

Dreams of (Under)Achievement: A Critical Metaphor Analysis of the American Dream and the Formation of Language Policy in Arizona

Eric Johnson

Arizona State University

In this era of heightened xenophobia, it is important to look beyond the daily avalanche of negative media and consider why there is such widespread fear of foreigners. In an attempt to understand such an immense problem, the current situation of immigrant and language-minority students in Arizona will be discussed. Understanding how communities are shaped through the implementation of language policies illuminates the social processes involved in the cultural and linguistic oppression of minoritized groups. Specifically, the pervasive metaphor of the American Dream will be analyzed as a tool to promote anti-immigrant policies within the media. While this study sketches out the relationship between language ideologies and education, Fauconnier's (1997) approach to metaphor analysis is applied to uncover the semantic foundation of the American Dream. This alternative view of the American Dream highlights the physical and structural obstacles that are frequently brushed over in the media during discussions concerning immigrants.

Introduction

The intersection of education and language policy has produced one of the most contentious debates throughout the U.S. in recent years. In 2000, the Arizona Proposition 203 campaign gained overwhelming public approval by claiming that Arizona's bilingual education programs impeded English acquisition by language-minority students. Currently, language-minority students in Arizona are placed into *sheltered English immersion* classes for a period not normally intended to exceed one year before being mainstreamed into the regular education (i.e., all English) classroom. Established within a context of educational apathy and social antipathy, it is necessary to look at the impetus for language policies like Proposition 203 and the strategies used to promulgate them to the voting public.

This paper looks at the formation of public opinion toward immigrants, bilingual education, and language-minority students by considering how economic success and social integration are portrayed by the media in terms of the *American Dream*. To many, the American Dream connotes economic success and security. To others, just having the chance to live and work in the U.S. constitutes the American Dream. But what does the American Dream really mean? Why is this ubiquitous concept

so influential in American society? How is it used to motivate vast groups of people? The notion of the American Dream is far reaching and appears in many different social realms. It is repeatedly used by politicians to promote their latest policies; it is frequently heard and seen in commercial advertisements; and, most importantly, it is often the reason many immigrants move to the U.S. In order to better understand the power inherent in the concept of the American Dream, this discussion analyzes the semantic structure of the underlying metaphor and demonstrates how it is used within a sociopolitical framework to promote potentially harmful policies targeted at immigrants. Specifically, the American Dream metaphor will be examined as it appeared in the media surrounding the debate over Arizona's anti-bilingual education law passed in 2000. Furthermore, while the principal focus is on how metaphorical rhetoric in the media shapes public opinion, the underlying themes of immigrant education and language policy span multiple fields of investigation and are evident throughout this analysis.

Language Ideologies in the US

The ideological underpinnings to the language debates within the United States demonstrate how schools are used as instruments to isolate and channel language-minority immigrants into the

margins of society. Understanding the process by which this occurs requires a brief description of the formation and perpetuation of language ideologies in the United States. While there are multiple impediments confronting immigrants as they struggle to integrate into a foreign society, illustrating the role that language plays in this process highlights many of the underlying social and political biases that pervade American society. In the United States, the act of speaking another language, or even speaking English with a foreign accent, is frequently received with prejudiced sentiments and can contribute to large scale notions of xenophobia (Spolsky, 2004). Urciuoli (1998) explains that when languages other than English are spoken in public contexts in the United States, the speakers are viewed as a threat to the essence of being “American.” But why does this occur? Where does this view originate?

Since the 18th century, English has always been the dominant language in the U.S. Contrary to popular belief, no other language has even come close to achieving this stature (Crawford, 1999, 2000; Schmidt, 2000). Schmidt (2000) highlights some valuable points concerning the status of the English language. First, not only are most non-English-speaking residents trying to acquire a working knowledge of English, so are most upwardly mobile residents in almost every country on the globe. Second, competence in English is highly correlated with social status, prestige, and income in the United States. Instead of looking at immigrants as a force that is diluting or diminishing the prominence of English, it is clear that “the life chances of U.S. language minority group members today are shaped by language difference and by structured ethnic inequalities in which culture, language, class, and race are deeply intertwined” (Schmidt, 2000, p. 224).

A quick glance at the most recent U.S. Census (2000) data will help situate the prominence of English in the United States. Of the 262,375,152 people over the age of five listed in the census, only 8.1% (21,320,407) of the total population is reported

to speak English “less than very well.” Noting that approximately 92% of the nation speaks English “very well,” it is hard to substantiate any claim that English is in danger of being overtaken by minority languages. Historically, the spread of English has been boosted by both explicit and implicit government policies toward ethnic groups in America. The process of cultural dilution of annexed *Mexicanos* in the 19th century, the Dawes Act of 1871 and Indian allotment of reservation lands, and the Slave codes of the Old South are all examples of explicit attempts to diminish the identity of minority groups (Schmidt, 2000). Schmidt (2000) poignantly notes that through these types of processes we see that “the identity of race and language was taken for granted, and race was exalted as the basis of a nation” (p. 207).

With a combined 8 million people (approximately 3% of the total U.S. population) admitting to speaking English “not well” or “not at all,” it seems even more absurd to imagine that Spanish is considered by many as the main threat to English (U.S. Census, 2000). Spolsky (2004) suggests that the xenophobic sentiments felt towards Latinos might have to do with the overall population in the United States. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are approximately 35 million Latinos (over the age of 5) living in the U.S., constituting approximately 10% of the total population. In addition, Spolsky (2004) reminds us that (contrary to popular beliefs) the concentrations of Hispanics from different countries do not make up a monolithic ethnocultural entity. From a diachronic perspective, the current situation with the Latinos in the U.S. can be seen as parallel to the plight of the German population in the 19th and 20th centuries (Wiley, 1998; Del Valle, 2003). Being proportionally very similar, Latinos in the U.S. are being subjected to similar bias-oriented language policies that eventually led to the dilution of the German language in American society. However, in the current climate of xenophobia in the U.S., this language controversy resonates with deeper sentiments of bias.

From a legal perspective, the battle over language rights could be viewed from within the framework of the U.S. Constitution. While there is no direct mention of an official language in the Constitution, the First Amendment guarantees an individual's freedom of speech and the Fourteenth Amendment affirms the principle of equal protection under the law and includes the due process clause concerning the protection of life, liberty, and property (Miner, 1998; Crawford, 2000; Del Valle, 2003). Yet, like many other concepts in the Constitution, different interpretations of these Amendments have caused a great deal of tension concerning the meaning and applicability of language usage within the constitution (Weinstein, 1990; Miner, 1998). Specific landmark Supreme Court cases have interpreted the Amendments in favor of the language minority community (see *Meyer v. Nebraska*, *Yu Cong Eng v. Trinidad*, *Farrington v. Tokushige*, and *Mo Hock Ke Lok Po v. Stainback* in Del Valle, 2005, pp. 30-45)

From an immigration perspective, learning English was (has been) considered part of a two-part process, "de-ethnization and Americanization" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 94). This form of language shift explains the process of linguistic assimilation of immigrants by the third generation (see Schmidt, 2000, p. 1, 72-75). This occurs to such an extent that in the majority of cases the heritage language is eventually lost and replaced by English by the third generation (Adams, 1990). While multiple languages were spoken and widely accepted, English was understood as the social norm. In the early part of the 20th century after World War I, a rise in xenophobic sentiments accompanied a change in a more liberal immigration policy. The anti-foreigner views supported almost thirty years of English-only legislation, largely implemented through the public school system (Harklau, 2003; Spolsky, 2004). Many states made English the only medium of instruction available. State-supported cultural oppression remained high until national policies in the 1960's (i.e., the 1964 Civil Rights Act) became more generally supportive

of multilingualism and multiculturalism (starting with the authorization of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and the subsequent reauthorizations of the Act in 1974, 1978, 1984, and 1988).

Concisely summarizing the issue at hand, Marshall and Gonzalez (1990) explain that "the United States is in the throes of debating the nature of its identity, veiled under the thin guise of deciding the necessity for an official language" (p. 49). Wiley (2000) argues that "throughout U.S. history there has always been an expectation of linguistic assimilation into English" (p. 84). The assimilationist attitudes of those who view other languages as counterproductive in the maintenance of a unified nation are a product of complex historical tensions concerning cultural diversity. At the extreme end of the assimilationist spectrum is the ideology of the English-only movement. Spolsky (2004) traces out the origins of the English-only orientation to a sense of insecurity based on dealing with conquered peoples (e.g., Native Americans, Spanish speakers in California and Puerto Rico, and Hawaiians) and the omnipresent threat of dominant immigrant groups (e.g., Germans in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin). While a monolingual English society might be the goal of many contemporary groups, historically, "the imposition of English-only policies was more a means than an end" (Wiley, 2000, p. 79).

In the early decades of the twentieth century, though, these sentiments eventually waxed to the point of a "draconian law establishing immigration quotas" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 105). By the latter decades of the twentieth century, supporters of these ideals had galvanized their views and officially formed political groups to "defend" the English language. Wright (2004) epitomizes the impetus behind the English-only movement:

The English-only debate seems redolent of a former era. The US is not as profoundly affected by globalization as many other groups, whether the phenomenon

is interpreted as flows and contacts or as constraints and pressures. American pre-eminence in media networks and entertainment industry has caused the flows to be away from it and not to it. American cultural products are a major export but there is no equivalent volume of imports (p. 163).

In 1983, a lobbying group known as *U.S. English* appeared as the leader of the English-only movement. Co-presidents S.I. Hayakawa and Dr. John Tanton molded the philosophy of U.S. English (Diamond, 1990; Zentella, 1990). An investigation into the background of some U.S. English leadership shows direct ties to political extremist groups supporting anti-black, anti-immigration, and eugenics policies (Crawford, 1992, 1999; Ricento, 1998; Schmidt, 2000). Tanton, who had previously served as president of other anti-immigrant lobby groups (e.g., Zero Population Growth and the Federation for American Immigration Reform), clearly expressed his biased views in the infamous 1988 memo:

Gobernar es poblar translates ‘to govern is to populate.’ ... In this society where the majority rules, does this hold? Will the present majority peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile? ... Perhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down! ... As Whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion? ... We’re building in a deadly disunity. All great empires disintegrate, we want stability (quoted in Crawford, 1992, p. 151).

While this quote caused a realignment of leadership, it provides a more thorough understanding of why groups like U.S. English draw on deeply embedded values to control language use (Ricento, 1998).

Proponents of English-only policies successfully spread their views by instilling a sense of insecurity into the public (Crawford, 1992, 1999; Zentella, 1990; Schmidt, 2000; Spolsky, 2004). To cover up their racially based viewpoints, advocates of these policies tout the following arguments for preserving English as the official language:

- ethnic groups are less willing to assimilate, resulting in social fragmentation;
- non-English language groups are being encouraged to maintain their ethnic/linguistic enclaves through bilingual policies;
- bilingual services are inordinately expensive to the tax-payers of the state;
- the primacy of English is at risk and is threatened by competing “official” languages (Ruiz, 1990, p. 12).

Though these claims hold little substantial evidence to buttress their arguments, twenty-two states had adopted English as their sole official language by the year 1999 (see Schmidt, 2000, p. 29 for a complete list). Of all the states, California has been especially targeted for English-only reform (Diamond, 1990; Woolard, 1990; Santa Ana, 2002). Since their original passing, such laws have been overturned by Arizona and Alaska. On a larger scale, the U.S. House of Representatives voted on and passed a bill in 1996 that would have made English the official language of the United States and rescinded the Voting Rights Act for minority language ballots (Schmidt, 2000). Fortunately, the Senate ignored the bill in the 104th Congress. Furthermore,

in the 1996 presidential campaign, Republican Party candidate Robert Dole supported an official English policy as part of his platform. These types of large scale support for English-only policies stem from the efforts of grass-root groups that continue to spread their ideology of xenophobia and ignorance.

Immigrant Education and Language

Tollefson and Tsui (2004) believe that “medium of instruction is the most powerful means of maintaining and revitalizing a language and a culture; it is the most important form of intergenerational transmission” (p. 2). Cultivating or limiting native language use directly affects the cultural formation/deformation of language minority communities. A historical glance at language policy in American education illuminates the importance of controlling the medium of instruction (Crawford, 1992, 1999; Ricento, 1998; McCarty, 2002, 2004). Due to the direct access to future generations of language users, the main target of English-only groups has most prominently focused on the education system (McCarty, 2004). Commenting on the post colonial linguistic tension in modern day Hong Kong, Tsui (2004) adds that while language policy is never simply an educational issue, direction in the medium of instruction inherently “determines who will participate in power and wealth” (p. 113).

In spite of the fact that the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1968) was initiated to address the needs of the language minority population, it did not specifically require schools to use a language other than English for instruction in order to receive funding (Ricento, 1998). Without direct federal guidance, language issues were further disputed in state courts (see Crawford, 1999). The 1974 U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on *Lau v. Nichols* is the defining court case for language minority children. While the *Lau* decision did not mandate bilingual education (or any other instructional method), it did hold school districts responsible to ensure that students who come to school not speaking English are not denied

equal access to the curriculum. The Office of Civil Rights used the *Lau* decision to police school districts around the country and make sure that they were providing adequate services (Crawford, 1992, 1999). Further legislation was passed after the *Lau* case in an attempt to ensure that schools were offering sufficient programs. Based on the *Castañeda v. Pickard* U.S. Supreme Court case, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act helped to develop a framework to determine whether schools had taken “appropriate action overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs” (quoted in Crawford, 1999, pp. 58-59).

Due to misapplications and/or disorganization of bilingual education pedagogies, there were many disputes over the services offered to immigrant students during the subsequent decades. Intolerant sentiments toward immigrants began to surface as bilingual education programs were described as impeding English acquisition by cultivating native languages instead. Shortly after taking office, President Reagan announced that “it is absolutely wrong and against American concepts to have a bilingual education program that is now openly, admittedly dedicated to preserving their native language and never getting them adequate in English so they can go out into the job market and participate” (quoted in Crawford, 1999). Not only do statements like this affect political mandates, they contribute to the corpus of commonly shared social knowledge that is (re)produced and perpetuated without warrant (van Dijk, 1987, 2000). Siphoning the negativity from debates over these misdiagnosed programs, proponents of the “English-Only” movement (i.e., U.S. English, English First) were able to gain support for their racist language policies (Crawford, 1992; Zentella, 1990; Ricento, 1998). Essentially, the most effective means of eradicating other languages is to halt future speakers from learning them. Recently, the groups that are most active in the language debates have expended a lot of time, money and energy into the education system.

Crawford's (2004) discussions demonstrate how the current federal education policy also reflects apathy toward nurturing the native language skills of non-English speakers. In 2002, Title VII (the Bilingual Education Act) was eliminated by the Bush administration as part of the new *No Child Left Behind* education reform. Under *No Child Left Behind*, Title III outlines the federal language policy for immigrant students (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). While the new Title III will continue to support the education of language minority students, it places more emphasis on *rapid* English acquisition, accountability of schools on standardized assessment, stronger state control of resources, less focus on the development of native language skills, and funding for program development based on "scientifically based research" (Crawford, 2004). What is considered "scientific research" can easily be misconstrued to justify allocation of funds for culturally insensitive programs (e.g., submersion based programs) and/or assimilationist-based language policies (e.g., California Proposition 227, Arizona Proposition 203, and Massachusetts Question 2). Focusing on the ignorance of those behind these movements, Schmidt (2000) poses the question, "just how strong would the statistical evidence need to be to convince a US English activist that maintenance BLE programs are highly successful and should be implemented in every school district in the country" (p. 161).

Recently, there has been much research on the effectiveness of English immersion approaches versus bilingual education. In California, Proposition 227 has offered over 7 years of English immersion outcomes. While Prop 227 has a waiver clause that many students have elected to follow, most of the programs still operate under the original guidelines. Even though it has been found that additional language support and resources have been found to help language-minority students, the margin of difference between those receiving extra help and those within regular English immersion courses was found to be slight (Mayer and Sanchez, 2004).

That said, Mayer and Sanchez (2002) also state that:

A number of complex contextual factors may influence the implementation and impact of Proposition 227 across districts and schools. These include elements of the California policy environment—class size reduction, the testing and accountability system, reading improvement initiatives, and the state's new ELD standards. Other less tangible factors include the attitudes of school and district administrators toward various provisions of the law as well as the demographics and general disposition of the school or district community (p.10).

Basically, how schools choose to actually implement the English immersion approach varies according to an intricate web of social and individual viewpoints, and the touted success of such programs needs to be considered accordingly.

Immigrant Education in Arizona

Before discussing the trends in immigrant education, it is necessary to situate Arizona's demographics within the larger context of the United States. Compared to a national population of 12.5%, Arizona boasts a Latino population of 25.3% (U.S. Census, 2000). Furthermore, 25.9% of Arizona residents reported speaking a language other than English at home, as compared to a 17.9% national average. Even though these statistics emphasize the overall prominence of Latinos in Arizona, looking at the difference in youth demographics signals the importance of education issues. According to the U.S. Census (2000), 38% of Latinos in Arizona are under the age of 18, as compared to 23% nationally. While it could be stated that this statistic alone supports the need for a more ethnically sensitive approach to education, looking at the dropout rates for Latinos is even more of a reason to support programs that are

more adequately geared toward cultural and linguistic sensitivity. As reported by the Arizona Department of Education (2005), the high school dropout rates for Latinos is 10.1%, as compared to 12.4% of Native Americans, 7.6% of African Americans, 4.8% of Whites, and 2.7% of Asians. Even more alarming, the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2000) reports a dropout rate of 44.2% for Latinos (age 16-24) born outside of the United States. Both the national and state level statistics demonstrate the urgency to reforming the type of education services given to Latinos in Arizona.

Taking into consideration that Arizona has the sixth largest Latino population in the United States (US Census, 2000), it is not surprising that Spanish has been a primary target for controlling the growing immigrant population. Knowing that Spanish-speaking immigrants want their children to do well in school and succeed economically, the *English for the Children* organization used the American Dream metaphor as a tool to convince language-minority communities that their children needed English to succeed academically. Sadly, though, the methodology promoted by English for the Children ultimately requires losing the Spanish-language resources necessary for optimal linguistic acclimation to school. A quick glance at the political environment surrounding the English-only movements during this time period illustrates the impetus for this type of heavy-handed policy.

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227, the original English for the Children referendum. Led by California millionaire Ron Unz, the English for the Children organization accumulated enough political and social support to convince the public of the initiative's ostensible value. Proposition 227 initially banned language-minority students from receiving bilingual education services. Even though many schools adhered to the guidelines, the law contained a waiver option for parents to place their children back into bilingual programs. Touting seemingly higher testing scores after the

first year of Proposition 227's implementation (even though children in waiver bilingual programs performed just as well [Krashen, 2000]), the English for the Children campaign moved on to Arizona.

In November 2000, voters in Arizona passed Proposition 203: English for the Children. The basic premise behind this proposition was that language-minority students were being cheated out of an effective English-language education by receiving bilingual education services. Supposedly, the bilingual education services being offered in Arizona were inhibiting the students' English acquisition and overall educational progress. In spite of the myriad of other social factors that affect second language acquisition and education in general (see Crawford, 1999; Krashen et. al., 1998), Proposition 203 was promoted as the remedy for the language-minority students' educational ailments.

In order to convince voters of their merit, proponents of Proposition 203 constructed a media campaign that portrayed bilingual education and its supporters as a social burden (Johnson, 2005). Metaphorical representations of bilingual education programs and language minority students pervaded the media during this time period. Inundated by a media landslide of confusing test scores, patriotic tropes, and ethnocentric stereotypes, Arizona's voting public ultimately chose to limit the educational services that language minority students receive. The metaphorical language that appeared in the media essentially situated bilingual education and language minority students in such a way that it seemingly necessitated Proposition 203.

This work explores the intentional application of metaphorical rhetoric to distort and/or legitimate the social context of minority languages. The profound nature of metaphorical language is examined by analyzing how it contributes to the (re)production of the general body of social knowledge. While examining how linguistic boundaries are politically determined might illustrate larger issues of social hierarchies and inequities, uncovering the specific discursive

strategies used to promote these policies can be difficult. From a social reproduction model, drawing on metaphorical representations used in public spaces demonstrates how culturally acquired stereotypes become common viewpoints via the constant bombardment of biased images (in the media as well as through interpersonal dialogues) (van Dijk, 1987, 1993, 1997). Individuals and institutions reproduce social knowledge and galvanize popular conceptions through the conscious and unconscious manipulation of discourse (van Dijk, 1987, 1993, 1997). Therefore, this discussion is not just about representations of immigrant students and bilingual education programs; it is about the use of power and influence to control broader social patterns of language use.

Surfacing as one of the most pervasive rhetorical strategies, advocates of Proposition 203 established bilingual education as a barrier to achieving the American Dream. Appearing multiple times in the public media, the American Dream metaphor helped sway public opinion against bilingual education. In order to further understand the power behind such socially influential language, this discussion aims to delineate the underpinnings of the American Dream metaphor and propose a general model for discussing the larger notion of *dreams*. A solid characterization of the DREAM metaphor will help to understand the depth of the multifaceted concept of the American Dream.

Furthermore, this investigation exposes how the methods used to promulgate Proposition 203 originate from a more profound desire to shape society through the control of language. Due to the variety of factors that influence voting trends and public opinion(s), it cannot be asserted that the media campaign employed by the English for the Children camp is the sole cause for the passage of Proposition 203. Instead, the aim of this project is to illuminate the ideological undertones that steer such a campaign and how dominant class views are super-ordinated in the process of manufacturing social policies. Unearthing the motivation for this type of social “language management” (Spolsky, 2004) reveals the

biased ideological foundation of groups who support such policies. While the main focus of the analysis here is on depicting the semantic framework for the American Dream, the overall goal is to understand why this concept is so ingrained in the national discourse that it was used with such potency to limit language resources for immigrant children in Arizona.

Methods

The focus of this project is on the rhetoric used in the most widespread written media available to the public in Maricopa County during the months prior to the November 7, 2000 general election. Considering that Maricopa County is Arizona’s most populous, it wields considerable weight in voting trends. The data were gathered from three main sources: 1) *The Arizona Republic*, 2) the *East Valley Tribune*, and 3) the *2000 Arizona Ballot Propositions & Judicial Performance Review Voter Information Pamphlet*. While the first two sources represent the most widely spread periodicals in the greater metropolitan Phoenix area, the *Voter Information Pamphlet* was distributed by the government to all residents in the state. 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 (though, the *East Valley Tribune* is primarily circulated throughout the cities east of Phoenix, while the *Arizona Republic*’s coverage extends across the entire state). Both periodicals covered the Proposition 203/bilingual education campaign extensively. Newspaper journalists, editors, and regular citizens all contributed to the articles and editorials 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 movement were selected for analysis. The search resulted in 70 relevant newspaper articles and 8 pages of text in the *Voter Information Packet*.

Along with the information in the *Voter Information Packet*, all of the articles collected from the newspapers were scoured for any metaphorical language used to describe the Prop 203 debate. A total of 535 metaphorical linguistic expressions were discovered (Johnson, 2005). While the notion of the American Dream was only mentioned 16 times, it was strategically applied to emphasize the significance of many other prominent metaphors (e.g., BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS FAILURE and ENGLISH AS SUCCESS). Essentially, the rhetoric revolving around the American Dream was used to create an overarching syllogism that equated speaking English to success and prosperity.

Metaphors

Before characterizing the American Dream, it is necessary to look at the theoretical underpinnings of conceptual metaphors. A metaphor establishes a cognitive link between two conceptual domains in which the traits of one concept are mapped onto the characteristics of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). According to Lakoff (1993), mappings “are not arbitrary, but grounded in the body and in everyday experience and knowledge” (p. 245). Metaphors, thus, produce a stream of entailments that guide our understanding of the concept. Moreover, Lakoff and Turner (1989) explain that

[f]ar 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)

In this light, metaphors found in public discourse contribute greatly to the framework of social knowledge/commonsense and worldview. Drawing from this framework, Santa Ana (2002) and Johnson (2005) apply metaphor theory to the realms of bilingual education and politics to demonstrate how the implementation of metaphorical language in the media can drastically influence public opinion.

Extending Lakoff’s descriptions of mental mapping, Fauconnier’s (1997) description of *blending* and *conceptual integration* extends the potential significance of metaphors. While much of the work echoes Lakoff’s work with metaphors, this theory looks at three domains instead of two. *Blending* occurs when structures from two different domains are integrated into a single structure with emergent properties in a third and separate domain. Once this third domain has been established, the structure within is allowed to grow and produce traits that extend beyond those of the original two domains.

Due to the abstract nature of this theory, Fauconnier provides the familiar example of a computer virus (1997). The original domains of computers and health were blended to produce the concept of a computational/program virus. The notion of this technological virus has extended so far into our lives that it now rivals the original notion of a biological virus. This blend has produced a totally new notion of a virus, such that there are now two subcategories of a virus, biological and computational. This blended structure now opens the way for other domains to use the notion of virus (e.g., social viruses: destructive forces within a society that spread, mutate, and replicate). This three-domain depiction of metaphors can be applied to illustrate the essence of *dreams* and the American Dream.

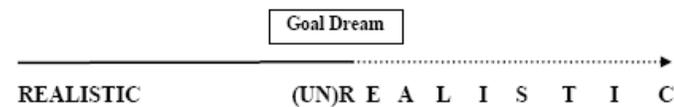
The American Dream

Statements concerning immigrant education programs were repeatedly contrasted with the American Dream. The American Dream and/or *dreams* appeared multiple times in the media

possibility that I will achieve my goal. Yet, by setting my sights on five minutes, then four minutes, I am moving closer towards an unrealistic goal (the world record is slightly under four minutes). Finally, a goal of three minutes (two minutes, one minute, thirty seconds, etc.) is physically/naturally impossible, whereby establishing an absolute measurable distance between a realistic and unrealistic goal. It is readily accepted that achieving a goal depends on the physical or natural constraints that arise in the process. In this context, goals simultaneously connote aspiration as well as limitation.

Through the implementation of metaphor, the simultaneous association between goals and physical/natural limitations can be erased. Mapping the source domain DREAM onto the target domain GOAL creates a *blended space* (Fauconnier, 1997) where goals take on the salient characteristics of dreams. Most significantly, the “unreal” limit of a goal is dissolved by the infinitely unapproachable surrealism of a dream:

Figure 3:



The combination of these two domains has produced a concept of achievement in which anything is possible. This erases the ambivalence that goals often carry by dissipating physical, natural, and structural constraints.

The conceptual integration (Fauconnier, 1997) accomplished by this metaphor is extremely important in that it has extended the overall notion of *dream* to an entirely new domain. In accordance with Fauconnier’s virus example, *dream* has now become a blended structure from which multiple meanings can be derived.



In general, a dream can now be defined as a positive aspiration that can be visualized as realistically accessible. Mapping other concepts onto this blended space results in an internalized notion of achievement. Thus, it is common to hear people talking about specific events and things as *dreams*:

- That receiver (game, coach, play) is a quarterback’s dream.
- This kitchen (meal, job) is a chef’s dream.
- Those students (classes, universities) were a dream.

Due to the ubiquity of this metaphor, it does not feel like an abstraction. Unlike most other metaphors, the DREAM model feels concrete and definable. Furthermore, the cognitive effects of this metaphor are twofold. The fact that it feels real disguises the fact that it excludes constraints. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe this dual effect of metaphors as *highlighting* and *hiding*. Constructing one concept in terms of another both highlights prominent features of the target domain while concurrently hiding other features. Paradoxically, metaphors both expand and limit our understanding of the world. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in the concept of the American Dream.

The rhetoric applied in the Proposition 203 campaign is a prime example of the DREAM model. As one of their primary mantras, supporters of the English for the Children campaign regularly proclaimed that bilingual education inhibits language-minority students from achieving their dreams, “...By passing 203, we can end this failed experiment and ensure that every child in Arizona will be **limited only by his or her dreams...**” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, November 3, p. B9). Similarly, English was touted as the key to making dreams accessible, “...I am happy that Arizona voters have given us the compassionate vote to help our children be proficient in English so they can **pursue their dreams** in this country...” (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, November

8, p. EX1). Following the DREAM model, these excerpts portray dreams as ultimate opportunity and access. By dismantling bilingual programs, we are made to believe that immigrant students will only be limited by their own dreams. This notion places the onus of academic achievement on the students and removes responsibility from policy makers and educators. Without being informed of other potential impediments, students are misled to believe that they can achieve whatever they imagine, regardless of the social and structural constraints that face them both inside and outside the classroom.

- Children who learn English will perform better in school and have wonderful new opportunities open to them. They may choose to go to college, become teachers, doctors, titans of high technology, or go **wherever their dreams take them**. (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, September 6, Chandler Community Section, p. 4)

The DREAM metaphor was extended even farther through the notion of the American Dream. Here, the DREAM concept is mapped onto American nostalgia to produce a romantic vision of economic and material success. As a result of this metaphor, bilingual education and Spanish were essentially situated as the antitheses of liberty and happiness.

- ...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)

Consequently, the American Dream was racialized through the use of this metaphor by equating achievement to a specific cultural characteristic (i.e., speaking English vs. Spanish). This view attempts to explain the reason for social class and ethnic inequalities as a linguistic matter.

- We will have an underclass of citizens who will **not have access to the American Dream**. (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 24, Chandler Community section, p.4)
- These children need to learn English, too, and we cannot keep them isolated so **that they can enjoy the American dream** that all others are enjoying except them and Hispanics. (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 13, Northeast Community section, p. 2)

The underpinnings of this view are emblematic of the same ignorance that they are purportedly striving to counter, "...Furthermore, becoming **full participants in the American Dream** does not necessarily mean erasing cultural identity..." (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, August 24, p. A14). This depiction encourages distancing culture from language, entailing that it is okay to look different and eat exotic foods, just as long as you speak English.

Since the debate over Proposition 203 occurred within a highly politicized environment, it offers the perfect opportunity to look at what Lakoff (1996) calls the Moral Order metaphor. According to Lakoff, the prominent political parties operate under certain fundamental philosophies that reflect a Parental metaphor. He describes the liberal political party in terms of the Nurturant Parent model and the conservative party as the Strict Father model. This view contends that in Judeo-Christian societies there exists an implicit natural order of dominance where God is naturally more powerful than people; people are naturally more powerful than animals; adults are naturally more powerful than children; and men are naturally more powerful than women (Lakoff, 1996). Lakoff (1996) argues that Western cultures often extend the Moral Order metaphor into other social realms to construct ethnic and socioeconomic hierarchies (e.g., Nazi Germany) such that the Strict Father model is applied to situations where

moral authority is used to justify social ranking.

Since the English for the Children movement is highly conservative, these notions can be directly applied to the rhetoric used in Proposition 203 (2000). Lakoff (1996) explicitly relates the idea of the American Dream to the Strict Father model. In Section 1 of Proposition 203, Findings and Declarations, the authors state:

English is the language of economic opportunity; immigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire **a good knowledge of English in order to allow them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement**; the government of Arizona has a moral obligation to provide all children with the skills to become productive members of our society, English literacy being among the most important.

Essentially, this phrase is a syllogism that traces the American Dream to English literacy. These fundamental notions are consistent with those of other conservative and more blatantly biased programs that reflect the Strict Father metaphor. Lakoff's outline of these political underpinnings provides an overarching framework for the political agendas involved in the Proposition 203 debate.

It seems second nature to despise anything that inhibits someone from achieving their dreams, but why? The alternative understanding of dreams presented here has elaborated on this question. Void of biased policies and ideological contours, *dreams* smooth over the rough edges/constraints in the mind and project a future full of success and happiness. The realities that students face inside and outside of school are eclipsed behind such symbolic language. Lacking from this rhetoric is the truth about *dreams*: that it is possible to have the same dream and accomplish the same goal in multiple languages.

Discussion

The media sources analyzed in this project were selected for multiple reasons. All three sources are circulated throughout most of Arizona and each provided a platform for both public (e.g., editorials, pro/con arguments) and institutional (e.g., 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.

Essentially, this project demonstrates how social views toward minority languages can be sculpted on many different levels. 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 promoted linguistic diversity as 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 immigrants access to the American Dream). Hidden behind this negative facade is the true goal of bilingual education: to cultivate multilingualism and multiliteracy. Finally, by contrasting American norms (i.e., dominant class values) with language-minority practices (i.e., bilingualism), it was made clear to the public as to what needed to be done to "help" the immigrant community succeed. Unfortunately, the ethnocentric underpinnings behind Proposition 203 were diluted by cognitively effective rhetoric.

Whereas supporting the students' right to learn English is honorable, discrediting minority languages and promoting subtractive language policies are outright demonstrations of bias (Crawford, 1999). Maria Mendoza, chairwoman of Arizona's branch of English for the Children, clearly articulated the vision of her organization, "...**Why do they want to**

keep them as prisoners in their culture and their heritage..." (*The Arizona Republic*, 2000, October 13, p. B1). Even though this statement was directed toward Native Americans, it epitomizes the founding principles of Proposition 203. Without realizing the fundamentally egregious connotations that she was conveying, Mendoza expressed her group's underlying ideological orientation: languages other than English are inferior and their spread threatens national unity. Entailing that English unites our nation assumes that other languages are a threat. In this context, it can be argued that filtering out the threat and prominence of other languages can be accomplished by prohibiting their cultivation in public schools.

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 eliminate the development of native languages (other than English) in public schools. It admittedly aimed to place academic progress aside in favor of acquiring English first, "...**Kids may have initial failures, but they get over it...**" [quote, Margaret Garcia-Dugan, Co-Chair, English for the Children-Arizona] (*East Valley Tribune*, 2000, May 20, p. A1). The effects of this process are twofold. From a young age, immigrant 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. Within this context, education becomes an exasperating game of constant catch-up. Simultaneously, students feel frustrated with the academic world of English and discomfited with the low status of their native language (Cummins, 1999).

As an anthropological endeavor, this project emphasizes how language policy issues can be analyzed to trace out ideological strands of dominant group interests. Delineating the language people

can or cannot use is a way of controlling their behavior and range of social interaction. Prolonged exposure to this type of cultural subjugation results in a fundamental shift in a person's and/or group's identity. Urciuoli (1998) articulates the intersection of language(s) and identity by putting forward her understanding of language as a *code*.

Code refers to a language or dialect; here, broadly, English and Spanish are codes. Codes are not automatically loaded with cultural meaning: people develop their sense of what codes mean in specific relations and contexts. People may assume one code to be normative in a particular context. They may use another code as contrast to shift what happens in that context. They may also have different notions of what the same code means in different relationships. Analytically, then, the social politics of relationships comes before interpretations of code (Urciuoli, 1998, p. 76).

Building on Urciuoli's code narrative, English was emblazoned in the media as the "language of success" and the "key to the American Dream." While the economic importance of English is recognized in various countries around the world, the value of other languages is also accepted (Wright, 2004). Equating the value of a language to economic worth ignores the importance of languages in other realms. In the case of Proposition 203, the normative prominence of English was so clearly professed that other languages were accepted as less valuable. By removing educational programs that focused on the advancement of immigrant students, Proposition 203 has essentially restricted the range and variety of language interactions 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.

Before concluding, it is only fair to address the *emic* perspective of those who supported Proposition 203. Coincidentally, everyone on the governing board of the Arizona branch of English for the Children had a Hispanic surname: Maria Mendoza, Chairperson, Hector Ayala, Co-Chairperson, and Margaret Garcia Dugan, Co-Chairperson. One might argue that this was a deliberate strategy to draw in support from other Hispanic voters. To most people, it would seem obvious that a person would not purposely promote a law that oppresses people from her or his own ethnic background. Though purely speculative, I suggest that not everyone who supported or voted for Proposition 203 did so with malicious intentions. Even though the fundamental ideology of Proposition 203 is fraught with bias, I believe that many of the advocates and voters truly wanted to help the language minority population. Rather, many voters probably acted under the mistaken pretense that the English for the Children had benevolent goals for the immigrant community. Sadly, though, referenda like Proposition 203 are allowed onto ballots where the voting public is faced with making a simplified “yes/no” decision on matters that profoundly affect the construction of social relationships. Hopefully, the findings of this project will help people with sincere intentions to realize the overall sociopolitical context of (language) policies like Proposition 203 and the consequences that they produce.

In spite of the myopic view that many Americans have concerning the threat of minority languages, the prominence of English is not being eroded by the ostensible growth of minority languages in the United States (Crawford, 2000). Regardless of this fact, immigrant children continue to be the targets of ethnolinguistic cleansing. Ogbu (1978) describes programs that devalue a child’s culture and heritage as “caste-like” in that they limit minority children from obtaining a level of education equal to those in the dominant class. In 1975, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights clearly stated, “it is not necessary

for language minority children to be taught explicitly that their group is less valued” (quoted in Schmidt, 2000, p.132). Contrary to this position, at the heart of the English-only debate is the message that using any other language besides English is wrong (Pease-Alvarez, 2003). If we sincerely want language-minority children to achieve and successfully integrate into society, there needs to be a fundamental shift in the way policymakers and voters view immigrant communities. Instead of limiting educational resources and denying access to broader social networks, it is imperative that we build on the strengths that language-minority children have and honor the inherent wealth of cultural capital that they bring with them to school every day.

References

- Adams, K.L. (1990). Ethnic and linguistic minorities the Southwest: An overview. In K.L. Adams, and D.T. Brink (Eds.), *Perspectives on official English: The campaign for English as the official language of the USA*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Arizona Department of Education (2005). *Dropout rate report: 2003-2004 annual dropout rates*. Retrieved from: http://www.ade.az.gov/Researchpolicy/DropoutInfo/Complete_2003-2004_Dropout_Report.pdf
- Crawford, J. (1992). *Hold your tongue: Bilingualism and the politics of “English only”*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Crawford, J. (1999). *Bilingual education: History, politics, theory, and practice*. Los Angeles: Bilingual Educational Services.
- Crawford, J. (2000). *At war with diversity: US language policy in an age of anxiety*. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

- Crawford, J. (2004) *James Crawford's language and policy web site and emporium*. Retrieved from: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/JWCRAWFORD/home.htm>
- Cummins, J. (1999). Rights and responsibilities of educators of bilingual-bicultural children. Retrieved from: <http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/rightsresponsibilinged.html>
- Del Valle, S. (2003). *Language rights and the law in the United States*. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters LTD.
- Diamond, S. (1990). English- the official language of California, 1983-1988. In K.L. Adams, and D.T. Brink (Eds.), *Perspectives on official English*. 111-120. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Fauconnier, Gilles. (1997). *Mappings in thought and language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Harklau, L. (2003). Representational practices and multi-modal communication in US high schools: Implications for adolescent immigrants. In R. Bayley, and S.R. Schecter (Eds.), *Language socialization in bilingual and multilingual societies*. 83-98. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters LTD.
- Johnson, E. (2005). Proposition 203: A critical metaphor analysis. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29(1), 69-84.
- Krashen, S. (2000). Bilingual ed foe used distorted facts. *East Valley Tribune*, October 13, 2000, p. A19.
- Krashen, S, Tse, L. & McQuillan, J. (1998). *Heritage language development*. Culver City, California: Language Education Associates.
- Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In Andrew Ortony (Ed.), *Metaphor and thought*. (pp. 202-251) Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Lakoff, G. (1996). *Moral politics: What conservatives know that liberals don't*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Turner, M. (1989). *More than cool reason: A field guide to poetic metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marshall, D.F., and Gonzalez, R.D. (1990). Una lingua, una patria?: Is monolingualism beneficial or harmful to a nation's unity? In K.L. Adams, and D.T. Brink (Eds.), *Perspectives on official English*. 29-52. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- McCarty, T.L. (2002). *A Place to Be Navajo: Rough Rock and the struggle for self determination in indigenous schooling*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McCarty, T.L. (2004). Dangerous difference: A critical-historical analysis of language education policies in the United States. In J.W. Tollefson, and A.B.M. Tsui (Eds.), *Medium of instruction policies: Which agenda? Whose agenda?* 71-96. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Mayer, J., and Sanchez, L. (2002). *Effects of the implementation of Proposition 227 on the education of English learners, K-12*. Sacramento, CA: American Institutes for Research and WestEd. Retrieved from: http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/year2finalrpt.pdf
- Mayer, J., and Sanchez, L. (2004). *English language acquisition program evaluation report: A report from the study Effects of the implementation of Proposition 227 on the education of English learners, K-12*. Sacramento: American Institutes for Research and WestEd. Retrieved from: http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/227YR4_Report.pdf
- Miner, S. (1998). Legal implications of the official English declaration. In T. Ricento, and B. Burnaby (Eds.), *Language and politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and realities*. 171-184. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ogbu, J. (1978). *Minority education and caste: The American system in cross-cultural perspective*. New York: Academic Press.
- Pease-Alvarez, L. (2003). Transforming perspectives on bilingual language socialization. In R. Bayley, and S.R. Schecter (Eds.), *Language socialization in bilingual and multilingual societies*. 9-24. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters LTD.
- Proposition 203, English for the Children, Arizona voter initiative (2000). Retrieved from <http://www.ade.az.gov/asd/lep/PROPOSITION203.pdf>
- Ricento, T. (1998). National language policy in the United States. In T. Ricento, and B. Burnaby (Eds.), *Language and politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and Realities*. 85-113. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Ruiz, R. (1990). Official languages and language planning. In K. L. Adams & D. T. Brink (Eds.), *Perspectives on official English: The campaign for English as the official language of the USA* (pp. 11-24). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Santa Ana, O. (2002). *Brown tide rising*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Schmidt, R., Sr. (2000). *Language policy and identity politics in the United States*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tollefson, J.W., and Tsui, A.B.M. (2004). The centrality of medium-of-instruction policy in sociopolitical processes. In J.W. Tollefson, and A.B.M. Tsui (Eds.), *Medium of instruction policies: Which agenda? Whose agenda?* 1-20. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Tsui, A.B.M. (2004). Medium of instruction in Hong Kong: One country, two systems, whose language? In R. Bayley, and A.B.M. Tsui (Eds.), *Medium of instruction policies*. 97-116. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Urciuoli, Bonnie. (1998). *Exposing prejudice: Puerto Rican experiences of language, race, and class*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- United States Census Bureau. (2000). *Ability to speak English*. Summary File 3, QT P17. Retrieved from: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTTable?_bm=y&geo_id=01000US&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U_QTP17&ds_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U
- United States Department of Education. (2006). *No Child Left Behind*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.html?src=ln>
- van Dijk, T. (1987). *Communicating racism: Ethnic prejudice in thought and talk*. London: Sage.
- van Dijk, T. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism*. London: Sage.
- van Dijk, T. (1997). Discourse as interaction in society. In Teun Van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction*. 1-37. London: Sage.
- van Dijk, T. (2000). Discourse and access. In R. Phillipson (Ed.), *Rights to language: Equity, power, and education*. 73-78. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Weinstein, J. (1990). Is language choice a constitutional right?: Outline of a constitutional analysis. In K.L. Adams, and D.T. Brink (Eds.), *Perspectives on official English*. 273-279. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Wiley, T.G. (1998). The imposition of World War I era English-only policies and the fate of German in North America. In T. Ricento, and B. Burnaby (Eds.), *Language and politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and realities*. 211-241. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Wiley, T.G. (2000). Continuity and change in the function of language ideologies in the United States. In T. Ricento (Ed.), *Ideology, politics, and language policies: focus on English*. 67-86. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Woolard, K. A. (1990). Voting rights, liberal voters and the official English movement: An analysis of campaign rhetoric in San Francisco's Proposition "O". In K.L. Adams & D. T. Brink (Eds.), *Perspectives on official English: The campaign for English as the official language of the USA*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Wright, S. (2004). *Language policy and language planning: From nationalism to globalism*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Zentella, A.C. (1990). Who supports official English, and why?: The influence of social variables and questionnaire methodology. In K.L. Adams, and D.T. Brink (Eds.), *Perspectives on official English*. 161-180. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Eric Johnson is a Ph.D. candidate in the Sociocultural Anthropology in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change at Arizona State University. He teaches courses in Anthropology, Spanish, and English as a Second Language. His hobbies include watching movies, playing soccer, and working with youth groups in west Phoenix.