

# **Proposition 203: A Critical Metaphor Analysis**

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## **Abstract**

This project draws on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work with metaphor analysis to uncover the rhetorical strategies applied by supporters of the English for the Children organization during the 2000 Arizona Proposition 203 campaign. The data were collected from three sources: (a) *The Arizona Republic*; (b) the *East Valley Tribune*; and (c) the 2000 *Arizona Voter Information Pamphlet*. Grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Wodak 1997; Johnstone 2002; Schiffrin 2002), Santa Ana's (2002) metaphor analysis framework was applied to expose the metaphors used to denigrate bilingual education and those who support it, as well as the underlying ideology behind biased legislation like Proposition 203. Metaphors were analyzed in terms of the cognitive entailments produced by their source and target domains. In general, the overall debate between bilingual education and Proposition 203 was characterized as a WAR. The results show that extra emphasis was placed on portraying bilingual education as a FAILURE and situating minority-language students as VICTIMS. Conversely, English was enshrined in the media as the key to the "American Dream." This work exemplifies the analytical power of critical discourse analysis by illustrating how language is utilized as a tool for political ends.

## **Introduction**

In November 2000, Arizona voters passed Proposition 203, English for the Children. This proposition asserted that bilingual education programs that taught students first in their primary language were not enabling language-minority students to learn English quickly or effectively, which impeded both their academic and social development. As an alternative to bilingual education, Proposition 203 promoted 1 year of English immersion instruction to prepare

non-English-speaking students for grade-level classes taught entirely in English. Led by California millionaire and software designer Ron Unz, proponents of Proposition 203 were able to accumulate enough political and social support to overshadow the opposition and convince the public of the initiative's (apparent) value, which was captured in the group's mantra, "English for the Children." To accomplish their goals, Unz and his followers constructed a media campaign that cast bilingual education and its supporters as short sighted and defenders of the status quo.

In spite of the myriad other social factors that affect second language acquisition and education in general (see Crawford, 1999; Krashen, Tse, & McQuillan, 1998; Hakuta, 1986), Proposition 203 was touted as an elixir for the language-minority students' ailments. Although it seems absurd to blame Arizona's record of low achievement on a program in which the majority of students were not even involved (MacSwan, 2000), advocates of Proposition 203 successfully persuaded the voting public to see things the way these advocates wanted them to.

In reality, only 30% of students eligible for language services in Arizona were involved in true bilingual education programs (MacSwan, 2000). Regardless of the obvious cultural and social issues involved in such a proposition as Proposition 203, the majority of the public, including many Latinos/as, saw it as a step toward a better education for non-English-speaking students. Caught in a landslide of confusing test scores, patriotic tropes, and ethnocentric lies, Arizona's voting public voted to limit the educational services that language-minority students receive. The general goals of this investigation are to understand how voters in Arizona might have been convinced to restrict the educational services offered to the language-minority community.

This is a study of how rhetoric is formulated in public spaces to distort and/or legitimate the social context of language(s). Inevitably, any discussion of language policy will lead to larger ideological issues. The methods used to promulgate Proposition 203 stem from a more profound desire to shape society through the control of language. To illuminate these issues, a critical metaphor analysis approach was applied to examine the prevalent rhetoric in the public media during the months leading up to the November 2000 vote. A closer look at the metaphors used by advocates of Proposition 203 to frame the bilingual education debate illuminates the rhetorical strategies that were applied during this time period.

## **Theory**

In most cases, media discourse is presented in an ostensibly benign format (versus outwardly vicious slurs and accusations). Some of the most harmful images are not necessarily the most blatant. Cognitive science has taught us that we think and communicate in terms of images created by

metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As described by Lakoff and Turner (1989), metaphors guide our subconscious thinking and reasoning:

Far from being merely a matter of words, metaphor is a matter of thought—all kinds of thought: thought about emotion, about society, about human character, about language, and about the nature of life and death. It is indispensable not only to our imagination but also to our reason. (p. xi)

According to this position, metaphors (either positive or negative) construct a cognitive framework of social knowledge and worldview. While positive metaphors are used effortlessly to paint a pleasant picture of our lived experiences (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989), when implemented strategically within the media, rhetoric imbued with negative metaphors can drastically sway public opinion (Santa Ana, 2002).

The potency of metaphors is derived from the ontological associations that they induce in our minds. According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of metaphor, the most salient characteristics of a conceptually concrete source domain are mapped onto an abstract target domain to provide a profound cognitive image. Domain, in this sense, refers to the ontological traits associated with a specific idea or entity. Lakoff (1993) states that these mappings "are not arbitrary, but grounded in the body and in everyday experience and knowledge" (p. 245). A metaphor, then, is a process in which the source domain transfers its ontological meaning onto the target domain, resulting in a stream of entailments that guide our understanding of the overall concept.

A thorough discussion of how metaphors in the media affect our understanding of different issues is offered by Santa Ana (2002). By dissecting specific metaphorical linguistic expression such as: the *foreigners* who have *flooded* into the country; the *relentless flow* of *immigrants*; the *massive flow* of *illegal immigrants*; a *sea of brown faces* marching through, Santa Ana (pp. 71–72) demonstrates that the notion of an *immigrant* is associated with the malevolent concept of a *dangerous body of water*.<sup>1</sup> Even though the negative associations might not be explicitly stated in the metaphors, their qualities are understood through our previous experience with and exposure to images of dangerous bodies of water. According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) model, the previous expressions can all be derived from the underlying metaphor IMMIGRATION AS DANGEROUS WATERS. In this example, the semantic source domain DANGEROUS WATERS is mapped onto the semantic target domain IMMIGRATION. In metaphor analyses, capital letters are used to represent underlying ontological metaphor from which the actual linguistic expressions in the rhetoric are derived.

## Method

The focus of this article is on the rhetoric used in the most pervasive written materials available to the public during the months prior to the November 7, 2000, general election. The three principal sources of data that were utilized for this project are: (a) *The Arizona Republic*, (b) the *East Valley Tribune*, and (c) the *Arizona Ballot Propositions & Judicial Performance Review Voter Information Pamphlet* (2000). All three sources contained information that contributed greatly to the formation of public opinion among English-speaking voters concerning the bilingual education debate. The official version of Proposition 203 (available to the public via the *Voter Information Pamphlet*) was also examined.

*The Arizona Republic* and the *East Valley Tribune* were selected due to their wide circulation in the Phoenix Metro–East Valley area. Both periodicals covered the Proposition 203–bilingual education campaign extensively. Journalists, editors, and the general public all contributed to the articles covering the debate. Both newspapers were searched for articles covering bilingual education and/or Proposition 203 between January 2000 and November 2000. These months were chosen due to the timing of the election and the concentration of materials that were relevant to the debate. All articles that included information on bilingual education, language-minority students, and/or the English for the Children (the founding organization of Proposition 203) movement were selected for analysis and analyzed for metaphorical rhetoric. Although both supporters and opponents used rhetoric to support their respective positions, my focus here is on the negative rhetoric utilized by Proposition 203 advocates.

To unearth the attitudes of those behind Proposition 203, I sifted through the periodical materials listed above to find metaphorical excerpts. The next step in the metaphor analysis was to determine a set of prevalent target domains. Target domains were determined according to the principal underlining theme of the excerpts. It was common for multiple source domains to be mapped onto the same target domain within the same excerpt. For example: “Students are *trapped* for years in *segregated bilingual classrooms* that *fail* to teach them English” (*Arizona Voter Information Pamphlet*, 2000, pp. 152–153).

In this excerpt, there are three source domains, TRAP, SEGREGATION, and FAILURE, which have been mapped onto the single target domain BILINGUAL EDUCATION. Thus, the target domain BILINGUAL EDUCATION has three separate sets of metaphorical significance (ontology and entailments) to analyze: BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS A TRAP, BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS SEGREGATION, and BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS FAILURE. The following headings represent the entire set of target domain metaphor themes:

1. BILINGUAL EDUCATION
2. LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS
3. PROPOSITION 203
4. ENGLISH
5. ENGLISH IMMERSION
6. MINORITIES
7. EDUCATION

After I established a set of evident target domain themes, the media excerpts were scrutinized for individual metaphors. The metaphors were arranged numerically according to the frequency of the different source domains that surfaced. Finally, the individual metaphors were broken down and discussed according to their ontology and ensuing entailments.

### Analysis

Before discussing the implications of the results, it is necessary that we look at the specific findings. The following figures display the entire set of metaphors according to their source and target domains. In most cases, excluding the metaphors related to MINORITIES, the caption of each figure represents the target domain theme for all of the constituent metaphors listed within the set. Below each figure, examples of each individual metaphor are provided.

Source domain	Target domain	<i>n</i>
FAILURE	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	51
PATHOLOGY	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	32
INDUSTRY	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	28
BAD INVESTMENT	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	23
SEGREGATION	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	20
TRAP	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	19
BROKEN	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	15
BARRIER	BILINGUAL EDUCATION	12
		<i>N</i> = 200

*Figure 1.* Bilingual education metaphors.

**Proposition 203 Media Campaign:  
Metaphor Breakdown N = 519**

1. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS FAILURE  
“The issue is the absolute, *abysmal failure* of bilingual education programs. . . .” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, September 6, Chandler Community Section, p. 4).
2. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS A PATHOLOGY  
“Spanish-only ‘bilingual education’ which *has inflicted so much educational harm* on tens of thousands of innocent Hispanic children. . . .” (*Arizona Voter Information Pamphlet*, 2000, p. 152).
3. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS AN INDUSTRY  
“Bilingual education has become *a lucrative industry* within education that handsomely rewards its proponents. . . .” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, February 2, p. A14).
4. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS A BAD INVESTMENT  
“Before Arizona legislators throw millions of tax dollars down *the bilingual-education rathole*. . . .” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, February 2, p. A14).
5. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS SEGREGATION  
“Bilingual education is an *evil system of racial discrimination* that has destroyed the education of countless Hispanic children in our state. . . .” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 11, p. B9).
6. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS A TRAP  
“Students are *trapped for years* in segregated bilingual classrooms that fail to teach them English” (*Arizona Voter Information Pamphlet*, 2000, pp. 152–153).
7. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS BROKEN  
“In California, he said, test scores improved ‘*dramatically after bilingual education was scrapped*’” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, June 28, p. A1).
8. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS A BARRIER  
“. . . boosting theories that bilingual programs were *holding kids back*. . . .” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 29, p. A1).

Source domain	Target domain	<i>n</i>
VICTIMS	LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS	32
SWIMMERS	LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS	32
INVADERS	LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS	13
		<i>N</i> = 77

Figure 2. Language-minority student metaphors.

1. LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS AS VICTIMS

“Therefore, any student deprived of the opportunity to become fluent in English *will be economically handicapped . . .*” (*Arizona Voter Information Pamphlet*, 2000, p. 153).

2. LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS AS SWIMMERS

“Children in English immersion classes *doing swimmingly. . .*” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, August 24, p. A14).

3. LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS AS INVADERS

“But even the most motivated teachers feel *the crush of ever-increasing students and languages. . .*” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, January 30, p. A1).

Source domain	Target domain	<i>n</i>
WAR	PROPOSITION 203	73
		<i>N</i> = 73

Figure 3. Proposition 203 metaphors.

1. PROPOSITION 203 AS A WAR

“Unz, meanwhile, has been crisscrossing the country *marshaling forces to mount attacks* on bilingual education in other parts of the country. . .” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, November 20, p. B6).

“*Battling the powerful bilingual lobby* within the public school system is daunting. . .” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, February 3, p. A14).

“I suspect the reason why we won’t see a *battle* is because *bilingual educators have little ammunition. . .*” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 24, Chandler Community Section, p. 4).

Source domain	Target domain	<i>n</i>
SUCCESS	ENGLISH	21
UNITY	ENGLISH	16
TOOL	ENGLISH	14
GIFT	ENGLISH	1
		<i>N</i> = 52

Figure 4. English metaphors.

1. ENGLISH AS SUCCESS

“English is the language of *opportunity and economic advancement*. . .”  
(*Arizona Voter Information Pamphlet*, 2000, p. 152).

2. ENGLISH AS UNITY

“If we’re going to have a society that stays together, *we’ve got to have a common language*. . .” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 11, p.A14).

3. ENGLISH AS A SKILL

“The government and the public schools of Arizona have a moral obligation . . . to provide all of Arizona’s children . . . *with the skills necessary to become productive members of our society*” (Proposition 203, Section 1).

4. ENGLISH AS A GIFT

“Please VOTE YES on ‘English for the Children’ and give *the gift of English* to all Hispanic children in Arizona” (*Arizona Voter Information Pamphlet*, 2000, p. 152).

Source domain	Target domain	<i>n</i>
ACCELERATION	ENGLISH IMMERSION	26
SUCCESS	ENGLISH IMMERSION	23
		<i>N</i> = 49

Figure 5. English immersion metaphors.



1. ENGLISH IMMERSION AS ACCELERATION

“Therefore, it is resolved that: all children in Arizona public schools shall be taught English *as rapidly and effectively as possible. . .*” (Proposition 203, Section 1).

2. ENGLISH IMMERSION AS SUCCESS

“Students in California with limited English *exceed expectations. . .*” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, August 20, p. A16).

Source domain	Target domain	<i>n</i>
PATHOLOGY	IMMIGRANTS	23
ISOLATION	IMMIGRANTS	12
ARTIFACT	IMMIGRANTS	12
		<i>N</i> = 47

Figure 6. Minority metaphors.<sup>2</sup>

1. IMMIGRANTS AS A PATHOLOGY

“It’s particularly acute in Arizona, where Douglas has basically become *the open wound in a bleeding border. . .*” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 11, p. A14).

2. IMMIGRANTS AS ISOLATION

“The problem that recent immigrants from any country face is that they *surround themselves* with people [family, friends] who speak their own language . . .” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, July 10, p. B6).

3. MINORITY LANGUAGES AS AN ARTIFACT

“. . . argued that the role of public education is to teach children to read, write and speak in English, *not to preserve native languages*” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 13, p. B1).

Source domain	Target domain	<i>n</i>
BODY OF WATER	EDUCATION	18
COMPETITION	EDUCATION	3
		<i>N</i> = 21

Figure 7. Education metaphors.

## 1. EDUCATION AS A BODY OF WATER

“But California’s parents, including most immigrants whose *children were sinking year after year* in interminable bilingual programs. . . .” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, August 24, p. A14).

## 2. EDUCATION AS A COMPETITION

“But if they don’t become immersed in and taught in English in school as soon as possible, *they’ll be behind the game*. . . .” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 13, Northeast Community Section, p. 2).

In addition to the metaphors listed above, another prominent theme that was woven throughout the media discourse was that of the “American Dream.” It was used by advocates of Proposition 203 and applied to an overarching syllogism. Essentially, it promoted speaking English as equating success and prosperity. Allegedly, if immigrants want to be successful (and achieve the American Dream) they need to learn English. In this strategy, American nostalgia is mapped onto the concept of a dream to produce a romantic vision of economic and material success, effectively situating minority languages and bilingual education as the antitheses of liberty and happiness.

### **The American Dream (*n* = 16)**

“. . . supporters say the measure emphasizes English, which is the key to the American Dream” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, October 25, p. A22).

“Her pursuit of the American Dream is on hold, perhaps forever” (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, May 7, p. A1).

There were two basic principles promulgated by Proposition 203. First, it is imperative for children to learn English if they are to be successful in the United States. This was relayed to the public by juxtaposing powerful metaphors like ENGLISH AS SUCCESS and ENGLISH AS UNITY with the concept of the American Dream. The second founding principle of Proposition 203 was that children would learn English in 1 year if placed in a structured English immersion context. Bombarding the public with the ENGLISH IMMERSION AS SUCCESS and ENGLISH IMMERSION AS ACCELERATION metaphors effectively conveyed this image.

Due to this type of opinionated rhetoric, the language-minority community was cast in a negative light. Although language-minority students were benevolently represented as VICTIMS and SWIMMERS, there was an abrasive trend in the depictions of other minorities (i.e., the larger Hispanic and Native American communities). Unless language-minority communities were portrayed as being supportive of Proposition 203, they were discussed as

PATHOLOGY. This discourse was extended from language minorities (Hispanic and Native American) to all ethnic supporters of bilingual education. This strategy was necessary to convince the public to save the VICTIM from the grip of the PATHOLOGY. Growing student populations (INVADERS) were used to implant a sentiment of urgency. Obstructing the students' access to English results in ISOLATION (i.e., bilingual education obstructs access to English and inhibits them from communicating with the English-speaking community) and threatens UNITY. These final attitudes explicitly reflect larger issues of language bias.

With financial support to schools based on head count (BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS AN INDUSTRY), it was easy for the reader to extrapolate the benefits of keeping students in programs by impeding their language acquisition. The efficacy of this message was based on the fact that the voting public was and is tired of being supposedly swindled out of tax money for useless bureaucratic programs. The prominence of BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS A BARRIER and BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS FAILURE created an overall image of a deficient program. These representations of bilingual education established a strong cognitive foundation upon which the BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS AN INDUSTRY (i.e., to generate profits) as well as the ENGLISH AS SUCCESS entailments were constructed.

The larger context of WAR ( $N = 73$ ) was used to establish sides in the debate and portray bilingual education as an enemy. Aside from the WAR metaphor, bilingual education received the vast majority of rhetorical attention from Proposition 203 supporters. As a single target domain, 200 (recorded) metaphors were found that applied specifically to BILINGUAL EDUCATION, whereas the next largest metaphor group (LANGUAGE-MINORITY STUDENTS) only amassed 78. Strategically, this flood of BILINGUAL EDUCATION metaphors turned out to be very efficient. By concentrating on defiling bilingual education, Proposition 203 supporters placed very little emphasis (in comparison) on actually describing the specific terms of Proposition 203 (e.g., ENGLISH IMMERSION,  $N = 49$ ). Proposition 203 supporters also avoided attacking students and parents (which could or would have been seen as prejudiced) by concentrating on administrators, researchers, and teachers. Ultimately, painting bilingual education as a failure and a scam undermined the efforts of those against Proposition 203 by diluting their credibility.

Even the title of Proposition 203's language education program was carefully promoted. *Sheltered immersion* conveys an image of a safe environment where students (SWIMMERS) build up their English competence and skills before easily transitioning into mainstream (BODY OF WATER) classes. *Sheltered* means organization and safety. It is a place where students (VICTIMS) can take refuge and heal their wounds. It is a benevolent, nurturing system that ensures the success of students. Whereas the strategy of

Proposition 203's opponents revolved around trying to communicate language acquisition research and statistics to the public, proposition proponents were much more publicly vocal and visible, playing off of patriotic tropes and derogatory metaphorical rhetoric. In this context, it is no wonder that 64.5% of voters chose to support Proposition 203.

## Discussion

This analysis demonstrates the function and importance of language in an ethnically pluralistic society from multiple vantage points. First, the language of the majority group (English) was emphasized as an indispensable skill for achievement. Advocates of Proposition 203 equated conformity to success and linguistic diversity to social degradation and deviation. This automatically relegates minority languages to an inferior position. Next, bilingual education programs were defamed as inhibiting the acquisition of English (i.e., inhibiting achievement and denying access to the American Dream). Finally, by contrasting American norms (i.e., values determined by the dominant class, which holds the lion's share of society's economic, symbolic, and cultural capital) with language-minority practices (i.e., bilingualism), Proposition 203 proponents made clear to the public what needed to be done to "help" the non-English-speaking community succeed. Unfortunately, the jingoistic and ethnocentric underpinnings behind Proposition 203 were diluted by such cognitively effective rhetoric. Hidden behind this negative facade is the true goal of bilingual education: to cultivate multilingualism and multiliteracy.

The media sources analyzed in this project were selected for multiple reasons. All three sources were and are circulated throughout most of Arizona. Also, each provided a platform for both public (editorials, pro and con arguments) and institutional (news reporting, legal wording) dialogues. A written medium allows an author to plan her or his choice of words carefully and select the most striking quotations to include in a news article, thereby incorporating the most potent metaphors in the text. This frequent use of metaphorical language produced distinct rhetorical patterns that highlighted the fundamental intentions of the authors. These rhetorical examples have opened the door for further discussion on access to the media and the persuasive nature of language.

Through the use of multiple metaphors, cultural insensitivity was communicated in the media in such a way that it seemed reasonable. Banking on prominent negative ethnic associations (Woolard, 1989), advocates of Proposition 203 couched the language issue in terms of class and education. This strategy caused society to associate a proper education with an education delivered in English. Furthermore, notions of poverty and social inequities were blamed on the language barrier and/or a reluctance to learn English,

thereby causing speakers of both English and Spanish to push for a remedy (i.e., a cure for this social PATHOLOGY).

Seemingly, the rhetorical debunking of bilingual education proved to be a successful tactic. The real success of this campaign, though, was achieved as an aggregate effort. The methodical application of metaphors planted seeds of doubt in the public's mind. *Coherence* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) between the metaphors explains the inextricable web of negative entailments toward bilingual education. The efficacy of language was combined with the ontological impact of imagery and social knowledge to shift popular opinion. Although this well-orchestrated campaign exemplifies the persuasive power of language, it was assisted greatly by the selective nature of the media's editorial process, which affected how the message was produced.

Whereas encouraging language acquisition and supporting the students' right to have access to English are honorable motives, discrediting the necessity to maintain heritage languages and promoting subtractive language acquisition are outright demonstrations of bias (Crawford, 1999). Maria Mendoza, chairwoman of Arizona's branch of English for the Children, clearly articulated the underpinnings of her organization: "Why do they [bilingual education advocates] want to keep them [language-minority students] as prisoners in their culture and their heritage?" (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 13, p. B1). This statement epitomizes the founding principles of Proposition 203. Without realizing the fundamentally pejorative connotations that she was conveying, Mendoza clearly expressed her group's underlying ideological orientation: Languages other than English are to be regarded as inferior tools and skills.

Regardless of the true objective(s) of the English for the Children movement, whether it was to teach children English or to preserve the dominance of English in society, Proposition 203 was a concerted effort to derail heritage-language development in public schools. The effects of this are crucial. From a young age, children learn that their native language and culture are not valued in American society. They are involved in an educational context that does not permit them to use their native language to learn. Meanwhile, their natural academic achievement is stymied during the time it takes them to acquire a sufficient level of English to be successful in the classroom. Education, then, becomes an exasperating game of constant catch-up. Simultaneously, students feel frustrated with the academic world of English and discomforted with the low status of their native language (Cummins, 1999).

Social communication, of all types, is imbued with ideological tensions that concurrently subordinate certain individuals and superordinate others. To understand how networks of power and communication are maintained and cultivated, one must analyze specific examples of these phenomena (e.g., Proposition 203). Kroskrity's (1998) characterization of language as "an

instrument of power and social control” (p. 115) provides an appropriate backdrop for this project. This notion can be seen here in two ways. First, Proposition 203 explicitly reflects a specific hierarchical view of languages. Passing Proposition 203 was about relegating a minority language (i.e., Spanish) to an informal context. English was promoted as superior to minority languages in order to ensure that COMPETITION, ACCELERATION, and SUCCESS were associated with the dominant-class language. These positive associations with English implicitly entail the opposite for Spanish. Thus, speaking Spanish (or any other minority language) is stigmatized in the socioeconomic realm. By not allowing minority languages to be cultivated, the proposition perpetuates predominance of English (and those who speak it). Establishing this view of English in schools guarantees that children will grow up viewing English as the language of power and achievement.

Secondly, Kroskrity’s (1998) views can be directly applied to the actual use of language in the media. Proposition 203 advocates used language in a way that contributed to the “general process of the production of meanings and ideas” (Williams, 1977, p. 55). Their rhetorical strategies not only reflected dominant-class interests and ideas, they also contributed to the reproduction and perpetuation of such ideas. The use of language in the media reinforced this position by disseminating negative connotations (FAILURE, TRAP, BARRIER, PATHOLOGY, INVADERS, and WAR) concerning bilingual education and language-minority communities. They employed concepts like UNITY and the American Dream to portray English as the essence of American society. The prevalence of this language in the newspapers and in the legal materials ensured that voters would be exposed to these ideas before voting. Language, in this sense, was truly an instrument of power and social control. By removing bilingual programs, Proposition 203 has extended the boundaries of the normative context of language use (i.e., when and where a language is considered appropriate) in society. Whereas English is the standard in educational and economic realms, minority languages have been relegated to casual and informal contexts outside of school.

The goal of this analysis was neither to discredit the importance of English in society nor to criticize those who desire to teach English to language-minority students. On the contrary, I am arguing for the simultaneous cultivation of English and the students’ heritage language(s). Encouraging multilingualism acknowledges the value of different ways of thinking. As a country of immigrants, the United States has benefited from the different perspectives brought to this country by various peoples. English is a powerful language, but learning it should not necessitate eradicating other languages. By focusing on the metaphors that were used to influence the public’s viewpoint on language education policies, this discussion has illuminated larger social issues. While this work discusses (some of) the inequities facing

language-minority students in the public education system, it also suggests broader issues of social injustice and stratification.

Even though the fundamental ideology of Proposition 203 is wrought with bias, I believe that many of the advocates and voters truly wanted to help the language-minority population. Hopefully, the findings of this project will help people with sincere intentions to realize how metaphorical rhetoric can mislead one in understanding the overall sociopolitical context of language policies like Proposition 203 and the consequences that they produce. Since it is still in its nascent stages, the true impact of Proposition 203 cannot yet be fully seen. Further investigation of the resulting intersections between linguistic boundaries will be needed as the social effects of Proposition 203 continue to unfold.

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Italics were added by the author for emphasis.

<sup>2</sup> Although the focus of this paper is on rhetoric aimed at Spanish-speaking minority-language students, much debate centered on the issue of Native American language programs, as well.