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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Although thousands of volunteers from the United States go abroad each year to teach English, many are unprepared for their experiences. Undergraduate students teaching in a foreign country seem to lack training in educational methodology or foreign relations that would prepare them for teaching and living abroad. This project was designed to combine personal experience of teaching in Mexico with the literature on bilingual education and English hegemony to highlight the political nature of speaking English around the world. This project explores the globalization of English and its impact on nations abroad and the United States. Disinterest in bilingualism within the United States, based on government policies, educational methodology, and public opinion, perpetuates attitudes that English is a dominant, unifying, and important language in the world. Although English has been the prevailing language of international relations, many countries are making official policies stating the importance of other languages. However, hegemonic attitudes within the United States undervalue the use of multiple languages. In conclusion, this project is intended to make native English speakers aware of the hegemony of English and the pervasive attitudes that may impair the United States as it builds relationships across countries and interacts globally.

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A Critical Analysis of the Globalization of
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A Critical Analysis of the Globalization of English in the U.S. and Abroad

Introduction

During 2006, I had the opportunity through Oregon State University to teach English in Guadalajara, Mexico. Every year, thousands of teachers go from English-speaking countries to teach English abroad through programs such as the Voluntary Service Overseas, the Peace Corps, The Civic Education Project, and hundreds of university sponsored programs (Peace Corps, 2007). Recently, more students and recent graduates have become involved in these projects in an attempt to fund their own experiences abroad. Many people, who go abroad, particularly with religious organizations, do so as a commitment to community service. Others go in an attempt to help modernize other nations, like volunteers with the Peace Corps who are building computer centers and working on small-business development (Peace Corps, 2007). Some programs send teachers to impoverished areas with the hope that not only will they be teaching English; they will also help physically build communities by helping churches, schools, or other public buildings. Generally speaking, the goal of these programs is to create a global world in the sense that we are all working together to help individuals have the opportunity to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities (Peace Corps, 2007). Many teachers may feel that they are doing something good by spreading English to these areas because they are providing the chance for education in an international language (Snow, 1996). However, often what

many describe as altruism also results in elimination of the local language as English spreads across the globe (Fasold, 1984).

In addition to the tension that is often felt in communities where English is becoming more dominant, many English teachers as Americans represent a culture that seems uninterested in foreign cultures (even if unintentionally). While I was in Mexico, I encountered a teacher from the U.S. in my school who allowed herself a lot of time in retreat because she could not escape the great yearning for the familiarity of her home country. She rarely went out, unless it was for school or with other Americans. She spent all of her free time watching English television, poking around on the internet, and talking on the phone with her friends back home. She was completely miserable. She was never able to feel comfortable with the culture. Instead of staying the entire year like she had contracted to do, she left during Christmas break, after only five months. She explained later that she left because several of us, who were there on five month internships, were leaving and she could not bear the thought of being there without the American support network she had built. It was really rather awful to see her so miserable, and often she brought the rest of us down with her. I wonder what would have happened if she had pushed herself a little more: Would she have been able to become accustomed to the country? Furthermore, this teacher's unwillingness to participate aroused a great deal of doubt from the parents about all of the Americans who were there. Many, including some of the Spanish teachers, were very critical of her and compared her to other teachers who had been there in the past. My host father, in particular, was very critical of American teachers and forbade me to speak English in his home.

If you show an interest in cross-cultural relationships, you gain credibility as a foreign language teacher (Snow, 1996). In the context I was working in, this held true—the teachers who showed an interest in learning more about Mexican culture received invitations to homes, family traditions, and were thanked when they left while those who did not venture far from their home language and culture seemed to lose respect of the host community. By default, we all lost initial respect because of her attitude and we had to work hard to regain it. The parents seemed to expect all of us to be uninterested in Mexican culture, and often seemed hesitant to speak with us. When they did, they expressed their appreciation for our willingness to immerse ourselves. They cited many examples of teachers who had come before us, including the one who was there with us, who had left knowing little more than when they arrived. The parents were very excited to share their food, homes, and traditions with those of us who put out the effort to get to know them.

The impact that individual attitudes have on the globalization of English can be tremendous (Rowntree, 2003). When Americans go abroad, we are representing our nation. If we go to teach English with disrespect for the local language and traditions, we demonstrate feelings indifference toward other nations. If we go without knowing any of the language, without knowing anything about the politics and local customs, expecting them to be interested in us, we present ourselves as egocentric (Snow, 1996). As people continually see Americans exhibiting these attitudes, as many of the parents claimed to have seen teaching in Guadalajara, they become distrustful, angry, and unwelcoming. It begins to shape their opinion of all Americans, and they begin to expect that of any foreigners who come abroad as well as their judgment of the United States.

In Mexico, I felt that there is already a great deal of hostility toward Americans because of all the anti-immigration efforts introduced and perpetuated by our politicians (BBC News, 2005) Many Mexican citizens that I encountered said that Americans hate Mexicans and they are very distrustful of the teachers who come to teach English. I spoke with many taxi drivers, bus riders, and parents who said that they felt this way. Many of the parents, including those who could speak English very fluently, refused to communicate in English with the American teachers because they felt that if we were in Mexico teaching their students, we should be competent Spanish speakers as well. Luckily for me, I had studied some Spanish before going. However, although my Spanish was quite broken and far from fluent when I arrived, as long as I showed enthusiasm for learning and excitement about being in Mexico, the parents were very welcoming. Even my host father, who put me in tears several times during my first week there because of his criticism toward Americans, was very friendly and supportive once he understood that I wanted to immerse myself in his culture.

Many people feel the same way Americans seem to when they encounter foreigners in their country. They ask, “Why don’t you speak (language of the country)?” There is already tension when you are teaching a foreign language because you are teaching something that is unfamiliar to many parents. This defensive attitude likely stems from their desire to maintain their own language, even if they want to learn English as well (Genesee, 1999).

Hegemony is the domination of one group over another, and it is not only a problem in the rest of the world. In the United States, we are also pushing minority languages out of their communities (Reyhner, 2001; D’Entremont, 2001). This is

especially a problem in Native American groups. English-only movements are discriminating against all those who have a right to maintaining their native language. I do believe that having a global language, like English, is a good thing because it will allow greater communication throughout the nation and the world. However, it should not come at the expense of eliminating other languages. There are different reasons why hegemony exists. For example, the most negative is during colonization, when nations develop a paternalistic desire to “do good” by spreading their own language and culture to the rest of the world. However, hegemonic acts can also be motivated by a desire to globalize the world by encouraging the addition of other languages and cultures (e.g. English) beyond those which are familiar to us. Other movements are an attempt to empower the colonized in order to bring them into the mainstream. In the following pages I will explore the concept of hegemony as it relates to my own experiences at home and abroad.

What is Hegemony?

During a symposium some years ago on bilingualism at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a student asked the panelists how they would reconcile their strong support for bilingual education in the United States with the current hegemony of English that was shaping the debate as to how to best educate millions of non-English speaking students enrolled in the nation's public schools. Before the panelists could address the question, a senior Graduate School faculty member, who is also a language specialist, unabashedly asked, "What is hegemony?" (Macedo, 2003)

Teaching a language goes beyond the question of whether or not it is useful for a student to be bilingual, or whether or not the learner receives some metalinguistic benefit from knowing multiple languages. Language is a key component of culture that is part of what defines a group of people (Fasold, 1984). It is part of one's self-identity (Heller, 2001). Yet the enactment of identity and the use of language is not a simple matter because power dynamics affect how individuals and groups are positioned in society, in the world, and in local communities and relationships. Hegemony is the dominance of one group over others to the extent that the dominant group can essentially dictate cultural perspectives, language use, or other policies until they are skewed to favor that group (thereby discriminating against the minority groups) (Fasold, 1984). It results in the empowerment of certain cultural beliefs, values, and practices, the consequence of which is that other beliefs, values, and practices are excluded, regardless of whether it is intentional or not.

Worldwide, English is gaining a global status. However, English is not the only language that is hegemonic. Many postcolonial communities are characterized by the language variation that is found within the state (Lam, 2005). For instance, there are the

indigenous languages of the area and the language of the colonizers. After several years of interaction between the groups, pidgins may be developed or code switching may occur (Ottenheimer, 2006). Language policy is often imposed during or after colonization with little thought to the great diversity of languages that generally existed originally. In Burundi, for example, while Kirundi and French are both official languages of the nation, French is predominant and is seen as a more important language (Heller, 2001). At best, the two languages are seen as complementary while, in fact, French is given more prestige as it is required as the primary language of instruction after fifth grade. Thus, the colonial language still bears status and prestige long after Burundi is officially a colony of Belgium. In Malta, no official language policy has been drawn up for schools (Heller, 2001). Teachers and students frequently switch between Maltese and English. During the 19th century, because the majority of the nation was Catholic, Italian was regarded as the language of superiority. However, in 1814 under the Treaty of Paris, Malta became part of the British Empire. Maltese, the language that had been spoken for centuries on the islands, was regarded as “the language of the kitchen” (Heller, 2001). In 1964, when Malta gained its independence, English and Maltese were given official status.

Language is really part of one’s self-concept and self-identity. Regardless of whether or not it would be easier if we all spoke the same language, the reality is that the language people speak defines how they see themselves (Heller, 2001). We cannot deny how language is inextricably intertwined with culture and social practices (Fasold, 1984). In the south of Brazil, there are about 3,000 Guarani speakers in addition to larger populations in Argentina and Paraguay. According to Schaden and Meliá (Heller, 2001),

the Guarani people are well known for their intense loyalty to their language because religion and language are seen as the same. The term *ñe'ẽ* means both “language” and “part of the divine human soul.” While their world construct is based around their language, the Portuguese colonizers, particularly the Jesuits of the Catholic Church, attempted to “civilize” the indigenous populations through Catholicism and Portuguese (Heller, 2001).

Hegemony is a concept that has been prevalent throughout history. When people believe strongly in something, they tend to have the desire to share it (in some cases by force) with the rest of the world. Whether talking about religion, politics, or language, sometimes certain individuals or groups believe that their way is the best way. Looking at the crusades during the middle ages, or at colonialism, we see strong nations attempting to force their dominant beliefs on smaller groups of people. It can occur between nations, for example, when the United States attempts to spread democracy to other nations, such as Iraq. Also, it can occur within a country, for example when an official language is declared and other languages, minority or not, are unrecognized and devalued.

While hegemony is typically thought of surrounding a political or religious group, it is upheld by the attitudes of the individuals in those groups (Rowntree, 2003). My own experiences abroad testify to the power of individuals who espouse particular attitudes. When I was in Mexico, although I was teaching English, I extended myself to reach out to the parents and students of my community and really tried to learn Spanish. During my last week there, we had a parent meeting to sum up the end of the term. The parent

meetings were always conducted in Spanish. As I began to speak, explaining the progress my students had made in their English skills and demonstrating my pride in their children, one of the parents stood up and interrupted me. She said, “Thank you for what you have done.” Then she turned to the other parents and commented, “Look at how much her Spanish has improved!” After a sudden standing ovation from the parents and a moment to recollect myself, I continued my presentation, beaming. Even when I left, I knew that my Spanish was not perfect—it was far from it. However, I knew that I had put out every effort to really connect with the people I worked with, and they recognized it and applauded my effort. On the other hand, while the other American teacher in my school could conduct basic interactions like grocery shopping and riding the bus, she could never relate with any of the parents in Spanish. This really detracted from the respect and credibility she had as a language teacher and several of the parents were very vocal in their disappointment in her. Based on the way they compared her to other teachers who had come to the school in the past, I think that many of the parents thought that she fit into the stereotype of the anti-Mexican, American tourist. Recognizing that my own actions had the potential to affect people’s attitudes and even relationships across countries, I acted in a way that encouraged pluralism (i.e., being able to live within and navigate across multiple cultures and languages) and promoted respect for the Mexican people’s own language and culture.

English Hegemony in the United States

A principal in a Massachusetts public school summoned the director of the school's bilingual education program for help with translation because he could not understand. When the bilingual director asked the principal in which languages the student was bilingual, he promptly responded: Spanish. Thus, 'bilingual' is used by the dominant hegemonic forces not to mean the ability to speak two languages, but rather to typecast ethnicity as a form of devaluation. When an American speaks two or more languages... it is labeled as advantageous unless the person who speaks the languages is a subordinate speaker, in which case it would be considered a handicap to learning English (Macedo 2003).

Antonio Gramsci was an Italian political theorist and writer in the 1920s and 30s. He is most renowned for his theory of cultural hegemony as a means of maintaining the status quo within a state (Boggs, 1984). According to Gramsci, hegemony was an organizing principle that is spread through socialization within a society. The concept or idea is diffused through aspects of everyday life until it becomes internalized by the population and the philosophy of the dominant group becomes common sense (Boggs, 1984). Within the United States, the dominant culture seems to have moved from a country based on immigration and the melding of foreign cultures to one that is often intolerant of difference and diversity. The policies that the United States government has enacted over the last sixty years regarding bilingual education have displayed this shift in acceptance. Currently, English is the dominant language and advocates of making English the official language and creating English-only policies for education are perpetuating the myth that bilingual programs are harming English dominance (Crawford, 1999). In so doing, they have instead decreased the educational opportunities of all American students and have widened the gap between ethnic groups of our nation (Clowse, 1981).

In the United States in 2002, the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) changed its name to the Federal Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). This seemingly simple change proclaims that the priority of the United States is to ensure that all of our citizens speak English. Slogans like “English for all children” are extremely popular, creating a false idea that bilingual education is an obstacle to learning English (Salazar, 1998). In fact, research in language acquisition has adequately demonstrated both the social and cognitive benefits of bilingualism for both students who speak English as a second language and those for whom English is their first language (Ovando, et al, 1985; Snow, et al, 1977; Genesee, 1999). However, many policy makers and educators either dismiss the evidence supporting bilingual education or they manipulate the data to fit their own ideological end. Thus, the hegemony of English exists in the United States as a powerful force that is able to make English the official language in some states, to eliminate bilingual education, and work to enact measures that proclaim an official language (i.e., English).

In 1998 in California, Proposition 227 passed on the June ballot. Before that, there was a great deal of debate over it. The measure sought to eliminate the use of native language instruction of children with limited English proficiency (LEP). There were several arguments on both sides of the issue; however, one is particularly interesting because it demonstrated how research literature is manipulated to serve particular political agendas. Rossell and Baker (1996: Greene, 1997) argued that, based on the extensive review of literature they had done, “children learn English best when they are taught in English” (Greene, 1997, p.1). They examined 75 pieces of literature in their analysis. However, Greene (1997) conducted a meta-analysis of the same literature

Rossell and Baker cited in their research. He used the same standards they had used to determine the validity of each piece of research. Studies that were determined methodologically acceptable had to have used controls, based results on standardized scores in English, and applied appropriate statistical tests to compare the groups (Greene, 1997). Additionally, Greene used one clarifying requirement on the research: that studies had to measure the effects of bilingual programs after at least one academic year of participation. While Rossell and Baker claim to have used all of these requirements in their own research, in reality, only 11 methodologically acceptable studies could be found! Even when studies with inadequate background controls and short measurement periods are included, the literature still favors the use of some native language instruction. It cannot be said how much native instruction is beneficial, based on Greene's report, because amount of native language instruction was not controlled for and there is so much variation in the studies. Also, the programs that were evaluated in the 1960s and 1970s (when many of these reports were done) may have been significantly different from the programs used today.

In essence, it is interesting to look at this particular study that reportedly supported Proposition 227 and that was highly publicized. This study, with so many holes and biases, was gobbled up and regurgitated by the media, encouraging support in favor of the measure (Crawford, 1999; Kerper, 2002). When highly publicized research is evaluated by experts in the field, it may not hold up and may be shown to have inadequacies. Unfortunately, many policy decisions are made before the research can be carefully evaluated. However, the measure passed with a 61% majority, and now

English-only education is required in the state of California. Several other states have since followed suit.

It would appear that many of the citizens of the United States are, in fact, very much in support of English being not only the dominant language of our country, but the only language, showing how the rhetoric of politicians against bilingualism has caused hegemony of English throughout the population. Republican Congressman, Toby Roth, claims that 90-97% of the population is in favor of English being the official language (PBS Newshour, 1996). We have cut out programs in many states that encourage maintenance of students' primary languages while teaching English (Genesee, 1999). Several states after California enacted legislation similar to Proposition 227 (Ed Week, 2007). In addition to the difficulty ESL students are facing in trying to absorb a new language, we are also creating divisions between English speakers and minority students that could be remedied by two-way immersion programs (Ovando and Collier, 1985; Genesee, 1999).

A review of the history of language education in this country demonstrates how the hegemony of English has come to exist in the United States. In 1958, the federal government initiated the National Defense Education Act which provided aid to both public and private schools at all levels to advance the education of students in our country (Salazar, 1998). Fueled by Russia's launch of Sputnik, the government tried to do everything in their power to promote education in science, math, and modern foreign languages (Grossman, 2001). However, despite this, there was great dissent over the idea of creating bilingual programs. While bilingual immersion programs seemed to be more

effective, both in teaching English to non-English speakers and in teaching foreign languages to majority students, it seemed “un-American” and many citizens claimed that bilingual education threatened to undermine our sense of national identity and divide us along ethnic lines (Clowse, 1981). The prominence of the English-only philosophy, and subtractive language programs have continued to propagate since that time. Promotion of the idea that bilingualism is unpatriotic or un-American has aided the way in which American citizens have become socialized to believe that English should be dominant (Boggs, 1981).

During the 1960’s a large number of affluent and educated Cuban immigrants settled in southern Florida and began a bilingual education program for their children (Ovando and Collier, 1985). They wanted their children to speak English while living in the United States, but since they were planning to some day return to Cuba, they needed to maintain their Spanish. Many politicians, seeing the educational inequity in schools, took hold of the idea of providing better educational programs to students from low-income, immigrant families, especially in the southwestern United States. This political attention resulted in Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1968 (also known as the Bilingual Education Act). The Act provided federal money for programs designed to help meet the needs of students with limited English proficiency. However, it never provided specific curricular content or methodology to develop English fluency in these students. In terms of government policy dictating attitudes, this was a step against the hegemony of English. Nevertheless, the inequity continued because the ideology of the system had become common place and although there were

some bilingual programs, the majority of schools continued to teach with English-only policies.

In the case of *Lau vs. Nichols* (1974), the Supreme Court ruled that school systems that failed to adequately instruct students with limited English proficiency were violating the students' civil rights. It declared that equal treatment of English-speaking and non-English-speaking students does not constitute equal educational opportunity. However like the Bilingual Education Act before it, *Lau vs. Nichols* did not prescribe any system to develop English fluency in our nation's English students. The methodology is determined at the state and local level. Some bilingual education programs have dual goals of teaching English and maintaining the native languages of the students. For example, Rock Point Community School in Arizona has developed a program for maintaining the indigenous Navajo language while teaching English (Reyhner, 1990). In 2006, there were 338 two-way bilingual programs in the U.S. listed by the Center for Applied Linguistics. Most frequently, however, the goal of bilingual education in the United States is to teach English to immigrant children (Hoff, 2005). Instruction is provided in the children's native language only during a transition period which usually only lasts 3-4 years. After that, the children are expected to learn all the content material in English, despite the research that suggests maintenance or late-exit programs would be more effective in helping them learn English fluently (Bialystock, 2001; Dash & Mishra, 1992; Hoff, 2005; Snow & Ferguson, 1977). However, because policies are enacted that prevent bilingual programs, bilingual programs are rare. Because bilingual programs are so rare, it is difficult for most people to see the positive effects they have. The regulations that both the state and federal governments make regarding education affect

the attitudes people have about bilingual education, and about bilingualism in general, thereby proliferating the hegemony of English in this country.

English may be the dominant language of our society, but its dominance does not give it more validity than other languages. Politicians, like Toby Roth, claim that the populous wants English as the official language. By giving it such status, we would create larger divisions between ethnic groups in our nation. If English has more prestige than the other languages spoken in the country, hegemonic attitudes will deepen. We need to ask ourselves: What are the benefits of being bilingual/supporting bilingual education?

It appears that children who experience a balance of two languages may develop greater cognitive awareness of their language which in turn leads to greater control and the ability to analyze the structure of communication (Hoff, 2005). That is not to say that children in monolingual environments do not develop metalinguistic awareness, because all children eventually do (Francis, 1999). Yet it seems to be generally agreed upon that “balanced” bilingualism at least offers some cognitive benefit. There appears to be a link between the ability to speak two languages fluently and the ability to extrapolate abstract ideas about the language in several types of tests (Bialystok & Majumder, 1998).

Whether the cognitive benefits continue in later childhood and adulthood is somewhat controversial as is the extent of the benefits in the first place. Nevertheless, the research in this area seems to imply a greater need for educators to ensure language development in the native language of the students as well as the target language (Dash & Mishra, 1992; Francis, 1999; MacNamara, 1967). At least in the United States, many people seem to be against the idea of continuing education in languages other than English, but

without native language support, there may be a great risk of deficits in cognitive functioning.

In 1965 one of the largest experiments in bilingual education began when the first immersion class opened in Quebec. The goal of the program was to teach French to the English-speaking population and the experimental question was whether immersion in French would help the students achieve better fluency than the standard foreign language instruction without sacrificing English competence or ability in other content areas (Genesee, 1999). In addition, they were attempting to create a cultural awareness in their students in order to eliminate the negative prejudice that had been occurring against native French-speakers in the area. Nearly 35 years after the beginning of the experiment, the results showed that students who speak the majority language of a community can be successfully taught a minority language if they are immersed in a language at school (Genesee, 1999). Also, when partial immersion programs (less than 50% of the day spent in the target language) are compared with complete immersion programs (100% immersion until grade 2, then less each year in the target language until they are both at 50%), it seems that more hours spent in immersion worked better than fewer. The students suffered no long term impairment in any other subject areas.

If there were more programs like this in the United States, not only would we give all children the benefit of knowing two languages, we would decrease the amount of racism that is shown in our society (Genesee, 1999). Rather than marginalizing minority language speakers into negative categories, we could increase the awareness and knowledge students have of other cultures (Hoff, 2005). Two-way bilingual programs

are the best possible scenario because they not only enhance the prestige of minority languages but also offer the opportunity to expand bilingualism to the majority population (Genesee, 1999; Fasold, 1984). Programs which are truly bilingual, like the one in Quebec, promise mutual learning, respect, and greater achievement for all students. The best part is that they do not cost any more to run than the average single-language classroom (Schildkraut, 2005)!

Of course part of the problem currently is the lack of funding for ESL-type programs, which do offer support for students learning English in public schools. My own experiences in schools testify to the importance of educational funding. I have worked in two different schools in Corvallis, one is a private bilingual school, and the other is a public school with an ESL program. The largest difference between these students is the amount of funding and support the schools receive. In the private school, all of the students are affluent, English speaking students. However, they are all learning a second language and learning about the culture of native speakers of that language. Additionally, each year a large group of students has the opportunity to travel to Mexico where they take part in classes in a school there. The parents of these students have higher levels of education and they are able to help their students in both languages. More parents attend conferences with the teachers and are in contact more frequently. All of these things are related to sociocultural and socioeconomic differences (Ovando & Collier (1985).

On the other hand, in the public school, the students receiving language training are only those who do not speak English natively. There is one teacher for all the

students in the school and she only has time to spend a few minutes with each student every day. While I worked with her, I pulled students out of classrooms individually and helped them understand assignments, administered tests that they were missing while I was working with them, and read with them. Really, it seemed to offer very little help in the long run. I felt as though we were bringing them in for half an hour and sending them away and then moving on to the next one, like an assembly line for students. I am really not sure how much it helped their English skills, and it only marginalized them more because they were going to “special classes” instead of staying with their peers. These students frequently played with each other at recess and interacted with each other the most in class.

In my high school, the situation was very similar. I never had a class with an ESL student. I saw the classroom where they met individually (it was about the size of a large closet upstairs in a corner) and I saw them walking through the halls. There was no interaction. There was a Chicano club that many attended, and they usually hung out by their lockers (which were all grouped together downstairs). Looking back, I feel like there could have been more interaction between us. I wish that the school system had put more effort into teaching us about Mexican culture (because most of the ESL students in my district were from Mexico). I felt so much hostility between us; we never would have approached each other to be friends because we had nothing in common. This separation in part could cause hegemonic attitudes in the population and these attitudes are sustained in the government because we have a democratic system (Schildkraut, 2005). Citizens are able to participate in government by voting on issues, like Proposition 227. If the

majority of the population is against bilingual education, initiatives that promote bilingualism will fail while those that eliminate bilingual programs will flourish.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 1998, only 63% of Latino children graduated from high school, 33% had completed some college, and only 11% actually obtain a Bachelor's Degree. This statistic is related to several background factors including lower socioeconomic status, poorer school districts, under qualified teachers, but also to language ability (Orfield, 2004). Without the support that bilingual programs can provide, these numbers will continue to be inexcusably low (Bialystok, 2001). Without native language assistance, many children will have difficulty becoming proficient in English, which at this point in time is the majority language in our society (Greene, 1997). We have a very large Spanish speaking population in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 31 million citizens (over 10% of the nation's total population), speak Spanish in their home. More than 18% of citizens speak a language other than English in their home (Shin & Bruno, 2003). Under *Lau vs. Nichols*, we cannot deprive our students of the opportunity to obtain higher levels of education by demanding English-only instruction and ignoring their need for native language support.

One major reason that a large percentage of the population is against bilingual education is because the media has publicized that native language instruction detracts from students learning English (Schildkraut, 2005). The desire for students to learn English as quickly as possible is based on the assumption that English is and should be the dominant, or official, language (Salazar, 1998). In fact, much of the original research that was done on bilingual education models did suggest that children who were bilingual

showed serious academic deficits in both languages (Smith 1923). However, more recent research has suggested that the disadvantage may not come from speaking two languages, but rather it may be a problem of the way the school system is run. Originally, it seemed that monolingual children had a considerable advantage, likely because the children who spoke two languages had little attention paid to developing their first language in addition to learning the majority language at school (Galambos & Goldin-Meadow, 1990). In his review of the research being done on bilingualism, Wagner (1980) comments that many of the earlier studies done on the deficits of bilingualism were done in lower-class communities. Based on research in the fields of sociology and education it is evident that even monolingual children of lower socioeconomic status tend to do worse academically than monolingual children of higher socioeconomic status (MacNamara, 1967). This difference confounds the early research on the advantages of monolingual children and emphasizes the fact that educators and parents must work to ensure that both languages are learned in order to obtain the cognitive benefits associated with bilingualism. It is important for literacy and language to develop in the native language while a second language is being learned. Therefore, native language instruction, in part, could help students learn English at higher levels. Without it, we are left with students who develop poor academic skills overall and a society that is largely intolerant of language diversity (Schildkraut, 2005).

Carlisle, et al (1999) looked at the ability of Spanish speaking children in English speaking schools to create formal definitions in both English and Spanish. Inspired by earlier findings that proficiency in a native language influences the acquisition of a second, sequential language (Cummins 1991: Carlisle, et al 1999), they were interested in

understanding the relationship between the first and second languages of children. The children in this study were all from lower socioeconomic standing, which constituted the majority of the school. Until the year of the study, the school had taught classes only in English. At the beginning of the study, the school began teaching 20% of the day in Spanish in an attempt to strengthen the children's content skills in their native language in addition to building their content skills in English. The hypothesis of the study was that children whose native language was underdeveloped would have a difficult time learning a second language and learning other content in a second language. This would also affect their metalinguistic development. Each child was asked to complete a Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, a listening comprehension test, word identification, and a reading comprehension test in both English and Spanish. They were each tested on four separate occasions. The researchers found that children who had stronger Spanish-speaking skills also did better creating formal definitions in English. There seemed to be a transfer of skills and a greater understanding of the languages rules that were being used. They concluded that educational settings with children learning the country's majority language as a second language (such as in ELL classes in the United States) should incorporate some language development in both the first and second languages in order to achieve greater comprehension and ability in the second language.

Despite the amount of research that supports the use of one's native language in schooling, in the United States, it seems that hegemony is the goal. Many citizens are endorsing English as the official language and the drive for native English speakers to learn a second language is low because English is found around the world (Weinreich, 1953). However, in all their enthusiasm for English, many people seem to be forgetting

the benefits that could be acquired with fluency in more than one language. The goal that we seem to have of giving English the prestige of being the official language is not consistent with the methods that are used in teaching it. The research shows that if the student has more support in their first language, they will achieve greater second language and academic content proficiency, and they will achieve it more rapidly (Carlisle, et al., 1999; Francis, 1999). Therefore, we should be promoting maintenance bilingual education programs, rather than subtractive language programs, in order to achieve greater English proficiency for all of our students. Also, as Genesee points out (1999), we should be giving majority language students the opportunity to acquire a second language through two-way bilingual programs.

In my own experience, it seems that second language proficiency in the United States is a peripheral goal, at best. Students are required to take two years of language study, but are rarely required to demonstrate any real communicative proficiency in that language. Students in college who are serious about learning another language have the opportunity to study abroad, study literature, or take conversation classes to enhance their competency. However, at most universities in the United States, only two years of basic instruction are required for a Bachelor of Arts degree, and language study is rarely necessary at all for a Bachelor of Science (Gourman, 2003). Learning a second language does not seem to be a priority for the majority of students on American campuses. Only 31% of the nation's high school students were studying a second language in 1994 (Osborn, 2002). This disinterest only increases the tension that other countries feel toward the United States because our citizens appear to be very linguo-centric and they lack proficiency in other languages. The incentives to learn another language are few

since many people around the world (especially those with whom Americans interact most) know English. This attitude of the superiority of English is spread as we continue to make English-only policies about education.

The only time the United States government seems to directly sponsor programs in which native English speakers learn a second language is when it is particularly beneficial to our nation. For instance, during the Cold War, the government supported foreign language instruction because it helped to advance our students in science and technology (Clowse, 1981; Grossman, 2001). Currently, there are government sponsored programs that will give students grants to learn Arabic. Obviously, this will further our foreign policy in the Middle East, which is presently controversial (Osborn, 2002). While English appears to be the language of globalization, the dominance of English may not serve the country well because it is indicative of our country's lack of willingness to compromise with other nations (James, 2001). Additionally, if the inequity in our school system continues, many of our citizens will continue to have lower levels of education (Schildkraut, 2005).

Worldwide Hegemony

Curriculum planning in Western societies has generally aimed at the production of subjects with a national identity. The social role of the curriculum has been to develop a high degree of normative and cognitive consensus among the heterogeneous elements of society, so that they can finally be embraced as part of the narrative of the national culture without disturbing its norms. In fact, the underlying assumption on which curriculum design has often been based is that recognition of difference can constitute a threat to the values, customs, and traditions of a society...Linguistic differences and other cultural and social differences are considered largely to be potentially subversive factors rather than conditions upon which to build the curriculum (Macedo, 2003).

In Canada, there has been debate over whether the official language should be English or French. The European Union also has had great conflict over language. In most countries, particularly those that have been colonies, language has caused conflict (Fasold, 1984). Around the world, we are beginning to see that English is becoming the language of international relations. Academically, more journals are written in science and technology in English than any other language (James, 2001). The globalization of the language is indisputable. However, in many cases the growth of English seems to be coming at the cost of eliminating or suppressing other languages (Heller, 2001).

Schools are one of the main public institutions in any country and are the easiest way to spread attitudes about language. An analysis of educational systems could hardly be complete without considering the question of power that they imply. In favor of whom and what (and against whom and what) are we educating? When one language is dominant, it gains more status than others and this is an even greater problem when there is great linguistic diversity. When one language is chosen as the medium of instruction, the dominant group is able to shape the curriculum in ways that benefit its dominance

(Boggs, 1984). India is an excellent example of a country whose language diversity is immense (Fasold, 1984). There is no definite number of languages spoken within its borders. Although somewhat unrealistically high, the 1961 census claims 1,652 languages are spoken throughout India (Fasold, 1984). Since then, the count has ranged between 200 and 800. Hindi is the official language of the country, though English is also used as a government language because of British colonialism. Of the recorded languages spoken, 49 are claimed by at least 100,000 speakers and 19 are claimed by at least one million speakers. As of July 2006, the population of India was 1,129,866,154 (CIA World Factbook, 2007). The question of education in India becomes a very complicated one. Perhaps instruction should be primarily in Hindi since it is the official language of the country. Also, English would be beneficial for many students, particularly if they are interested in international business or politics—equally so if they are interested in business or politics within India. However, there are many students who enter school with only basic working knowledge of Hindi and virtually no English knowledge. How difficult learning must be for these students!

Not only is learning difficult, but the primary language of these students may be discriminated against or considered to be worthless. If a person's ability to communicate is part of what creates his self identity, then we can assume that students whose primary language is considered worthless may develop resentment against their own culture (Heller, 2001). If they are continually marginalized because of the language they speak, their self-concept may begin to decrease. By learning English students obtain greater cultural capital to work with in the competitive global job market, but they also have a

language, a culture, and a history that should not be invalidated simply because it is in the minority.

The Gicagi community in Kenya has a similar problem (Heller, et al, 2001). The village is a homogeneous Gikuyu-speaking community. The residents also speak Kiswahili (i.e. the national language) and some English (i.e. the official language).

Kiswahili and Gikuyu are the languages of instruction prior to grade 4 and English is the instructional language after that. The students have virtually no access to English outside of school as the radio and print media most frequently use Kiswahili or Gikuyu.

Although 100% of the community speaks Gikuyu and few speak anything else fluently, Gikuyu is prohibited in the schools after Standard 4. Because it is so difficult for them to learn in a language with which they have little experience and which they have little need for in their daily lives, many parents in Gicagi see their education as a personal failure because learning is so difficult in English and it offers them little social mobility. They recognize the potential benefits of the educational system because they see a few who continue their education, do well, and leave the village, but it is very difficult and most never leave. The forced dominance that English, due to the fact that it is the official language of the country, inhibits the education of the citizens of this and other communities because they have no support in Gikuyu, their native language, and few are fluent in Kiswahili upon entry to the school system (Heller, 2001).

The primary reason that English has had such a prominent role in so many parts of the world is that during the last two centuries English-speaking nations have held tremendous economic, political, and military power (Macedo, et al., 2003). Thus, there

has been considerable resentment felt by many other nations (Schirokauer, 2006). Westerners have typically been invaders, colonizers, or economic competitors rather than friends. Although it is beneficial for people around the world to learn English because of its dominance, it is done with some bitterness (Price-Williams & Ramirez, 1977). In some places, this sentiment may be quite apparent, whereas in others it may be fairly subdued because of politeness. On the other hand, in many countries, English is widely accepted, particularly by the younger generations. I saw this distinctly when I spent some time in Japan. Many of the children and adolescents play with toys or wear clothing with English printed on it, even if they do not know what it says. They were very excited to demonstrate their English skill to me whenever we spoke. This enthusiasm for a dominant language is part of what leads to the death of minority languages (Ottenheimer, 2006). For example, in the United States, many minority indigenous groups are trying to save their language and are meeting great difficulty because the younger generation speaks English and barely understands the native language (BlueArm, 2001). If a conscious effort is not made to preserve the language, it will become extinct with the death of the older generation who speaks it fluently. As minority languages wane, the dominant language of the country gains status. Frequently English is taught as a second language, perpetuating its dominance worldwide (Nunan, 2002).

English speakers represent a language that is very dominant on the global stage, and though there may be some variations to the language; it is generally mutually understandable by speakers around the world (James, 2001). For many people around the world, English offers many opportunities, but can be very threatening to local languages and cultures (Snow, 1996). Communication is what ties us together as a social

community. It binds generations of families together in culture and tradition (Ottenheimer, 2006). In my own experience abroad, people are interested in learning English because they have access to more global opportunities as is a dominant language. However, they also want foreigners to be interested in their language and culture as well.

Yet, with increasing access to the Internet, more languages are thriving than before. Cyber spaces are helping to revive some minority languages because people are no longer isolated (Holt, 2005). They can share and learn languages online as long as they have access to a computer, which is becoming more common. There seems to have been a sudden surge of interest in minority languages around the world, particularly those spoken by indigenous North American groups (James, 2001). The difference between interest in North American languages and other minority languages around the world can in part be attributed to Internet access, which is more common in the United States than in most other countries (Holt, 2005). Additionally, the presence of other languages is challenging the dominance of English on the internet. Websites in German, Russian, and Spanish are becoming increasingly common. Global Reach Inc., a market research company, estimates that English is now the mother tongue of less than half of all Internet users, and the proportion is falling all the time (James, 2001). The proportion of English websites is declining steadily while the proportion of websites in other languages, particularly Chinese and other non-English languages, are progressively increasing. The percentage of English websites has decreased from 42% in 2001 to only 27% in 2005. At the same time, Chinese websites have gone from 9% to 20% (Holt, 2005).

China is an interesting country to look at when discussing language policy because it has changed so rapidly in the last sixty years. Also, while it accepts the

dominance of English and English-supportive educational policies, it does not accept English hegemony. The government has encouraged the development of minority languages and has standardized Chinese. However, although the government has officially recognized hundreds of minority languages, the reality of the situation is that many of these languages are only oral. Many have fewer than a thousand speakers and are rapidly becoming extinct (Xiao, 1998). Since the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), policy toward minority languages has gone from an egalitarian approach, to suppression under Mao, to the goal of bilingualism (Lam, 2005). The idea now is that it is not enough for minority groups to speak their own language because they cannot participate in the mainstream life and politics of the country easily. In order for minority groups to maintain their own languages and cultures and, at the same time, have access to the national life and the associated economic benefits, they need to achieve bilingualism (Lam, 2005). For some, trilingualism is the goal so that they can gain access to a range of political, social, and economic spheres. They are exposed to some English (though most not until secondary school) but typically not until entering university, which many minority students are not able to do, so their English skills are far behind other students (Lam, 2005).

In 1976, after Mao's death and the end of the Cultural Revolution, schools reopened and English became the language of modernization (Nunan, 2002). Since 2001, it has been required that all schools teach some English beginning in primary grade 3, although many schools, especially along the coastal regions, begin in primary grade 1. By secondary school, English should be taught in at least four class periods each week. At the university level, students are required to study English for two years, regardless of

the level with which they enter (Lam, 2005). Although English is still difficult to find in the daily environment in China (outside of Hong Kong), it is apparent that more students are learning English as a foreign language than any other language. This is a larger problem within the communities of ethnic minorities, who are struggling to learn both Putonghua and to develop literacy in their native language. The situation is similar to that of the Gicagi community in Kenya in that trilingualism is required for students to be really successful (Heller, 2001).

In an attempt to improve their relationship with and the living conditions of ethnic minority groups within China, the government has provided bilingual education in Putonghua and minority languages. Many scholars have argued that bilingualism is necessary for the advancement of learning among minority students. This would seem to be true as groups become socially marginalized if they do not speak the language that is used in politics and schools. However, the problem arises in finding curriculum, textbooks, and teachers that are qualified to teach both those minority languages and Putonghua (Lin, 1997).

China is an example of a country that, while accepting the dominance of English in the global society, does not accept its hegemony. The constitution of the People's Republic of China specifically states that "every ethnic group has the freedom to use and develop its own language and script" (Lam, 2005, p. 125). Perhaps this linguistic strength is part of the reason why Chinese is slowly overcoming English use on the internet. Maintaining linguistic diversity is also an important aim of the European Commission, which is concerned that the increasing acceptance of English as the lingua

franca of the European Union is eliminating other languages. The Commission argues that the ability to speak two or three languages will give the Europeans economic and technical advantages over their monolingual American rivals in a world of diversity (James, 2001).

While some areas, like China and the European Union accept English dominance and make an effort to maintain local languages, the situation is more difficult in other areas. For example, in the Gicagi community in Kenya, English is forced upon the people even though they have little practical use for it (Heller, 2001). However, as our world has been shifting from one of colonial domination to one of national independence and greater international communication, through the internet, the United Nations, and other programs that promote global cohesion, we are seeing more language groups with the desire to maintain their own culture (James, 2001).

The attitude that many Americans have, that English use is expanding to the point that there will be no need for other languages, will hurt the United States in the long run (Nunan, 2002). Unlike the European Union, which embraces linguistic diversity despite the using English as the *lingua franca*, the United States has created in its citizens an attitude of discrimination and disinterest in other languages, at least at the governmental and societal level. There is no doubt that English plays a dominant role in global relations, although many politicians in the United States would have us believe that English is threatened by all of the illegal immigrants in the country. Rather than fearing a decline in the supremacy of English, we should fear a climate of intolerance. The increased dominance of English around the world has led many people in the United

States to the conclusion that there is no need to learn a second language. We travel abroad without bothering to learn local languages or culture. We seem to expect other nations to welcome us without participating in the difficult task of acquiring a second language. Our nation's political ideology has trickled down to the individual attitudes that people hold about citizens of the country who do not speak English as their first language, which has led to linguo-centrism and discrimination (Macedo, et al., 2003). Additionally, it is symptomatic of a distorted worldview, in which Americans have the right to dominate the policies of other nations.

Conclusion

At this point in time, English is being spread across the globe. By becoming a teacher, many students have the chance not only to help give people greater global opportunities but also to expand their own knowledge of foreign culture and language (Snow, 1996). A great deal of good is being done by English teachers who do go abroad with the additional intention of understanding the world from another perspective, or of helping nations with high poverty levels. However, those teachers who go abroad with an attitude of linguistic superiority are hindering the process of globalization more than helping it because they are perpetuating hegemonic feelings and creating hostility between themselves (representing the United States) and the communities in which they are working (Rowntree, 2003).

In the United States, as well, English is the dominant language. It may be true that it is easier to function as a nation when we have a common language. Nevertheless, it is not necessary to eliminate other languages in order to achieve this goal. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The research I have read and highlighted seems to indicate that programs that provide native language support to students learning English are the most effective in creating balanced bilingual students (Genesee, 1999). By creating supportive learning environments for these students we can help foster attitudes of learning and a positive appreciation of differences between people that will continue throughout their lives. Additionally, if we were to incorporate more two-way bilingual programs into our educational system, English-speaking students would have the opportunity to obtain greater cultural awareness and greater language ability. The ability to speak a second

language fluently will present them with many more cultural experiences as adults. The students of the United States could achieve much greater academic ends if they were presented with this possibility during childhood.

As globalization continues to bring nations into contact more frequently, languages other than English will be preserved. Minority languages will be strengthened as they develop writing systems and as literacy is developed through education in those languages. The languages can be shared and promoted on a greater scale than ever before via the internet. However, it is apparent that English is becoming the language of international communication. While English is more common, dialects are also being developed individually between nations. For example, in countries like Nigeria and India, where English has been used for a long time, distinct local varieties of the language are emerging, complete with their own dictionaries, textbooks and literature (James, 2001). I agree with Victor Montviloff (2001), who is responsible for information policy in the communication and information sector at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, when he says that “English will [probably] remain the world communication language, but we will all come together with our own kinds of pidgin” (James, 2001).

Hegemony is an attitude that is perpetuated by misunderstanding and egocentrism. In the United States we are developing a society of intolerance for difference and fear of the unknown. When we can accept diversity within our own nation by allowing students to receive a richer education, we will be better able to accept worldwide diversity. The United Nations has declared 2008 the year of languages. In an attempt to eliminate the disparity between the use of English and the other five official

languages of the U.N., all six languages will be used for all activities of the Department of Public Information (U.N. General Assembly, 2007). The rest of the world is making an attempt to support and encourage multilingualism by celebrating diversity. At the same time, within the United States, many citizens are against bilingual education (Schildkraut, 2005). If we continue to discourage bilingualism as a nation, we will be left behind the rest of the world.

Bilingual education should be required in the United States for several reasons. First, it would increase the achievement of non-native English-speaking students by giving fuller support in their native language (Carlisle, et al, 1999; Galambos and Goldin-Meadow 1990). Secondly, it would increase cultural awareness in all who participate by allowing students natural interaction with peers from different linguistic backgrounds (Genesee, 1999). In so doing, when our students go abroad to study, or to teach English, they will have greater sensitivity to the political nature of what they are doing. Also, discrimination toward English language learners would be eliminated because all students would be learning a second language and they would be interacting with English learners on a regular basis (Genesee, 1999). Additionally, all students would have the opportunity to obtain the social and cognitive benefits of being bilingual (Hoff, 2005). Rather than creating a nation of intolerance by eliminating bilingual education, we should embrace the diversity that is found within our country by allowing all citizens to become bilingual. If the English teachers in Mexico from the United States had been bilingual, not only would we have had an easier time communicating, we would have been worthy of the respect of the parents whose children we taught.

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