offer English language training to their employees. Also included is a resolution recognizing the cultural importance of the many languages spoken in the United States while warning of the potential of language diversity to foster societal discord.
- The **Amending the Immigration and Nationality Act** is introduced in Congress. This bill requires that citizenship ceremonies be conducted exclusively in English.
- Governor Pedro Rossello of Puerto Rico signs a law making Spanish and English the official languages of the commonwealth, an action which he deems a step towards statehood.

1994:

- The Georgia Senate passes an official-English bill, but discussion is stalled in the House and no action is taken.

- Governor William Donald Schaefer vetoes an official-English bill passed by the Maryland legislature.
- Governor Tom Carper vetoes an official-English bill passed by the Delaware legislature on advise from his Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, but indicates that he will sign a revised bill in the future.
- The Ninth Circuit Court upholds the decision for the plaintiff in *Yniquez v. Mofford*, which found Arizona's official-English amendment unconstitutional.
- President Bill Clinton signs that **Improving American Schools Act**, which includes substantive support for bilingual education.
- **Proposition 187** passes in California. It denies undocumented aliens access to public health clinics, social services, and all levels of public education, and requires state employees to report suspected undocumented aliens to the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

1995:

- Several new bills, **Language of Government Act**, the **Declaration of Official Language Act**, and the **National Language Act**, are introduced in Congress.
- Three bills seeking to limit illegal and legal immigrants and to limit immigrants' access to government services are introduced in Congress; **The Immigration Accountability Act**, the **Immigration Moratorium Act**, and the **Immigrant Financial Responsibility and Sponsorship Act**.
- Five more states pass official-English laws: Georgia, Oklahoma, Montana, New Hampshire, and South Dakota. Followed shortly by Virginia (1981 & 1996), Wyoming (1996), Georgia (1986 & 1996), Alaska (1998), Missouri (1998), Utah (2000).

Source: Draper, Jamie and Martha Jiménez. "A Chronology of the Official English Movement." Crawford 1992: 89-94.

Appendix C

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

February 2, 1848, 9 U.S. Stat. 922
Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits,
And Settlement with the Republic of Mexico

Concluded between the United States of American and the United Mexican States on February 2, 1848. Ratifications exchanged at Queretaro May 30, 1848. Proclamation July 4, 1848.

[The only article in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which might be relevant to language rights is Article VIII, eds.]:

Article VIII

Mexicans now established in territories previously belonging to Mexico, and which remain for future within the limits of the United States, as defined by the present treaty, shall be free to continue where they now reside, or to remove at any time to the Mexican republic, retaining the property which they possess in the said territories, or disposing thereof, and removing the proceeds wherever they please, without their being subjected, on this account, to any contribution, tax, or charge whatever.

Those who shall prefer to remain in the said territories, may either retain the title and rights of Mexican citizens, or acquire those of citizens of the United States. But they shall be under the obligation to make their election within one year from the date of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty; and those who shall remain in the said territories after the expiration of that year, without having declared their intention to retain the character of Mexicans, shall be considered to have elected to become citizens of the United States.

In the said territories, property of every kind, now belonging to Mexicans not established there, shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of these, and all Mexicans who may hereafter acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with respect to it guaranties equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States.

Source: Adams, Karen, and Daniel Brink, eds. Perspectives on Official English. (Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 1990) 315.

Appendix D

Projected Asian and Latin Populations

(figures in thousands)

Year	Total U.S.	Hispanic Origin	Asian, Pacific Islander
1995	263,434	26,798	9,756
2000	276,241	31,166	12,125
2010	300,431	40,525	17,653
2020	325,942	51,217	22,653
2030	349,993	62,810	28,467
2050	392,031	88,071	40,508

Source: Crawford, James. Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory, and Practice. 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Bilingual Education Services, 1999) 17.

Appendix E

English Plus Resolution

WHEREAS English is and will remain the primary language of the United States, and all members of our society recognize the importance of English to national life, individual accomplishment, and personal enrichment; and

WHEREAS many U.S. citizens have native languages other than English, including many languages indigenous to this continent, and many members of our society have not had an equal opportunity to learn English; and

WHEREAS the ability to communicate in English and other languages has promoted and can further enhance American economic, political, and cultural vitality, and contributes to our nation's productivity, worldwide competitiveness, successful international diplomacy, and national security; and

WHEREAS our fundamental values and national documents ensure tolerance and respect for diversity and guarantee all persons equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS English Only and other restrictionist language legislation have the potential for abridging the citizen's right to vote, eroding other civil rights, fostering governmental interference in private activity and free commerce, and causing social disunity; and

WHEREAS the organizations establishing the English Plus Information Clearinghouse are committed to the principles of democratic and cultural pluralism and encourage respect for the cultural and linguistic heritages of all members of our society;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. There is a need for a vastly expanded network of facilities for comprehensive English language instruction and services to ensure all persons the ability to exercise the rights and responsibilities of full participation in society.
2. There is a need to foster multiple language skills among all of our people in order to promote our position in the world marketplace and to strengthen the conduct of foreign relations.
3. There is a need to encourage the retention and development of a person's first language, to build upon the multiple language skills of all members of our society, and to strengthen our commitment to cultural and democratic pluralism.
4. There is a need to retain and strengthen the full range of language assistance policies and programs, including bilingual assistance, in order to ensure all members of society an equal opportunity to exercise their rights and responsibilities in regard to the electoral process, education, the legal system, social services, and health care.
5. There is a need to reject the objectives and premises of English Only and promote the concept of English Plus in order to promote public civility and the fundamental values and objectives of our society.
6. There is a need to defeat any legislative initiative on the federal, state, or local level which would mandate English as the official language and thereby restrict the civil

- rights, civil liberties, or equal opportunities of all persons, including persons with limited English proficiency.
7. There is a need for an English Plus Information Clearinghouse to facilitate and enhance: the exchange of information, public education, advocacy, effective policies and programs, and cooperation among a wide range of communities, private organization, and public sector entities.

Source: Crawford, James. Language Loyalties: A Sourcebook on the Official English Controversy. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 153.

Appendix F

Proposition 227

Initiative Statute:

- Requires all public school instruction be conducted in English.
- Requirement may be waived if parents or guardian show that child already knows English, or has special needs, or would learn English faster through alternate instructional technique.
- Provides initial short-term placement, not normally exceeding one year, in intensive sheltered English immersion programs for children not fluent in English.
- Appropriates \$50 million per year for ten years funding English instruction for individuals pledging to provide personal English tutoring to children in their community.
- Permits enforcement suits by parents and guardians.
- Impacts on individual school districts would depend on how schools, parents, and the state respond to the proposition's changes. These impacts could vary significantly by district.
- Requires state spending of \$50 million per year for ten years to teach tutors of limited English proficient students. Total state spending on education, however, probably would not change.

Significant changes for LEP students in California:

- Requires California public schools to teach LEP students in special classes that are taught nearly all in English. This would eliminate bilingual classes in most cases.
- Shortens the time most LEP students would stay in special classes. This initiative states that (1) LEP students should move from special classes to regular classes when they have acquired a good working knowledge of English and (2) these special classes should not normally last longer than one year. This would eliminate most programs that provide special classes to LEP students over several years.

Exceptions: Schools would be permitted to provide classes in a language other than English if the child's parents or guardian asks the school to put him or her in such a class and one of the following happens:

- The child is at least ten years old and the school principal and teachers agree that learning in another language would be better for the child.
- The child has been in a class using English for at least 30 days and the principal, teachers, and head of the school district agree that learning in another language would be better for the student.
- The child already is fluent in English and the parents want the child to take classes in another language.

If a school lets 20 or more LEP students in a grade choose to take their lessons in a language other than English, then the school must give such a class. If there are not 20

students or more, then the school must let the students go to other schools that have classes in those languages.

Funding Provisions: The initiative requires the state to provide \$50 million every year for ten years for English classes for adults who promise to tutor LEP students. In addition, the measure requires that any special funding currently spent on LEP students be maintained, if possible.

Fiscal Effects: (1) Savings: By limiting the time LEP students can be in special classes generally to one year, the initiative would reduce the number of special classes schools would have to offer. This could result in major savings for schools. (2) Costs: The proposition could also result in new costs to schools, for a number of reasons. For instance, the one-year special classes could be more expensive than existing classes if schools provide more intensive services. Schools may also need to give LEP students extra help in academic subjects once they are moved to regular classes if they fall behind other students. (3) Distribution of “Compensatory” Funds: The state provides “compensatory” funds to schools based in part on the number of LEP students. The proposition would likely reduce the number of students who are considered LEP at any given time. As a result, state funds would be allocated differently—some schools would get more compensatory funds and other would get less. (4) Net Impact on Schools: Net Impact would depend in large part on how people respond to the proposition’s passing including parents’ and schools’ decisions about services provided for their children.

State Fiscal Effects: Under the proposition, the state would spend \$50 million each year for ten years for English classes for adults who promise to tutor LEP students. This provision, however, probably would not change total state spending for schools. (This is because the level of state spending for K-12 schools is generally based on a formula in the Constitution.) As a result, the costs to the state of this provision would likely reduce spending on other school programs by a like amount.

Source: Attorney General. “Official Title and Summary: English Language in Public Schools. Initiative Statute. Proposition 227.” 20 Oct. 2001 <<http://primary98.ss.ca.gov/VoterGuide/Propositions/227.html>>.

Appendix G

Robert Frost's "Mending Wall"

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
 That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
 And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
 And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
 The work of hunters is another thing:
 I have come after them and made repair
 Where they have left not one stone on a stone.
 But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
 To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
 No one has seen them made or heard them made,
 But at spring mending-time we find them there.
 I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
 And on a day we meet to walk the line
 And set the wall between us once again.
 We keep the wall between us as we go.
 To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
 And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
 We have to use a spell to make them balance:
 'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'
 We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
 H, just another kind of outdoor game,
 One on a side. It comes to little more:
 There where it is we do not need the wall:
 He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
 My apple trees will never get across
 And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
 He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
 Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
 If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall, I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That want it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
 But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
 He said it for himself. I see him there
 Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
 In each hand like an old stone savage armed.
 He moves in darkness as it seems to me,

Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
--(1949:47-8) (emphasis mine)

Source: Fidel, Noel. "On Walling In or Walling Out." Adams and Brink 301-2.

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