

Policy Discourses and U.S. Language in Education Policies

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Language in education policy for English language learners in the United States has varied significantly over time and has been shaped by policy discourses that could broadly be described as assimilationist (monolingual) and pluralist (multilingual) views of the role of linguistic and cultural diversity in schools. This article outlines the main arguments underlying these discourses, situating them as distinctly different societal conversations rather than mere opposites. Both discourses have historically been reflected in U.S. language policies at different times with different dimensions being highlighted within each discourse. At present time, the dominance of monolingual discourses is clear, although pluralistic spaces continue to resist monolingual trends. The article concludes with the need for constructing more pluralist discourses and proposes a framework that advocates for policies and practices that affirm cultural identities, promote additive multilingual learning environments, and support an integrative approach to the schooling of linguistically and culturally diverse learners.

POLICY DISCOURSES AND BILINGUAL STUDENTS' SCHOOLING

Due to globalization, technological advances, and continual migration patterns, educators and policy makers have to deal with increasingly complex and diverse teaching and learning contexts. The values, beliefs, and convictions educators and policy makers hold about how best to respond to linguistic and cultural diversity in school will shape schools' responses to this diversity. What earns legitimacy (what is valued) will be reflected in discursive practices (how we talk about things) as well as concrete actions, such as formal policies and resource allocation. Some have referred to these beliefs or ideologies as broader societal conversations, or Discourses (Gee, 1996).

This article considers the Discourses surrounding linguistic diversity in schools as they are enacted through implicit and explicit language choices or decision making (Shohamy, 2006; Woolard, 1998). The focus is broadly on the position of linguistic and cultural diversity in schools. This includes a wide range of language choices beyond medium of instruction, such as literacy activities, curriculum content, and assessment practices (de Jong, 2011). These multiple language choices in schools, or language-in-education policies, define the role of different language(s) and language varieties in schools, including which language(s) can or must be used for instructional purposes (Corson, 1999). Although language-in-education Discourses are varied and multiple, two broadly defined perspectives are analytically useful: pluralist and assimilationist discourses. I first outline the main arguments or discursive frames that characterize pluralist and assimilationist

TABLE 1
Pluralist and Assimilationist Discourse

	Pluralist/Multilingual Discourse	Assimilationist/Monolingual Discourse
Guiding question	How can we employ linguistic diversity in solving social, environmental, and technological problems?	How can we achieve greater efficiencies through the reduction and streamlining of diversity?
Value of diversity	Additive view; linguistic and cultural diversity as a positive force to be built upon and used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity is the norm • Multilingualism supports cross-linguistic and intercultural communication • Cognitive, educational, cultural, political, and economic benefits of multilingualism should be available to all 	Dis/replacement (subtractive) view; linguistic and cultural diversity needs to be limited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monolingualism is the norm • One language is needed to support effective communication, efficiency, and national unity
View of bilinguals and bilingualism	Bilingualism from a holistic perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual as bilinguals • Bilingual as two monolinguals in one • Focus on language use in sociocultural and sociopolitical context • Assessment across two languages, combining skills • Unitary system where transfer occurs 	Bilingualism from a fractional perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on language as system • Assessment in one language, separate skills • Container system where one language interferes with the other
Preferred program models	Additive bilingual programs with the goal of supporting bilingual competence	Monolingual programs or bilingual programs with the goal of teaching societal language
Policy to practice	Focus on equity through affirming identities, additive bilingualism, and integration	Focus on the same educational experiences through assimilation, instruction in the societal language and inclusion or segregation

Note. From *Foundations for Multilingualism in Education. From Principles to Practice* (p. 241), by E. J. de Jong, 2011, Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing. Copyright 2011 by Caslon Publishing. Adapted with permission.

discourses as they affect immigrants and children of immigrants¹ in the United States. I then trace how U.S. language policies have led to the current dominance of monolingual discourses in current language-in-education policies. The article concludes with a discussion of constructing alternative pluralist discourses to achieve more equitable outcomes.

PLURALIST AND ASSIMILATIONIST DISCOURSES

Pluralist and assimilationist discourses are two distinct ways of framing the role and place of linguistic and cultural diversity in schools (Lakoff, 2004). These frameworks are powerful, as they shape not only how we discuss diversity in schools but also what is included and excluded in the discussion. The main features of these dominant discourses are presented in Table 1, and a brief outline of key ideas is provided next (for a more detailed discussion, see de Jong, 2011).

¹Although outside the scope of this article, it is important to note that these discourses are also reflected in language-in-education policies toward other linguistic minorities such as native American Indians and nonstandard English speakers.

Pluralist Discourses

Pluralist discourses position linguistic and cultural diversity as the norm within and across geographical borders. Rather than viewing this diversity as a problem, they approach it as a potential force for social change and ask, “How can linguistic diversity be employed in solving social, environmental and technological problems?” (Martí et al., 2005, p. 11). Specifically related to language-in-education policies, the issue is not whether bilingualism is good or bad but rather how can bi- and multilingual competence be maintained, sustained, and expanded for the well-being of individuals, groups, and societies (Cziko, 1992).

Pluralist discourses reference the cognitive, cultural, educational, and sociopolitical benefits of bi- and multilingualism. Studies indicate positive links between bilingualism and metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness. They also show positive relations with symbolic representation, attentional control, and problem solving (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider, 2010; Bialystok, 2009). Allowing students to voice and enact multiple cultural identities shows respect, leads to more engagement in schools, and maintains healthy relationships with families and communities. High-quality bilingual programs have a positive impact on literacy development in the dominant and the minority language, as well as on academic achievement for minority language speakers (e.g., Francis, Lesaux, & August, 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Willig, 1985). At the national and international level, multilingual competence is said to increase economic competitiveness, support military defense goals, contribute to peace efforts, and facilitate interethnic communication (Graddol, 2006; Spolsky, 2004). Finally, particularly for indigenous language groups, linguistic rights are strongly linked to these communities’ autonomy and self-determination (May, 2005).

The relationship between multiple languages is seen as dynamic and fluid. Scholars and educators apply a holistic framework grounded in the use of two or more languages across different contexts and domains (García, 2009; Grosjean, 1989). Phenomena such as the use of multiple languages within discourses (translanguaging), code-switching, or hybrid language practices reflect linguistic creativity (Escamilla, 2006; Martinez, 2010). Transfer of knowledge across languages is normative and encouraged to support the development of multilingual competence, conceptual knowledge, and metalinguistic awareness (Cummins, 2001). Linguistic and conceptual knowledge is accessed and assessed across languages to obtain a full picture of students’ competence and achievement.

Given the diversity of bilingual learners, differentiation and flexibility to adapt to local contexts is seen as an important principle to equitably meet the needs of bilingual learners. Pluralist language-in-education policies and programs are designed to build on and expand students’ linguistic and cultural resources to develop various levels of multilingual competence. These resources are considered assets and necessary supports for students’ academic achievement and identity affirmation (de Jong, 2011).

Assimilationist Discourses

Assimilationist discourses are grounded in the emergence of the nation-state and its concern with a unifying language and national culture to support a sociopolitical community well beyond the traditional boundaries of the tribe or village (Anderson, 1991; S. Wright, 2004). Within

this perspective, linguistic, and cultural diversity are seen as a hindrance and threat to unity; monolingualism is the desired norm. The central question thus becomes, “How can we achieve greater efficiencies through the reduction and streamlining of diversity?” (Martí et al., 2005, p. 11). In terms of language-in-education policies, proficiency in the language of public life (i.e., government, schooling) is seen as a precondition for effective participation in society.

Assimilationist discourses stress the importance of having one (official) language to maintain sociopolitical unity and prosperity (Wodak, deCecilia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 1999; S. Wright, 2004). The political separation of French-dominant Quebec in Canada and the conflicts between French and Flemish (Dutch) speakers in Belgium are often given as evidence for the divisive power of language and the danger of fragmentation as a result of linguistic diversity. Joshua Fishman and Jonathan Pool’s classic studies on the negative relationship between economic development and linguistic and cultural diversity serve as a further warning against linguistic fragmentation (Nettle, 2000). In addition, economic cost and the lack of efficiency of multilingualism or translation are cited in favor of monolingual systems. Given the central role of the official or national language in the public sphere, learning the standard variety of this language is viewed as the priority for other-language speakers. Proficiency in this language is necessary for school success and to secure economic and political integration (Imhoff, 1990).

Assimilationist perspectives on bilingualism view the two languages as two separate, and often competing, entities. In this fractional view of bilingualism, native language maintenance and use is seen as hindering and interfering with efficient second-language learning (Porter, 1998). Code-switching deviates from monolingual norms in either language and is considered a sign of linguistic confusion and/or lack of competence. In terms of assessment, the focus is on demonstrated skills in the school language.

Taking these understandings of bilingualism into consideration, assimilationist language-in-education policies and programs focus on teaching English. The students’ native languages may be tolerated, but not with the intent to develop or maintain that language. Time in English is a key instructional principle—the more time you spend in and exposed to English, the better you will learn it (Imhoff, 1990; Porter, 1998). It is important and appropriate to use the same standards and provide the same instruction for English language learners (ELLs) as for other students.

POLICY DISCOURSES AND LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Pluralist and assimilationist discourses thus represent two quite different societal conversations about diversity, and both are guided by distinct values, questions, and problem definitions. Each perspective frames the schooling issues related to linguistic and cultural diversity differently and hence seeks different solutions in the form of policies and decision making about practices at the school, program, and classroom level (Bacchi, 2000).

In particular, language-in-education policies framed within the pluralist discourse have advocated for practices that make linguistic diversity visible in schools and that support the development of bi- and multilingualism through a dynamic, additive approach—English is added onto the students’ native language(s). Over time, language-in-education policy discourses have included an emphasis on different rationales, including the importance of maintaining cultural heritage and identity (cultural identity discourses), the right to access to and development of the native

language in education (rights discourse), and a resource perspective that stresses the linguistic and cultural assets at the individual, group, and national level (assets discourse). Assimilationist discourses have emphasized language-in-education practices that privilege English over other languages and that lead to subtractive bilingualism—the native language is replaced by the use of English. Historically, assimilationist Language-in-Education policy discourses have referenced the unifying role of English and English monolingualism as a key indicator of the American identity (national identity discourse) and, more recently, the right to English proficiency and access to institutions through English (access discourse).

In the sections that follow, I briefly review language-in-education policies for English language learners (ELLs) in the United States with the goal of illustrating these dimensions of pluralist and assimilationist discourse frames as they have historically emerged during different periods.

Pluralist Beginnings

Multilingualism was long the norm on the North American continent, where for centuries Native Americans lived throughout the area of what is now the United States and spoke about 300 different languages (Brisk, 1981, 2006; Conklin & Lourie, 1983; Kloss, 1998). The European colonists who settled colonial America spoke Spanish, French, German, Dutch, and English, as well as several other northern European languages. Although the question of a national language was put forward, Congress decided against an official language, declaring that the U.S. would have “a policy not to have a policy” (Heath, 1977, p. 10). The unity needed to fight Britain could be better achieved by respecting the various languages rather than by suppressing them and it was anticipated that the domination of the English language would naturally occur without government interference. They valued multilingualism for individuals and national service because it provided access to knowledge and learning, and advocated for the recognition of local, regional, or special interests. Policies toward immigrant and immigrant communities were therefore largely tolerant of the use of immigrant language by community-based organizations, newspapers, and churches, as well as schools (Castellanos, 1983).

In terms of language-in-education policy, schools used the native language as well as English. In addition to a significant number of German bilingual schools, instruction in Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish had been reported in public schools in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota, and Washington. Dutch was used in Michigan, Polish and Italian in Wisconsin. Spanish was used extensively in the Southwest, in particular in New Mexico (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). These bilingual schools sometimes rose out of a desire to maintain the native language and culture and out of necessity in the absence of English-speaking teachers. In other cases, public schools were competing with parochial schools, and offering instruction in the native language was an incentive for public school attendance (Crawford, 1999, 2000).

Early Assimilationist Discourses

A strong American narrative exists that describes the United States as a country of immigrants who have found success economically and politically through full immersion in English and by giving up one’s cultural ties to the home country (Olneck, 1989). The early roots of this assimilationist

discourse can be found during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a time of industrialization, urbanization, and the advent of compulsory public education. At the time, the number of immigrants arriving in the United States grew exponentially. The majority of the new immigrants did not speak English and settled in urban rather than rural areas. Their religious backgrounds and cultural habits were perceived as being distinctly different from previous immigrants (Conklin & Lourie, 1983). These demographic and economic developments were joined by the threat of and entry into World War I (1914–1918). The dominant response to this diversity was that of a strong emphasis on learning English and embracing the new American lifestyle (Handlin, 1982; Higham, 1998). Several laws that limited immigration (e.g., immigrants of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino origin) and that required English proficiency were also passed (Daniels, 1990; Schmid, 2000). These legislative anti-immigrant efforts cumulated in the Immigration Act of 1924, which put quotas on the number of immigrants allowed to enter the United States. Because the quotas were based on the 1890 census, immigration from northern European countries was significantly privileged.

Language became a central issue in this “new” immigration debate (Leeman, 2004; Schmid, 2000). Speaking English became a precondition for being an American and for national unity. As Theodore Roosevelt exclaimed in 1914, during World War I, “We must have but one flag. We must also have but one language. . . . The greatness of this country depends on the swift assimilation of the aliens she welcomes to her shores” (as cited in Crawford, 1992, p. 85). In this climate, the use of languages other than English in school was portrayed as un-American and undesirable. Educational policies for immigrant children were ones of neglect and ignorance and focused on learning English. Intelligence testing in English led to the disproportionate placement of immigrant children in special education classes (Hakuta, 1996). Educators quickly began to recognize that special classes were needed to help students who did not speak English. New York City, for example, established “C” or steamer classes for students older than 8 years who had recently arrived. These classes lasted for 6 months to 1 year, segregated students from native peers, and focused on teaching oral English skills (Berrol, 1995).

A Return of Pluralism

Pluralist discourses found their way back into educational policy after World War II. World War II increased awareness of the need for foreign languages. Further reinforced by the Cold War and competition with Russia, the federal government passed the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which promoted extensive foreign language programs for language majority speakers. After the passage of the 1964 Immigration Act (abolishing the 1924 quota system), immigration from South and Central America and Asian countries increased and created new patterns of linguistic diversity. The civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s set the stage for the recognition of minority group rights and antidiscrimination legislation, both of which greatly shaped educational options for immigrant children.

The right to not be discriminated against based on language status or national origin and the role of the native language as supporting ethnic identity and school success featured prominently during this period. The language of the landmark Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) highlighted the equity dimension in pluralist discourses. Chinese parents in San Francisco argued that their children did not have equal access to the educational system if instruction was in a

language their children did not understand. The Supreme Court agreed, stating that “under these state-imposed standards 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” (as cited in Teitelbaum & Hiller, 1977, p. 143). In *Lau*, the Court made the important observation that *same* does not imply *equal*. For ELLs, equity is not served by providing them with the same instruction without making specific accommodations for their needs. In response, the Office of Civil Rights reinforced the *Lau Remedies*, which provided a boost for native language instruction through the requirement of bilingual education for elementary school ELL students (Crawford, 1999).

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA), or Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was the first comprehensive federal intervention in the schooling of language minority students and allowed for the use of the students’ native language for instruction. The history of the reauthorizations of the BEA (1974, 1978, 1984, 1988, 1994) provides an interesting study of vying pluralist and assimilationist views (Gándara, Moran, & García, 2004; Wiese & Garcia, 1998). Early reauthorizations emphasized the transitional nature of instruction in the students’ home language and English, a position that Zhou (1997) refers to as a “reluctant bilingual discourse.” This monolingually oriented discourse positions the student’s native language as a temporary bridge to the ultimate goal—learning English. In the 1980s, bilingual education came under heavy criticism for not effectively teaching English (Crawford, 1992; Rossell & Ross, 1986) and the 1988 reauthorization allowed English-only programs to be funded under the BEA. In contrast, the 1994 reauthorization of the BEA was pluralist in scope as it funded maintenance or developmental bilingual programs that taught content as well as language and literacy development in and through languages other than English.

The Assimilationist Present With Pluralistic Edges

The past three decades have witnessed the emergence of a modern Americanization movement. More than 20 states have declared English the official language and multiple policies have been passed that limit the role of languages other than English in federal and state government agencies and in the workplace. Various immigration laws, such as those recently passed in Arizona, have restricted immigrants’ rights to social services and due process (Archibold, 2010). The current version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), also reflects a return to a strong assimilationist discourse. NCLB no longer references bilingual education for immigrant children and values English-only outcomes on English reading and math tests (Evans & Hornberger, 2005; Menken, 2008). The renaming of the federal Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs to “Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students” indicates a clear return to a focus on English only.

The policy discourses that surrounded three English-only ballot initiatives represent an excellent example of the current assimilationist perspectives that dominates today. Media analyses (Capetillo-Ponce, 2002; Galindo, 1997; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Media Alliance, 1998; W. E. Wright, 2005) of Proposition 227 in California, Proposition 203 in Arizona, and Question 2 in Massachusetts showed that supporters of the English-only initiatives expressed concerns for unity as a result of immigrants maintaining their native languages. They also argued

that the use of the native language slows down and hinders efficient second-language acquisition. The lack of English language proficiency is presented as the cause of school failure for language minority students, which may then lead to economic failure and political nonparticipation. Teaching English quickly will remedy this marginalization. A similar “equal access” argument has been noted in the debate on bilingual ballots. Advocates for abolishing bilingual ballots argued that these ballots prevent immigrants from learning English and hence keep them dependent on ethnic leaders for political decision making (Woolard, 1989).

The language of the laws also clearly reflects a monolingual stance. The preamble to the original California law (Proposition 227) establishes the primacy of monolingualism in English rather than bilingualism, declaring, “The English language is the common public language of the United States of America. . . . [It] is also the leading world language for science, technology, and international business, thereby being the language of economic opportunity.” The superiority of English-only is further reinforced in the section dealing with program accountability, which requires districts to document annual progress in English only. Knowledge and skills acquired in and through other languages are not validated and viewed as legitimate. The monolingual intent of the laws can further be seen by constraints on the use of students’ native languages. In the sheltered or structured English immersion classroom, only limited use can be made of the native language (Section 2) and all instructional materials to teach content or literacy must be in English. The recommendation that districts place students from different language backgrounds together in the same classroom further seeks to limit the use of languages other than English. Ironically, early definitions of structured English immersion included a strong bilingual component (McField, 2006), and research has consistently shown the effectiveness of the strategic use of the native language in these programs (Gersten & Baker, 2000).

Despite the hegemony of monolingualism in English, pluralist language-in-education policies continue to create multilingual spaces in schools. For instance, the number of so-called two-way immersion programs continues to grow. Originally established to meet the needs of middle-class Cuban refugees in Miami, Florida (Mackey & Beebe, 1977), these programs developed rapidly in the 1980s supported by federal Title VII funding. Two-way immersion programs enroll both majority and minority language speakers and aims for high levels of bilingualism and biliteracy for all students. Studies have documented positive academic achievement and language and literacy outcomes in English and the partner language for minority and majority language speakers (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002). These positive outcomes of dual language programs have also been documented for schools for English and Spanish-dominant Hispanic students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Lindholm-Leary & Block, 2010). The national and international recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples to transmit their culture and languages has resulted in ongoing efforts supporting Indigenous language and cultural maintenance (McCarty, 2003). Finally, a renewed interest in heritage language education has emerged in formal school settings. Examples include Spanish for Spanish speakers classes (Roca & Colombi, 2003; Valdés, Fishman, Chavez, & William, 2006) and community-based efforts at language maintenance, such as Saturday schools (Cho, Shin, & Krashen, 2004; Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001).

These efforts continue to position the maintenance and development of multiple languages as a resource (Ruiz, 1984) and asset for the individual and the community at large—culturally, educationally, and economically. They also reflect a continuing resistance to English monolingualism. Monolingualism in English is viewed as less relevant in a globalized society where working with

people from diverse background in and through multiple languages is valued. In short, the focus is on the development of skills in multiple languages, including English, in a manner that does not exclude students' native languages.

MULTIPLICITY AND DISCOURSE FRAMES

The discussion of language-in-education policy in the United States illustrates the diversity within and across pluralist and assimilationist discourses. Pluralist discourses have included the following dominant frames: cultural identity, civil rights, and languages as resources or assets. Assimilationist discourse frames have emphasized national identity and, more recently, access. Our review also shows that both Discourses are present in any given period, though some may be more visible and dominant during certain times. Dicker (2003) observed, "What emerges . . . is a kind of multilayered time line: English is a constant presence throughout, existing with other languages that appear and sometimes die out in different parts of the country at various points along the time line" (p. 47).

A historical view of language-in-education policy in the United States also illustrates that the main question is not about the status of English—the position of English as the dominant language of the United States has never been threatened (Alba, Logan, Lutz, & Stults, 2002). It emphasizes that, although much of the focus of both federal and state policies has been on medium of instruction (i.e., bilingual education vs. English-only program models), the policies are in fact grounded in broader Discourses about diversity, schooling, and society. Pluralist and assimilationist discourses define what roles, position, and status are given to languages other than English in schools in significantly different ways. It is important to note that their frames are not necessarily opposites or mirror images but rather reflect distinct views of the place of cultural and linguistic diversity in society. As reflected in Table 1 and illustrated in the wide range of policies over time, the two broad Discourses on language-in-education represent different conversations about diversity. They use different vocabulary to talk about schooling and the role of linguistic and cultural diversity and emphasize different dimensions of schooling.

NEGOTIATING FUTURE FRAMES: PRINCIPLES FOR PLURALISM

As stated earlier, a dominant frame for current language-in-education policies is that of "access," which is positioned as educational, economic, and political success through monolingualism in English and through the homogenization of curriculum and instructional practices. The latter is, for example, represented by common standards and prescribed curriculum implementation (Cummins, 2007; Harper & de Jong, 2009). One important question then becomes whether and how the policies and practices that are informed by this assimilationist-oriented access argument have delivered on the promise of improved educational outcomes for ELLs and minority language speakers.

One positive impact of NCLB frequently mentioned is the increased focus on ELLs and shifts in resource allocation to better support ELL schooling (e.g., Evans & Hornberger, 2005; W. E. Wright, 2002). Although generally considered an improvement, the positive impact of this investment is less evident. The achievement gap between ELLs and White students on NAEP

reading and math scores has barely narrowed over the past years (Fry, 2007). Studies in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts have demonstrated that ELLs' academic language development and achievement has not significantly improved over time as a result of the English-only laws. In some cases it has worsened and/or has resulted in more referrals to special needs or higher drop-out rates (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). Currently, ELLs disproportionately attend segregated (minority-dominant) schools where they have access to fewer resources and less qualified teachers (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004).

The policies and practices that have adopted assimilationist discourses do not meet their own expectations. The additional investment in ELLs and teachers of ELLs has been accompanied by policies that aim to streamline and homogenize instructional practices. The educational, cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity that ELLs bring to school comes in conflict with this one-model-must-fit-all approach (Herrera & Murray, 2006). A need therefore arises for alternative discourses to achieve educational equity and positive academic outcomes for ELLs. Educators must find more effective ways to create learning environments that take into consideration the linguistic and cultural strengths and needs of ELLs. These strengths and needs should also be considered in educational decision making at the district, school, program, and classroom level. Given the documented cognitive, linguistic, cultural, and educational benefits of approaches that build on, validate and legitimize, and expand ELLs' linguistic and cultural resources (rather than ignore, devalue, or neglect them), schools need to engage in policies and practices that reflect this additive stance (de Jong, 2011). To function as an alternative to assimilationist Discourses for policies and practices at the state, school, and classroom level, pluralist Discourses needs to be developed as a frame for a broad audience that includes policy makers, administrators, teachers, and other educational stakeholders (see also Kumashiro, 2008).

This pluralistic approach can be framed in terms of four core principles that can be used guide educational decision making. In this framework, the overarching principle is that of *educational equity*. This core principle draws educators' attention to the values of respect and fairness as well as how school policies and practices treat bilingual learners as bilingual and bicultural individuals. The Principle of Educational Equity undergirds the next three principles for policies and practices. First, the *principle of affirming identities* is derived from a basic understanding of how people learn, namely, that engagement in and motivation for learning is facilitated when students feel validated for and can build on what they know. When students' developing sense of self is affirmed and extended through their interactions with teachers, they are more likely to apply themselves to academic effort and participate actively in instruction (Cummins, 2001, p. 2). Affirming identities and providing spaces for identity negotiation in positive ways is fundamental to the academic success of culturally diverse students. This principle helps educators ensure that cultural differences in experiences in and outside school do not become a source of bias but are tapped into as a resource for learning. It avoids a "color-blind" approach that many educators believe allows them to remain neutral and objective in their practices. Adopting texts and textbooks that are representative of the diversity in schools and implementing curriculum that reflects multiple perspectives and issues relevant to students' cultural experiences are examples of decisions made with this principle in mind.

Second, the *principle of promoting additive bi/multilingualism* examines school policies and practices from an additive bilingual and multilingual perspective. Additive schooling contexts build on and add to students' existing linguistic repertoires. They show respect for and provide opportunities to develop language minority students' native languages to the maximum extent

possible. In these environments, students' home and school languages are viewed and used as a resource for teaching and learning. Hiring bilingual staff and the implementation of programs designed to develop bilingualism and biliteracy are examples of how this principle can be implemented at the school and program level.

The third principle, the *principle of structuring for integration*, looks at how a school's various components—students, parents, and teachers, as well as programs and activities—connect, relate, and interact with each other and how these relations reflect equal status among those involved.² School improvement plans that consider the impact on linguistically and culturally diverse students and parent involvement activities that are sensitive to community diversity and concerns are examples of inclusive practices (for more examples of policies and practices at the school and classroom level, see de Jong, 2011).

Each of the four principles is important and the four principles work together to create equitable, additive learning environments for linguistically and culturally diverse students. They reinforce one another, whereas lack of attention to one of the principles can lead to new inequities. For example, without attention to the *principles of affirming identities* and additive Multilingualism, the *principle of structuring for integration* easily turns into an assimilationist approach where linguistic and cultural differences are ignored or where cultural and linguistic differences are constructed as deficits. Simultaneous attention to each of the three principles reminds educators that putting student together in the same physical space does not imply that students will have equal access to educational opportunities.

Similarly, without the *principle of structuring for integration*, policies and practices may be aligned with the other two principles but they operate in the margins and fail to impact the broader school environment. For example, additive and affirming practices can characterize an isolated bilingual classroom (Shannon, 1995). Without a whole-school approach, however, the students are likely encounter assimilationist-oriented practices when they leave that classroom and what they know and are able to do are no longer valued according to multilingual norms and a language-as-resource perspective. As a result, students may fail to experience an ongoing sense of belonging in school and this may make it more likely that they will disengage from school.

Educational equity calls for a careful balancing of the demands that each of these principles places on policymakers at all decision-making levels, including teachers. Ultimately, these additive frames matter not only for bilingual learners but for all students who bring different diversities to the classroom.

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²*Integration* is used here because the terms *inclusion* and *mainstreaming* have historically been associated with processes that, intentionally or unintentionally, are concerned with “fixing” the child in order to fit him or her into an existing structure (i.e., the standard curriculum classroom).

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