CONTESTING LANGUAGE ORIENTATIONS
A Critical Multicultural Perspective on Local Language Policy in Two Middle Schools

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This article presents findings drawn from the development of an intervention designed to leverage Spanish to improve English reading comprehension. Five teachers and 18 middle school English language learners (ELLs) in 2 urban middle schools participated in the project over the course of an academic year. Analysis of policy documents, interviews, and observations reveals the presence of multiple language orientations in the enactment of local language policy, and these differing orientations afford and constrain ELLs' access to languages other than English. The authors conclude that opportunities for critical multicultural educators to engage inequity and promote linguistic diversity exist at multiple levels of the educational system, from state administrators to local principals and teachers. Moreover, findings suggest that students also participate in the enactment of policy, and students' orientations to linguistic diversity impact the implementation of multicultural instruction.

This article analyzes the language policy in a local public school district and illustrates multiple ways in which individual orientations to language diversity influence policy implementation in two middle school settings. Specifically, this article documents a plurality of language orientations in a state whose English-only policy remains largely absent from the national debate over language of instruction, a debate which has primarily focused on English-only ballot initiatives in states such as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. Adopting a critical multicultural perspective, this article argues that teachers and students maintain agency to interpret and enact language policies, potentially exerting bottom-up influence on the broader sociopolitical context of schooling for linguistically diverse students.

Language is an integral aspect of multicultural education, as well as a fundamental human right and instructional resource. Affirming the centrality of language in theo-

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ries of multicultural education, Nieto and Bode (2008) argue that "culture and language are inseparable" (p. 185); however, they caution that "language issues are frequently overlooked in multicultural education" (p. 229). With language as a central component of their multicultural framework, these scholars claim that recognizing and honoring language diversity will support student identity development and encourage wider participation in school-based activities. Thus, we concur with critical multicultural educators that in "multicultural nations the issues of language rights and loss and the equitable redistribution of textual and discourse resources through literacy education are test cases for democratic education" (Luke, 2003, p. 132).

In middle schools, the challenge to meet the needs of the growing English language learner (ELL) population is particularly pronounced. ELL enrollment growth is considerably larger in middle schools than in elementary schools (Capps et al., 2005). Additionally, heterogeneity among ELLs in terms of socioeconomic status, years of U.S. residency, and native language and literacy proficiency is greater for middle school students than younger students (Rubinstein-Avilla, 2003). In addition, by grade 4, and particularly in middle and high school, students learning English are confronted with more conceptually dense texts in subject areas (Cummins, 2007; ELL Working Group, 2009). Moreover, adolescent ELLs have fewer years to master these additional academic and language demands of U.S. schools than their elementary counterparts (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Add to these issues is the fact that ELLs drop out of school at higher rates than the general education population beginning in middle school, and one can see why Rubenstein-Ávilla claims that the "challenge for middle school teachers, therefore, is to retain the growing number of ELLs who are enrolled and to ensure their literacy development and content-rich education" (Rubinstein-Ávilla, 2003, p. 123).

Research that explores quality of instruction reveals that adolescent English learners often do not have access to the mainstream curriculum (Coulter & Smith, 2006; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999), do not receive high quality instruction (Callahan, 2005; Koyama, 2004; Padilla & González, 2001; Watt & Roessingh, 2001), and their linguistic and cultural backgrounds are treated as impediments to learning (Gitlin, Buendía, Crosland, & Doumbia, 2003; Reeves, 2006). In this political and instructional context, it is perhaps not surprising that only 26% of eighth grade ELLs read at or above basic proficiency levels (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

At the same time that middle schools are struggling to meet the demands presented by linguistic and cultural diversity, the sociopolitical context of schooling remains largely unsupportive of the resources that these linguistically diverse students bring to schools. Although international and U.S. federal policies protect native language use as a fundamental human right (e.g., Civil Rights Act, 1964; The World Conference on Linguistic Rights, 1996), several states have enacted legislation that limits the extent to which students may receive instruction in their native languages (e.g., California, Arizona, Massachusetts). While state and federal court decisions support the legality of English-only instruction in schools (e.g., *Castañeda v Pickard*, 1981; *Horne v Flores, 2009; Lau v Nichols*, 1974), James Crawford points out that the Federal Office for Civil Rights has regarded English-only rules for students as evidence of national-origin discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (J. Crawford, personal communication, September 3, 2010). Thus, while U.S. Courts consistently uphold states' rights to limit the language of instruction offered by schools and teachers, national and international law maintains students' right to speak in their native language, even in English-only school settings.

The connection between restrictive language policies, quality of instruction, and the academic achievement of linguistically-diverse students is not incidental. Language

researchers generally agree that effective instruction should tap the native language of ELLs and should focus on those skills that are transferrable across languages, particularly for older students (August & Shanahan, 2006; ELL Working Group, 2009). Gutiérrez (2008) argued that the elimination of students' home languages has had profoundly negative consequences on young people's academic trajectories, suggesting that schools' failure to utilize students' native languages is harmful, and therefore, more than just a missed opportunity to learn.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Critical Multiculturalism

This article invokes the work of critical multicultural educators that explicitly address issues of linguistic inequality (e.g., Luke, 2003; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Sleeter, 2004). These critical multiculturalists advocate more than a pluralistic celebration of difference and diversity; rather, they seek to name and redress cases of inequity based on the complex interactions of power between so-called "mainstream" education and multifaceted diversity and difference. Similarly, critical multiculturalists see linguistic differences as resources, not deficits to be remediated, and they propose pedagogies that leverage students' cultural and linguistic differences as instructional assets. Moreover, these critical multiculturalists suggest that an understanding of student learning and achievement necessarily includes an understanding of broader sociopolitical contexts. Luke expressed this perspective well in a 2003 analysis of language policy work in Australia:

> A science of literacy education that restricts itself to the efficacy of classroom method and that attempts to control against the variance of these economies and cultures is, indeed, a naive science at best decontextualized, at worst part of a long ideological effort to remove reading and literacy forcefully from its complex social, cultural, and economic contexts (Luke, 2003, p. 140).

This study examines the ways that students, teachers, administrators, and state and district policy interact in the local school context for ELLs engaged in intervention development work. Employing a critical multiculturalist lens, this article examines ways that the enactment of local language policy is shaped by the language orientations of school staff and students and documents ways that students are provided or denied access to their native language as they encounter various language orientations to the English-only policy.

Language Orientations

Mirroring the tenets of critical multiculturalism highlighted above, Ruiz (1984) provides a highly cited language planning[1] framework that proposes three "orientations" toward language diversity in public policy and discourse: language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource. In the United States, the language-as-problem orientation has resulted in policies restricting the role of bilingual education for language minority students to program models that focus on English acquisition at the expense of native language maintenance and conservation. On the other hand, language-as-right orientations are usually based in legal terms and, according to Ruiz, depend on a conflict with majority interests. He distinguishes between a simple *claim to* an entitlement and a full-fledged right that is necessarily a *claim against* someone or something. In this sense, language-as-rights orientations thrive on conflict and exist primarily to promote language minority rights in the face of repression and restriction. Finally, he recommends the addition of a third orientation, language-as-resource. The language–as-resource orientation views bilingual and multilingualism as an important and valuable source of human capital, and Ruiz highlights some of the contributions this orientation could make to the bilingual/multilingual education debate

in the United States. Nonetheless, he suggests that language-as-resource orientations remain largely absent from language policy discussions in the U.S. context.

Ruiz makes another theoretical distinction that is relevant to this article. He distinguishes *orientations* from other constructs,[2] and he defines an orientation as "a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their roles in society" (p. 4). Importantly, he suggests that orientations differ from Kuhn's classic conception of paradigms because orientations are not mutually-exclusive; that is, multiple orientations may simultaneously coexist, and Ruiz claims that the presence of multiple orientations may actually prove beneficial.

Other researchers have extended Ruiz' framework to analyze the language orientations of individual educators and students, as well as topics as seemingly disparate as worldwide language loss (Hornberger, 1998) and the effects of program models on ELLs (McKay, 1988). Gkaintartzi and Tsokalidou (2011) found that despite official policy, teacher orientations and the classroom practices which grew out of them prevented the successful integration of language minority students into Greek schools. Similarly, Ricinto and Hornberger (1996) connected official policy documents with enacted policy at the classroom level, and they suggest that teachers may confuse their own language orientations with official policies:

> Teachers may implement policies (e.g., English only in the ESL classroom) that reflect broader social attitudes and not specific school policies without realizing it. They do so in many ways and on many levels; for example, teachers may internalize normative social attitudes toward speakers of nonofficial languages or nonstandard varieties of official languages, or they may believe that bilingual education programs disadvantage language minority students. Further, the discourse of schools, communities, and states helps reinforce unstated beliefs so that teachers come to believe not only that what they are doing reflects explicit policies but that the policies are generally in the best interest of students. (p. 417)

Likewise, researchers employing Ruiz' framework report that the language orientations of students affect the implementation of language policy and the effectiveness of educational interventions. For example, Freeman (2000) examined the development of a dual-language program in one Philadelphia school, and she found that negative student discourse about the Spanish language became an obstacle for the success of the program. Similarly, Kamhi-Stein (2003) observed that a bilingual student's orientation to their first language has an impact on their use of their native language to help their reading in English. She notes that students who viewed their native language as a problem were less likely to engage in translating texts between languages. In contrast, students who viewed their native language positively engaged their native language to help construct meaning from English texts.

This article utilizes Ruiz' framework to demonstrate the presence of all three language orientations in the enactment of language policy throughout multiple levels of the local school system. From written policy to administrators and classroom teachers, various orientations on linguistic diversity coexist in the lived experience of classrooms and schools. Students and educators articulate these orientations in varied ways as they coconstruct learning environments.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Although the intervention is not the emphasis of this article, a brief description of our primary purpose in the schools is necessary to understand our role in these contexts. The first four authors spent more than a year at two middle school sites, developing an instructional approach that supports the English reading comprehension of bilingual students through the strategic use of translation. In small groups, the instructors conducted guided reading sessions, modified to include the transla-

tion of conceptually and linguistically rich text excerpts. After reading a section of text, students summarized and discussed the text in English. Students then collaborated to translate text from written English into written Spanish. Typically, students discussed alternate translations orally and then one student wrote down an agreed-upon product, though there was considerable variation in specific processes across groups and sites. After writing the translation, students were invited to discuss the meanings of their translation, the original English passage, and the text as a whole.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study documents local language-of-instruction policy and examines the articulation of language orientations by educators and students observed during the development of an intervention designed to leverage Spanish as an instructional resource. Specifically, the following research questions guide our research:

1. What language orientations are operating within state and district language-of-instruction policies?
2. What language orientations are articulated by educators and students in the enactment of language-of-instruction policy in local middle schools?

METHOD

Setting

Local Demographics. Our research takes place in a major metropolitan public school district in the South. The city is a prominent example of several new immigrant destinations in the United States, and the population of ELLs within the district has nearly doubled in the past 5 years, now comprising 22% of the total student population. Currently, the school district provides language support services to 6,400 students who come from 120 counties and 95 language backgrounds. Within the district, 109 schools serve ELLs through the use of sheltered elementary school programs, one to two English language development class periods a day in middle and secondary school, and a Newcomer Academy that serves the needs of immigrant children who arrive with no prior education and no first language literacy.

Two Middle School Sites. The most recent iterations of the intervention have been conducted in two different middle schools. Both schools are part of the local public school district, and both are racially and ethnically diverse with relatively large populations of ELLs. Moreover, ELLs are not meeting Annual Yearly Progress targets at either school.

Participants

At both sites, participants were middle school children who ranged in age from 12 to 14, with nearly the same number of girls (n = 8) as boys (n = 10). Students were identified by their classroom teachers as speakers of Spanish and "struggling readers". Typically, participants were 2 to 3 years behind in their reading comprehension, as indicated by classroom grades, informal assessments, and state and district tests. While all of the students were identified as English language learners, students were conversationally fluent in English.

TABLE 1
Demographic Profiles of Two Middle Schools

School	*School Size (n)*	*ELL (%)*	*Free/Reduced Lunch (%)*	*At/Above Proficient Reading (%)*
Site 1	700	30	90	65
Site 2	500	17	77	67

Informal observations and formal language testing revealed that native language proficiency varied considerably within the samples.

Data Sources

This article draws from a wide variety of data sources to describe state language policy, as well as enacted language policy in two local schools. While intervention research primarily involved the collection of observational data, initial fieldwork led us to consider district policies and documents as an important data source as well. Consequently, multiple policy documents, including written district and state policies, and minutes of state board meetings were collected. In addition, state authorities and local principals were queried about their interpretation of language policy. Work in the schools included a wide variety of conversations with educators, students, and administrators, observations of classroom instruction and student interactions, and videotaped recordings of our own instruction. Interactions, interviews, and conversations were documented using field notes. School demographic information comes from district websites, and student information comes from school data (i.e., district and classroom assessments) and interviews with the students. Finally, the description of student learning comes from audio and video recordings of student interactions during translation activities and interviews.

Both formal and informal interviews were conducted throughout the intervention. Students participated in semistructured group interviews that focused on their home literacy practices and the role of their native language in school settings. During the intervention, students also provided informal feedback about the impact of the intervention, as well as their linguistic lives at school. For teachers, two formal group discussions and several informal individual interviews were conducted about the role of native languages in their settings both before and during instruction. District and state personnel were invited to talk about language policy in local instructional settings to university classes taught by the first, fourth, and fifth authors. These administrators also responded to emails requesting clarification on language policy questions. All of these interactions were considered to constitute informal interviews. Often, the informality of the processes produced incredibly valuable insight that might not have occurred in the presence of explicit protocols and research agenda. For example, one state administrator recognized that schools and teachers cannot deny students the right to speak their languages, even though many instances of such prohibitions were observed.

The authors of the study adopted a participant-observer stance, and all of the authors played multiple roles in the implementation of the intervention and the analysis of the data. For example, the first four authors were instructors during the execution of the intervention; the fifth and sixth authors acted as observers and recorded field notes during instruction, and the fifth author also administered language assessments in Spanish and English.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) was employed. First, translation events were identified and indexed. Translation events were defined as moments when students identified key passages in assigned English language literature, translated it collaboratively with fellow students, and then evaluated the translation. Initial coding revealed 35 translation events within the data set. Each author then analyzed the translation events for use of Spanish, use of English and instances of code-switching. Subsequently, the research team discussed the analysis of translation events to determine the characteristics and qualities associated with the most productive instructor-student learning opportunities. Most importantly, as a result of the prior coding of the data, instances were identified when students discussed their views and understandings

of language use within the school and their community.

In addition, Patton's (2002) notion of "sensitizing concepts" limited subsequent data collection and our analytic gaze to issues and topics dealing with language policy, including official and unofficial discourses in local schools. Once the research team identified data dealing with language policy and native language use, members of the research team presented illustrative examples to the larger group. At that point, all members of the team asked questions, proposed counter-interpretations, and considered alternative explanations. Often, the initial conjectures of team members required more data to answer fully. Following Bogdan and Biklen (2003), conjectures, hunches and initial hypotheses were put to the test by gathering additional information in the form of interviews, observations, or documents to confirm tentative interpretations. For example, questions concerning some of the students' comments were found within the translation events, so student participants were asked follow-up questions to confirm ongoing understandings of their statements and refine interpretations of the data.

During the final analysis phase, observations, field notes, interviews, and videotaped recordings were analyzed as an entire data set, and emergent themes were identified across data sources (e.g., Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Glesne, 2006). This work was especially important with the document data. Documents dealing with language policy were read by all members of the research team, and relevant issues were identified and then discussed by the group as a whole. Consequently, additional documents (e.g., the Attorney General's published opinion on the language of education law) were cross-referenced to triangulate (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) working hypotheses about language policy. Finally, formal and informal interviews with key personnel were consulted to clarify and validate our understanding of the law.

FINDINGS

Analyses indicate that multiple language orientations interact in the implementation of language policy, and across levels of the educational system, these differing orientations afford and constrain ELLs' access to languages other than English.

Language Orientations in Local Language-of-Instruction Policy

The state in which this research was conducted adheres to an "English only" language policy (Code Ann. § 4-1-404, 1984)[3] that states, "All communications and publications … shall be in English, and instruction in the public schools and colleges of State shall be conducted in English unless the nature of the course would require otherwise." Examination of the minutes from the legislative session in which this law was debated reveals that bilingual education was specifically targeted:

> You know, if like we get a big influx of Spanish-speaking people here, they can just go down to the board of education or go down to the city and demand that you going to teach Biology in Spanish for twenty people … why should we teach three or four different classes in three or four different languages and have to employ these people? (May 8, 1984)

In 2007, the office of the State Attorney General issued an opinion (07-112) declaring that teachers may be required to teach in English; however, the opinion also declared that Code Ann. § 4-1-104 permits instruction in other languages depending "upon the facts and circumstances, including the pedagogical objectives" of the curriculum. The Attorney General suggested that a less restrictive reading of the prohibition of instruction in other languages was legally the most defensible, arguing that the clause "unless the nature of the course would require otherwise" allows educators pedagogical flexibility in determining whether or not to provide instruction in other lan-

guages. Consistently, the attorney general's opinion encouraged flexible, unrestrictive interpretations of the law specifically to avoid infringing upon the constitutional rights of individuals. While state law and the discussion surrounding its passage primarily represent language diversity as a problem, the Attorney General's opinion indicates the presence of language-as-right orientations in the broader interpretation of the law.

Similarly, when the state coordinator for ESL programs was queried about the significance of the statute for classrooms, the reply was:

> [The state] is an English only state. We do not offer instruction in the native language except through heritage language classes—and these are generally in Spanish.... If a teacher knows the word for a concept in the native language or wants to allow peers with the same language to work together, there is not a problem.... The idea that a student can discuss a concept in his/her L1 with a peer is generally well accepted. Much of this varies district to district (State coordinator, personal communication, August 23, 2010).

While the state coordinator explicitly claims that teachers can occasionally use a student's native language, this explanation does not typically appear in local documents that declare "all instruction is in English-only." Similarly, where heritage language classes are available, they are not always available to all bilingual students. The cooperating teacher at the first site, who also taught Spanish heritage language classes, claims that the school policy permitted only those native-Spanish speakers with sufficient mastery of English to participate. In this case, Spanish language is portrayed as an important resource to develop, but English is posited—through systemic, curricular requirements—as a more desirable and prerequisite resource. Thus, the confluence of language orientations creates varied policy implementation across districts and within schools as educators construct various understandings of the law.

Language Orientations Among Educators

Testing discourses drove many of our interactions with the local schools, and different language orientations informed these discourses in ways that dramatically shaped students' access to their native languages. For instance, testing pressures were the explicit reason for the principal's decision to discontinue all research projects at the first site. Although language policy was not specifically mentioned, the principal's decision suggests a language-as-problem orientation because she viewed and framed the intervention development work as an obstacle rather than a resource for reaching academic goals. At the second site, however, testing pressures were the very reason the principal asked us to work with their students, hoping that the intervention would improve their test performance. Similarly, a math teacher at the second school expressed concern that the participating students, who are missing targeted math instruction to participate in our research, will perform worse on the district math assessment because of their participation. The lead math teacher countered that concern, stating that the students are too far below to pass anyway and that the potential long-term literacy advantages of the intervention outweigh the short-term math gains. Consequently, a deficit-orientation to students' math performance actually afforded language as-resource discourses an opportunity to flourish.

Notably, these same cooperating teachers expressed considerable interest in the utility of students' native languages for academic instruction. One teacher asked if the research team could provide intensive summer professional development that included Spanish language instruction. She described district policy as a constraint on their collective ability to provide bilingual instruction for these students in words that explicitly invoke Ruiz' language-as-resource perspective:

> Teacher: It's like we have to teach with one hand and one foot tied behind our

> backs.… We have to teach with half the resources when what we really need are twice the resources.

Language Orientations and Students

Not only do the presence of larger societal discourses in the words of school personnel shape the nature of the instructional services they allow or provide on their campuses, they also influence students' perceptions of school. Students reported being frequently exposed to English-only discourses that devalue the utility and prestige of Spanish:

> Faron: They don't let us [speak Spanish]. Only if they know [it]. Like Ms. V, she knows and sometimes she'd let us.
>
> Researcher: She'll let you speak Spanish.
>
> Faron: Mm-hmm, because she knows what we're saying. Somebody doesn't know, like, I don't know, like Ms. J doesn't know, so she won't let us …
>
> Benito: When we speak Spanish she got mad at us and (unintelligible) speaking Spanish cause "I don't get y'alls."
>
> Faron: Like at computer class when I go, she's like, the computer teacher, she's like "English only. Don't speak Spanish."

Faron's use of the phrase "English-only" is striking. While the state's law has been interpreted in a variety of ways, students have clearly heard the exact phrase, and students confirm that they hear teachers discourage them from speaking Spanish. Thus, state and district policy is ultimately manifest in the messages students receive about their native languages. Interestingly, students attribute these individual differences in policy interpretation to teachers' knowledge of Spanish, and suggest that those that know the language are more likely to allow it. This resonates with previous research (e.g., Maxwell-Jolly, 2000; Stritikus & Garcia, 2000) that found individual variation in the implementation of California's Prop 227 was associated with differences in dispositions to language diversity and beliefs about the value of the native language for second language learning.

The presence of supportive and restrictive orientations shapes the language and literacy practices of students in and out of school settings. To understand students' language and literacy practices, students were invited to participate in small-group conversations about the multiple ways they use Spanish and English. Overwhelmingly, the middle school youth reported living highly bilingual lives. In general, English appears to serve as the prestige language and Spanish serves as the more intimate and everyday language that they use to interact with friends and family members.

Students regularly described translating for family members in both formal and informal contexts, including: banks, doctor offices, driver's license offices, and reading mail at home. In addition, students reported situations where they occasionally translate in school settings, as in the following example:

> Researcher: Will she (your teacher) ever have you translate anything like we did?
>
> Faron: When there's new students, like, that don't speak English at all …
>
> Researcher: And what about in terms of your learning information and knowledge, like in social studies or math or science, is there any time when you can be allowed to use your Spanish in those classes?
>
> Faron: We can speak Spanish to our friends. But if we get out, out to Spanish, some teachers don't like it.
>
> Researcher: Right. Why do you think they don't like it?
>
> Emilio: Because they don't know what we're saying, we could say something bad. I don't know.
>
> Researcher: Do you have any other thoughts about why you think they don't like it?…
>
> Emilio: They just don't like Spanish.

Viewing the spoken presence of multiple languages as a problem, teachers regularly discouraged students from speaking another language. Here, however, Faron describes an

exception, where he was asked to translate for non-English speaking students. This help-seeking activity seems to be a tacit acknowledgement that bilingualism can be viewed as a resource *and* a problem by the same teacher.

At the same time, participating students have been identified as struggling English readers by their classroom teachers, and most of our students report engaging in little traditional literacy activity (e.g., reading or writing) in Spanish or English outside of school. Students occasionally reported using both Spanish and English to engage in digital literacy practices (e.g., surfing the web and social networking), and a few reported reading more traditional texts in multiple languages. The following example represents an exceptionally rich and strategically bilingual approach to reading in out-of-school contexts:

> Researcher: Like what things do you read in Spanish at home?
>
> Flora: The Bible. I have one in English and one in Spanish.
>
> Yolanda: It's bilingual.
>
> Flora: No, it's two separate Bibles.
>
> Researcher: Do they seem the same? Do you understand them the same?
>
> Flora: Yeah, Like if I don't understand something in English I look at it in Spanish. If I don't understand in Spanish, I look at English.

Flora's comments—and the important fact that she has the same text in two languages—suggest that she views bilingualism as an important linguistic resource. Specifically, she mentions that her comprehension can be supported by reading both English and Spanish. In spite of being categorized as a low-achieving reader and consistently told that her language is a problem, Flora has developed bilingual approaches to reading.

In addition to students' lived language and literacy practices, the identities that students form as they encounter broader discourses in the community shape learning in the classroom, and students exert agency and resistance in ways that can promote or inhibit the effectiveness of the intervention to promote multilingualism in the classroom. One exceptional student, Valentín, illustrates some of the ways that identity and the sociopolitical context interact with each other and multicultural intervention work.

While most of the students report using Spanish regularly, Valentín was adamant that he was *not* a Spanish speaker, saying things like "I speak English only," and "I never liked Spanish." The following transcript is taken from our first meeting with the new students:

> Valentín: I speak English here and I speak English at home.
>
> Researcher: Can you understand Spanish?
>
> Valentín: No.
>
> Researcher: Like if your abuelita (grandma) is talking to you, can you understand it?
>
> Other students: Yeah. You could. Don't lie.
>
> Valentín: When my grandma speaks to me I say 'Yeah, yeah." (Everyone laughs)

From a language as a problem orientation, Valentín appears to be posturing or engaging in what Tse (2001) calls ethnic evasion; when the researcher uses the Spanish term *abuelita*, the student demonstrates his Spanish listening comprehension by later responding with the appropriate English word *grandma*. However, subsequent administration of a Spanish literacy test indicates that he performs *below* the preprimer, baseline level of Spanish literacy required to establish a reliable score; and so, Valentín's English-speaker identity perhaps reveals an honest assessment of his limited Spanish abilities.

To introduce the idea of translation, students were invited to play a modified version of the telephone game to introduce the idea of translation, and two of the girls were using Spanish to discuss the message they had just passed. Valentín interrupted their conversation to tell them, "Speak English!" This comment is remarkable because Valentín was not directly involved in their conversation and because the social space had been explicitly marked as a

bilingual environment. Thus, Valentín's admonition to speak English appeared to be the enactment of a familiar discourse of policing non-English language usage in school.

Valentín remained committed to the identity of being an "English only" speaker, and chose to participate minimally during the first few weeks of instruction. However, when asked if he would prefer to return to his classroom, he unexpectedly declined. Upon further questioning, he said that he wanted to stay because "it's helping me learn Spanish." Despite his earlier insistence that Spanish was a problem, he acknowledges that it may also be a resource. This interaction shows the complex layers of language orientation that a student may embody and suggests that individuals may display multiple language orientations across times and contexts.

The very next week, Valentín's participation shifted noticeably, and when students transitioned to partner work, Valentín actually helped his partner construct the Spanish translation. In fact, just two sessions later, Valentín attempted to transcribe the Spanish translation for his dyad. While he and his partner struggled to find the correct Spanish words and wrote only partial translations, the event marked Valentín's first attempt to use Spanish in nearly 2 months of instruction. However, his participation was inconsistent, and most weeks Valentín remained resistant and disengaged.

Valentín seems to be a student who has internalized English-only discourses but is beginning to see the value of Spanish. Like many second-generation ELLs, Valentín is more literate in English than he is in Spanish. His monitoring of other students' use of Spanish and impassioned denial of Spanish ability demonstrate how strongly he felt about the value and appropriateness of Spanish in school-based activities. Valentín appears to embody multiple language orientations, and the complex interactions of these internal dispositions manifest as inconsistent behaviors and responses to language diversity.

CONCLUSION

First, this work clearly demonstrates that English-only policies exist outside of California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. Interestingly, the state's 1984 statute precedes the more recent wave of ballot-sponsored initiatives, and it illustrates the prevalence of entrenched, restrictive language policies in the presence of an increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse student body. Similarly, these findings suggest that individual educators and students may interpret English-only in ways that infringe the rights of linguistically diverse students to speak languages other than English in school settings, even when administrators and other policymakers may encourage less restrictive interpretations of the policy. Consequently, we hope that our work will invite a broader discussion of educational language policies across the country.

Although this work is situated in an explicitly English-only context, multiple language orientations are present in documents and discourses throughout the district and across the state. Conservative, language-as-problem discourses, encoded in published state policy documents and enacted by educators and students, dramatically shape structural opportunities for linguistically diverse students to use their native language as an instructional resource; and high-stakes accountability pressures reinforce the tendency for educators to avoid what they see as extraneous or experimental approaches to improving literacy outcomes for ELLs. Language-as-right orientations are reflected at secondary levels of articulated policy—in legal opinions and administrative caveats—but these discourses are rarely reflected in the schools themselves. Notably, the language-as-right orientations that are evident are mostly examples of what Ruiz called *claims to* the free expression of their language and not *claims against* language majority individuals or interests, suggesting that only weaker forms of language-as-right orientations are evident in this strongly English-only context. Language-as-resource orien-

tations are at least occasionally evident in local school settings, but they often conflict with other orientations articulated by faculty and even students. This work adds to a critical multicultural literature that suggests that enacted policy is complex and context-specific. Even in a state or district with strongly articulated language policy, monolithic claims about the instructional context are complicated by the orientations and actions of the individuals composing that context.

Consequently, individual educators across the district contribute to considerable variability in the lived experiences of students. Some teachers craft safe spaces for students to use their native-languages in the classroom, and others enforce an English-only learning environment in which students are constrained from speaking their native languages. In fact, it is precisely the contestable nature of policy and the autonomy of individual educators that enables students to negotiate multilingual spaces in the contestable space between mandated and enacted policy.

Identifying educators supportive of language diversity in the classroom and finding additional ways to support their ongoing professional development remain crucial aspects of our work as multiculturalists. For multicultural educators, from classroom teachers to researchers, this work provides a model for crafting instructional approaches that capitalize on the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students. Similarly, the contestable nature of policy leaves considerable room for critical educators to work within these gray spaces—what Cummins (2001) calls "cracks in the structure"—to advocate for the rights and resources due those students who are all too often marginalized in discussions of language and literacy policy (Luke, 2003). At the very least, we are convinced that if we are to understand students and create learning spaces that foster multilingualism and cultural diversity, then we must also understand the complexity of the sociopolitical context of the school and communities where these students live.

Moreover, these findings suggest that student participants are important contributors to intervention design and development. As autonomous agents, students variously engage and resist collaborative participation in ways that dramatically impact the effectiveness of the intervention. However, the impact of student resistance or disengagement is potentially more significant than the loss of an opportunity to learn. Student acceptance or rejection of their native language represents participation in a larger clash of language ideologies and orientations; and as participants enact these broader discourses in the classroom, the social justice aspect of this work becomes more salient. Not only is student learning potentially impacted in these interactions, but larger phenomena like immigration debates and language loss are embodied before our eyes. As conveyed in the case of Valentín, the messages students receive about the value of their native language contribute to these larger social processes, just as those larger social processes shape multicultural work in the classroom.

Ruiz (1984) asserted that language orientations could coexist, and this study presents considerable evidence that multiple language orientations often exist within districts, schools, teachers, and students. In fact, these findings indicate that individuals may display multiple orientations at different times and in different contexts. While Ruiz speculated that the coexistence of multiple orientations might prove beneficial to language planners, this study reports mixed evidence about the "benefits" of multiple language orientations. From a critical multicultural perspective, the interplay of orientations creates dynamic possibilities for students and teachers to utilize linguistic diversity as an instructional resource; however, the presence of multiple orientations simultaneously creates contestable spaces where language-as-problem discourses may thrive.

Luke (2003) suggests that the sociopolitical context is a central aspect of literacy research and instruction and suggests that broad issues

of power and identity infuse literacy education in fundamental ways:

> The perennial questions of literacy education are only subordinately about method. First, the lingua franca question: Whose languages should be the media of instruction in schools, and also civic domains, workplaces, mass media, and other institutions? Second, the curriculum questions: Which selective traditions should shape what will count as literacy; which texts and discourses, literacy practices, and events will be codified and transmitted in schools; in whose interests and with what material and discourse consequences will it be done? (Luke, 2003, p. 133)

The findings suggest that individuals at every level of the process, from policymakers to state administrators to principals and teachers, contribute to the enacted nature of local language and literacy policies. Thus, the answers to the perennial questions addressed by Luke (2003) do not exist entirely in top-down models of policy diffusion, though bottom-up models of individual and group struggle and change must not ignore the very real impact of federal, state, and district policy mandates on daily instruction and learning. In summary, multicultural educators at all levels can and should exert agency and challenge inequities; however, a nuanced understanding of local contexts and complexities needs to be considered.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The conclusions drawn in this article are subject to a number of limitations. First, the data are drawn from a relatively small number of participants and sites, and the findings do not necessarily generalize to other settings or participants. Rather, the influence of local context underlines the critical multicultural claim that learning cannot be divorced from the context in which it occurs. Also, analysis of student and teacher interviews is ongoing; thus, important, potentially discordant data are likely to emerge as new data is collected and analyzed. Finally, our position as researcher-teachers presents the possibility for bias; nonetheless, by adopting the role of teachers, we are more aware of the many small decisions and instructional moves required to support the reading development of ELLs. To some extent, the potential trade-off in internal validity is rewarded with invaluable engineering data that informs ongoing intervention development.

These findings provide guidance and implications for future research. Intervention research attempting to support ELLs should consider how multiple and perhaps conflicting orientations may influence their work. In addition, future research on how translation can support and promote bilingual approaches to reading comprehension should consider the language orientations of both students and teachers in specific settings. More generally, we hope that our investigation of the influences of context sparks additional research that explores interactions between the sociopolitical context and schooling for ELLs and other marginalized students. Finally, this research has implications for studies that examine how state and local language policies influence local discourses and individual identity development; additional research outlining ways that educators and students might challenge inequities in the status quo remains urgently needed as a rapidly diversifying student body confronts structural and attitudinal barriers to educational equity.

NOTES

1. While *language planning* is defined by Fishman (1974, as cited in Ruiz, 1984) as "the organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level," it is not clearly defined in Ruiz (1984). Ruiz' implicit definition seems to include policy at multiple levels of government and other social institutions. Similarly, in this article *language planning* refers to the intentional use of policy to regulate language use in schools at federal, state, and local levels.
2. Ruiz makes some distinctions between language *orientations* and other language con-

structs like: *attitudes, beliefs, paradigm, and discourses.* While we are aware that some differences exist between these constructs, his use of the term *disposition* in the definition and his own analyses of the orientation construct suggest that these constructs are similar in many ways. Thus, the terms *orientation, attitude, belief, disposition, and perspective* are used somewhat interchangeably in this article as terms referring to the internal disposition of an individual toward linguistic diversity as encountered and enacted in policy. However, for the sake of conceptual clarity, this article emphasizes the term *orientations* in the discussion of Ruiz' framework throughout the article.

3. No citation is provided in the References section for this source, and throughout this article, all references to particular states, institutions, and individuals are carefully masked to protect the identities of individuals who might otherwise be readily identifiable.

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