Language Education Policies in the US: 
A Case Study on Linguistic Minority Students in Philadelphia

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DEDICATION

For my fellow linguistic minorities.

And also for anyone who reads this thesis in its entirety. You are a champ.
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Introduction

Aside from a handful of ethnographic studies, the topic on how language policies affect linguistic minority (LM) students with respect to their academic progress and identity is understudied and misunderstood (Olsen, 2008; Valdes, 2001; Suarez-Orozco et. al., 2008; Johnson, 2009). Longitudinal studies on the effects of bilingual education are limited to analyzing test scores of LM students. Rarely do these studies comment on how students engage in the classroom with their teachers and peers, based on whether they are enrolled in either a bilingual or English-only school. This study attempts to give readers a peak into the world of LM students in the classroom. Furthermore, discussion on the identity of minority students is widely misunderstood by the American public. Many believe “that today’s immigrants and their descendants reject American norms, and this belief generates ‘immigrant resentment’” (Schildkraut, 2011, p. 18). Does promoting bilingualism really dissuade immigrant students from adopting American culture and identifying as an American? This study also attempts to reveal the thoughts and opinions of LM students on their identities. How do they define themselves as they attend US schools? Do they embrace or resent their ethnic identities? Is “being American” an obvious part of their lives? Together, I explore how language policies affect linguistic minority students with regards to their academic progress and their identities.

The empirical part of my study explores how LM students, most of who are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs), perform academically and how they choose to identify themselves. The encompassing goal of my research is to contextualize survey results, test scores, the performance levels, and the opinions of the students themselves within the layers of local, state, and national policies on language education. I begin with a brief overview of who
LM students are. One reason why the debate on language education policy is controversial is due to the technical difficulties in identifying and keeping record of LM students. Each state defines an English Language Learner differently, and districts vary in how they assess and classify LM students. Although there are variations in defining, classifying, and evaluating LM students, one thing is clear: the growing number of LM students is rapidly changing the demographics of the US student body. The section, “Linguistic Minority Students in the US,” describes the national demographic patterns of LM students and discusses the variation in how they are classified by schools, districts, and state.

The next section introduces multiple forms of bilingual education, another element of controversy in the debate over language education policy. Programs vary depending on goals for students, the frequency of how minority languages are used in the program curriculum, and what level of academic literacy is expected in both languages.¹ In other words, language education programs differ depending on whether the goal is to maintain fluency and literacy in both languages or transitioning into only English instruction. The section entitled “Program Types” presents the benefits and the critiques of each program type, and discusses the national preference for transitional bilingual education, which usually just takes the form of providing English-only instruction.

I then summarize the history of language education policies in the US. There have been dynamic changes in US policy on bilingual education in both federal and state government. Starting from the early 18th century American history, the historical background section covers the evolution of language education policy. I highlight how the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s sparked the momentum toward heated language debates during the 1980s. By the end of

¹ In this study, the term “minority language” is synonymous to the following other terms: home language, heritage language, and L1 (first language).
the 1980s, the US experienced a sharp shift towards preferring English-only policies, which eventually led to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The historical section also includes a brief history on language policies in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), to provide a context for my case study of the Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School.

The historical section is followed by a literature review on how language policies affect linguistic minority students. The literature review is divided into two schools of thought—assimilationist versus pluralist perspectives on language education policy. Assimilationists favor English-only policies, oppose bilingual education, and argue for the quick assimilation of LM students into American society. Pluralists, on the other hand, critique the idea of immersion in an English-only environment, not only because it contradicts psycholinguistic theories on language acquisition, but also because it marginalizes and delegitimizes minority languages. Pluralists are concerned about how English-only policies are detrimental to the academic performance and identity of immigrant children. Overall, the literature review summarizes the different views on bilingual programs, English-only programs, restrictive state policies on language, and the NCLB Act. The studies discuss how language policies and programs have either affected the academic performance or identity of LM students.

In my research design, I hypothesize that LM students who are educated under a pluralistic policy on language will demonstrate stronger academic performance than will LM students enrolled in a school with a restrictive policy on language. I also predict that LM students in a pluralistic setting will identify more as American, while maintaining their ethnic identity. My findings are presented in two parts. I first present survey data and compare the results between students from schools with pluralistic policies and students from schools with restrictive policies. The second part is a descriptive discussion connecting how a pluralistic
policy actually affects LM students in the classroom. What I found was that all LM students, regardless of policy type, believe that they are academically engaged, but LM students under a pluralistic policy are much more actively engaged in classroom activities compared to LM students under a restrictive policy. My findings on identity suggest that language policies may not have as strong of an effect as they do on academic performance. There was some evidence that restrictive policies led students to feel that they had more in common with White Americans. For the most part, my hypothesis did not hold that LM students would identify more as American. I only found that students had mixed feelings on whether they identified more as American or as ethnic minorities.

This ethnography reveals how a school with a pluralistic policy on language can still exist under national and state policies that implicitly prefer English-only programs. I hope that my project can open up more discussions on other alternatives to supporting the fast growing LM student population. This study shows how the language debate need not be a black and white debate between bilingual policy and English-only Policy; the fusion of both policies can still assist LM students as they continue in their academics and develop their identities.
Linguistic Minorities Students in the US

The unfortunate reality on discussing linguistic minorities is that federal and state governments do not have a standard system for collecting data, tracking students, and understanding their needs. Reports on linguistic minorities have been inconsistent, and due to these discrepancies, it is difficult to precisely describe how the US student body has been changing due to high rates of immigration since the 1960s. Despite the lack of accuracy, one cannot deny the growing presence of linguistic minorities and the increasing demand for language resources for immigrant students (Garcia and Kleifgen, 2010; de Cohen et. al., 2005; Schildkraut, 2011). This study considers LM students to encompass all students who speak another language other than English at home, regardless of whether they are in English-as-Second-Language (ESL) programs, bilingual programs, or English-only programs.

As a result of increased immigration since Congress enacted the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, one out of five students in the nation is from an immigrant family, and speak a non-English language at home. This is an enormous increase, considering the children of immigrants only made up 6% of the school-age population in the US in 1970 (Capps et al., 2005). This rapid change in the student body has obviously impacted US public schools. During the 1960s, 80% of students enrolled in public schools were White. By 2010, the White student population was a little over 50%, and they are usually the minority if enrolled in urban schools (Gandara and Hopkins, 2010).

If White students are slowly becoming the minority, who is making up the rest of the student population and what are the non-English languages that are commonly spoken? In 2000, 75% of immigrant children in elementary school were Asian or Hispanic. Considering the large
percentage of immigrants being Hispanic or Asian, it is unsurprising to find that “85% of students speak one of only five” of the world’s languages. According to Gandara and Hopkins (2010), the nation’s top five spoken languages, other than English, are Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, Chinese (Cantonese), and Korean. Furthermore, within these top five languages, 79% of linguistic minority students speak Spanish, while only 15.5% speak Cantonese, 2% speak Vietnamese, 1.6% speak Hmong, and 1% speak Korean; the remaining 1.5% represent the speakers other minority languages other than the top five mentioned above (Gandara and Hopkins, 2010).

Language trends obviously represent the ethnicities who most recently immigrated to the states. Reflecting the popular destinations for immigrants, LM students are mostly concentrated in the following states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey. Furthermore, “the fastest increases in the number of children of immigrants were recorded in Nevada (206 percent), followed by North Carolina (153 percent), Georgia (148 per-cent), and Nebraska (125 percent)” (Capps et. al., 2005). Another study reports that South Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee have also experienced high growth in linguistic minority students (Garcia and Kleifgen, 2010).

Within these states, researchers find that most immigrant families settle in urban areas. The Urban Institute recently found that “nearly 70% of [Limited English Proficient] students nationally enroll in only 10% of elementary schools. In these school, LEP students account for almost one half of the student body…” (de Cohen et. al., 2005). The fact that five languages are concentrated in urban districts is critical information for policymakers. Certain linguistic communities can be more easily taken into account (Capps et. al., 2005).
Language Program Types

One reason why bilingual education is so controversial is programs have very different goals for students. Some programs expect students to become bilingual, while others expect students to become monolingual. Scholars of language acquisition categorize language programs into three groups: monolingual education, weak forms of bilingual education, and strong forms of bilingual education (Baker, 2006; Garcia, 2009). This section discusses program types that are used in the US, starting with the strongest forms of bilingual education to the weakest forms of bilingual education.

Maintenance (or Developmental) Bilingual Education

Not commonly found in the US, maintenance bilingual education (MBE), which is now referred to as developmental bilingual education, uses both majority and minority languages in different periods of time (Garcia, 2009). The goal is to “develop English proficiency, [and] also to develop academic proficiency in the native language” (August and Hakuta, 1998, from Garcia, 2009, p. 125). Expecting students to develop academic proficiency in both languages, MBE seeks to “instill a strong bicultural identity in children” (Garcia, 2009, p. 125). There is no clear formula on how long one language is used as the medium of instruction over the other, but the main goal is to produce bilingual students.

One variety of MBE is the two-way bilingual, or dual-language education programs. Modeled after Canada’s French language immersion education, two-way instruction (TWI) programs are designed for both majority and minority students to be taught together. The programs can take different forms, such as the 90-10 model, where the L1 is used 90 percent of the day and the L2, in this case English, is used 10 percent of the day. “For the English speakers it is a bilingual immersion program…and for the language minority students it is a bilingual
maintenance model, emphasizing their primary language first for literacy and academic development” (Ovando and Collier, 1998, p. 59). In a 50-50 model, both languages are used at an equal ratio. The goal for TWI programs is to develop proficiency in both languages for both groups of students, and for each student group to appreciate diverse languages and cultures. TWI and dual-language programs are true to the term “bilingual education” in that the programs value the two languages with equal importance. The reason behind coining the programs as TWI or dual-language is because the term “bilingual education” developed a controversial stigma over years of political debate (Garcia, 2009).

**Transitional Bilingual Education**

Transitional bilingual education (TBE) is the most popular program in the US. It is also the weakest form of bilingual education because it focuses most on preparing students to assimilate into mainstream classes. TBE typically allows the temporary use of the home languages of LM students to assist with acquiring the dominant language. The final goal is to transition LM students into English-only instruction. “TBE ultimately supports and values monolingualism and permits bilingualism only as a temporary measure,” whereas MBE supports and values literacy in two languages (Garcia, 2009, p. 124).

There are two major types of TBE: early-exit and late-exit. Early-exit programs use the native language for instruction for 2-3 years in early education; late-exit programs use native language instruction up until 4th grade. Early exit programs are criticized for ignoring the large body of research on language acquisition that says that it takes more than two years to acquire a second language (Cummins, 1996; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Studies have found that students enrolled in late-exit TBE programs improve in performance (Thomas and Collier, 2001). In general, TBE programs focus heavily on teaching English so that the “academic content and
cognitive complexity of the remainder of the [school] curriculum is weakened,” thus resulting in a remedial education lacking depth in content knowledge (Ovando and Collier, 1998, p. 57). Ovando and Collier (1998) argue that TBE programs are “generally perceived as a remedial program, a lower track for low students... TBE is often perceived by staff and students as another form of segregated and compensatory education” (p. 57). Despite criticism from linguists, TBE is still used the most in the US “based on perceived priorities: children need to function in the majority language in society” (Baker, 2006, p. 221).

Another concern with TBE is that teachers are left with vague instructions on how much the L1 should be utilized in the classroom. The home language is permitted as long as it is used to expedite the language acquisition process. In other words, there is no specific model or policy on language use, as long as students eventually transition into mainstream classrooms. Educators have a lot of discretion over how to interpret and define the program. “The language use of TBE teachers varies immensely, depending on their own language proficiencies, those of the children, the difficulty of the content they are trying to teach, the instruction material they have, and their own values toward bilingualism” (Garcia, 2009, p. 124). Given these vague guidelines, the effectiveness of TBE program can be heavily influenced by a wide variety of factors, most of which are controlled by teachers and school administrators.

TBE programs can be widely interpreted, but they must still be dedicated to assimilating the minority into the majority culture. Most schools adopt a quick-exit model and claim to be providing students bilingual education, despite the minimal or non-existent use of the L1 as support. In essence, the quick-exit model is not a bilingual program. However, opponents of strong bilingual programs misinterpret or distort studies on bilingual education by classifying TBE programs to be bilingual programs, when in reality a large majority of TBE can be
classified as structured-immersion programs (Cummins, 1996; Baker, 2006; Garcia, 2009). Studies scrutinizing the effectiveness of TBE programs are discussed in greater depth in my literature review.

Even though it is critiqued for being ineffective, TBE programs hold potential for being beneficial for LM students. Some schools and teachers take advantage of TBE’s loose structure and interpret the program as a venue for a less intimidating assimilation process for LM students. For example, Newcomer Centers, which are slowly becoming more popular across the US, “offer a ‘shock-absorber’ transitional experience culturally, educationally, and linguistically.” Such centers and schools are lenient toward language use, and are used as a safe space for new immigrants to adapt to their new home for “one or two semesters, or one to two years” (Garcia, 2009, p. 223). Unfortunately, most school districts lack the resources to create TBE programs that can provide adequate cultural and linguistic services for new immigrants as described above.

**Submersion, or Mainstreaming Education**

Submersion programs teach LM students solely in the majority language, “typically alongside fluent speakers of the majority language” (Baker, 2006, p. 216). It is infamously known as the “sink or swim” program. Of course, no school wants to be affiliated with a type of program with such a reputation, so this program is often referred to as “structured immersion.” Linguists and educators criticize structured immersion programs because genuine language immersion courses still use the native language to support students as they acquire the second language. Structured immersion programs essentially submerge students in “simplified” English with no native language support, which is similar to early-exit TBE programs. Many ESL programs in US schools are also based on this model (Baker, 2006; Garcia, 2009; Ovando and Collier, 1998).
History of Language Policies in the US

Issues on language education policies were most salient in US politics throughout the 1960s as a reaction to the Civil Rights Acts, the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (Schmidt, 2000). But even prior to the Civil Rights Movement, the US has had steady exposure to language politics. To avoid framing issues with language policies as only a modern political concern, this section provides a historical overview of previous language policies in the US.

Restrictive Policies toward Indigenous Languages

During the Western expansion of the 19th century, the US government faced “problems” with the Native Americans of the West. Even before gaining full control over Native American territory, the US government passed the Civilization Act in 1819, which established “mission schools” to “make the whole tribe English in their language, civilized in their habits and Christian in their religion” (as quoted from Del Valle, 2003, p. 281). By 1878, when the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was published, Native American children were removed from their tribes and enrolled in boarding schools, which essentially aimed to assimilate the children into mainstream American society (Henson et. al., 2008, p. 199; Garcia, 2009, p. 162). In the words of Captain Richard Henry Pratt, who was appointed to oversee the state-sponsored education programs, the goal was to “kill the Indian, save the man” in each student (as quoted from Churchill, 2004, p. 12-14). The policy was fully enforced at the end of the Indian Wars in 1890, when Congress authorized the US Commissioner of Indian Affairs to withhold government support, such as rations and clothing, from Indian families who resisted or failed to send their children to school (p. 16). Students were beaten for speaking in their native tongues,
forbidden from continuing cultural practices, and prevented from wearing traditional dress. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) mandated that each pupil “be compelled to converse with each other in English and...be properly rebuked or punished for persistent violation of this rule (p. 22-23). Thousands of children died from diseases throughout the continuation of these education programs, which lasted well into the 1980s. Those who survived were culturally oppressed and emotionally distraught. “Discouraging dropout rates, classroom performance, and post-secondary graduation rates stand out as indicators today of this legacy” (Henson et. al, 2008, p. 200). The US government’s efforts in Americanizing the children only left behind disempowered generations of Native American, stripped of their cultural identities and languages, all of which are now endangered.

Today, there have been efforts in reviving the endangered Native American languages through the Native American Languages Act (NALA), which was passed in 1990. Some scholars deem consider the NALA to be “the most explicit statement on language ever to have issued from the US Congress in all its history”. A complete turnaround from the government’s past attitudes toward indigenous languages, the NALCA calls for language preservation, the right to use Native American languages in schools, provisions for educational opportunity, and funding for culture and language protection. (Schiffman, 1996, p. 263)

From Tolerance to Intolerance: Language Policies from 1700s to 1900s

The harsh treatment that Native American languages faced is perhaps the most extreme form of intolerance the US government has had toward other languages. It is a sharp contrast to the generally tolerant attitudes that European minority languages initially experienced during the early history of the US. Upon gaining new land from France, Spain, and Russia the government held fairly tolerant policies toward existing languages in each territory, acknowledging the need
to include the languages for smooth administration. The initial tolerance that each territory experienced, however, almost always transitioned into restrictive attitudes. Immigrants, linguistic minority communities, and bilingual schools have often experienced tension particularly during times of increased immigration or war. Throughout the 1700s to the 1900s, minority languages often faced tolerance before falling under English-only policies each time.

Private schools in Philadelphia during the 1750s offered bilingual education in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and even Arabic (Crawford, 1992, p. 36). The German-speaking community particularly flourished in Pennsylvania during the colonial Era so that German language schools and bilingual schools were well established by 1776. As the German-speaking community continued to grow, its network of bilingual schools became of political concern among Americans. During the 1837-1838 constitutional convention, Pennsylvania county representatives debated over how minority languages would be affected if the state should declare English as the official language. In the end, the state chose to leave “language choice to the individual and for those with political power to see to it that legislature protects their interests.” A law was passed “that permitted the founding of German language schools as co-equals with English language schools” (Del Valle, 2006, p. 11-12).

While the state government chose to protect German speakers in 1837, the German-speaking community was not so lucky afterwards. At the start of World War I, anti-German sentiments quickly caught fire. States passed laws banning churches and public meetings from conversing in German. The restrictive languages policies were a result of leading politicians only trying to appease the public, which was influenced by anti-German propaganda campaigns. More states began passing restrictive laws on language as WWI continued. By the end of the WWI, 37 states restricted schools from providing instruction in German, or foreign languages in
general (Del Valle, 2003; Schiffman, 1996). Despite having been able to divert language restrictions prior to WWI, the German-speaking community quickly found itself succumbing to English dominance.

Just as the German-speaking community experienced tolerance before facing resistance, other European languages that the US government came in contact with during the Westward Expansion were initially tolerated. Upon purchasing the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, the French-speaking population in the US doubled in size; the expansion brought in a mix of French Creoles, Acadians, and francophone blacks, Spaniards, and more Germans. The first territorial governor, William C.C. Clairborne, did not speak French, declared English to be the language of local government. This sparked many complaints from residents of the territory, forcing Jefferson to appoint bilingual judges and instruct governors to record and publish laws in both French and English. The states that were established after the Louisiana Purchase developed many modes of linguistic tolerance during the 1850s. For example, Kentucky had several cities that translated public notifications in German, Swedish, Norwegian, and French. Other official documents were published in multiple languages in Ohio, Missouri, and Texas (Crawford, 1992).

The moderate acceptance of linguistic diversity began to wane as immigrants flooded in throughout the late 1800s. The famines and political turmoil of northwestern Europe brought waves of German, Irish, and Scandinavian immigrants. At around the same time, the Gold Rush in California brought thousands of Chinese immigrants. By the end of the 1890s, Japanese immigrants also entered the mainland after the annexation of Hawaii. In response to this new surge of immigrants, states began implementing English-only laws, and generally expressed hostility toward the use of minority languages (Salomone, 2010). Campaigns to end schooling in
foreign languages, especially German, began in the late 1880s. By 1889, Wisconsin and Illinois passed laws that mandated that English be the basic language of instruction in schools (Crawford, 1992, 49).

Interestingly enough, minority languages once again experienced tolerance and protection from the US government after the end of WWI. Cited as one of the few influential lawsuits related to language policies, *Meyer v. Nebraska* challenged the constitutionality of Nebraska's *Siman Act* of 1919, which “prohibited instruction in any foreign languages in any public, private, or parochial school” (Del Valle, 2006, p. 34). Robert Meyer, a religious teacher at the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Congregation's school, was convicted and fined for “teaching bible stories in German to ten year old students.” His case was eventually brought to the US Supreme Court, which found the *Siman Act* to be a violation of the constitution (p. 35). The Supreme Court's decision in this case to use the *Due Process Clauses* of the Fourteenth Amendment, which was often “used to protect individuals from arbitrary governmental actions that [compromised] established private rights,” set a precedent for future lawsuits related to language policy. This ruling affected similar cases that were brought up in Idaho and Ohio at the time. Language advocates applaud how the Supreme Court was able to recognize that the restrictive state laws on language were a result of sheer, war-induced xenophobia. *Meyer* left a fundamental precedent for future cases within the context of language and education. The court’s ruling, however, did not necessarily endorse or mandate bilingual education in public schools. It was strictly limited to protecting language minorities and their equal right to constitutional rights, and no more than that (Del Valle, 2003; p. 38-39).
From the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002

As the US immigrant population continued to grow, issues in language policies became a larger topic of national controversy. The debate over bilingual education gained momentum with the Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964, which "prohibited discrimination on the basis of color, race or national origin, and led to the establishment of the Office of Civil Rights." Often associated with integration, the CRA is overlooked for its emphasis on the equality of educational opportunity. According to Baker, "this Act symbolized a less negative attitude to ethnic groups, and possibilities for increased tolerance of ethnic languages, at least at the Federal level" (Baker, 2006, p. 192). The CRA was to ensure equal education opportunities for all ethnic minorities.

The Bilingual Education Act, Title VII

After passing the CRA, a series of legislation and lawsuits followed, snowballing into the unsettled issue that remains today. First, Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas introduced the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) in 1967. The BEA was passed in 1968 and was also known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty. Title VII was the first form of legislation to allocate federal funds for bilingual programs, specifically with low-income, native Spanish-speaking children in mind (Crawford, 2000). President Johnson signed the bill on January 2, 1968, “making bilingual education a federal policy for the first time in the history of the United States” (Faltis and Coulter, 2007, p. 9). The Act provided the means to develop bilingual programs, train more bilingual teachers, and create a communication bridge between the home and school for linguistic minority students (p. 10).

The BEA posed a challenge for many states already with English-only legislation (Baker, 2006). At around the same time the BEA was passed, the demographics of the immigrant
population were shifting significantly. Prior to the CRA, the immigrant population mostly consisted of European immigrants. At the start of 1965 to 1974, however, immigrants arriving from Europe dropped to less than 30 percent, “while the percentage arriving from Asia increased dramatically to 22 percent, and the percentage from Mexico and Central American increased by 40 percent” (Schmid, 2000, p. 68). The combination of this sudden increase in new non-European immigrants and the ongoing Cold War unsurprisingly churned resistance against the BEA.

How the BEA was implemented also left the act vulnerable to criticism and attacks from language restrictionists. From 1969 to 1973, $135 million was budgeted for the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to support linguistic minority students who required bilingual assistance. However, the total expenses during that time never exceeded $35 million. Researchers suggest that given the estimate of over three million limited English proficient (LEP) students, only an average of about $5 or $6 was spent per child on language assistance in school. The BEA was therefore left for much criticism because it was being poorly implemented (Del Valle, 2003). The vague and undefined goals of the BEA also left it highly controversial. Both opponents and proponents of bilingual education questioned the purpose of the BEA. Should bilingual education be provided for all students or just linguistic minority students? Should the aim for bilingual programs be to emphasize maintenance of the heritage language or simply to assist students in acquiring English faster (p. 227)? In the midst of these debates, there was also an increase in research on bilingual education, many of which questioned the effectiveness of bilingual education, such as the American Institute of Research’s (AIR) report on the ESEA Title VII Spanish/English Bilingual Education Program (1977) and the Baker and de Kanter (1981) study. These studies are discussed later on in my literature review.
Throughout the 1970s, the BEA continued going through reauthorization without ever settling the ambiguity of its goals. The goals were difficult to define in large part because research on the effectiveness of bilingual education remained unsettled. For example, the House Committee on Education and Labor published a report in 1973, indicating that "there is evidence that the use of the child’s mother tongue as a medium of instruction concurrent with an effort to strengthen his command of English acts to prevent retardation in academic skill and performance" (Del Valle, 2003, p. 228). However, other reports, such as the AIR (1977) report, concluded that bilingual education was ineffective; having published the "first large-scale, comparative evaluation of bilingual education in the US," AIR (1977) found that LM students enrolled in bilingual programs scored lower on math and English tests than students enrolled in regular classrooms, and attitudes toward LM students did not differ between bilingual and regular programs. Furthermore, the report found that "the ability of students in bilingual education programs to read Spanish did not improve significantly" (p. 230). However, the report received much criticism because it failed to distinguish between the weak or strong types of bilingual programs (Gray, 1977; Cummins, 1996). Research on bilingual education and the criticism that each report received upon being published seemed to contradict one another, leaving the debate unresolved, and policymakers uncertain on how to define the goals of the BEA in schools.

Because of confusing research and the lack of clearly defined goals, implementing the BEA remained controversial. Later on, a government review team found "a number of practices which [had] the effect of denying equality of educational opportunity to Spanish-surnamed pupils" and that schools were discriminating against students by their ethnicity in order to follow the BEA (from 35 Federal Register, 11595, 1970, as quoted in Faltis and Coulter, 2007, p. 10).
In other words, US-born minority students, who were fluent in English, were being misplaced in language assistance programs just by their surname. The OCR made efforts to address this discriminatory practice by sending a formal memorandum to various school districts. The memorandum, however, still failed to specify the actions required to avoid such mistakes. Furthermore, some language-minority communities fought to keep their bilingual programs.

Unfortunately, because it was during the Civil Rights Movement when there were an increasing number of lawsuits pushing for the integration of races, the desire linguistic minority communities had in developing more bilingual programs was interpreted as an ethnically exclusive act to the rest of the nation (Del Valle, 2003). In short, Congress had to wrestle with complaints from the perspective of immigrants, researchers, educators, and interest groups in order to clarify the goals of the *BEA*. Of the six times that the *BEA* went through reauthorization, its most significant amendment was when Congress decided to only support TBE programs in 1978, in response to the unfavorable review that bilingual education had in the AIR Report (Del Valle, 2003; Schmid, 2001). As discussed in an earlier section on language program types, TBE programs are designed to provide some assistance in the minority language, as long as ELLs are eventually transferred into mainstream English classrooms. The decision to support TBE programs was to appease both sides of the language debate; pluralists argued that it was necessary to “develop a child’s speaking and literacy skills in [his or her] native language before English as introduced in a major way,” while assimilationists argued that “educational equality of opportunity could best be realized by teaching English as early as possible and assimilating language minority children into mainstream culture” (Baker, 2006, p. 193). TBE programs provided a compromise between the differing sides of the debate. About a decade later in 1984 a small portion of funding was allocated for MBE or DBE programs (Crawford, 2000, p. 90).
Lau v. Nichols

In the midst of the heated debates over Title VII, the US Supreme Court required “school districts take affirmative steps to address the language needs of minority language children” as part of its conclusion on Lau vs. Nichols (1974), the most important historical case related to the education of linguistic minorities (Schmid, 2001, p. 70). Challenging the San Francisco School Board, the parents of Kenny Lau, a non-English-speaking Chinese child attending an English-speaking school, filed a class-suit with 2,856 Chinese-speaking students enrolled in the San Francisco School District. The Chinese students were forced to take English-only classes as a result of the ruling from Brown v. Board of Education (Faltis and Coulter, 2007, p. 10-11). The Chinese students in the San Francisco school district required language assistance, but over half of the students were forced into English-only classrooms and only 433 of the students received full language assistance in school.

In 1970, the district courts and the court of appeals dismissed the lawsuit, citing the decision from Brown v. Board of Education to require school districts to provide all children, regardless of race or ethnicity, the same educational opportunity (Del Valle, 2003, p. 237). However, the Supreme Court accepted the case in 1974, ruling that

There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education...We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful (as quoted in Crawford, 2000, p. 92-93).

Upon this decision, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) was appointed the responsibility of implementing what became known as the Lau Remedies. Issued from 1975 to 1981, the Lau Remedies pressed hundreds of school districts to pay more attention to the linguistic needs of LEP students and develop more bilingual programs (Crawford, 2000; Baker,
Though language advocates consider *Lau v. Nichols* to be the most important case supporting linguistic minorities, the “victory” ironically invited further criticism. The development of bilingual programs would have been almost impossible without *Lau v. Nichols*, but it also paved the way for criticism and political attack (Crawford, 2000).

**The English-Only Movement: Proposition 227 and Other Restrictive Language Laws**

At the start of the Reagan Administration, the little support that bilingual education gained during the 1960s fell apart in the 1970s. After the AIR concluded on the ineffectiveness of bilingual education in 1977, the former Senator S.I. Hayakawa of California, who was also a professor of linguistics, led the English-only Movement with the help of several organizations that supported English-only initiatives, such as US English, the Federation of American Immigrant Reform (FAIR), Save Our State, and several Republican politicians (Schmid, 2001). Consistent with his presidential campaign promise to lift the “federal red tape,” one of President Reagan’s first decisions in office was to remove the *Lau Remedies* and increase restrictive language policies (Crawford, 2000, p. 94). As the language debate continued, California was put under the spotlight throughout the 1990s. “Between 1990 to 1996...the state’s population increased by 2.6 million, [where] nine out of ten of the new Californians were Latinos or Asian American” (p. 105). The increase in immigration during the early 1990s was one of the largest the nation had seen. As if in response to the growing immigrant population, California introduced Proposition 227 in 1997. Several other states chose to follow California’s lead.

Introduced by a multi-millionaire software developer and a former Republican candidate for governor named Ron Unz, Proposition 227—also known as “English for the Children” — called to ban bilingual education from the state’s public schools. Unz claimed that the inspiration behind his proposal was the 1996 boycott at Ninth Street Elementary School in Los
Angeles, led by almost 100 Latino parents who were dissatisfied with the bilingual education of their children; they complained that "their children were learning neither English nor Spanish well...[and that] the programs were racist and segregatory" (Del Valle, 2003, 249). The boycott was a surprising response from the Latino community; it seemed that "bilingual education was unpopular among the very groups it was intended to serve" (Crawford, 2000, p. 107). It caught the attention of the media, which framed bilingual education as a detriment to the education of linguistic minority students. The public perception on bilingual education took a negative turn, influencing voters to pass the proposition as law in 1998 (Del Valle, 2003, p. 251). A few years later, similar laws restricting bilingual instruction in schools were passed in Arizona in 2000, and Massachusetts in 2002 (Baker, 2006, p. 202).

No Child Left Behind—2002 to the Present

As the BEA continued to be reauthorized throughout the 1980s, the government’s linguistic tolerance gradually swayed toward preferring English-Only policies. Despite the attention that was given to LM students throughout each reauthorization of Title VII, ELLs were still excluded in the comprehensive education reform at the national level (Menken, 2008). The reauthorization of Title VII in 1994, however, required the inclusion of ELL performance on standardized testing, marking the beginning of a new era in education reform. This time ELLs were required to "[meet] the same statewide academic content and performance standards as those set for English proficient students." Congress passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994, which "specifically mentioned the inclusion of ‘students or children with limited English proficiency.’" The ESEA was also reauthorized and amended in 1994 as the Improving American’s Schools Act, which "mandated that states develop academic content and performance standards, and corresponding assessments.” The amendment of Title VII in 1994 recognized the
benefits of allowing ELLs student to learn in their native language for an extended period of time before entering English-only classrooms. But with the increasing demand for schools to meet student performance standards on standardized assessments, ELLs were inevitably left vulnerable to a “greater federal involvement in education and imposition of incidental English-only policy” (Menken, 2008, p. 28-29). According to Kate Menken, this laid the groundwork for the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), arguably the most powerful policy on ELLs in the history of the US.

Approved on December 13, 2001, with a vote of 381 to 41 in Congress, the NCLB removed the Bilingual Education Act and replaced it with Title III, which is entitled Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students. Though it does not explicitly deny funding for bilingual programs, scholars have noticed that the law steers all attention away from providing bilingual programs. All mention of bilingualism or developing native language competence disappeared from federal law and even the name of federal agencies. (Baker, 2006; Menken, 2008; Salomone, 2010). Aside from the Title VII being replaced by Title III, the US Department of Education’s “Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs” (OBEMLA) was renamed the “Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students” (OELA). Other major education research centers were required to change their names in order to continue receiving funding from its sole supporter, the US Department of Education. For example, the “National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education” (NCBE) became the “National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs’ (NCELA) (Menken, 2008, p. 30). With the words “bilingualism” or “bilingual education” excluded at the
federal level, it is unsurprising that pluralists deem the NCLB to be an English-only policy, despite the fact that it does not actually ban bilingual education as Proposition 227 does.

In addition to these symbolic changes, Titles I and Title III of the NCLB nudge schools toward English-only programming due to accountability requirements that directly impact funding for states, educators, and school administrators. The NCLB differs from all other language policies mentioned in this section in that the law applies to all students, which changed the rules for ELLs and their teachers. Title I requires schools districts to include the performance of ELLs into its overall academic assessment system; before, ELLs were not included in state education reports. Furthermore, ELLs are required to prove their progress in English proficiency through a yearly English proficiency exam, even immigrants students who had immediately arrived in the country. This annual exam is mandated in addition to taking the general testing required from all students enrolled in American public schools (Menken, 2008, p. 30-31). In short, the NCLB has set an institutional impression that is incompatible with bilingual education programs, created expectations for the ELLs to acquire English as soon as possible, and placed high pressure on states to evaluate the progress of ELLs by including them in the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports. Further discussion on the impact that the NCLB has had on the academic progress of ELLs is discussed in the literature review.

History of Language Policies in Philadelphia

Only limited information is available about Philadelphia's language policies. Before the 2000s, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) was one of the leading cities in developing bilingual programs for the increasing linguistic minority student population. When Title VII still existed and granted funding for language programs, the SDP developed bilingual programs for Russian, Chinese, Khmer, and Spanish, under the influence of Eleanor Sandstrom, director of the
SDP’s Office of Foreign Languages in the late 1960s (Hornberger and Johnson, 2007). A wide variety of bilingual education models, many of which were developmental or maintenance programs, were used during Sandstrom’s term, and an increasing number of bilingual teachers from Spanish-speaking countries were hired. Furthermore, Sandstrom initiated one of the first bilingual training programs in the US; she began a Bilingual Institute at Temple University using a six-year grant provided under Title VII to train emerging bilingual teachers each summer (Singh, Allard, Rieser, 2008). Later, Sandstrom’s efforts in developing MBE in Philadelphia schools were setback during 1980s due to severe cuts in federal funding. The Reagan administration decreased funding for Title VII grants and increased funds for English-only instruction. As a result, MBE programs, which allowed students to use their heritage language, slowly decreased in number (Singh, Allard, Rieser, 2008).

**Y.S v. School District of Philadelphia**

The dwindling number of MBE programs clearly had an impact on the increasing population in Philadelphia’s immigrant community, as seen in the significant court case, *Y.S. v. School District of Philadelphia (1986)*. The case, which involved 6,800 Asian students in Philadelphia, was brought up by the parents of a Cambodian refugee whose initials were Y.S. Y.S did not receive any bilingual services even though he was enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. Not being able to understand his courses, which were all instructed solely in English, Y.S was unable to progress academically in school. Three years later, Y.S. was misplaced in a class for mentally handicapped students, as a result of having been misdiagnosed by a test for English-speaking students. The case was settled with the SDP agreeing to various terms. The district was to “review placements for all LEP Asian students in general and special education, and to develop a remedial plan to address the needs of such
students, including evaluation and counseling in their home language, [and] a revised curriculum for the district's ESOL program.” The district was also to train bilingual instructors to teach, translate, and communicate in the home languages spoken by the Asian students and their families in Philadelphia (Fernandez, 1992, p. 133-134).

As a result of *Y.S. v. SDP*, a remedial plan was drafted and enacted in 1988. The plan involved developing a new model for ESOL classes and Welcome Centers, improving bilingual services by hiring more bilingual translators and interpreters, and establishing the Office of Language Minority Programs to “administer ESOL program and monitor compliance.” In 1997, the newly created Office of Language Equity Issues implemented *Y.S.* mandates to all linguistic minority students, not just Asian LEP students (Singh, Allard, Rieser, 2008).

*The Creation and Implementation of the SDP Language Policy*

After the late 1990s, SDP experienced dynamic changes in its language policies. David Cassel Johnson’s (2007) recent dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania traces a shift in ideology on language programs in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). He found that local level government had much leeway in interpreting language education policies for linguistic minorities; consequently, interpretation was heavily influenced by the personal beliefs and opinions of school administrators on bilingual education. The SDP’s policies on language programs became of prominent concern during the early 2000s, not only because of the change in national language policy—when Title III of the NCLB replaced Title VII of the BEA—but also because of the change in key players, who each held differing views on linguistic minority education (Hornberger and Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2007).

As soon as the NCLB was enacted, the SDP slowly began changing its preference to TBE over MBE. From the 1990s to the early 2000s, Emily Dixon-Marquez, chief officer of the Office
of Language Culture and Arts (OLCA) strongly supported maintenance bilingual education programs. Dixon-Marquez not only wrote Title VII grants, but also directed how federal grant money was used within the district. The SDP preferred MBE under Dixon-Marquez’s leadership. Upon receiving a five-year Title VII grant in November 2000, the SDP began developing two-way immersion, or dual-language programs (Johnson, 2007, p. 100; Singh, Allard, and Rieser, 2008).

While dual-language programs were still developing, the district hired Paul Vallas as the new CEO for the district in fall 2002. He asked the OLCA to develop an explicit language policy “to guide language education programs,” in response to the NCLB (Hornberger and Johnson, 2007, p. 516; Johnson, 2007, p. 100). In 2003, Maggie Chang, a regional ELL Academic Coach for the OLCA, organized a two-day retreat held in Chinatown. Chang, Dixon-Marquez, and about 30 other school district employees, teachers, principals, and administrators came together to draft a new language policy for ESOL and bilingual education (Hornberger and Johnson, 2007, p. 517). Johnson notes that the initial draft of the policy, “clearly and deliberately articulates a language as resource” and emphasizes “the necessity of creating and sustaining language policies and programs” (Johnson, 2007, p. 107). The original mission statement for the policy reflects a favorable attitude toward developmental and maintenance bilingual programs:

The diverse cultures of students are a well-spring of resources and when nurtured sensitively can bring to the city of Philadelphia a valuable asset that should be preserved and enhanced. Proficiency in more than one language is to the economic and cultural benefit of our city, state and nation...[T]he district firmly believes that administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community partners working together in an environment of mutual respect, can bring about the positive changes necessary to ensure equality of education (SDP Policy Mission Statement Draft, as quoted from Johnson, 2007, p. 106).
The drafting process continued for over a year. Developments for the language policy was interrupted in fall 2003 due to substantial changes in the central district administration. Maggie Chang became officer of the ESOL and bilingual office. Upon entering her new position, she fired the entire original staff, causing some animosity among staff and administration. Dixon-Marquez left her position as director of the OLCA after the School Reform Commission finally passed the new SDP Language Policy in 2004, perhaps due to tension or out of protest of what was happening to the district's stance on language programs (Johnson and Freeman, 2010).

While the district was experiencing various shifts in power, drafts for the language policy passed through several different authors. Though some of the original philosophy on viewing bilingualism as a resource for students remained, the final product came to reflect a stronger preference for English proficiency, based on NCLB requirements:

> English Language Learners (ELLs) in every school must have the opportunity to acquire English and content in an efficient and effective manner, be prepared to meet rigorous promotion and graduation requirements and develop an understanding of and appreciation for their own and other students' linguistic and cultural heritages (SDP Policy, Section II “Goals”, Part A, as quoted from Johnson, 2007, p. 109).

Proficiency in English became a priority, leading schools to discontinue MBE (Johnson, 2007).

Lucia Sanchez replaced Dixon-Marquez as the new director of the OLCA. Her interpretation of bilingual education was in stark contrast to that of Dixon-Marquez. Whereas Dixon-Marquez clearly advocated an additive approach to bilingual education, Sanchez believed bilingual education was meant to be a subtractive experience—that is, bilingual education was meant to help ELLs make the transition away L1 instruction to English-only instruction.

Hornberger and Johnson (2007) credit the SDP's ideological shift regarding transitional language programs to this change in leadership:
[Dixon Marquez's] interpretation of Title III as flexible and her beliefs about bilingual education research created and supported ideological and implementational spaces for additive bilingualism in the SDP language policy, whereas [Sanchez's] interpretation of Title III as rigidly English-dominant and her own beliefs about language education have engendered a shift in SDP language policy toward transitional programs” (Hornberger and Johnson, 2007).

During this transition, district teachers in Johnson’s dissertation (2007) admitted to feeling pressure to move toward transitional programs. The pressure built even more so in 2004 as Sanchez began insisting that students enrolled in bilingual programs “were ready for all-English instruction” (Johnson, 2007).

Interestingly, other sources suggest that flexibility was still an option, despite the new focus on English proficiency. When the new policy was introduced in August 2004, Philadelphia’s education newspaper, The Notebook, published an article quoting one school official who explained that schools would still “be able to choose what methods of instruction to use for their specific ELL populations, ‘but the [OLCA would] give some very definite guidelines’” (Davis, The Notebook, 2004). In other words, the SDP policy on language programs did not restrict schools from using home languages in bilingual programs. Despite a change in ideology, community members and grassroots organizations have had some influence on shaping language policies in Philadelphia. For example, JUNTOS, a non-profit organization comprised of Mexican and Latino immigrants living in Philadelphia, organized immigrant parents and families to seek changes in policy “to improve language access...increase accountability, and promote the educational advancement of immigrants students” since 2005—the same year when Sanchez joined the OLCA and instructed teachers to implement only TBE programs. The SDP continued to face pressure from educators and parents, who demanded wider and improved bilingual services in schools. In response to growing dissatisfaction on language assistance,
there were talks about a “soon-to-be-named head of language and translation services [that] would help oversee a process for hiring not only more bilingual assistants, but also bilingual parent ombudsmen and other staff” (Graham, S, November 10, 2008). In 2008, the Philadelphia Immigrant/Refugee Coalition (PIRC), which consisted of several grassroots organizations such as JUNTOS, the South East Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC), the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition, and the Public School Notebook, successfully created the Offices of Translation and Interpretation and Multilingual Family Support Service and hired nearly one million dollars worth of additional bilingual staff across the District (JUNTOS Website, 2010; School Victories, March 23, 2009).

Today, main support for the linguistic needs of ELLs comes from the district’s Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs. The OMCP’s website greets viewers with a brief summary of the current Language Policy of the School District:

The Language Policy of the School District mandates that English Language Learners have equitable access to educational opportunities by providing them with high quality, rigorous instruction and appropriate support services in accordance with the distinctive linguistic and socio-cultural needs of this group (adopted by the School Reform Commission on June 20, 2007, as quoted on OMCP’s Website).

The most recently adopted language policy seems to have rhetorically preserved the pluralistic philosophy toward the value of minority languages. The website also mentions that “all of the programs offered by the School District of Philadelphia will nurture self-pride and self-identity in each student’s linguistic and cultural heritage.” The District consciously recognizes the close link in how language programs affect the pride and identity of LM students. However, the District still functions within the overarching system of accountability mandated by the NCLB. Therefore, the District is also careful to mention that “[t]he purpose of the program is to ensure that all ELLs attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English,
and meet state academic content achievement standards as all children are expected to meet” (OMCP Website). Schools are allowed to use their discretion over what kind of programs are deemed appropriate for students and provide “high levels of academic attainment in English.” In other words, the district highly prefers TBE programs, which are geared toward preparing students for English proficiency testing mandated by the state. Also, fewer resources on language assistance seem to be available due to recent budget cuts. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, “over the past year [in 2010], facing a $629 million budget shortfall, the district has cut about half the number of its bilingual counseling assistants—the interpreters who help students and their parents” (Shaw, Philadelphia Inquirer, March 28, 2011).

In summary, Philadelphia’s policy on language education reflects the open-ended nature of the topic. Ideologies were quick to change with the change in leadership and interpretation; the SDP initially favored developing dual-language and maintenance bilingual education programs, but began preferring transitional bilingual education. Today, the SDP only offers dual-language programs for pre-K and kindergarten in select schools. Transitional bilingual education is the only other language program offered for ELLs (School District of Philadelphia Webpage). Recent budget cuts have forced the district to reduce the number of bilingual teachers and assistants.
Literature Review

The arguments and research included in this literature review discuss how language policies affect the academic progress and the identity of LM students. Academic progress includes performance on standardized assessments, graduation rates, level of classroom engagement, and attitudes toward education. By identity, I refer to how LM students conceive of their social status either as Americans, or as ethnic minorities.

The literature review is divided in four parts. The first part introduces the different arguments held by assimilationists and pluralists. Assimilationists typically prefer English-only policies and are against bilingual education, though in most cases they do not outright deny the benefits of bilingualism. Their thematic arguments focus on national unity, the economic benefits of learning English, and the necessity to learn English to access rights and privileges. Pluralists prefer bilingual programs and critique the overbearing effects of English-only policies. Their arguments focus on language rights, and bilingual education as empowerment for minority students.

The second part discusses present studies on the effects of bilingual education. Some studies that conclude that bilingual education has no effect on the overall academic performance of LM students. Pluralists, however, critique the methodology of these studies and reference multiple studies reporting that LM students enrolled in long-term bilingual programs can perform comparably with their non-LM peers.

The third part discusses a concern shared by both assimilationists and pluralists: both schools of thought acknowledge the segregatory nature of language programs for LM students, regardless of whether programs are bilingual or English-only. How assimilationists and
pluralists frame this issue, of course, is different. Pluralists frame the inevitable separation of LM students in a positive perspective; students are given a safe space to explore both languages and are therefore able to develop confidence and engagement skills. Furthermore, they are able to maintain pride in their ethnic identities, while developing their American identities.

Assimilationists, in contrast, frame the issue in a negative light, claiming that minority groups will only continue to form exclusive groups without assimilating into mainstream American society.

Finally, the last part reviews recent studies on the effects of restrictive language policies on the state and federal level. Overall, restrictive policies seem to have a negative effect on the academic performance of LM students.

Part I: Differing Perspectives

Assimilationist Perspective: Unity, Economic Mobility, and Access to Society

Former US Senator Dr. Samuel I. Hayakawa, one of the leading voices of the assimilationists during the 1980s, strongly advocated for declaring English as the official language of the US. In his brief monograph (1985), Hayakawa wrote:

What is it that has made a society out of the hodge-podge of nationalities, races and colors represented in the immigrant hordes that people our nation? It is language, of course, that has made communication among all these elements possible. It is with a common language that we have dissolved distrust and fear. It is with language that we have drawn up the understandings and agreements and social contracts that make a society possible (Hayakawa, 1985, p. 6).

The former senator's foremost concern is to maintain the unity of the country, through one common language. Legally recognizing English would ward off any chance of misunderstanding and distrust among citizens. At the heart of this call for unity is the assumption that immigrants should harmoniously assimilate with the nation. With such
emphasis on the need to accelerate the assimilation process for LM students, assimilationists argue that bilingual education ends up hindering the unity of the nation.

Most assimilationists argue that because bilingual education slows down the process for students to acquire English, LM students are also held back economically in the long run. In his controversial book, *Who Are We?*, Samuel Huntington discusses the effects of the Hispanic community's emphasis on seeking bilingual education for their children. According to Huntington, "66 percent to 85 percent of Mexican immigrants and Hispanics emphasized the need for their children to be fluent in Spanish" (Huntington, 2004, p. 232). He argues that Hispanic children feel no identity with the US because they have retained their fluency in Spanish. Using data collected from surveys that were implemented in Southern California and South Florida in 1992, Huntington discusses that only Mexican-American children born in the United States responded that they identified as “American” when asked about their identity (p. 241). Huntington also points out that Mexican-American students fall behind White and Black academically, which eventually has hindered their progress in occupation and income (p. 232-233). This connection between language and economic mobility is an underlying theme among most assimilationists. The rationale is that “assimilation is the *cost of success*” (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 241). English as the dominant, functioning language in society is equated as a means for upward mobility, and eventually economic security in America. This compelling argument—that English-only is the best policy of economic security for LM students—is a significant line of reasoning for policymakers to prefer English-only policies.

Finally, assimilationists refer to the experiences of immigrants themselves to underscore the priority LM students must have in acquiring English. Many assimilationists quote Richard Rodgriguez, who wrote the autobiography *Hunger of Memory*. His story illustrates an
immigrant's personal critique of pluralist intentions. Rodriguez recounts his experience of having to abandon his home language to fully satisfy his desire to belong in the United States:

Supporters of bilingual education today imply that students like me miss a great deal by not being taught in their family's language. What they seem not to recognize is that, as a socially disadvantaged child, I considered Spanish to be a private language. What I needed to learn in school was that I had the right—and the obligation—to speak the public language of *los gringos*...Only when I was able to think of myself as an American, no longer an alien in *gringo* society, could I seek the rights and opportunities necessary for full public individuality. My awkward childhood does not prove the necessity of bilingual education...If I rehearse here the changes in my private life after my Americanization, it is finally to emphasize the public gain (Rodriguez, 1982, p. 19, 29)

Rodriguez challenges the pluralist emphasis on embracing one's heritage; for Rodriguez, embracing one's "past" heritage was only an obstacle in gaining access to the valuable rights and opportunities that came with being American. English-only policies, he argues, would enable LM students to leave behind their past to fully embrace their new American future.

In short, the assimilationist perspective prefers English-only policies and programs for LM students because it would protect the unity of the country, ensure the economic mobility of minority students, and open up access to rights and opportunities in American society for LM students.

**Pluralist Perspectives: Language Rights and Empowerment**

*Language Rights*

Pluralists often frame language as a *right*. Public support for the right to use languages other than English in the public sphere, such as in schools, would protect LM students from educational, economic, and political failure. Oftentimes, assimilationists justify English-only policies because of the commonly held belief that fluency in English is a critical component of being American; it is commonly agreed that "to be American, one must speak English" (Olsen, 2008, p. 911 Schmid, 2000). However, using theories of justice, Ronald Schmidt Sr. points out
that because English is not declared as the official language of the US, it “is unjust to base public policy on the premise that not speaking English is ‘un-American’ or even a ‘handicap’ to full access to civil and political rights” (Schmidt, 2000, p. 229). Pluralists demand equal protection for all cultural groups in the US. Extreme pluralists even argue that “the state cannot claim to be neutral in respect to language. If the state chooses to work through only one language in a multilingual society, the speakers of the dominant language will have many advantages over the speakers of minority languages” (p. 154). In short, pluralists argue against English-only policies because they denies linguistic minorities their equal rights to participate and be a part of American society.

Scholars analyze past litigation on language rights and find that “in the United States language discrimination against bilingual individuals is not subtle” (Valdes, 2001, p. 142). Valdes analyzes several different cases that involved linguistic minorities, or immigrants, and explains how each case was a violation of their civil rights under the constitution (p. 159). Sandra Del Valle, who was involved with promoting bilingual education in New York City for over ten years, takes Valdes’ (2001) argument on civil rights even further; from experience, she explains that “bilingual education cannot easily be legitimized by reference to the short-term self-interests of the majority...Bilingual education demands that language minorities be accepted as language minorities” (Del Valle, 2003, p. 8). She reflects the belief of many pluralist scholars; such a drastic change in society, in accepting and respecting, rather than merely tolerating linguistic minorities, starts in the classroom (Cummins, 1996; Olsen, 2008; Menken, 2008; Lippi-Green, 1997). Schmidt summarizes this sentiment best when he writes:

In short, by creating a bilingual and bicultural schooling experience in which it is implicitly and explicitly recognized and affirmed that multiple cultures and languages are truly and equally American, students will be helped to combat the ethnolinguistic hierarchy that pervades the psychological and social milieu of the
United States. This alternative educational experience, pluralists argue, will generate a more positive self-concept among language minority children, which, in turn, will lead to greater success in the educational system and greater equality in society in general (Schmidt, 2000, p. 132).

Another weighty rationale to support the language rights of LM students is to protect not only their well being as they mature in the US, but also to protect intergenerational relationships among immigrant communities. Assimilationists fear that bilingual education programs would prevent LM students from fully acquiring English and would only encourage ethnic subgroups to form. However, pluralists criticize this position, explaining that immigrants actually “acquire English rapidly; contrary to popular opinion, they are also losing their family or ‘heritage’ languages rapidly” (Krashen et. al., 1998, p. 31). In their study, Cho and Krashen (1998) found that intergenerational conflict due to heritage language loss was common among the linguistic minorities who participated in their study. The study interviewed 12 Korean-American university or college graduates working in California, and 60 Korean-American students enrolled in heritage language class at the University of Southern California. The participants “reported a feeling of isolation and exclusion from members of their own ethnic group” (p. 34).

Furthermore, “several subjects confirmed that their loss of their ability to sue the heritage language interfered with their ability to communicate with their parents” (p. 33). Cho and Krashen conclude that “ensuring strong parent-child communication is an excellent investment for both the individual and society. Without it, children lose a great deal” (p. 38). Gradually, LM students lose touch with their heritage language and acquire English over time.

**Bilingual Education as Empowerment**

The most popular critique against English-Only education is that such practices devalue the language and culture of LM students in public schools.
The education system…perpetuates the standard language ideology (SLI). Children who speak marginalized varieties are taught that the standard is superior in both structure and importance. At the same time their own speech varieties are shown to be inferior if not by denigration, then by being excluded from the education process (Siegal, 2006, p. 161).

English-only policies hold a domineering ideology that subordinates speakers of other languages. Rosina Lippi-Green (1997), who studied various ways in which standard language ideology (SLI) affects minorities, argues that English-only practices in schools lead to a continued rejection of minorities because English is held as the only language of value. “US policies [on English as a standard language] draw strong distinctions: Standard English is preferred, obligatory, appropriate, widely used, while the Other [sic] languages are narrow, inappropriate, and even tolerated” (p. 110). Within this ideology, school administrators and teachers are led to conceptualize LM students as “handicapped” or “deprived.” Lippi-Green (1997) cites several interviews from various studies, revealing teachers who believe “speakers of non-mainstream language don’t possess sufficient human language to think or reason, and must be helped to overcome these language and cultural handicaps.” For example, one teacher from Massachusetts spoke of her Puerto Rican students:

These poor kids come to school speaking a hodge-podge. They are all mixed up and don’t know any language well. As a result, they can’t even think clearly. That’s why they don’t learn. It’s our job to teach them language—to make up for their deficiency. And, since their parents don’t really know any language either, why should we waste time Spanish? It is “good” English which has to be the focus (p. 111).

In short, schools that favor English-Only instruction delegitimize minority languages as functioning languages, imposing an unequal social status on LM students.

Similarly, language theorist Jim Cummins (1996) also argues that English-only policies instill a language hierarchy where non-English languages and cultures are disregarded. As a result, he finds that LM students resist and lose interest in school in order to prevent the further
devaluation of their identities. Whereas English-only policies direct instructors to focus on replacing the students’ ethnic past, Cummins writes that bilingual education naturally creates a space in which the instructor can “mediate between students’ past and their future.” After having analyzed several case studies of linguistic minority communities among the First Nations in Canada, Cummins equates bilingual education as a venue to empower LM students:

_Empowerment_ can be defined as the _collaborative creation of power_. Students whose schooling experiences reflect collaborative relations of power develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically. They participate competently in instruction as a result of having developed a secure sense of identity and the knowledge that their voice will be heard and respected within the classroom. They feel a sense of ownership for the learning that goes on in the classroom and a sense that they belong in the classroom learning community (Cummins, 1996, p. 15).

In his case studies, Cummins finds that English-only approaches strip LM students of the legitimacy to speak and feel welcome in their new learning environment. In contrast, bilingual education settings allow students to offer their knowledge in collaboration with their new classroom; bilingual education serves as a means for LM students to express themselves freely and with confidence, without repressing their cultural identities. Cummins (1996) predicts that in the long run, empowerment through bilingual education will translate into active participation in America’s democracy. Cummins’ theory is supported by several studies that link bilingualism with positive engagement and confidence among LM students. These studies are discussed in greater depth in the third section on identity.

**Part II: Differing Results: How Effective is Bilingual Education?**

The major studies that oppose bilingual education have been used by conservative politicians and policymakers as “scientific evidence” to discontinue funding for bilingual education, especially during Reagan’s administration. Today, however, these major studies are discredited by researchers due to flaws in methodology and mislabeling of bilingual programs.
Pluralists present studies supporting the effectiveness of bilingual education. The contradicting conclusions from both sides leave the language debate unresolved still today. Although, considering that most recent studies support bilingual education, and most studies that question the effects of bilingual education are slightly outdated, perhaps the general social trend today is more supportive of bilingualism than it once was in the 1980s.

Studies Opposing Bilingual Education

The Baker and de Kanter (1981) study is perhaps the most famous studies referenced by assimilationists. The researchers reviewed 300 studies on different language programs—structured immersion, ESL, and TBE. Of the 300 studies, only 28 were considered to be “methodologically sound” enough to be included in the Baker and de Kanter study. The researchers were unable to find substantial data on the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education. Because of the uncertainty, the researchers advised that the US government should not support any particular type of education program through legislation.

The common sense observation that children should be taught in a language they understand does not necessarily lead to the conclusion they should be taught in their home language...Given the American setting, where the language-minority child must ultimately function in an English speaking society, carefully conducted second-language instruction in all subjects may well be preferable to bilingual methods (Baker and de Kanter, 1981, p. 51).

Baker and de Kanter echo the assimilationist argument that regardless of what form of education LM students receive, English is the ultimate goal. Therefore, they suggest that the most efficient and preferable mode of education is to expose LM students to the English language as frequently and as soon as possible in school. Less exposure to the L1 will increase the chance for LM students to quickly assimilate and function in mainstream America (Baker and de Kanter, 1981).

In a similar study conducted about a decade later, Rossell and Baker (1996) compiled a comprehensive review of 300 studies on bilingual education for over a period of 15 years and
concluded that bilingual education was detrimental to the academic performance of LM students, or at the least made no difference in their education. 300 studies were collected for this study, but Rossell and Baker only found 75 studies to be methodologically sound, due to inconsistencies in evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of TBE, and comparing the program to the effects of submersion, ESL, structured immersion, and MBE. When TBE was compared to the submersion program, “78% of the studies show TBE to be no different from or worse than the supposedly discredited submersion technique” for reading scores.” Only 7% of the studies found TBE to have improved scores in language, and only 9% of the studies found TBE to have improved student scores in math. In comparing TBE to ESL, none of the studies found evidence that TBE improved the reading and language scores for LM students. In comparing TBE to structured immersion, none of the studies found that TBE improved scores in reading, language, and math. In fact, 83% of the studies found that students enrolled in TBE did worse on reading tests. Finally, in comparing TBE to maintenance bilingual programs, which is the strongest form of bilingual education, studies found that TBE improved reading scores (p. 20). In short, the researchers concluded that after having compared various alternatives to bilingual education, “the best program is ‘structured immersion’...where the entire classroom consists of [LM] students, the pace of instruction is structured to their level, and instructors teach completely in [English].” The study found that TBE “substantially showed more harm...compared to all-English instruction” (p. 43). Though the researchers present data that oppose bilingual education, they are also acknowledge the limitations of their study, especially because only 75 studies were reviewed (Rossell and Baker, 1996).

In a more recent study on the effects of bilingual education, Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) advise against bilingual education for the sake of acquiring English as quickly as
possible. They highlight how Hispanic LM students continue to lag behind other LM students in academic progress and economic mobility because Spanish-speaking communities support bilingual education and value retaining fluency in Spanish. Bilingual education, they suggest, is preventing Hispanic LM students from fully acquiring English, and therefore affecting graduation rates and economic mobility. Comparing Hispanic students to Asian students, Thernstrom and Thernstrom cite a survey from 1995 which found that “a third of all second generation Mexican-American students could not use English very well,” in contrast to “a mere seven percent of second generation Asian students...still struggling with the language” (p. 112). Pointing to this as a “linguistic deficiency” among Hispanic students, they also found evidence in the 1980 Census that “75 percent of...Mexican immigrant children who spoke English ‘poorly,’ and 85 percent of those who did not speak it at all, left high school without a diploma”; among US-born Mexican-American students, 48 percent with limited English proficiency and 63 percent who only knew Spanish dropped out of high school (p. 113). Thernstrom and Thernstrom suggest the significant achievement gap is due to continued enrollment in bilingual programs, where “instruction in English [is] regarded as a supplement” and not the main medium of instruction. In short, the researchers believe that Hispanic students suffer academically because “they do not learn enough English to transition” out of bilingual programs and into mainstream English classes (p. 115). Bilingual education not only costs more, but it also does not provide significant advantages for Hispanic students (Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 2003).

To summarize, assimilationists emphasize the need to speed up the process of English acquisition and assimilate LM students into mainstream courses. Studies have found it questionable as to whether bilingual education truly improves the academic performance of LM students. However, their studies have been limited to early-exit TBE program.

The Baker and de Kanter (1981), and Rossell and Baker (1996) studies received immediate criticism after being published (Cummins, 1996; Garcia, 2009; Greene 1998). The Baker and de Kanter (1981) study was integral to the Reagan administration’s restrictive policy toward bilingual education. Researchers, however, consider the report to have questionable methods. The American Psychological Association (1982) reports that “inconsistencies are apparent in the application of the methodological standards utilized. The evaluation addressed by the study was limited, and an arbitrary and narrow definition of ‘acceptable data’ was utilized (p. 8-9; as quoted from Cummins, 1996, p. 200). In other words, scholars criticize the study for only looking at TBE as the representative of bilingual education. As it was mentioned in my previous section on language program types, TBE is the weakest form of bilingual education and may take a wide range of forms; the study, however, fails to distinguish the different forms of TBE (i.e. late-exit TBE vs. early-exit TBE) (Cummins, 1996). Furthermore, Baker and de Kanter’s narrative integration approach in the study is essentially a subjective process. Narrative integration—that is, the process of reviewing a compilation of studies—lacks an objective systemic process, which may result in completely different conclusions under the eyes of a different reviewer. Finally, critiques argue that this study does not provide an adequate analysis of bilingual education due to the limited number of studies that were taken into consideration (Baker, 2006).

Similar critiques apply with regards to the Rossell and Keith Baker’s (1996) study. Jay P. Greene (1998), who re-analyzed the Rossell and Baker (1996) study, discusses how the programs that were evaluated were inconsistently categorized.

The requirements for a study to be considered methodologically acceptable were also clarified for this reanalysis in a few ways. First, bilingual programs were
defined broadly as those programs in which LEP students were taught at least some of the time in their native language. Rossell and Baker subdivided bilingual programs into various program categories, such as transitional bilingual education (TBE), English as a second language (ESL), and maintenance bilingual education (MBE). The difficulty with these subdivisions is that program labels are notoriously unreliable descriptions of the content of the approach employed. What is called TBE is some places might be called ESL in others. The descriptions of the programs in the studies were often inadequate for drawing finer distinctions (Greene, 1998, p. 2).

The confusion in what actually defines language programs to be TBE, ESL, or structured immersion in Rossell and Baker (1996) is a critical weakness in the study. Greene (1998) attempts to re-analyze the studies used by Rossell and Baker. During his research, he found that “several studies that could not be found” and that many studies were irrelevant or inappropriate for the task at hand, which was to evaluate the effectiveness of TBE (p. 4). Greene took the 75 studies that were included by Rossell and Baker gauged for levels of native language use because “it is much easier to detect in each study and therefore is more likely to be a more reliable label for the programs (p. 2). After controlling for levels of native language use and background characteristics (i.e. socioeconomic class, parents’ level of education,” Greene found that only 11 of the 75 studies that were included in Rossell and Baker’s (1996) study were acceptable to evaluate the effects of TBE (Baker, 2006; Greene, 1996). He found that “the use of at least some native language in the instruction of limited English proficient children has moderate beneficial effects on those children relative to their being taught only in English” (p.1). In other words, using the native language improves student achievement. While Greene was able to clarify the problems in Rossell and Baker (1996), the fact that only 11 studies were used to measure the effects of TBE still does not provide convincing enough evidence for the public that long-term TBE is more beneficial for LM students than early-exit or structured immersion programs.
Academic Benefits of Bilingual Education

In addition to their critiques of assimilationist studies, pluralists also provide a wealth of literature on the benefits of bilingual education. Many studies are based on Cummins’ (1996) theory on language acquisition, also known as the additive bilingualism enrichment principle. According to Cummins (1996), English-Only policy impose a cognitive inequality on LM students because it limits their “academic and intellectual development” (p. 106). He theorizes that bilingual programs turn English acquisition into an additive experience by complementing students’ prior knowledge in the L1. In contrast, English-only programs treat English acquisition as a subtractive experience by removing the L1 and only prioritizing learning English as the goal. In collaboration with several linguists, he concludes:

The development of additive bilingual and biliteracy skills entails no negative consequences for children’s academic, linguistic, or intellectual development. On the contrary, although not conclusive, the evidence points clearly in the direction of metalinguistic, academic, and intellectual benefits for bilingual children who continue to develop both their languages (p. 109).

In other words, Cummins and other linguistic scholars assure that supporting LM students with bilingual education would not slow down their academic progress; rather, it would bring cognitive benefits to their educational experience. This is a fundamental theory behind how students transfer prior knowledge into their second languages in bilingual education. As discussed above, many anti-bilingual proponents assert that education in another language only slows down the process of English acquisition; they argue that education in L1 becomes a crutch for LM students. Several studies, however, have found positive correlations between academic performance and bilingual education, thus supporting Cummins’ (1996) additive principle.

Thomas and Collier’s (2001) prominent study with the Center for Research Education, Diversity, and Education (CREDE) found that LM students in bilingual instruction were able to
score comparably, or even outscore non-LM students on standardized tests. The longitudinal study is most famous for its long-term research on the academic achievement of LM students from 1996 to 2001. Researchers found that LM students who received the support of bilingual programs for four to seven years were able to maintain English in addition to retaining their L1, scored above the 50 percentile on all subject areas; some even outperformed native English speakers on all subjects (Thomas and Collier, 2001, p. 331). LM students who continued their education in a dual-language setting for more than three years were able to progress through their education until they were performing at level with their non-LM peers. By contrast, LM students who were placed in English immersion or mainstream courses after only an initial year in a bilingual program immediately showed large decreases in math and reading achievement by grade 5. This group also had the largest dropout rate, and by grade 11 they were scoring only at the 25th percentile on standardized reading tests (p. 326-327). This study underscored the effectiveness of bilingual programs in providing the cognitive, social, and emotional support that LM students need to succeed academically. Furthermore, the study serves as evidence that LM students require several years to acquire enough English to fairly perform in comparison to their non-LM peers on state assessments (Cummins, 1996; Baker, 1993; Ovando and Collier, 1998).

In their four-year study, Sohn and Merrill (2008) compared the performance of Korean LM students from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), who enrolled in one of three language programs: an English-only (EO) program, a general modified bilingual (MB) program, or a Korean/English dual language programs (KDLP). EO programs delivered all instruction in English, MB programs instructed students in English with “minimal primary language support,” and did not teach literacy in Korean. KDLP programs taught literacy in both Korean and English (Sohn and Merrill, 2008, p. 269). The study found that LM students who
received KDLP outscored LM students in EO on standardized testing in both reading and math, became reclassified as proficient English speakers at a 40% faster rate than LM students enrolled in EO and MB, and maintained their fluency in Korean. The researchers credit the data to support Cummins’ theory that continued bilingual education for LM students becomes an additive experience.

Many other studies note the correlation between pluralistic languages programs and academic engagement. Garcia (1985) found in his study that “fluency in the heritage language was positively related to self-esteem, more ambitious plans for the future, confidence in achieving goals, and the amount of control subjects felt they had over their lives.” He also found a positive correlation between fluency and GPA. Huang (1995) similarly found that the “Mexican American eighth graders who described themselves as biliterate had higher self-confidence than monoliterates (from Krashen et. al., 1998, p. 8).

To some things up, longitudinal studies have found bilingual education to be effective. The key feature of these studies is the emphasis on the importance of long-term enrollment in bilingual programs. One of the main objections pluralists had against the assimilationist studies was that the studies only observed students for a few months, even though linguists have found that it takes three to seven years for one to acquire a second language (Cummins, 1996; Baker, 2006; Krashen, 1998).

**Part III: Language Programs and their Effects on Identity**

Performance in the classroom and academic achievement can have a considerable effect on the identity of a child. Seeing how language programs can have such a heavy impact on the academic performance of LM students, it is unsurprising that language programs can also influence how students perceive and develop their identities. The studies below discuss how
bilingual education, or even English-only programs that provide more linguistic resources, can help students build confidence, despite being a minority. Both pluralists and assimilationists share the concern that any language program for LM students, whether it is bilingual or English-only, segregates LM students from the mainstream student body, and can ultimately make them feel marginalized or isolated.

In one study, Zanger (1994) interviewed high achieving Latino students about their experience at a high school. The high school was made up of 40% Latino, 40% African-American, and 20% White students. The interviews reflected the alienation and marginalization felt by the Latino student body. Students commented on their inferior status at school and how the curriculum did not represent their culture. Zanger suggests that the disengaged attitudes of students, as a result of excluding minority languages and culture in the school environment, has a significant affect on the high dropout rate of Spanish-speaking students at the high school (Zanger, 1994). Though the correlation is not clearly explained, Zanger's collection of narratives attempts to connect how integrating minority languages and culture may help students develop confidence in their identities as minorities and feel less excluded.

Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003), who have restrictive views on language policy, criticize how bilingual education keeps LM students "ethnically isolated" (p. 115). Rosalie Pedalino Porter (1990), a specialist in bilingual education, found from her experience that bilingual education "reinforces the feeling of being different, of being a perpetual outsider" (Porter, 1990, p. 35). These scholars explain that pulling students out from mainstream English classes limit LM students from interacting with their "American" peers, which may further instill marginalized feelings among LM students. From an assimilationist's perspective, the best alternative is to support programs such as TBE, structured-immersion, or ESL courses because
these programs aim to quickly transition LM students into mainstream courses. TBE, structured-immersion, and ESL courses provide opportunities for students to immerse themselves in their new American culture and English language.

One way to address this problem might be to create a linguistically pluralistic atmosphere. For example, one study suggests that merely including other languages in the school library can improve the engagement and confidence of LM students. Feuerverger (1994) studied the effects of exposing minority and majority students to HL books. As part of the study, the researcher added HL books in the library of a school in Toronto "serving students from over a dozen language backgrounds." After encouraging students and teachers to borrow or use them in the classroom, Feuerverger found that both minority and majority students had more positive attitudes towards different languages (Feuerverger, 1994; cited in Krashen et al., 1998). Using in-depth interviews, participant observations, and periodic video-taping of five classrooms, Feuerverger also found that LM students "gained other affective benefits in terms of ethnic group attitudes and self-esteem" (Krashen et al., 1998, p. 61). A linguistically pluralistic atmosphere can help LM students develop positive attitudes toward their ethnic language and culture, and even help majority students develop an appreciation of multilingual peers.

From a pluralist's perspective, pulling students out for bilingual education at least alleviates the risk of students losing literacy in their home language, which can potentially sever "ties to their families and homeland cultures...a rich and important connection" (Olsen, 2008, p. 92). Pluralists would rather have LM students pulled out to retain their home language while acquiring English, rather than leaving LM students to sacrifice a critical component of their identities. Furthermore, even if LM students are pushed into mainstream English courses, this
often results in students being placed in lower academic tracks due to their limited grasp of academic English.

Based on her ethnography in California, Laurie Olsen finds that “there is an institutional reality that provides groups of students with different resources, different encouragement, different curriculum.” Most middle schools and high schools are structured by academic tracks—college preparatory, regular, and “remedial” tracks. Under a school system that does not support bilingual education for LM students, these students are either placed in low-level mainstream English courses, or “remedial” courses that are specifically designed for students who lack English proficiency. Finding that a large percentage of her LM participants were placed in low tracks, Olsen came to understand that for these students, “becoming more like ‘Americans’ may mean changing their relationship to the academic system of the school, an academic system that is to an extent racially arranged” (Olsen, 2008, p. 80, 168). Without the proper language support, the obstacle of overcoming these systemic boundaries becomes a nearly impossible feat for many LM students; becoming “American” seems out of their reach.

Olsen also discusses how English-only tracks designed for LM students are regarded with negative stigmas among students. By the time LM students reach high school, they “already have a well-developed sense of whether they are ‘smart’ or not,” based on the academic track in which they are placed (p. 81). Educators often suggest that this negative awareness of their status as students has great influence on their confidence and self-expectations (Olsen, 2008, Suarez-Orozco et. al., 2008).

In short, regardless of whether a school district allows or prohibits bilingual education, most LM students are inevitably segregated from the mainstream at schools. It is a concern shared by both pluralists and assimilationists. Assimilationists emphasize the importance of
pushing LM students into mainstream English courses to increase opportunities to interact with American students. Pushing students into English-only courses, pluralists argue, raises the stakes for losing fluency in L1 and cultural identities among LM students. Pluralists raise an interesting point that pushing students into mainstream courses most often results in students being placed in low-academic tracks. Being placed in low, remedial academic tracks not only comes with fewer educational resources, but it also cripples the confidence and optimism of LM students.

**Part IV: Reviews on Current Language Policies**

**Effects of State-level Language Restrictive Policies on LM students**

Because the NCLB does not regulate how states educate LM students, states have great flexibility in creating policies based on the unique demographics of their population. As of 2007, twenty-eight states have passed English-only laws, three states have declared as bilingual—New Mexico, Louisiana, and Hawaii, thirty states have permitted some use of native-language instruction, and seven states have explicitly prohibited instruction in languages other than English (Garcia, 2009). This section is a brief overview on the effects of restrictive state language policies. California is one of the few states that explicitly restrict bilingual education. Enacted in 1998, California’s Proposition 227 “intended to officially replace bilingual education with structured English immersion” (Salomone, 2010, p. 153). The proposition mandated that LM students in California should be placed in structured English immersion programs for no more than a year before being transferred to mainstream classrooms (Parrish et. al., 2006). Similar restrictive mandates were also made in Arizona and Massachusetts (Salomone, 2010). These state laws restricting bilingual education are the most explicit forms of language policies.
on LM students. However, research on the effects of state laws has few conclusions on how state language policies actually affect LM students.

**Bilingual Programs: Disappearing or Reappearing?**

Studies on Proposition 227 note that the number of bilingual programs offered in California have decreased since its issue in 1998. Parrish et al. (2006) analyzed student achievement data, interviewed educators, and observed various schools across the state, finding that “the proportion of English learners receiving bilingual instruction statewide dropped from 30 percent to 8 percent” (Parrish et al., 2006, p. 8). Yet, other studies have also found that dual-language programs, a form of bilingual education, are steadily growing in both California and Massachusetts; the number of dual-language programs in California increased from about 90 to 201 programs. Others scholars who tracked the effects of California’s decision to declare English as the official state language in 1986 have found that very few California schools districts have chosen to discontinue their bilingual programs. In fact many school districts have continued to expand and develop bilingual programs (Ovando and Collier, 1998). Some researchers postulate that this phenomenon is because there is much Proposition 227 fails to clarify operational definitions, leaving the law for open interpretation (Parrish et al., 2006; Izumi et al., 2008). In short, how language policies at the state level seem to have an inconsistent impact on whether LM students enroll in bilingual or English-Only programs; the ambiguous and flexible nature of language policies at the state level allows for schools to do as they see fit, depending on the needs of the community.

**Effects on Academic Performance**

Studies on how restrictive language policies affect the academic progress of LM students have found clear conclusions. Rumberger and Tran (2010) studied how LM students are affected
by state language policies across the nation. They found that “states with restrictive language policies tended to have larger achievement gaps than those without such policies” (Rumberger & Tran, 2010, p. 98). The researchers see this as an implication that “state policies restricting the use of native-language instruction could limit the ability of states and schools to reduce the [LM] achievement gap” (p. 100). The study compared test scores of ELLs among six states: Arizona, California, and Massachusetts (states with restrictive language policies), New Mexico and Texas (states with large populations of English learners and a large number of schools that use native-language instruction for EL students), and Nebraska (a state that does not provide any native-language instruction (p. 89). States with restrictive language policies or no native-language instruction had the largest achievement gaps, which were measured by standard deviation. For example, 4th grade reading scores in Arizona had a gap of 1.08, California had a gap of 0.94, Massachusetts had a gap of 0.97, and Nevada had a gap of 1.00. States providing native-language instruction, New Mexico and Texas, had gaps of 0.86 and 0.72. Similarly, Arizona, California, Massachusetts, and Nevada had larger achievement gaps in 4th grade math scores than New Mexico and Texas. In short, states with restrictive policies had larger achievement gaps in both reading and math assessments (p. 90-91).

One analysis on the effects of Question 2, Massachusetts’ restrictive policy on bilingual education, found that the dropout rate among LM students “was significantly larger than that among students in general education” (Uriarte et. al., 2010, p. 83). In 2003, the high school dropout rate of students in general education was 35.6%, and the dropout rate of students in EL programs was 35%; the difference was not significant. However, a few years after Question 2 was enacted in fall of 2003, the percentage difference increased. In 2006, 40.2% of students in
general education dropped out of high school, whereas 46.4% of students in EL programs dropped out of high school (p. 79).

It is interesting that restrictive state policies were meant to close the achievement gap between LM students and non-LM students. Overall, studies cannot conclude on how restrictive language policies affect the number of language programs on the local level; some say the number of students receiving bilingual services have decrease, but others suggest that the number of dual-language programs have increased under restrictive policies. Research has shown, however, that restrictive policies have a negative impact standardized test scores and graduation rates.

The Effects of Federal Language Policy: The No Child Left Behind Act

The United States does not have an explicit language policy; English is not the official language and the federal government has not explicitly forbidden bilingual education. Some scholars, however, argue that the US government has found other means to implicitly enforce English as an unofficial language. The NCLB is often criticized for its anti-bilingual stance against LM students for two main reasons: 1) it removed any mention of bilingual support that was established from the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, and 2) the mandated standardized assessments not only demand immediate proficiency in English proficiency, but also nudge schools to prefer English-only programs over bilingual education in order to prepare LM students for testing in English.

It is argued that the NCLB has had the most acute impact on LM students since the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) in 1968, also known as Title VII (Menken, 2008; Salomone, 2010; Evans & Hornberger, 2005). As it was mentioned above, when the NCLB was put into effect in 2002, the Bilingual Education Act was removed from the education policy, replaced by
the NCLB’s *Title III, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students*, which essentially eradicated any mention of bilingual education from the law (Faltis & Coulter, 2007; Menken, 2008). As a result, several official names of government legislation and institutions affiliated with bilingual education were altered to eliminate the inclusion of terms such as “bilingual,” “bilingualism,” or “bilingual education.” Scholars analyze such drastic changes in the law as a reflection the government’s ideological preference for English-only programs education. Pluralists are concerned that this policy may limit access to and funding for bilingual education for LM students, which in turn may affect academic performance (Menken, 2008).

Besides mere name changes, pluralists also interpret the NCLB as an implicit English-only law because of its mandated requirements and procedures regarding LM students. They argue that *Title I* and *Title III* are structured in a way that LM students must abandon their L1 (Del Valle 2003; Baker, 2006; Menken, 2008). Under these two Titles, LM students are expected to take two different assessments; they are required to “prove they are making progress each year towards becoming proficient in English,” in addition to taking the mandated assessment for general students. As a result, LM students are not only “burdened with additional testing,” but also drilled to perform on these English exams with urgency. Because states and school districts rely on test scores for funding, schools and teachers are pushed toward ignoring the language developmental needs of LM students, suppressing the value of bilingualism, and focusing mainly on English testing skills (Menken, 2008, p. 31).

Menken (2008) argues that heavy focus on testing has led to academic disengagement among linguistic minority students and a diminishing support for bilingual education. In her case study of New York City, she found that there was a significant decrease in bilingual
education enrollment after the *NCLB* was enacted. Between 2002 to 2006, the percentage of LM students enrolled in bilingual programs decreased from 39.7% to 31.1%, while the percentage of LM students enrolled in English-immersion ESL programs increased from 53.4% to 61.1%. Menken also found that dropout rates among LM students increased after the *NCLB* was enacted. In 1999, 21.2% of LM students had dropped out of high school. By 2003, only a year after the authorization of the *NCLB*, the percentage of LM student dropouts had already increased to 30.5% (Menken, 2008).

Capps et. al. (2005) express concern that the *NCLB*’s “emphasis on testing may narrow the focus to subjects covered by the standardized tests...additionally, with English proficiency foremost among their goals, schools may rely less on dual language immersion programs that build students’ English and native language skills.” The researchers discuss the possibility that late-entering immigrant students who struggle with testing in English “may grow discouraged by their poor performance and possibly drop out of school” (Capps et. al., 2005, p. 2). Overall, the study suggests that the *NCLB* is decreasing the likelihood of LM students maintaining their L1, receiving a well-rounded education, maintaining confidence in their ability to succeed on the required exams, and graduating with a high school degree.

Though the *NCLB* does not forbid it, funding for bilingual education has become more difficult to attain. *Title III* has eliminated the direct federal funding that bilingual education programs used to receive through *Title VII*; today, funding for bilingual programs only come through state educational agencies. According to Susanna Roberta Katz (2004), federal funding for ELL student language programs is provided only when programs are aligned toward rapid English acquisition. The $665 million budget allocated to fund programs for ELLs has remained the same since 2002, while the number of English language learners nationwide has continued to
increase (Katz, 2004). Furthermore, funding to train bilingual teachers has become increasingly limited as soon as the NCLB replaced Title VII. Various programs and fellowships for future bilingual education teachers that were previously funded under Title VII have disappeared due to budget cuts that came with Title III (Katz, 2004).

Crushed by Testing

Having conducted a five-year study that compared the progress of LM students in San Francisco and Boston, Suarez-Orozco et. al. (2008) studied the change in expectations young LM students initially had for themselves at the start of their education in the US. This ethnography found that “only 10 percent of [LM] students scored at or above the 50th percentile on the reading test and only 18 percent did so on the math test.” Based on an analysis of various interviews and writing narratives, the study found that these students were letting “their optimistic resolutions to embrace educational opportunities in the new land fall away” (Suarez-Orozco et. al., 2008, p. 260).

In addition to dashing personal goals and optimism for the future, testing seems to deter LM students from continuing their education. In some cases, not being able to pass standardized testing holds student back from graduating; sometimes it’s the only thing that is holding them back. Menken’s (2008) case study on LM students in New York discusses how testing “creates a push for students to leave school to pursue a GED, leave the United States, or simply drop out of school entirely” (Menken, 2008, p. 116). Many participating students in her study had retaken the Regents’ Examinations, New York’s state standardized assessments, at least twice. Many of them also required more than four years to graduate from high school. At the individual level, the reality of testing is beyond just discouraging test scores. According to Menken, “standardized exams are...a major part of [an LM student’s] introduction and enculturation to
the United States, given that they are such a defining force in students’ daily educational experiences” (Menken, 2008, p. 100). The daunting expectation of having to understand the academic English used on standardized tests suppresses the expectations students have for themselves.

*The NCLB as a Potential Benefit for LM Students*

Even though there are many critiques on the negative effects of the NCLB on LM students, some scholars remain optimistic because the NCLB places a spotlight on ELLs and LM students. For the first time, states and school officials are held accountable for the performance of ELLs (Evans and Hornberger, 2004). Some scholars suggest that the NCLB has the potential to address the achievement gap between LM students and their non-LM peers. Despite the reservations Evans and Hornberger (2004) have on the NCLB, they agree that “the inclusion of LM students in overall educational accountability requirements might have potential to yield dividends for academic achievement, if adequate provisions were made for facilitating and assessing their language acquisition and biliteracy learning” (p. 103). The NCLB at least represents a step in the right direction, even though it is designed to give English-only programs preference.

Other leading policy research institutions provide some support that the NCLB is in fact beneficial for LM students (Chudowsky et. al., 2010; Capps et. al., 2005). In 2010, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) found improvement in 4th grade ELL test scores. Focusing on the top 10 states with the largest ELL student population, Chudowsky et. al. (2010) found that 75% of ELLs demonstrated improvement and reached the level of proficiency marked for ELLs (p. 12). They suggest that ELL test scores are improving. The study still indicates, however, that large disparities remain between LM student and non-LM student performance; among high school
ELL students “the median percentage proficient for ELLs was 31% in 2008...[whereas] the median for students who were not ELLs was 76% — a difference of 45 percentage points” (p. 14). The researchers recommend the federal government to “expand and improve professional development for teachers on effectively instructing ELLs” and “conduct research on innovative, evidence-based models for teaching these students both academic content and language proficiency” (p. 16). Although the institute urges the government to support education models that best support LM students, it neither prescribes bilingual nor English-immersion models.
Research Design

This study explores how LM students are affected by language policies with respect to their academic progress and identity, specifically looking at a case study with the Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School in Philadelphia. The goal of this ethnography on language policy is to connect how macro-level policies may affect individual on a micro-level (Johnson, 2009).

Hypothesis Formulation

Research has shown that LM students enrolled in schools with English-Only policies can become academically disengaged and socially marginalized (Suarez-Orozco et. al., 2008; Menken, 2008; Capps et. al., 2005). Ethnographies on LM students enrolled in bilingual programs, in contrast, suggest that LM students are empowered through bilingual education, or in environments where minority languages are respected and acknowledged. Integrating minority languages in the school environment provides a safe space for LM students, allowing them to build confidence, develop engagement levels, and feel welcome at school (Olsen, 2008; Tse, “Affecting Affect,” 1998). LM students in other studies have also demonstrated steady academic progress when enrolled in maintenance bilingual education programs (Thomas and Collier, 2001). A number of studies have also found that students in maintenance bilingual program are not only able to maintain their heritage language and acquire English, but they are also able to perform at par with their non-LM peers on standardized assessments, if not outperform the non-LM students (Sohn and Merrill, 2008; Krashen, 1998). Overall, incorporating minority languages in schools has a positive effect on how LM students engage and perform academically.
The close connection between language and identity turns schools into political war zones, especially because most students construct and negotiate their identities while attending school (Quach et. al., 2009; Pennycook, 1994; Cummins, 1996). One of the strongest objections assimilationists, or supporters of English-only policies, have against bilingual programs is that immigrants may resist becoming a part of American society and remain committed to their ethnic communities as a result of maintaining their home languages (Huntington, 2004; Schildkraut, 2011). But pluralists theorize that bilingual programs help LM students develop positive identities, both as ethnic minorities and as American, which may potentially develop into active political participation among minorities and immigrants in America (Cummins, 1996).

Considering the differing views on language programs mentioned above, I argue that students enrolled in a school with a pluralistic language policy will demonstrate positive academic progress and will be more likely to identify as American, compared to students who attend schools with more restrictive policies on language. Regardless of whether students receive instruction solely in English or in multiple languages, LM students who attend schools with a pluralistic ideology on the minority languages are likely to be well engaged in the classroom, and should perform at par with their non-LM peers. With regards to identity, a pluralistic policy on language should encourage LM students to maintain pride in their ethnic identities, while also easing LM students into developing an American identity. In short, I hypothesize that LM students enrolled in a school with a pluralistic policy on language will demonstrate positive academic progress and will also establish strong American identities while maintaining their ethnic identities, compared to LM students enrolled in schools with restrictive language environments.
Hypothesis Model

Pluralistic Language Policy

Positive Academic Performance  Strong Identity

Framework for Analysis

Subjects: Linguistic Minority Students

Although in many cases the children of immigrants are placed in ESL, or an English
learning program, this study will account for all immigrant students who speak in a language
other than English, or dialects of English, at home, regardless of whether they are placed in ESL,
bilingual, or mainstream English courses in school. Black students, who are not necessarily
children of recent immigrants, are often still classified as part of the LM student population
because of their use of various English dialects, such as pigeon, Creole, or African-American
Vernacular English (AAVE). LM students in this particular study are limited to students who are
exposed to languages other than English, or non-English dialects.

Independent Variable: Pluralistic Policy

A pluralistic policy can be implemented in a school regardless of whether the school
supports bilingual or English-only programs. The underlying goal is to promote what Cummins
(1996) refers to as an additive experience for LM students, where L1s are integrated in the
school environment or curriculum, and are given respect and validity. Rather than disregarding the L1 in the education of LM students, a pluralistic policy “is similar to that of genuine bilingual programs in that an additive orientation to students’ language and culture is communicated to both students and parents” (Cummins, 1996). Examples of how a pluralistic policy is implemented in a school setting may include curriculums that incorporate heritage languages, bilingual books and dictionaries in libraries, multilingual signs and poster, and permission for students to use home languages with their peers. (Cummins, 1996; Feurverger, 1994). An example of a pluralistic policy is discussed in greater detail in the background section for my case study.

Definitions and Measurement of Dependent Variables

Academic Performance

This variable is defined as a combination of student engagement in the classroom and performance on standardized tests. In their longitudinal study on immigrant children, Suarez-Orozco et. al. divided engagement levels of immigrant students in several different categories, such as academic, cognitive, and relational. In a similar way, I chose to account for two types of engagement: academic and relational engagement among LM students. Academic engagement encompasses how well students complete school tasks, such as homework and projects, engage in classroom discussion, and participate in class or group activities. Relational engagement refers to the extent in which students seem connected to their teachers and peers; are they comfortable approaching their teachers and peers? In addition to the two categories of engagement at school, academic performance also includes how well students perform on standardized tests. The reason performance on standard tests is included is because the NCLB makes testing a major component of the education of LM students; for LM students, “high-stakes
standardized exams are...a major part of their introduction and enculturation to the United States” (Menken, 2008, p. 100). Students will either demonstrate positive academic performance (PAP) or negative academic performance (NAP) based on their engagement levels and performance on standardized exams.

I measure student engagement by administrating a survey to students, observing students in the classroom, and interviewing students and their teachers. Survey questions about engagement in the survey ask how often students like to answer the teacher’s questions, ask questions in class, and participate in group projects. While in the field, I kept notes on how often specific students raised their hands when teachers posed questions, led group discussion or activities, and shared opinions or thoughts to their peers or the class. In addition to measuring for engagement, I include student performance on standardized exams. This study uses scores from the Pennsylvania Standardized Student Assessments (PSSA). The subjects in this study actually took their 6th grade PSSAs during the time frame of my research, so I included their 5th grade PSSA scores instead. Although I was unable to gain access to the PSSA scores of ELLs from comparative schools, I compare the performance of ELLs from my case study school to the performance of ELLs in the entire School District of Philadelphia.

Identity: American vs. Ethnic Identities

Studies that include identity as a variable often leave the concept undefined, mainly because the concept of an identity remains vague and open-ended. Many studies discuss how students equate “American-ness” to having fluency in English (Olsen, 2008; Valdes, 2001). Fluency in English is often “a proxy or code word for a much broader concept of being ‘American’” (Olsen, 2008, p. 40). Olsen’s subjects describe that “there are many paths to and aspects of becoming ‘American’ though they all involve becoming English-speaking” (p. 43). In
other words, fluency in English seems to have a close connection to whether students “feel American.” Similarly, students tend to closely identify with their ethnic background if they are fluent in the language and are able to connect to their ethnic community. Of course, because they are only in middle school, it is doubtful that LM students in my study will have a definitive idea of their identities, making it complicated to measure for identity.

To somewhat resolve the complex nature of this topic, I rely heavily on the close connection identity seems to have with language. The survey includes questions about how important students think it is to continue speaking their heritage language, which language they prefer to use with family and friends, and whether they think in English, their heritage language, or both. I also ask simply how students identify themselves, either as Americans or Ethnic-Americans, and how they would identify themselves if they were in a different country. I include conversations from interviews about how students prefer to identify themselves.

Case Selections

Main Case Study: Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School in Philadelphia

Founded in 2005, the Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) is a K-8 charter school located in Chinatown of Philadelphia. While FACTS does not have a bilingual program—all content courses are instructed in English—the school explicitly dedicates its curriculum “to respect, to celebrate, and to sustain the linguistic diversity that is a unique part of [the school’s] community” (FACTS Website). Multilingual resources are available for students, such as interpreters and translators, heritage language libraries in classrooms, and signs in multiple languages; furthermore, the school has its own code-switching policy, which I analyze.

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2 Code-switching is the deliberate act of switching between languages. In education, code-switching usually refers to switching between languages when one language seems more appropriate in a given situation (i.e. academic English for the classroom; slang with friends; heritage language at home). FACTS defines code-switching as “the ability to move easily between using academic English and everyday language (Baker, p. 100; FACTS Code-Switching Policy and Plan, 2011).
in my study as an example of the pluralistic policy I refer to in my hypothesis. The school makes for a relevant case study because it creates an atmosphere where the languages of linguistic minorities are incorporated into the school space. As such, the selection of this main case study will allow me to evaluate my hypothesis on the impact that a pluralistic policy may have on the academic performance and identity of its LM students. A detailed profile of the school I discussed prior to my analysis of field observations and interviews at FACTS.

**Comparative Schools: Antonia Pantoja Charter School and George Washington Elementary**

The high percentage of Asian minorities enrolled at FACTS obviously had a large influence on the identity of LM students. The racial diversity of any student body has an inevitable influence on the atmosphere of the school, whether bilingual or English-only policies are in effect; it controls the range of exposure students have to various cultures and languages, and shapes the understanding of what “being American” means to students. Therefore, having a large minority student population was a necessary component in selecting comparative schools for this study.

Antonia Pantoja Charter School (APCS) is a K-8 school, founded in 2008 for Puerto Rico Puerto Ricans living in the US. The school currently offers bilingual education for students K-4 and plans to add the bilingual program in each grade each year so that by 2016, the entire school will have a bilingual curriculum by 2016. The students enrolled in the current bilingual program technically follow an A/B schedule where one day is taught in English, and the other day is taught in Spanish; it is ideally a 50-50 dual-language model.\(^3\) The APCS 6th grade students who took the survey have never been a part of the school’s bilingual program because the school was

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\(^3\) I say “technically” and “ideally” because the teacher from APCS whom I corresponded with acknowledged that it is not exactly a 50/50 model, where students are instructed in L1 and L2 equally. She explained that it is more of a 60/40 model where English is used more frequently. For example, she wrote to me that “[students] are taught literacy and social studies in Spanish and literacy and science in English. However, from 1:30-3:00 math is taught and it’s done so in English no matter what type of day it is, hence the issue that it’s more like 60-40 (personal communication, April 10, 2012).
founded only four years ago. Even though the participants from APCS were not enrolled in the bilingual program, students are aware of the school’s use of both English and Spanish.

I chose to include APCS for several reasons. First, because the LM student population in the US is largely Hispanic or Asian, it would be helpful to collect data from both racial groups. Also, since the LM students from FACTS were all of Asian descent, I wanted to see if pluralistic policies affected Hispanic LM students of other ethnicity and race. Another reason I chose to work with APCS it because it actually offered a bilingual program, whereas FACTS did not. Aside from this difference, both APCS and FACTS had pluralistic policies on language. This common feature affected each school’s LM students in very similar ways, as I will discuss later on, thus supporting my hypothesis.

George Washington Elementary School (GWS) is a K-8 public school in the School District of Philadelphia. It provides an ESL program for ELL students, which are strictly taught in English. Code-switching is not encouraged at GWS, even in ESL class. Students in ESL are prevented from speaking in the L1 by being seated separately according to language (Personal Interview with GWS ESL teacher, March 23, 2012). The reason I chose to include GWS in my study was because it lacked a pluralistic policy on language, and it had a reasonable number of minorities. About 43% of the student body consists of non-Black and non-White minorities (School District of Philadelphia). I also included this school because it was the only school in the SDP that agreed to participate in my study.

Data Collection

My data was collected from completed student surveys, interviews, and field observations. Field observations at FACTS took place each Friday from late-February to late-March in 2012. I followed 6 Sun, a 6th grade class cluster consisting of 25 students (half of the
6th grade class at FACTS) to every class they had on Fridays, for the entire school day, including their homeroom period. I observed student behavior not only during class time, but also during transitions to classes in the hallways and during recess time outside. I conducted surveys during the third week of my observations; interviews took place during the fourth week.

I administered the survey, which asks questions on language use, identity, and academic engagement, to the entire sixth grade class at FACTS. I selected students who indicated that they used a non-English language at home to include in my discussion and analysis. Observations and interviews were strictly limited to LM students from 6 Sun. Students selected for interviews were divided into three groups of three or four students to alleviate any intimidation for students and to facilitate more discussion. Groups were formed based on results from surveys and my observations of student social groups. Group I consisted of four girls (Carrie, Lucy, Stacey, and Mary) who never spoke their home language at school. Group II consisted of three boys (Matt, Ted, and Liam) who rarely spoke their home language at school. Group III consisted of four boys (Darren, Mark, Tom, and John) who spoke Mandarin with each other frequently both inside and outside of class.

I also conducted the same survey with LM students attending the comparative schools. Interviews with students at comparative schools were not conducted, although I was able to conduct interviews with ESL teachers for more information about the language programs provided for ESL students.
Findings and Discussion

My findings are discussed in two sections. I first compare and contrast survey results from each school to discuss how the language policy of each school affects LM students with respect to academic performance and identity. I also include data from 2010-2011 PSSA test scores. I compare the 6th grade test scores of ELLs from FACTS to ELL student scores from the entire School District of Philadelphia. The second section, an ethnography on FACTS, ties survey results from FACTS into the context. I analyze FACTS' Code-Switching Policy, my field observations, and student interviews.

Part I: Survey Results from FACTS, APCS, and GWS

Academic Performance

Academic Engagement

Results from surveys support my hypothesis that a pluralistic language policy helps LM students display positive academic progress. In terms of academic engagement, LM students in general seemed to have a desire to excel at school and achieve good grades. In every school, the majority of LM students indicated that school was a critical component of achieving success. 1 out of 7 students from GWS indicated schools was only “somewhat important” for success; the rest of the students indicated that school was either “very important” or “important”. 20 out of 28 at FACTS indicated that school was “very important” and the remaining 8 students said school was “important.” 32 out of 36 students at APCS indicated that school was “very important” for future success and the remaining 4 students indicated that school was “important. In general, LM students, regardless of what type of language program they are enrolled in, considered school to be an important part of their road to success. Furthermore, the majority of
the students from each school considered themselves to be “good” students. 19 out of 28 from FACTS, 23 out of 36 from ACPS, and 4 out of 7 students from GWS considered themselves as “good” students. The surveys also showed that LM students clearly thought getting good grades was “very important”; 24 out of 28 from FACTS, 31 out of 36 from APCS, and 5 out of 7 students from GWS indicated that getting good grades was “very important.” In summary, the general finding is that LM students are invested in school.

Based on these results, LM students in general showed that they had the desire to excel academically, and recognized the importance of being engaged at school. It did not make a difference whether they were enrolled in a school with a pluralistic or restrictive policy on language; they all exhibited an aspiration to be engaged academically. Even though they all shared this common feature of wanting to be academically engaged, the students differed greatly in their responses on relational engagement, as the next section will show.

Relational Engagement

How students actually interacted with their teachers and peers in the classroom differed based on the type of language policy of their school. Students from each school showed similar patterns of engagement when they were asked if they would ask teachers questions if the students did not understand a concept. The most popular answer for this question from each school was that they asked “sometimes”—16 out of 28 students from FACTS, 19 out of 36 from APCS, and 6 out of 7 from GWS. The next popular answer was “I usually ask”—11 out of 28 from FACTS, and 12 out of 36 from APCS. Only 1 student from FACTS, 5 from APCS, and 1 student from GWS indicated “I always ask.” Overall, students seemed to hesitate when it came to asking teachers questions.
Different patterns occurred when I asked students about talking in class, and engaging with their peers. When asked if students liked to talk in class and answer questions, students at FACTS and APCS were more likely to participate in class than students from GWS. 14 out of 28 from FACTS and 15 out of 36 from APCS indicated that they liked to talk in class “most of the time” whereas only 1 student from GWS indicated that same particular answer. FACTS had 8 students who indicated that they liked to talk in class “all the time,” and 5 who indicated “sometimes”; none of the students indicated “not usually”. From APCS, 1 student indicated “all the time,” 14 said “sometimes,” and 6 students said “not usually.” Finally, at GWS, none of the students said “all the time,” 6 students said “sometimes,” and 1 student said “not usually”.

Overall, students from FACTS and APCS seemed to enjoy speaking and participating in class more so than the students from GWS.

Students from FACTS answered favorably when asked if they enjoyed doing group work and working with their peers, whereas most students from ACPS and GWS seemed not as enthused by the idea. From FACTS, 9 out of 28 students indicated they enjoyed working with their peers “all the time”, 16 out of 28 said “most of the time”, and only 3 students said “sometimes”. From APCS, 9 out of 36 students said “all the time”, 13 out of 36 said “most of the time”, and 14 out of 36 said “sometimes”. Only 2 students from GWS indicated “all the time”, 1 said “most of the time”, and 4 out of 7 students said “sometimes”. In short, the most popular answer from APCS and GWS was “sometimes,” but the most popular answer at FACTS was “most of the time.”

Based on these results, LM students from all the schools preferred not to ask teachers questions, but there were some differences when students were asked about answering question and doing group work. Students from FACTS seemed more engaged with speaking in class and
working with their peers, compared to students from ACPS and GWS. This supports my hypothesis that students learning under a pluralistic ideology would help LM students be academically engaged, especially in comparison to students learning in a non-pluralistic setting. Placed on a spectrum, students from GWS were not very engaged, students from APCS were somewhat engaged, and students from FACTS were well engaged in the classroom.

Performance on Standardized Tests

Due to limited access in getting PSSA data from individual schools, this section can only compare the performance of 6th grade ELL students from FACTS to the performance of 6th grade ELLs from the entire district of Philadelphia in math and reading. The reason I compare students from FACTS to students from SDP is because I assume that the most public schools in the SDP provide English-only language programs for their ELLs, and do not implement a pluralistic policy on language.

In math, 75% of the 6th grade ELLs at FACTS scored at the Proficient or Advanced level, whereas only 42% of 6th grade ELLs at SDP reached the Proficient or Advanced level. In reading, 46.6% of ELLs at FACTS scored at the Proficient or Advanced level. In comparison, 14% of ELLs at SDP achieved the Proficient or Advanced level. ELLs from FACTS clearly outperformed ELLs in the SDP in both math and reading. Even though ELLs at FACTS have outscored ELLs from SDP in both subjects, this does not mean that FACTS was able to close the achievement gap between ELLs and their mainstream students. The percentage of students from both FACTS and SDP reaching the Proficient or Advanced level in reading is still rather low.

To summarize the section on academic performance, students enrolled at FACTS and APCS were more engaged in the classroom than students from GWS. ELLs from FACTS
outperformed ELLs from the SDP in both math and reading on the PSSAs. Both of these findings support my thesis that pluralistic policies lead to stronger academic performance.

**Ethnic vs. American Identity**

The close connection between language use and identity motivated my decision to explore whether students who used their L1 more frequently were more or less inclined to identify as American. While there were some interesting patterns worth noting, there was no clear pattern on how language policies or ideologies affect the overall identity of LM students.

An overwhelming majority of students from each school identified as some type of ethnic-American. 27 out of 28 students from FACTS, 22 out of 36 from APCS, and all 7 students from GWS said they identified themselves as ethnic-American. None of the students from FACTS said that they identified as just “American,” and 1 student identified herself as “Cambodian.” 4 students from APCS identified as “American” and the remaining 10 students identified themselves as Puerto-Rican, Latina/Latino, or Spanish. Again, in another question where students were asked how they would identify themselves to a new friend if they were in France, most students said they would identify as an ethnic-American—25 out of 28 students from FACTS, 18 out of 36 from APCS, and 6 out of 7 from GWS.

These results suggest that the students are well aware of their identities as minorities. Seeing that they identify with both their ethnic and American identity, it was not unusual to find that students divided their language use at school and at home. When it came to speaking with friends and siblings, students from all three schools clearly preferred using English. 19 out of 28 from FACTS, 31 out of 36 from APCS, and 6 out of 7 from GWS listed only English when asked which language they preferred to use with their friends. 15 out of 28 from FACTS, 21 out
of 36 from APCS, and 5 out of 7 students from GWS listed only English when asked which language they preferred using with their siblings.

Looking at the data thus far, the identity and language use of LM students from all three schools seemed unaffected by language policy. Subtle differences, however, appeared in the second half of the data. When asked to list which language they preferred using with their parents, 27 out of 28 students from FACTS and 22 out of 36 students from APCS listed either only their heritage language, or both English and their heritage language. Students from GWS, in contrast, mostly preferred to speak in English with their parents; 5 out of 7 students listed only English, and the remaining 2 students listed only their heritage language. This means students enrolled in schools with a pluralistic policy were more likely to use their heritage language with their parents, and students from a school that had a more restrictive policy on language preferred using English even with their parents.

Because such a large majority of students from each school identified as ethnic-Americans, I thought students from each school would also be likely to think in both English and their HL. Again, however, there was a divide between the responses from students in schools with and without a pluralistic language policy. From FACTS, 3 students indicated that they think in “only English”, 19 students said “English + sometimes HL”, 6 students said “HL + sometimes English”, and none of the students said they think only in their heritage language. From APCS, 9 students indicated that they think in “only English”, 22 said “English + sometimes HL”, 5 said “HL + sometimes English”, and 1 student said “only HL”. From GWS, 4 out of 7 students indicated that they think in “only English”, 1 student said “English + sometimes HL”, 1 student said “HL + sometimes English”, and 1 student said “only HL”. The majority of
students from FACTS and APCS indicated that they used both languages to think, but the majority of students from GWS said that they only used English to think.

Even with knowing this information, I was still surprised to find that 7 students from GWS marked “yes” when asked if they thought they had a lot in common with White Americans. This was particularly interesting given the student demographics of GWS, where White students were the minority. Students from FACTS and APCS answered quite differently. Only 3 students from FACTS said “yes”, 20 out of 28 marked “sort of”, and 5 marked “no”. From APCS, only 1 student indicated “yes”, 25 out of 36 said “sort of”, and 9 said “no”. This could mean that a great majority of students from schools with pluralistic language policies felt some partial commonality with mainstream American culture. Because “sort of” is a vague answer, I followed up on this question with FACTS’ students during my interviews.

Language policies and programs at first don’t seem to have a clear impact on the identities of LM students. Nearly all of the students from each school indicated that they identified as an Ethnic-American. Furthermore, most of them indicated that they preferred using English with their siblings and friends. A careful observation of questions on language use with parents and on shared identities with White Americans, however, revealed that students from schools with pluralistic policies were more inclined to use their HL with their parents, and only partially identified with White Americans. Students from GWS, which as a restrictive policy, preferred using English with their parents, and all of the students felt like they had a lot in common with White Americans.
Part II: Ethnography at FACTS

Before discussing my findings, it is necessary to describe the layers of policies that 6 Sun were affected by, as a context for results from surveys, conversations from interviews, and my personal observations in the field. This section includes a brief history of the establishment of FACTS, demographic information of the school and the community in which it is located, an analysis of its unique Code-Switching Policy and Plan, and a description of FACTS' environment.

History of Establishment

Ever since the first Chinese immigrants settled along Race Street in Chinatown about 150 years ago, the only school available in the community was Holy Redeemer, a private Roman Catholic school. Students whose families could not afford the private tuition had to attend McCall Elementary School, a mile south of Chinatown (Gammage, Philadelphia Inquirer, March 2005). After ten years of planning, Asian Americans United (AAU) and the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP) founded the Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School in 2005 (Beete, 2009). The groups faced some opposition, as community members debated whether the school was truly necessary and whether it was ideal for a school to be so closely connected with a non-profit immigrant organization. "Leaders of the Philadelphia Chinatown Community Development Corp. argued that a charter school was unnecessary, that it would drain students from Holy Redeemer and McCall Elementary. One board member accused AAU of causing contention in the community, "with vague promises and misstatements of fact," and warned that AAU would indoctrinate children in "an ideology of protest" (Gammage, 2005). In the end, the district's commissioners unanimously voted, 4-0, in favor of the proposal for the charter school.
Members of AAU and PFP vision for FACTS was to integrate, respect, and support the diverse cultures of Philadelphia’s immigrant communities. The founders of FACTS believed that the folk and traditional arts could be used to “[help] a wider range of kids to succeed academically (Beete, 2009).” The school community is well known for celebrating the cultures of its diverse students, many of whom are from Asian countries, such as China, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Vietnam (personal interview with Principal Susan Stegal at FACTS, Feb. 24, 2012). Today, the school’s curriculum highlights the inseparable connection between culture and language: The FACTS website states: “We offer nationally and internationally recognized curriculum programs implemented through collaborative and collegial teaching and learning models. Our curriculum is committed to arts education, folk arts, respect for language and language diversity, and community based learning” (FACTS Website). Though all content courses are taught in English, students take at least one hour of Chinese Mandarin language class as either a world language or a heritage language class. Middle school students are required to take Chinese language class twice a week.

Demographics

FACTS takes pride in being closely knit with the Chinatown community. To better understand the community that FACTS serves, this section offers a brief overview on the demographics of Chinatown and the school itself.

According to the 2010 Census, 60-75% of the population in Chinatown are Asian, while 10-15% are Black and 15-30% are White, and only 1-5% are Hispanic. When walking through Chinatown, one will notice a wide range of Asian restaurants; there are not only Chinese restaurants, but also Vietnamese, Japanese, Malaysian, and Thai restaurants. One may wonder how “Chinese” Chinatown really is and whether Chinatown is just a Pan-Asian community in
Philadelphia. In actuality, 75-90% of the Asian residents in Chinatown are Chinese immigrants, excluding those who are from Taiwan. Chinatown has the highest percentage of foreign-born people, in contrast to other areas of the city (Social Explorer, 2012).

The student body at FACTS closely mirrors the community in which it is located. There are 449 students enrolled at FACTS. 70.4% are Asian or Pacific Islanders, 21.4% are Black, and 31% are Hispanic, only 1.1% are White, non-Hispanic. 25% of its students are classified as ELL students (NCES). Students in each grade level are split up into two clusters of about 25 each. Class clusters are identified by titles such as “Earth,” “Fire,” “Sun,” or “Moon.”

Policies and Programs in Effect at FACTS

No Child Left Behind Act

At the time of my research at FACTS, students were powering through PSSA workbooks in preparation for PSSA exams in math, reading, and writing. English Language Arts class was focused on analyzing passages, writing essays, comprehending poetry, and deciphering types of questions found on the PSSAs. Math class was spent drilling through problem sets, reviewing math questions from workbooks, and decoding the key vocabulary needed to understand word problems. The NCLB had a looming presence over both teachers and students at FACTS. During my visits on Fridays, the mornings were mostly dedicated to preparation for the upcoming exams. FACTS has reached state expectations, achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three years in a row (FACTS Website).

Pennsylvania State Policy on Language Programs for Linguistic Minorities

In technical terms, the state of Pennsylvania does not have an official policy restricting bilingual or multicultural education. Some school officials in Philadelphia even “argue that it allows schools to make any programmatic decisions they choose.” The vague nature of the
policy leaves much room for interpretation, allowing school districts with the right to choose their preferred language programs and receive funding from the state (Johnson and Freeman, 2010, p. 18). Even though the school teaches academic classes only in English, I wondered if FACTS’ extensive multicultural curriculum ever became an obstacle for receiving funding, especially because it requires all students to take Mandarin Chinese language class twice a week, and encourages their LM students to maintain their bilingualism. However, it seems that FACTS does not experience any trouble from receiving state or federal funding. As a charter school, FACTS receives funding from both the state and federal government, in addition to receiving some funding from a few private grants.

Me: How is FACTS funded?

Principal Susan (PS): So we’re funded by the state. Just like all public schools, we get a per pupil allotment. So that’s by far the primary source...so it’s about $8600 per student...err its not very much. It sounds like a lot but its not. Then we have some funding from the federal government...

Me: Have you had any trouble receiving funding because of your emphasis on bilingualism?

PS: No. I think it gives us an advantage. Well actually I don’t know if it gives us an advantage but definitely no trouble. I mean the state funding is automatic, I mean once you’re a charter school, you just get it. There’s no discrimination there. As far as grants go you just have to know what grants to go for. People like the fact that we are, I mean we are a very successful school, so they like giving to something that’s already a success and they know you’re using the money very wisely. And I think that is because we are such a multilingual community (personal interview with principal at FACTS, Feb, 24, 2012).

Analysis of the FACTS Code-Switching Policy and Plan

It should be noted that the pluralistic acceptance of minority languages is not the foremost goal at FACTS; instead, the pluralistic policy on language is merely a branch of FACTS’ overarching commitment to integrating and promoting the cultural folks arts into the school curriculum. The emphasis is on the cultural arts, but integrating languages is an inevitable part of the process because of the inseparable tie between culture and language.

PS: So respecting everyone’s home language and respecting everyone’s culture means respecting one’s language. I think the important part about this is that um...that you shouldn’t be correcting
a student's grammar all the time, you shouldn't be correcting the way they speak because it'll just make them more self-conscious and it usually doesn't work anyway. But if they are supposed to be giving a speech in front of the class or if it's a piece of written work that is being presented as a final paper, then yes, then that would be an appropriate time to correct their grammar.

Me: What were the general expectations [that teachers are given]?

PS: So...we should not prevent students from speaking their home language so if they're speaking to another student and they speak in their home language then that's ok. We don't correct them and say 'Speak English' we don't do that. Of course if they're speaking in front of the whole class, they speak English, you don't have to remind them to do that. They know that's the only way that they would be understood. So, and then we try to find ways for them to use their home language. I mean, now and then if they're maybe in their writing and they use a quotation in their language, and of course especially if their home language is a Chinese dialect, then in Chinese class they get plenty of chance to use their home language. Whenever we have programs, we have student translators to translate for the whole audience.

The assumption at FACTS was clearly to allow students to use their home language liberally, as long as English is used within the classroom setting. However, some teachers raised up concerns about when they were expected to intervene when students were speaking or writing ungrammatically, and how often they were expected to correct students’ English. Such questions seemed to contradict the goal of respecting all languages and dialects, leaving teachers uncertain about how to interact with their LM students. As a result, drafts for FACTS Code-Switching Policy and Plan began last spring. The policy clearly reflects a pluralistic ideology on how students are to develop their understanding of language.

The document begins with an excerpt from the FACTS Pledge: *All people have the right to use their own languages and honor their own cultures.* As the proceeding statement before the policy even begins, this excerpt from FACTS’ school pledge sets up the premise of treating all languages and cultures equally. Following this excerpt are four bullet points, outlining the four goals of the Code-Switching Policy. I begin by discussing the last point in the policy before the other points because it provides key definitions.

*Point 4: Formal, standard English should be referred to as “academic language,” and informal English, or home languages as “everyday language.”*
At FACTS, the term *standard English* is referred to as *academic language*. The highlighting feature of this point is FACTS’ deliberate choices in terminology—using the term *academic* instead of *standard*. According to Rosina Lippi-Green, using *standard* may be a problem because “the opposite of standard appears as *substandard* or *non-standard*; these terms automatically bring with them a uni-directionality and subordination” (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 60). As an example of resolving this issue, she mentions how some educators tend to use *mainstream* in place of *standard*. Similarly, FACTS has chosen to use *academic language* instead of Standard English, to prevent any sense of a language hierarchy in the school community. As for *everyday language*, the use of the word *everyday* seems to imply that home languages and dialects are commonly used on a normal, acceptable basis.

**Point 1: All teachers should use academic English within the classroom setting.**

Interestingly, the very first point mentioned in the policy focuses on the language use of teachers. Teachers are expected to represent how language is used in the classroom. Having the teachers use academic English at all times in the classroom guarantees that the students will have access to academic English. FACTS wants their students to understand that academic English, the style of English used on assessments and formal social settings, is the appropriate type of language to use in a classroom setting. Another small detail worth noting in Point 1 is that expectations from students are not mentioned, suggesting that they are not required to use academic English at all times.

**Point 2: Outside of the classroom, or in informal situations, students (and teachers/staff?) may use home languages, including dialects of English.**

In the second point, the policy focuses strictly on *everyday language*. The policy permits students to use their home languages, or other dialects of English outside of the classroom. However, as it was briefly discussed in the previous point, this goal leaves out whether students
are expected to speak academic English in the classroom. By suggesting that teachers and staff members at the school may also use everyday language outside of the classroom, FACTS creates an underlying ideology in the school community that every language is valuable and respected, though academic English is the preferred language for the classroom. The main purpose of this goal is to set clear perimeters for when and where everyday language can be used.

Point 3: Student grammar need/should not be corrected within the classroom, unless grammar usage is a stated objective.

The penultimate goal directly prevents teachers from correcting ungrammatical speech or writing unless lesson goals are specifically about learning grammar skills. This point separates grammatical corrections to be appropriate only for academic purposes.

The discussion above illustrates how a pluralistic school policy on language may exist under federal and state policies that place heavy emphasis on transitional bilingual education and standardized testing in English.

Implementing the Policy in the School Curriculum

The FACTS Code-Switching Policy and Plan also elucidates how the curriculum for each grade level is an integral step toward teaching students the importance of language equality. The plan is divided into three phases, each phase divided by grade levels. The plan essentially aims to train students to become conscious of code-switching and embracing their bilingual status.

Grades K-2

The most prominent goal for grade K-2 is to expose the youngest students of FACTS to various dialects and languages. Through modeling, FACTS teachers and staff are encouraged to demonstrate to students that different dialects and languages are spoken by adults and are acceptable to at school.
Modeling. Students should see adults switching between various dialects and languages. Teachers and staff who speak dialects/languages spoken by our kids should make sure students (and other adults) know that they speak those dialects/languages. This helps to shift or lessen power and judgment dynamics associated with those dialects (FACTS Code-Switching Policy and Plan, Plan Grades K-2, April 26, 2011).

This goal specifically addresses power dynamics in language; it intends to counter any discriminating stigmas that society may impose on certain languages or dialects. FACTS recognizes that students will look to adults—teachers and staff—as models for language use. The entire school community is responsible for showing students that all languages and dialects are accepted in an academic setting.

**Grades 3-5**

The second phase introduces students to the concept of code-switching. While code-switching might seem only relevant to non-English speaking linguistic minorities, it is still very important for speakers of English in inner-city schools, who may speak various dialects of English. Discussing the Philadelphian English Dialect is the second goal mentioned in the plan for grades 3-5. Part of the plan includes a suggested “script” for teachers as they prepare to officially introduce the concept of code-switching to students.

As your teacher, I want certain things for you. I want you to love reading and writing, and I want you to get better and better at it. I want you to become mathematicians, scientists, and historians. Most importantly, I want the people you meet throughout your life to read something you have written, or listen to something you say, and think, “Wow. This is someone to take seriously.” I can see that you have important experiences and ideas to share with the world. However, we do not live in a fair world. People are sometimes judged by the color of their skin, or because of where they live, or how much money they have. This is prejudice. People are also judged on their writing and speaking. When people see writing that is full of errors, they are often distracted and unable to see beyond those errors. As students coming from such a rich variety of ethnic backgrounds, this is something you cannot afford. In learning certain rules around grammar in academic language, and making those rules your habit, your words will be heard more loudly, more clearly, because you are not allowing errors in academic language to give people permission to ignore or discriminate against you. This is essential to your access to many privileges, comforts, and necessities in life. You deserve those things, and learning this will help you to have access to them. This doesn’t mean that you have to stop using your home language, or speaking the way that you do with your families. It is important to know “academic English,” which is used in schools and many jobs, but it is also important to speak your “everyday language,” which you use with your families, friends, and in the community. The ability to move easily between using “academic English” and “everyday language” is called “code-switching.” To be able to code-switch, you must know the grammar rules of both languages, and you must also know when and where to use which language (FACTS Code-Switching Policy and Plan).
In learning about code-switching, students not only become more aware of the differences between academic or everyday language, but they also become more aware that they may face discrimination for using languages in certain spaces. Although students know they will not be penalized for using everyday language at FACTS, they become aware that some people outside of FACTS may not understand the value of all dialects and languages.

**Grades 6-8**

The last phase of the plan involves having in-depth discussions on power, language, and access. Students practice “translating” between informal vernaculars, dialects, and languages. Ideally, by the time students at FACTS reach middle school, they should be accustomed to having discussions on language varieties.

The outline to implementing the Code-Switching Plan reflects FACTS’ longitudinal vision in teaching students about language equality. Having taught students the foundations to the diverse meaning of using language, FACTS shapes student attitudes toward language by heightening their awareness of how language is interpreted by society, the academic world, and their ethnic communities. This heightened understanding of language not only allows FACTS’ students to transition easily between their different linguistic communities, but it also empowers students and prepares them to think critically about how language is perceived by others, whether they are in an academic or urban environment.

Based on my observations at FACTS, the Code-Switching Policy had a significant affect on student interactions. Students who did not code-switch had very little complaints about other students who code-switched.

**Group I**
Carrie: Like now that I know how to speak English very well, it feels weird speaking your home language at school.
Me: Really? Some people in your class do it. [I list a few people]
Stacey: We’re used to it.
All: (Scattered) Yeah
Carrie: we’re used to it because a lot of people in our school...mumble...
Me: Do you ever feel uncomfortable when they do it?
Stacey: No not really, we’re used to it.
Lucy: yeah sometimes.
Carrie: sometimes
Lucy: They talk about us in Chinese and we don’t even understand them. So it’s really hard.
Me: Laugh. How do you know they’re talking about you?
Carrie: We hear our names. Then they start laughing. Laugh

Aside from the playful suspicion that girls from Group I had about the boys, the LM students at FACTS were not bothered by other students who code-switched. One specific moment when the Code-Switching Policy was relevant in class was during sixth period Science Class. Even non-LM students seemed very used to situations when code-switching took place during group activities. For example, Amy was working with Mark and Tom in science class. The three students were grouped together to work on creating a game for science class to learn the types of rocks.

The groups are now asked to create a game to help them remember/learn the geological time periods. Each group got a bag full of supplies to make a game. Tom comes over to Mark and starts talking in Chinese--he asks questions. Mark again takes the lead in bringing up ideas to make a game. Mark mediates between Ashley and Tom. Tom asks in Chinese, Mark answers in English. Tom isn’t afraid to participate in the group, despite being more comfortable in Chinese. Tom shares his ideas in Chinese. Ashley doesn’t mind at all the Mark and Tom are talking in Chinese. She waits patiently. They help each other out. Once they get started working Azi does ask once in a while “What does that mean?” And Mark fills her in while Tom still actively takes charge in putting his input on the board game (Field Observations, March 23, 2012, 6th period).

While this was going on, Teacher Becca had no problem with Tom sharing his ideas in Chinese. Amy waited patiently while Tom conveyed his ideas to the group, and Mark mediated between Amy and Tom to explain all the ideas that were being brainstormed. The students were clearly used to situations where both languages were present in the classroom.

Classroom Environments

6 Sun mainly rotated between two classrooms. Teacher Stephanie’s room was used for homeroom, English Language Arts, and Social Studies class. Teacher Becca’s classroom was
used for Math and Science. Each classroom included a bookshelf in a corner of the room holding Chinese and Spanish bilingual dictionaries. As language arts classroom, Teacher Stephanie’s room had a variety of books in the classroom library, including books with stories from other cultures. The classrooms where Chinese was taught were well decorated with Chinese posters, maps, and charts; English was barely present in the Chinese classrooms. As I learned my way around the school, I also noticed that ESL classrooms had Chinese and Spanish books, including translations of popular young adult book series such as the *Harry Potter*, *Twilight*, and *The Hunger Games Trilogy*.

**Formation of Interview Groups**

While students from all three schools generally seemed to follow similar patterns of language use at home and at school, my observations and interviews found subtle differences in the language use of students from FACTS. Each student, of course, had his or her own unique situation, preference, and opinions on how they moved between their two linguistics worlds.

Over the five weeks that I observed 6 Sun, it was clear that the students varied greatly in language ability and language use. It is an overgeneralization to categorize all the students just as LM students. From my observations, the LM students could be clearly divided into three groups, based on their language use, which was how I formed the three groups for my interviews. Group I (Lucy, Mary, Stacey, and Carrie) consisted of students who only spoke English with friends at school; Group II (Matt, Ted, and Jeff) was made up of students who practiced code-switching minimally; and Group III (John, Mark, Darren, and Tom) consisted of students who code-switched frequently. The girls in Group I did not code-switch mainly because the girls did not speak Mandarin; two of the girls spoke Cantonese, one girl spoke Indonesian, and one girl spoke Khmer. The boys in Group II rarely code-switched because two of the boys
spoke Cantonese, and one boy sometimes spoke Mandarin with the boys from Group III. Students from Group III code-switched very often because they were fluent in Mandarin, the language that is most prominently supported by FACTS. Given the different patterns of language use in each group, the groups differed in their views on being bilingual, their experiences in the ESL program, and their experiences in their Chinese language class, which I discuss after briefly providing an overview of my observations on how students engaged in class.

Field Observations on Student Academic Engagement

In terms of academic engagement, LM students at FACTS were clearly invested in their schoolwork. Some LM students participated in class or led group activities more frequently than non-LM students. Aside from two or three students, the students selected to be interviewed were all strong students in 6 Sun. Students from all three interview groups were represented when Teacher Stephanie announced the students who got As on their research papers. Most of the students were also recognized in class for getting As on their vocabulary tests. Granted a few of the boys from Group III did not get an A on the vocabulary test, but overall the LM students I interviewed were clearly engaged with their class work (Field Observations, March 16, 2012, 2nd Period).

As mentioned above, in my analysis of FACTS’ Code-Switching policy, students who were more comfortable using their L1 in class did not hesitate to speak in Chinese during classroom activities. Sometimes, I even heard students from Group III thinking out loud in Chinese in math class (Field Observations, February 24, 2012, 2nd period). Two of the students from Group III, Mark and Darren, were noticeably active in the classroom even though they were previously enrolled in the ESL program.
Rug time—reading poetry... The students are asked to guess what the tone of the poem is, forgiveness or grudge. Mark is so eager to share his opinion about the poem with John. He's definitely leading the discussion, asking the question. When Mark raises his hand, he shoots it up (Field Observations, March 16, 2012, 3rd period)

Darren tends to raise his hand pretty frequently to answer questions in both ELA and math class. He has a soft quiet voice and sort of mumbles and speaks slowly. But he seems content and confident with his answers (Field Observations, March 2, 2nd period).

Being in an English-only ESL class does not seem to have discouraged Mark or Darren from actively participating in class, suggesting that they did not feel marginalized or alienated from their mainstream peers. I interpret this experience as evidence that FACTS’ pluralistic policy on language has positive effects on the relational engagement of LM students.

Conversations On Identity

Based on survey results, almost all of the students from FACTS identified as ethnic-Americans, and were partial about how much they had in common with White Americans. In terms of language use, a majority of the students also indicated that they preferred speaking in their L1 with their parents and English with their friends. This dichotomy suggests that both languages are important to them. During the student interviews, I followed up with questions on identity with each group and found a more complex picture on how students developed their identities. Students shared their views on what it meant to be bilingual. They also discussed their experience with the ESL program and the school’s Chinese language class requirement. Finally, students explained that for them, language played a small role in their identities as Americans or minorities. Speaking English had some influence on their identities, but following cultural practices, such as celebrating holidays (i.e. 4th of July or Thanksgiving vs. Chinese New Years), and eating cultural foods (American food vs. Chinese food) seemed to have more relevance to identity for students.
Being Bilingual

When I asked whether students thought it was important to be bilingual, the students in Group I and Group II immediately mentioned the economic advantages of being bilingual. Their responses to my question were in terms of becoming successful, getting a job in the future, and also belonging in the linguistic minority community.

**Group I**

Me: Do you guys consider yourselves to be bilingual then?
Carrie: What’s bilingual?
Stacey: Speaking two languages, or something like that.
Me: So do you guys want to keep getting better at being bilingual? Or does it matter to you...?
All: It matters.
Me: Why?
Carrie: It matters. Because my family say that if you can um speak in more than two languages you’ll get a more successful job.
Lucy: Yeah...that’s what my mom says to me all the time.
Stacey: And my dad says like there’s so many Chinese people. Umm...our substitute teacher told us that every ten people on earth, two of them is Chinese. So being able to learn Chinese gets you better like jobs.
Me: K...what about you?
Mary: I think it’s important because my parents said that sometimes ummm...when you like speak a language and that you don’t know. Sometimes when someone speaks to you that then you probably feel uncomfortable and you don’t know what they’re saying at all...

**Group II**

Me: Do you think being bilingual is important?
Matt: Yes
Me: Why?
Matt: Because when you’re out looking for jobs, uh some companies uhh
Me: You guys are already thinking about jobs. (I laugh)
Liam: I think I agree with Matt because...because my mom wants me to be...it has to do with something like...you can speak Chinese.
Me: (speaking to Ted) and you said yes too, right? Why?
Ted: Because my mom wants me to uh...she saying when I go to China...she wants me to be able to speak Chinese so I that won’t be like an outcast and won’t understand anybody.

Group III’s interview on being bilingual went differently. Although students in this group were much more fluent in their L1 compared to the students in the other groups, members of Group III did not mention anything about having an advantage in getting a successful job because of their bilingual skills in the way that students from
other groups did. In fact, the students from Group III did not mention anything about how being bilingual might lead to success. In fact, they didn’t have much to say about it:

**Group III**

*Me:* Do you think it’s important to be bilingual?
*Mark:* explaining in Chinese to Tom
*Tom:* Yeah.
*Mark:* explaining in Chinese
*Tom:* replying in Chinese
*Mark:* Umm he’s still thinking, that’s what he told me.
*Me:* Do you like being bilingual *(to Darren)*?
*Darren:* Ummm I don’t know...
*John:* Yes
*Me:* Do you think it’s important to be bilingual, John?
*John:* Yes, when you go to different countries and like speak their language and stuff.

While Groups I and II jumped onto the topic, explaining the special opportunities that could arise from being bilingual, students from Group III seemed to think the question was not significant to them. In short, the groups differed in their views on the value of being bilingual. The students who did not code-switch as often as students in Group III saw it as an advantage, whereas the students who code-switched often and were much more active in speaking both English and their L1 seemed to think it was just an obvious part of their lives.

**Being in ESL**

When I asked Group I and Group II about what it was like to be in ESL, they described the types of activities they did in class to learn English.

**Group I**

*Me:* What is [ESL] class like? I don’t really know too much about it. How would you describe it?
*Stacey:* When I came here, I was starting first grade and I knew no English except yes no and a few colors. Laughs And so...like in class I didn’t know how to do the test and I barely knew what the teacher was talking about for most of the time. Like most of the time Teacher Mae pulled me out and she said and showed me objects, teaches new words. And I don’t even realize it and then all of a sudden I speak English.
*Carrrie:* its like sometimes you go on field trip and there’s a time when like...you have to give directions to the teachers...Like one time we were making sandwiches we have to give directions like put the bread on the table and all that and we have to give directions and if you don’t say properly then the teacher just do what you say.
*Me:* What? Can you explain?
*Carrrie:* like they just do what you say.
*Me:* Ohh, so it’s like an activity.
*Carrrie:* Yeah, like just to make sure you know how to speak like directions like left or right or up top
Group II
Me: What was it like being in ESL?
Liam: If you be in ESL, they help you stuff and you understand more things. Like grammar and past tense and stuff.
Me: When you started learning English, do you remember it being kind of hard or...
Liam: The only first word I know is mom.

Both groups clearly saw ESL as a helpful space to learn English. It almost seemed like it was a fun time, with the games, activities, and field trips. Group III also mentioned the “fun” part of ESL, such as getting “prizes and stuff”, but they also expressed how they felt a sense of inferiority when they were in ESL classes.

Group III:
Me: So I don’t know too much about ESL. Can you describe to me what it’s like to be in ESL?
Darren: I feel like I’m stupid when I’m in ESL.
Me: What?!
Darren: yeahh...
Me: Why?
Mark: I don’t like...well I do like ESL because you get all these prizes and stuff. But...When you in ESL it means like you’re below...not so good...
Tom: Below basic
Mark: Yeah like below basic. That’s the truth. You’re not really at the grade level like so then I tried my best and worked hard so like reach half the like same way everybody was treated like at classroom. Like do you know Teacher Mayuko. She comes in and picks students up. She’s ESL member. She...these students are below.

This conversation was a surprise to me because in comparison to all of the students I interviewed, Darren and Mark raised their hands to answer questions in class most frequently. Mark actively led group projects or small group discussions. Despite having felt “below basic” when they were in ESL, Darren and Mark were vocal in class and raised their hands more often compared to the rest of the students in 6 Sun. Students still demonstrated confidence and engagement in the classroom, even if they experienced a language barrier in previous years. Furthermore, out of all three groups, my interview with Group III was the most enthusiastic and energetic. Their interview session went well over time because they had a lot to say, including digressions and irrelevant (yet comical) side stories.
Being in Chinese Class

As discussed from the survey results, students mostly preferred to speak in English with their peers. Students from Group III—the students who code-switched most often—were no exception; aside from one student who recently immigrated to the US last year, the other students preferred to speak in English with their peers. When students from Group III were with each other during recess and in between classes, they liked to speak in Chinese. But for the most part, they typically spoke English in class, even during Chinese class.

Ted speaks in English. Matt is pretty loud spoken. Matt speaks in English. But it seems like the boys ask him [Matt] for help on Chinese words. Actually...the boys' table tends to help each other out in English... Mark is conversing really loudly and dynamically with the teacher [in Chinese]. Turns out he really had to go to the bathroom...The students become so lively during Chinese class! They chit chat in Chinese, switching in between English and Chinese when they need help. They laugh and make Chinglish jokes. I wish I can understand them. I think this is the first time I've ever seen the Chinese students being so talkative. I also think it's the first time I've seen them smile for such a long period of time... They act pretty differently in Chinese class compared to how they act and behave in regular classes...(Fields Notes at FACTS, March 2, 2012, 1st Period).

The boys from Group III were always the liveliest during Chinese class. They joked around quite often, helped each other out, and code-switched frequently. They explained to me later that they were more related and comfortable in Chinese class because it was somewhat helpful and easy, which was why they enjoyed talking in that class:

**Group III**
Me: Do you feel yourself getting worse in Chinese?
Mark: Well...I don't think I'm getting worse or getting good because everyday you talk Chinese. So simple. Welll...I am learning a little from Chinese class, so I suppose...getting better.
Me: Do you think Chinese class is better?
(Mark: translating in Chinese to Tom.)
Darren: No
Tom: Too easy
Mark: Because they from China.

The other two groups had a very different experience. They expressed frustration with having to take Chinese class. One main reason was because they did not speak Mandarin and had a lot of difficulty with keeping up in class.

**Group I**
Me: Do you guys feel the same way (about getting better at Chinese)?
Lucy and Carrie: Nope
Lucy: Chinese class is so frustrating.
Me: Why?
Lucy: We can't speak Chinese [Mandarin] and we don't even know why we're in that class.

Group II
Me: And you guys don't really speak Chinese when you're at school, right?
Matt: Well I speak it with my friends. Like Calvin, Mark, Benson, and John.
Ted: I never do because most people aren't Cantonese and because Mandarin is the main language in China
Me: So... When you're speaking Chinese to your other friends in Chinese do you ever feel uncomfortable doing that or do you usually don't even care? Are there any classes where you would never speak in Chinese and other classes where you're ok with speaking Chinese?
Liam: I will not speak Chinese in Chinese school.
Matt and I laugh.
Me: Are you joking? Why?
Liam: Because if I speak Chinese and like mess up... people might laugh.
Me: What about in school here?
Matt: Ted only speaks Cantonese. Mostly we don't even understand.

Students from Group I and Group II explained that Chinese class was hard, especially because they did not speak Mandarin at home. Group III enjoyed the relevance Mandarin has in FACTS’ environment. Students from other groups were aware that their cultures and languages were respected and valued at FACTS, but they had some resentment that they were forced to learn Mandarin. The different reactions to Chinese class reflect the limitations of FACTS’ pluralistic policy; helpful as it may be in affecting student engagement, some LM students may feel left out.


When asked about identity, everyone except one student indicated she identified only as Cambodian. When I interviewed the one student who identified only as Cambodian, she replied that it was because she was born in Cambodia. To recap, 20 students indicated that they “sort of” identified with White Americans; only 3 indicated that they felt they had many similarities with White American, and 5 students indicated that they felt they had no similarities with White Americans. During the interviews, students explained in detail why they felt “sort of” identified with White Americans, and why they still felt a distinction from White Americans. There was a wide range of responses.
**Group I**

Me: Would you say you identify more with your ethnic identity or are you more American, or is it equal for you guys?

Carrie: Equal.

Stacey: Me, I'm more ethnic.

Mary: For me, it's equal.

Me: What does it mean then to identify as being American? What's the important part, of like...what makes you American?

Stacey: Well, even if I don't know how to speak Khmer, I will say I am more ethnic because that's where I came from, that's where my parents came from, where my family came from, its where I was born.

Lucy: Umm...I'm not really sure

Mary: I would say a bit more to the ethnic but its kind of equal. Because I was born where I from, Indonesian. And like um, like my parents was born there. My sister was born there, my brother was born here. But like, and I knew the language, and um like I knew a lot about Indonesia.

Me: Would you say speaking English has a big part of it?

Carrie: Well, um, I say equal because most of my family members speak English and most speak Cantonese, and we do a lot of Chinese tradition things so yeah, I say equal. English do matter to me its only because I know two languages and if I didn't know English then I feel I wouldn't be able to talk to anyone...

Lucy: English is important to me also because a lot of people immigrate umm...to get a better life in America um but also you need to know like some English to get like proper needs...I do a lot of the same things that White American do. Like umm...go to baseball games, go to movies, things like that.

Me: (to the rest of group) Why would you guys say sort of?

Stacey: 'Cause like when it's Columbus Day or Christmas, like some holiday most of the holidays we don't celebrate it, but like regular life, yeah we go to see movies go shopping.

Stacey, the Cambodian student, did not view language as a relevant factor to her identity. Her identity depended more on where she was born, and the fact that her family did not celebrate or follow traditional American holidays. Mary was similar in that she identified more as an ethnic minority than as an American because she was born in Indonesia. Carrie and Lucy, who were both born in the US, mentioned the importance of language. Lucy, who barely spoke Chinese even though her parents spoke Chinese, identified as feeling more American. Carrie felt equally connected to her American and ethnic identities.

**Group II**

Me: Do you think you're more Chinese or more American, or its pretty equal?

Matt: More American.

Me: Why? That's surprising. Can you explain?

Matt: Because people said that my hair look not Asian.

Me: What does that mean?

Matt: Like not straight. And because my parents keep on saying that I speak too much English and uh one day I'm gonna start becoming American and not very good about being Asian.

Ted: Because when I first learned English, I never had an accent, and uh I've always acted like an American.
Me: What does it mean to be or act like an American?
Ted: Uh, speaking more English instead of Chinese
Liam: Can you repeat the question again?
Me: Why do you feel like you’re more American than you are Chinese?
Liam: Because I wasn’t born in China, I was born here. And I speak more English instead of Chinese and my family is only Chinese and my brother and me just American people. Like we eat American stuff instead of Chinese food.
Me: Would you kind of feel like you don’t belong in the Chinese community? Or are you not comfortable?
Liam: I’m not comfortable.
Me: Reviewing results from surveys. Do you feel like the way you identify as being American is different from being a White American? I guess what I’m asking is why did you answer “no”, Ted, and why did you guys say “sort of”?
Matt: Sort of because we’re all American but its not like we’re the same race. It’s almost similar to like when I’m saying same kind of people we different [mumbles something] but we have similar things too.
Me: Like what?
Matt: Like we’re born in America. And we’re the same.
Ted: No. I don’t think that I have anything in common with White Americans because I don’t like American food, I always eat Asian stuff, and um, I like doing American activities like skateboarding, I play basketball sometimes.

All of the students in Group II responded that they identified more as American than as Chinese. Some of the reasons they gave were that they were born in American, spoke more English than Chinese, and that ate American food. But even though they identified more as American, they clearly felt a distinction from White Americans. Matt’s response, which is italicized in the transcription above, stood out me during the interview because it reflects his belief that White Americans do not define what it means to be American.

Group III
Me: Why do you feel equal, Darren?
Darren: Because I speak English a lot and my brother and sister know English and they always talk to me in English and I only speak Chinese a little bit at home but I still feel like I’m equal, not all American-ish but not all Chinese either.
Me: What about you Mark? Why do you feel more Chinese than American?
Mark: Well, I suppose I change my answer as equal because I’m born here and I’m not that good at Chinese but I do talk a lot in Chinese so I don’t know I suppose equal because I study English and write English so then I suppose I talk a lot and then I talk English and plus equal and then why you guys laughing is there something funny? (talking to other group members)

For Group III, speaking both English and Chinese had a lot to do with their identities. Their answered differed; some felt more Chinese than American, others felt that the two were equal. I followed up with the question about whether the students shared commonalities with White
Americans. One of the students couldn’t quite understand the question and asked for an example, which led to a digression about who was considered to be “White” in 6 Sun.

*Group III*
Mark: Oh you mean like Ted! He is example.
Darren: Yeah Ted
Me: You say he’s white?
Darren: Kind of white...
Me: Huh?
Mark: No he’s just joking
Darren: No I’m not!
Mark: Oh you’re really? Oh.
Darren: He is kind of white
Me: What do you mean by that Darren?
Darren: I mean, he always speak English, he don’t really speak Chinese sometimes only a little bit of Fujianese, I mean Cantonese muttering in Chinese

Being “White” was synonymous to speaking English. Group III did not mention too much about how cultural practices shaped their identities. Most of their discussion identity focused on language use.

In summary, my findings on how language policies are connected to the identities of LM students are mixed. The groups reacted differently to questions about their bilingual status, being in ESL, and being in Chinese class. The data from surveys strongly suggests that LM students identified as ethnic-Americans, and most of the students from FACTS “sort of” identified with White Americans. However, the interviews revealed different nuances on how students really felt about their dual identities. Some students from Group I preferred their ethnic identities more than their American identities, some preferred identifying more as American, and some considered their ethnic and American identity to be equal. Students from Group II, which consisted of LM students who did not speak Mandarin, generally preferred identifying more as Americans instead of their ethnic identities. It is possible that these students felt less connected to their ethnic identities compared to students from Group III because Cantonese is not as commonly spoken as Mandarin at FACTS. Even with FACTS’ pluralistic policy on allowing LM students to speak their home language at schools, the Cantonese students interviewed in this
study were more comfortable speaking in English and did not code-switch very often, if at all. Considering that each group gave mixed responses, ranging from feeling equal about both identities, or preferring one identity over the other, perhaps the language policy at FACTS has no substantial effect on the identities of LM students.

Concluding Discussion

The results from surveys, observations, and interviews support my hypothesis that a pluralistic policy on language will have a positive effect on the academic performance of LM students. Across the board, LM students were academically engaged. Students from all three schools felt that school played an important role in becoming successful; they also believed getting good grades was important. Many of the students also considered themselves to be good students. Language policies did not seem to have an effect on their hopes to excel in school. On actual performance on standardized testing, however, ELL students from FACTS outperformed ELL students from SDP in both math and reading, suggesting that pluralistic language policies can have a positive effect on the testing. How LM students were relationally engaged, that is how students engaged with teachers and peers in class, also differed according to language policy. Students from schools with pluralistic language policies demonstrated higher relational engagement compared to students from the school with a restrictive language policy.

For identity, all of the students identified as ethnic-Americans. But the extent in which they identified with White Americans differed. Students under a restrictive language policy preferred using English more so than students under a pluralistic policy, suggesting that a restrictive policy does in fact nudge students toward assimilating and using English. This does not mean that pluralistic language policies do not do the same. Students under pluralistic policies still felt partial connections with White Americans. Very few students felt like they had
nothing in common with White Americans. Students under pluralistic policies were also more inclined to use both of English and their L1, reflecting their dual identities. These patterns, however, do not elucidate how language policies directly influence identity.

My ethnography at FACTS provided a more detailed illustration of how language policies might affect LM students. The unique Code-Switching Policy at FACTS created a dynamic atmosphere for LM students. The students I closely observed and interviewed were very academically engaged—this does not mean that they were all great students with perfect grades and high test scores; some of them still struggled in grasping concepts, which is typical of any student. What I found to be most interesting from my observations was that the students who were most comfortable with code-switching were also the most talkative ones in 6 Sun. They demonstrated strong relational engagement. Finally, identity still remained a vague topic during the interviews. Students brought up interesting points about how language was not the only aspect influencing their identities and that relating to White Americans did not dictate what it meant to be American. Despite the lack of a conclusion on how identity was connected to language policy, the important observation is that students acknowledged both their ethnic and American identities.

There are many limitations to this study that may raise concerns. First, only seven students from a school with a more restrictive policy on language took my survey. This study has not included enough students under a restrictive policy to make a fair comparison. Given the limited time and the lack of response from schools in the SDP to my project proposal, however, the comparisons made were still somewhat significant. Future research should also consider having more schools involved. Furthermore, it would be interesting to compare differences between schools with pluralistic policies. FACTS and APCS both had pluralistic policies on
language, but one taught only in English, while the other was an emerging bilingual school. How the two models differ under similar ideologies on language may be worth exploring.

Finally, this study holds many implications for educators, parents, and policymakers, especially as the LM student population in the US continues to grow. The purpose of my ethnography was to document how a school with a pluralistic policy on language can fit within the framework of an education system that highly prefers English-only programs. FACTS was unique in that it was very open with its pluralistic stance on minority languages but taught all content courses in English, while also requiring all their students to take Chinese language classes. It is an innovative model on how LM students can still be empowered within an English-only setting. The multilingual atmosphere and the respect toward minority languages clearly had a positive effect on the students.

The past debate on the effectiveness of bilingual education has slowly become obsolete; the trend toward bilingualism and multiculturalism is slowly becoming more relevant to education models. According to Rosemary C. Salomone (2010),

In recent years, we have witnessed the birth of educational approaches reflecting the realities of changing demographics, student profiles, and parental preferences...these newer models are achieving positive academic results in an integrative environment. They avoid both the ethnic and racial segregation of older bilingual approaches and the fragmentation and loss of content instruction typical of SL pull-out programs (p. 236).

FACTS is one example of the new models of education that Salomone describes. Pluralists in the past have raised concerns on how state and federal language policy limits funding for bilingual programs. But I believe FACTS shows how state and federal language policies are open for interpretation, leaving room for innovative language education models to develop. The requirement for ELLs to take standardized tests in English, even within a year after arriving in the US, is a difficult obstacle for students to overcome. By providing a pluralistic environment
in school, allowing students to freely switch between their L1 and English, can perhaps help ease students into acquiring academic English. It is certainly not a perfect model—the achievement gap between LM students and their mainstream peers may still remain, and there are only so many languages that can be incorporated in a school environment. The pluralistic model at FACTS, however, seems to hold some potential and does not seem to harm the academic performance or identities of LM students.

While being bilingual generally holds a positive stigma in society today, there are still English-only policies that are being proposed and considered by state governments, even in Pennsylvania. Just last fall in 2011, the House State Government Committee of Pennsylvania held hearings to consider proposals to declare English as the official language of the state, and mandating that all “state government, municipal, and school district business be conducted in English.” Representatives Scott Perry and RoseMarie Swanger, who have introduced the proposals, regret over “the money spent printing government pamphlets and brochures in various languages and would prefer to see the money spent on teaching English courses.” They echo the assimilationist argument that passing this proposal would become a unifying action for the state (Warner, Reuters, September 19, 2011). How this proposal plays out at the local level remains to be seen. Given the results from this study, it seems best to oppose this restrictive policy. It may be more ideal to support schools that encourage the pluralistic use of language. Doing so may produce a generation of LM students who perform well academically and confidently embrace their identities as minorities and as Americans.
Survey Questions

1) At home, what language(s) do your parents use most of the time?
2) At home, what language do you use to talk to your siblings or cousins?
3) What language do you prefer to speak with your parents?
4) What language do you prefer to speak with your friends?
5) School is the most important way for future success.
   Very Important  Important
   Somewhat Important  Not important
6) What kind of student would you say you are?
   Excellent  Good
   Not Bad  Not Good
7) I get all my school assignments done on time.
   All the time  Most of the time
   Sometimes  Not usually
8) Getting good grades is:
   Very Important  Important
   Somewhat Important  Not important
9) When I have a problem with my homework, I usually ask ________ for help. (Circle all that apply)
   My teachers  My friends
   My parents  I don’t ask for help.
10) I like to talk in class because I usually know the answer.
    All the time  Most of the time
    Sometimes  Not usually
11) If I don't understand the teacher, I am not afraid to ask a question.
    I always ask  I usually ask
    I sometimes ask  I never ask.
12) What do you like best about school?
13) In your opinion, what does a person have to do to be a good student? List.
14) I enjoy doing group projects and working with my peers.
    All the time  Most of the time
    Sometimes  Never
15) Speaking in English is easy for me.
    Yes  Sort of  No
16) I like to read in English.
    Yes  Sort of  No
17) Continuing to speak in my heritage language (Chinese, Spanish, etc) is important to me.
    Yes  Sort of  No
    I only speak English
18) What do you consider yourself to be in terms of nationality or ethnicity?
    American  Ethnic-American  Other: ____________
19) What country would you say most of your friends are from?
20) If you went to visit France and made a new friend, would you tell them you were an American? If not, how
    would you identify yourself to your new friend?
    American  Ethnic-American  Other: ____________
21) What language do you think in?
    Only English  English + sometimes heritage language
    Mostly heritage language, sometimes English  Only heritage language
22) Do you feel you have a lot in common with White Americans?
    Yes  Sort of  No
23) Do you like speaking your heritage language?
    Yes  Sort of  No
    I only speak English
## Survey Results

FACTS 6th Grade Linguistic Minority Students Results on Surveys (28 total)

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APCS Linguistic Minority Students (36 total)

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I only speak English
George Washington Linguistic Minority Students (7 total)

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**Note:**
This is the first year the PSSA in Reading and Science assessments were administered. An asterisk may not equal 100 due to rounding.

**Table entries include:**
- *Indicates fewer than 10 students in a group. To protect confidentiality and to protect
  the privacy of individual students, data are blocked, when the total number of students
  in a group is less than 15.

Data is not included among the groups when a student may belong to more than one of these groups.
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Correspondence with ESL Teacher at Antonia Pantoja Charter School

Surveys for 6th grade LM students

mariavillella85@yahoo.com <mariavillella86@yahoo.com>
To: Rachel Lim <rlim@havenford.edu>

Hello Rachel,

The school is a bilingual school from grades K-4. Every year they add on another grade to the bilingual program. By 2015 the School's goal is to have a full bilingual program. Those grades that receive the program now are technically supposed to be receiving 50/50, but it's more 60/40 (the 60 being English). They follow an A/B schedule where one day is Spanish and one day is English. They are taught literacy and social studies in Spanish and science and math in English. However, from 1:30-3:00 math is taught and it's done so in English no matter what type of day it is, hence the issue that it's truly not 50/50. They are working on this. For example, they also get a special where another teacher comes in and teaches them on the various Spanish speaking countries, in Spanish of course. There is also talk of teaching computers and art in Spanish since the faculty teaching these specials also speak Spanish. I hope this answers everything!

Sent from my iPhone

Rachel Lim <rlim@havenford.edu>
Reference List:


