

Tongue Tied: Language Policy and Monolingualism in America

However, the Tower of Babel was not built for the worship and praise of God, but was instead dedicated to the glory of man, to "make a name" for the builders: "Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.'" (Genesis 11:4). God, seeing what the people were doing, came down and confounded their languages and scattered the people throughout the earth. –

Genesis

Introduction

Case 1

The LPGA - 2008

In 2008, The LPGA- ladies Pro Golf Association included 121 international players from 26 countries, including 45 from South Korea.

In September of that same year the Golf Digest had the following story:

“Facing anger from lawmakers and bewilderment from sponsors, the LPGA Tour backed off of plans to suspend players who could not speak English well enough to be understood at tournaments in the U.S.

Commissioner Bivens stated: “We have decided to rescind those penalty processes”

California State Senator Leland Yee asked the legislature legal office to determine whether the English Policy violated

State or Federal ant-discrimination laws. If it were legal he would push legislation banning such regulations.”

Michael Walker – editor of Golf magazine wrote his article titled LPGA’s English Only policy is unsportsmanlike and un-American. He finishes his column: “Oh, and one more thing to chew on , LPGA: this is America. We embrace diversity we don’t punish it.” –Golf Digest, August 26, 2008

There is a joke in the linguistic circles that asks: “What do you call someone who speaks three languages? Trilingual. Two languages: Bilingual. One language: American.”

My paper tonight is about language and the policies dealing with language diversity in the United States. I will discuss the topic of American monolingualism, and talk about why this ideology and practice is not in our long term best interest.

I will look at the dynamics driving our country toward language restriction and regulation at the very time when the world is becoming more and more global and when the country and our world is, in fact, becoming more diverse. In the paper I will illustrate how language policy is usually more about ideology, race, religion, and even our national identity, than it is about communicating with people, or understanding a conversation.

In particular I want to focus on the “English Only” movement in the United States; a movement that will have significant affect on many areas American life. As we speak there are hot debates with constitutional amendments on the floor of Congress.

Rep. Fred Upton Adds to Growing List of H.R. 997 Co-Sponsors

June 17, 2009

The number of co-sponsors of the [English Language Unity Act](#) increased to [119](#) yesterday with the support of Michigan Congressman Fred Upton. Rep. Upton becomes the fifth new co-sponsor of [H.R. 997](#) and the 61st new supporter since the bill was [introduced by Rep. Steve King](#) and 58 original co-sponsors on Feb. 11, 2009.

H.R. 997 would make English the official language of the United States and limit government multilingualism to specific areas such as emergency services and tourism.

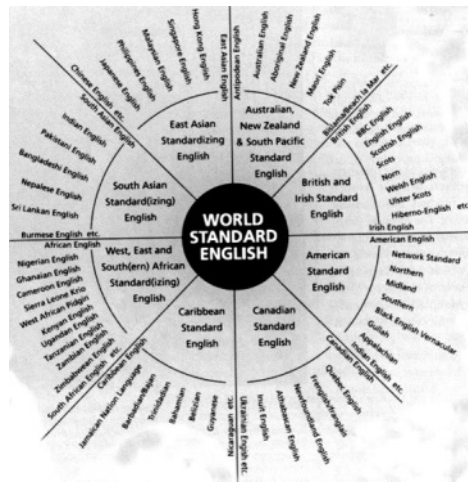
You will see that

my topic is not just theoretical. Our national approach to language says so much about how we **teach** our children, how we **relate** to the rest of the world, how we **communicate at work** and how we **approach innovation** and creative thinking. Our approach to language also tells the rest of the world **what we value** and respect. Our policies and belief about languages says so much about our sense of justice, prejudice, and respect for differences in people, other cultures, and other approaches to the world in which we live.

My paper promises to raise many more questions than it will answer. The social, political, and cultural dynamics of language in the United States today is extremely complex and will become more controversial as demographic and social trends change. The four main points in the paper are as follows:

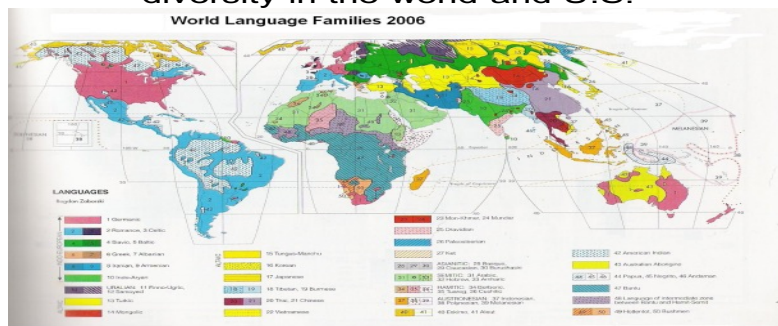
1. A “Common sense” and often linguistically ignorant approach to language promotes bad policy and an unenlightened approach to language.

1. A “COMMON SENSE” APPROACH TO LANGUAGE OFTEN PROMOTES BAD POLICY AND AN UNENLIGHTENED APPROACH TO LANGUAGE.



2. Linguistic diversity is the norm in the world and the United States.

2. We need to understand the facts and realities of language diversity in the world and U.S.



3. Questions about language are generally questions about

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Power



power

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4. “English Only” and the ideology and public policy of monolingualism is regressive and oppressive.

4. An ideology and public policy of Monolingualism is
Regressive
And often Oppressive



FOUR KEY PERSPECTIVES

- A “Common sense” approach to language often promotes bad policy and an unenlightened approach to language.
- We need to understand the facts and realities of language diversity in the world and U.S.
- Questions about language are generally questions about power
- An ideology and public policy of monolingualism is regressive and often oppressive.

Common Sense Language

Most Americans see the “Speaking English” question in common sense terms. **Of course we speak English here.**

Upon careful analysis, however, the answers to the common sense questions about what language we should speak and how we should control that language take on new meanings and complexities.

This is America and sometimes we *do* punish diversity

Much of the world sees the United States as narrow, ignorant and stubbornly fixated on English as the only important language. In addition to the narrow view of English as the supreme prestige language is the judgment that other languages and those people who have diverse mother tongues are less worthy and “inferior”.

There is a strong populist belief in the United States that to be American, a person needs to speak English. Put another way, the quality and even accent you hold, indicates how American you really are. This belief- we might better say this ideology- of “*English as American*” creates a linguistic protectionism that ties the use, teaching, or appreciation of other languages directly to political jockeying and power, and limits any encouragement or incentives for multicultural learning or proficiency. In fact, the current environment discourages the use and legitimacy of

hundreds of home languages. Our monolingual bias leaves us a country without linguistic capital.

The linguist James Crawford states:

“While to extent a matter of practicality, American monolingualism is principally a matter of values. It is supported by attitudes that emphasize the negative aspects of linguistic diversity and ignore the potential benefits. “Language as problem” - is our dominant orientation argues Richard Ruiz of the University of Arizona, as opposed to “Language as resource”. Hence the treatment of bilingual education has a transitional emphasis focusing on overcoming a disability-student’s lack of English-rather than on cultivating abilities that could be useful to this society.” (Hold your Tongue- Jim Crawford p. 208)

Our nations “common sense” approach to English plays out important social policy outcomes. For example:

Case 2

Pahrump Town Board- 2009

In 2009, in a little town in Nevada, the Pahrump Valley Times from Nye Country ran this story:

“The Pahrump Town Board passed the “English Ordinance” declaring English to be the official language with a 3 to 2 vote. The vote was met with a torrent of cheers and applause from supporters while the opposed remained seated and shaking their heads.

The Ordinance declares English to be the official language of Pahrump, but also establishes regulations for flying the American Flag. Board member Meraglias stated: For all the servicemen and women who died for our country, I make the motion to pass PTO 54, “The English Language and Patriot Reaffirmation Ordinance”. One dissenter stated that while the ordinance cannot be enforced, it sends a message to the Federal Government that laws concerning illegal aliens need to be enforced. Mr. Romero, President of Hispanics in Politics asked why instead of creating laws we can’t make it positive- Open up schools, teach English, our children want to learn!”

We normally underestimate the important role the issue of language plays in our everyday life. In the same way it is commonplace to be unaware of the role language plays in the public realm of legislation, and public policy. “Language is built into the structure of society so deeply that its fundamental importance seems natural, and language policies are often seen as expressions of natural, common-sense assumptions about language in society. (Language conflicts generally incorporate symbolic struggles over cultural, religious, or national identity. Yet they represent more than contending philosophies of assimilation and pluralism, disagreements about the rights and responsibilities of citizens, or debates over the true meaning of “Americanism”. Ultimately language politics are determined by material interests-struggles for social and economic supremacy-which normally lurk beneath the surface of the public debate (Crawford- At War with Diversity, p. 10)

As Noam Chomsky stated in his book “Language and Responsibility” questions about language are generally questions of power”

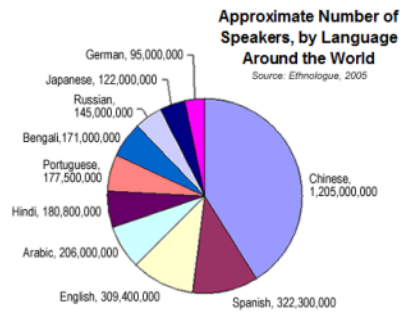
Linguistic diversity is the norm in the world and the United States.

The public debate about language policy in the U.S. should be seen in the context of the demographics of language. **Understanding the linguistic realities of our world and the United States is the first step in informed language policy.** The world is a rich tapestry of languages and cultures. Most of the world lives in an environment of polylingualism and multilingualism. Africans *expect* to encounter numerous languages and dialects in daily life. Europeans know that a four hour drive could mean passing French, German, Italian and Spanish areas

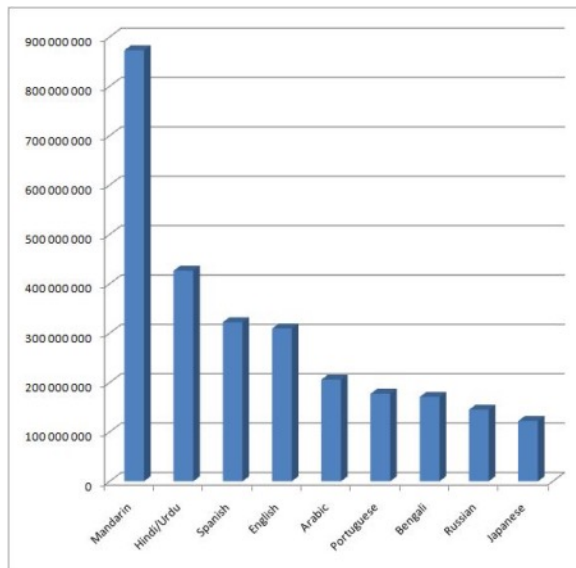
Linguists estimate that there are about **5,000-6,000 different languages** spoken in the world today. The imprecision in this estimate is largely due to the fact that some dialects are in the process of diverging and it is not clear that they have reached the stage of being separate languages. If two people find each other's speech unintelligible, they are usually thought to be speaking different languages rather than dialects.

There are about 200 languages that have a million or more native speakers. Mandarin Chinese is the most common, being spoken by around 874,000,000 people as a native language. English is a distant third with approximately 341,000,000 native speakers.

WORLD LANGUAGES



NUMBER OF NATIVE SPEAKERS



The majority of the languages in the world are unwritten and many of them are disappearing. About 1/2 of the world's languages are no longer

spoken by children. This is the first step in the extinction of a language. About 2,000 languages now have less than 1,000 speakers. The most threatened are the indigenous languages of Australia and the Americas. (Ethnologue)

The European Union is preparing a comprehensive strategy of Multilingualism in order to stay competitive and relevant in a changing world. UNESCO is targeting language policy and multilingualism as a critical focus over the next several years

UNESCO

Expected results at the end of the biennium

- Local and endangered languages integrated into national linguistic policies;
- Multilingualism promoted in Member States through capacity-building for multilingual education in the context of lifelong learning;
- Vernacular languages promoted as vehicles for an enhanced transmission of local and indigenous knowledge;
- Multilingualism in cyberspace enhanced and cultural diversity and pluralism fostered through local language media;
- Observatory on multilingualism established providing information on and analysis of policies, strategies, good practices and research related to languages and multilingualism.

At this same time- there is a strong current of monolingualism, language exclusion, and official language legislation in the United States. Does this walk beside our sense of cultural ethnocentrism, our desire for hegemony, and our ignorance of other cultures and approaches to life?

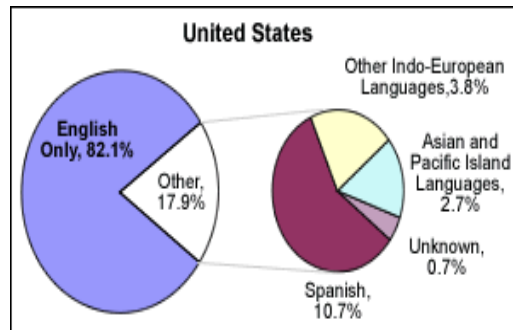
As the world moves toward globalization there is an increased tension between pluralism and assimilation. Peter Berger in a recent NPR interview stated that the two extreme reactions to this tension is either fanaticism or complete relativism; neither which is the most constructive for our futures.

As Jim Crawford states: “To be bilingual or multilingual is not an aberration supposed by many, it is a normal and unremarkable necessity of the majority of work today. Linguistic myopia could have very negative effects on us and accompanies narrow cultural awareness and is reinforced by powerful state policies.” (At War with Diversity)

US Languages.

As of January 2007, the U.S. population was approximately

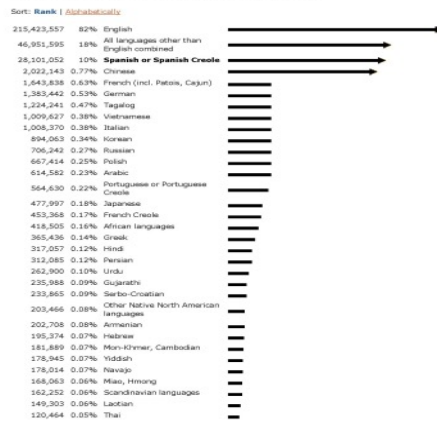
LANGUAGES IN U.S.



301,029,225.

LANGUAGES IN U.S.

Number and percentage of speakers per language in the entire US



Far from being monolingual, the U.S. is a highly multilingual country, and has only become more multilingual in the last decade. 311 languages are spoken in the United States. Of these, 162 are indigenous, and 149 are immigrant languages.

According to the Census Bureau, 14 million U.S. households speak a language other than English. One in five people over age 5 speaks a language other than English.

The list below shows the 20 most populous languages spoken in the U.S. based on the 2000 census. No indigenous language made the top 20 list.

- 15% of Americans speak a minority language or live in a household where one is spoken.
- 60% of minority speakers are native born
- 82% who speak a minority language speaks English well
- 97% speak some English
- 90% 5-17 years old speak only English
- 89% 18+ speak only English
- The number of U.S. residents who speak a language other than English at home increased by 47 percent during the 1990s. It was 38% in the 1980s.

- The number of minority language speakers who also speak English “very well” increased at comparable rates.
- The number who have some difficulty with English (speaking English “not well” or “not at all”) increased by 53%.
- During the 1990s speakers from home languages other than English grew 6 times the rate of English only speakers
- School age children who speak languages other than English increased by 55% in the 1990s.

In 2000 census, 6 in 10 minority language speakers were Spanish speaking

(Crawford –Guide for the Perplexed)

ENGLISH SPEAKERS- U.S.

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U.S SPEAKERS

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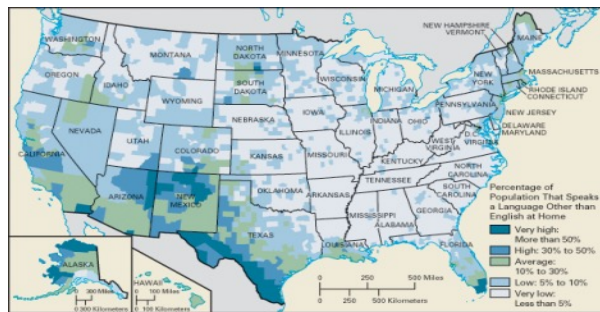
U.S. SPEAKERS

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Jim Crawford

U.S. Census Guide for the Perplexed

HOME SPEAKERS OTHER THAN ENGLISH



Holland languages

Brief History of Language Policy in US.

HISTORIC LANGUAGE CONFLICT

- Pennsylvania Germans -1753
- Louisianans – 1803
- Californians - 1850
- American Indians – 1880
- Puerto Ricans – 1902
- Hawaiians – 1898
- European Immigrants- 1880s

A better understanding of the language history in the U.S would be helpful in changing many common assumptions about language and would be instrumental in supporting good language policy.

The American struggle with language has been as unique as its history and political background. Language policy in the United States has to walk the fine line of pluralism and assimilation. There has been conflict and tension about language and cultural assimilation from the beginning of our country. However, never has the move toward legislative restrictions and control been stronger than in the decades since the 1980s.

While Americans assume that English is the *official* language of our country, it is not. There are no federal laws in the country that make English an official language. The Constitution of the United States does not address the question of English as the language of the land. For more than 200 years, Americans have gotten by without declaring English their official language.

According to the 1997 Political Handbook of the World, the United States is one of 8 countries that do not have an official language. (out of 191 entries). The other seven countries are Great Britain, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Costa Rica, and Bosnia.

. While there was no formal designation of language, there were many discussions about the relationship of a common language to democracy. John Adams tried to form an American academy to help standardize and improve the English language. Noah Webster tried to establish “American” as a language to replace “English” . None of these ideas or many other attempts to establish rules for English were supported or adopted.

The United States was already linguistically diverse. Even in the early Federal days there were fears that a language provision would compromise the chances of signatures and political support of statehood. Dutch, German, Huguenots, Spanish and French were all prestige

languages and speakers were already in America in great numbers. Other Scholars assume that the founding fathers left language out of the constitution in support of the cultural pluralism that was the vision and philosophy of America.

During the first hundred years non English speakers established parochial schools and churches in which German, Swedish, Norwegian and other languages were spoken. In some rural areas of Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Minnesota, and Dakota, were heavily concentrated in German and there were few “English” schools. **The first congressional vote concerning language occurred in 1795.** This bill would have allowed Congress to print its laws both in German and English. It was rejected, but a second proposal that year required all federal statutes to be printed in English only. The federal government did not return to this issue until the post world war II era when immigration laws and trends entered their current phase.

The language debates existed when Benjamin Franklin campaigned against speaking German in Pennsylvania in 1753. There were attempts to outlaw French in Louisiana in the early 19th century.

Bilingual education was explicitly authorized in the 1830s and 40s by law in states such as Ohio, Louisiana, Pennsylvania. In the mid 1800s there were many public English and German schools in major cities such as Baltimore, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and St

Louis. In addition to this bilingual tradition there were also strong forces toward linguistic assimilation.

In **1851**, California required all landowners to prove title in English-only courts. This resulted in most Mexican landowners losing their property. In **1879** California passed a law requiring all official business be conducted in English. Shortly after capturing Puerto Rico from the Spanish in **1898**, the use of Spanish was banned in Puerto Rican schools. There were many attempts to eliminate Native American languages in the 19th and 20th centuries in what has been called linguistic genocide. U.S. attitude toward Indian languages gives a foreshadowing of how Americans would treat languages that were not prestige languages or languages of white- European origin.

In the 1870s the US began forcing Native American children into boarding schools and punishing them for using their own dialects. The American desire to limit native languages and support a national language was becoming a clear policy in the reservations and in the heartland. Since these languages were not perceived as prestige languages, and because the Indians were a direct threat to the westward expansion, no one worried about using English to dominate their culture. The Indian's were considered intellectually inferior. Their language barbaric. All the misunderstandings of language structure, language development, and the meaning of language to a culture was demonstrated in the treatment of the Indians. The attempt

to eradicate Indian languages was followed for decades in our country as policies and laws attempted to not only promote English, but to eradicate minority or non English languages.

The reasons given then are the same as those given now: "it's for their own good." The real reason might be more pointed: simple fear of another people, another culture.

ENGLISH ONLY

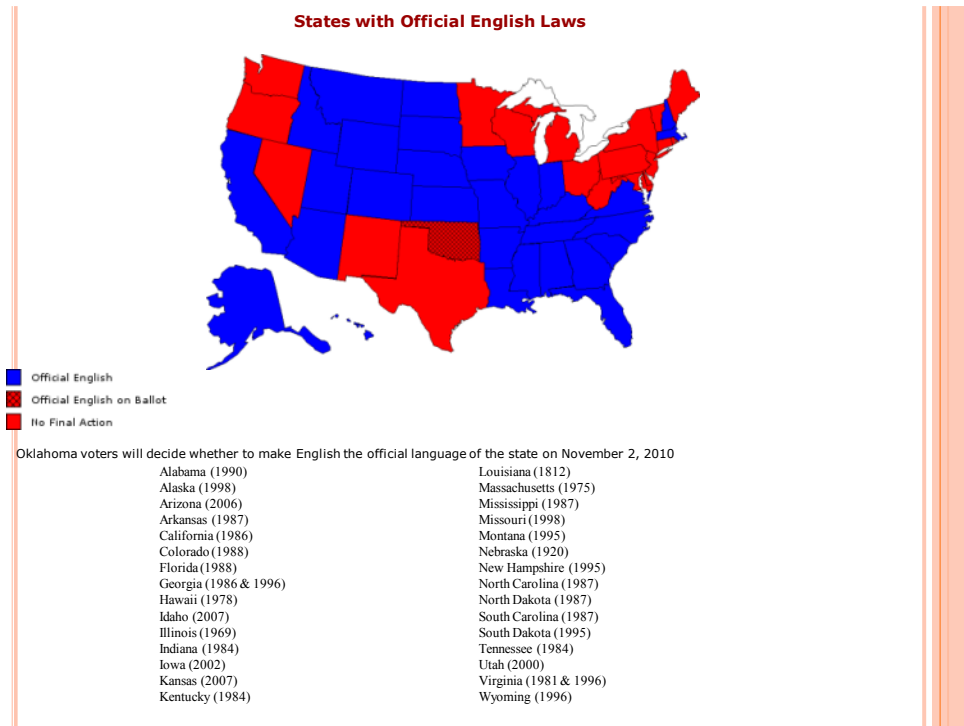
In spite of the linguistic and cultural diversity in the U.S., however a strong and relentless movement to make English the official and only language recognized in this country began in the 1980s.

In the early 1980s the debate about a national language was also fostered with the formation of private organizations such as *U.S. English* and *English First*.

The main thrust of their lobbying, mailing, and advocacy campaigns was, and continues to be in the areas of fighting **Bilingual education** (for minority children), **linguistic access to political and civil rights**, and **constitutional amendments that would declare English the sole language of the U.S.**

IN 1983 former Senator S.I. Hayakawa teamed up with Michigan ophthalmologist Dr. John Tauton to form *U.S English*. Their Lobby spearheaded the Official English Language offensive in Congress, state legislatures, and ballot campaigns. Hayakawa claimed that a common language unifies while separate languages fracture and fragment society, English is a major task of each immigrant, and that English is the principal tool for mobility. Within four years their campaign had 400,000 dues paying members, with proposals considered in 48 of the

fifty states. In 1998, Alaska became the 23rd state to adopt a law designating English as its official language. With these political forays however, came the clear message that this was more than a battle about language.



In fact English has a secure place as a language of power and influence. English is not threatened. English is far more world wide in its distribution than all other spoken languages. It is an official language in 52 countries as well as many small colonies and territories. In addition, 1/4 to 1/3 of the people in the world understand and speak English to some degree. It has become the most useful language to learn for international travel and is now the *de facto* language of diplomacy.

What were the major reasons proponents of “English Only” were so eager to move their cause?

ENGLISH ONLY ASSUMPTIONS

1. English needs protection and preservation because it is threatened
2. Monolingualism is desirable while multilingualism is undesirable in daily public life
3. As far as immigration is concerned, American national identity is conceived in terms of the melting pot metaphor.
4. English is essential to unity and social coherence in the U.S. (and in general, a common language is essential to unity and social coherence in any society)

ENGLISH ONLY ASSUMPTIONS

5. A division exists between American born monolingual English immigrants and bilingual Spanish-speaking Latinos who choose to maintain their languages and cultures
6. Bilingualism is equated with ethnic separatism as far as immigrants are concerned
7. Languages are best learned in a situation that forces one to do so (immersion)-not in bilingual classrooms

Here is an example of the kind of rhetoric used by the chair of U.S. English a pro English only lobbying group.

“With some 32 million foreign born now living in the U.S. and illegal immigration out of control, America is rapidly becoming multilingual as evidenced by these disturbing statistics on our government’s provisions for non English speakers. But most Americans believe abandoning English as our common language undermines our national unity and that encouraging the use of a foreign language ultimate hurts rather than helps immigrants”....
Mujica- chair U.S. English April 2007. (Pg 95 Lawson

Only English

Most of the recent debate driving legislation and new laws of official English are not just about learning and using English- it is about “only English” at the expense and exclusion of other languages and at the exclusion of many American’s mother tongues. It is, essentially about Power.

So why English only and why now

Joshua Fishman, research professor at Yeshiva University states:
“Clearly something has happened of late in the U.S. to bring the status of English into controversial prominence, and I would like to ask what that is, why now, and why in the United States? In what has been referred to as the” Century of English”, at a time when English is the world’s most prestigious, most effective, and most sought after vehicle of communication the world over. Why are the facts so disregarded in this situation.? The truth is that the official English /English only efforts cannot hide the fact that the power class feels insecure about its own leadership role and its prerogatives in American Society.” (Fishman)

WHY ENGLISH ONLY

- Immigration patterns
- Demographic and cultural change
- Language entitlements

Many scholars tie the beginning of the modern English only activity to changes in the demographics and to the same tensions that drove the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Dramatic increase in Immigration and passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act set the stage for increased minority rights and began to trigger the debate on who is American, and what does that mean.

The English only debate moved language into the political sphere with a split between pluralists, and assimilationists. Pluralists see the language conflict as linked to the struggle for racial equality in the U.S., while assimilationists see it as the socialization of immigrants and the common good, and they see an increasing threat to national unity.

Immigration

In **1965 amendments to the constitution** (based on the recently passed Civil Rights Act) dropped country quotas on immigration and the number of immigrants entering the country increased dramatically. In the 1960s an annual average of 332,000 immigrants entered the country, In the 1990s the average was 991,000. Of course as Rob indicated last year, there was also a shift away from Europe and toward Asia and Latin America. Immigration in late twentieth century was heavily concentrated in as few states and especially in a few cities. California, Arizona, and Florida saw Hispanic immigration in particular burden schools and social service agencies in cities like Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Miami. South East Asian immigration also taxed states with populations and needs never expected by the typical American. These immigration patterns were significantly different than the previous trends, but the myth of the melting pot and stories of the last American immigrants made the late 20th century immigrant seem less desirable and less respectable than the Europeans that came before them. America as a melting pot was challenged as immigrant groups became frustrated with the lack of assimilation and problems with economic equity.

The picture of the past immigrant eager to learn English and excited about giving up their homeland and native language is full of paradoxes and misconceptions.

As Schmid states: “Identity in the U.S. has been imagined around a monolingual past. Multilingualism and bilingual education do not figure in the immigrant myth. The melting pot did not immediately turn non-English speakers into accentless speakers of English. Myths, however, die hard. The melting pot mythology obscures the hardship that often lasted several generations and the diversity of cultures that have flourished in the United States despite aggressive efforts to eliminate them.” (Schmid, pg 168)

Indeed the early immigrants were needed to drive a country growing and needing unskilled labor. Some linguistic realities however are never discussed. One reality is that oral proficiency at any level does not mean literacy. In addition, the language you need to work in the mines is a very different level than one needs for academic pursuits or technical employment. Furthermore, in the late nineteenth century there were in fact thousands of immigrants that were taught in their own language- German, Polish, Dutch. Additionally, the European immigrants moved to their own ghettos and neighborhoods more than current perspectives of history care to mention. Typically the transition from a mother tongue to a new language takes three generations. The journey through this transition is generally accompanied by self esteem issues, family conflict, generational discord, and often the final result of leaving behind the original mother tongue and customs.

“From its earliest history in the U.S. foreign languages have not been associated with cultural elite, but rather with common immigrants whose strange mannerisms offered a subject of parody and ridicule. Language use and indeed the reality of polylingualism in the U.S. became a negative identifier. Nowhere were these pressures for assimilation greater than in the cities where the level of contact and conflict was greatest of all.

The forces impinging on the immigrant to give up his culture, especially his language, created a complex set of pressures which accelerated the mastery of English on one hand, and excluded the immigrant from full participation in the host culture on the other. So while some immigrants mastered an instrument, primitive, rudimentary English sufficient to survive, others retreated into the ethnic enclaves and ghettos.” *Polylingualism in the USA : a multitude of tongues amid a monolingual majority Edward sagarin and Robert Kelly, pg 20 language policy and national unity Beer Jacob.*

Legislation and Language rights

LANGUAGE RIGHTS

- 1964 Civil Rights Act- Title VII
- Voting Rights Act – 1965,1970, 1975, 1992
- Bilingual Education Act – 1968
- *Lau vs Nichols* – 1974
- Equal Opportunity Act 1974
- 1979 – Martin Luther King vs Ann Arbor
- 1981 – First proposed Amendment – official language
- 1983 – U.S. English Founded
- 1985- William Bennet attacks Bilingual ed
- 1998- Proposition 227 in California
 - Banned use of languages other than english for instruction
- 2000- Proposition 227 in Arizona
- 2007- HR997 Federal legislation introduced making English the national language

Legislation was a factor that was both a response to social and demographic changes, but also fuelled the fire.

Voting Rights Act

A key piece of legislation in the language debate was the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). These amendments required election officials to provide bilingual voting assistance in communities where 5 percent or more of the citizens speak a language that is not English. (in 1992, these were extended for another 15 years, and were amended to apply to communities where 10,000 people in a jurisdiction speak a language that is not English).

1968 Bilingual Education Act

Another important piece of legislation that fired up the language debate is the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, which funded bilingual education. Protests from several states and an effort to save money on Bilingual Education occurred in 1974 when the Supreme Court ruling *Lau v Nichols* ruled that schools that did not provide opportunities for non-English speaking students were violating the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

In 1988 voters in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida overwhelmingly approved ballot measures declaring English as the official state language.

Two key pieces of legislation were instrumental in pushing forward the English only legislation occurred in California and Arizona.

California Proposition 227 – 1998

PROPOSITION 227

- Impose an inflexible, state-mandated curriculum for all LEP children,
- Require an English-only methodology has no support in scientific research and no quality controls to ensure that students are learning;
- Create chaos in regular classrooms by "mainstreaming" LEP students after just one year of English instruction;
- Suggest to schools that during the year-long "sheltered English immersion programs" they group LEP students together on the basis of a student's English proficiency, regardless of the student's age;
- Deny parental choice by making it practically impossible to obtain a waiver of the English-only rule;
- Intimidate teachers and administrators with threats of lawsuits and financial penalties for using any language but English to assist a child;
- Straightjacket the California legislature by requiring a two-thirds vote to amend the English-only mandate, making this radical experiment virtually impossible to modify or repeal.

In 1998 California passed proposition 227 61% to 39%. It stated that all children in California shall be taught English using English. This almost eliminated bilingual education in California. Race and ethnicity played a significant part in the voting. Blacks support was below 50%, and fewer than 40% of Hispanics voted to back the initiative. The ballot failed in two dozen precincts, in which Latinos accounted for at least half of the population. The reason for the vote is in part due to California's demographics. In the last decade the enrollment of non English speakers has more than doubled to 1.4 million. English learners represent one

quarter of k-12 students. This comes from immigration but also from the high birth rates in language minority communities.

Proposition 63- overturned in 1998

The Arizona “official English” passed in 1990 with a very different result. In 1998 the Arizona Supreme Court overruled the amendment on the ground that it was unconstitutional. This high level rejection of the law raised the bar in the official English wars. In addition to the actual votes there was the increased political exposure of the relationship of **U.S. English to immigration laws and anti Hispanic propaganda.**

The offices of US English were next to the (FAIR) Federal Association of Immigration Reform, and in 1988, the president, founding member, and a celebrity spokesperson were forced to resign amid allegations of anti Latino prejudice. In Arizona, among cartoons associating English only with Nazis and Klansmen, the Article 28, which stated that Arizona shall act in English and no other language, was blocked by a federal judge. Pro English had now moved to anti –other languages. In 1998, this article was deemed unconstitutional by the Arizona Supreme Court (Ruiz vs. Hull).

The Future of language policy

Academics who examine the census data and probe for meaning in the numbers already speak of a new "demographic balkanization," not only of residential segregation, forced or chosen but also a powerful preference to see ourselves through a racial prism, wary of others, and, in many instances, hostile. (Washington post 1998). On the one hand, those hoping to have English as the official language look toward pulling our country together and back to the "melting pot". Those on the other side of the official language debate suggest that pluralism is the reality that we are going to live with and we need to face this reality with a sense of justice and inclusion.

So how should our national approach to language diversity be treated.

- 1, As a Minor irritant with ad hoc solutions
2. As a threat to our nations hegemony and prosperity
3. As cultural assets, variable skills, and human rights

Education

The results of the current political direction have many potential side affects. The elimination of bilingual education and the policies of "No Child Left Behind" do not address the needs of millions of legal residents who will be part of the American future. While many bilingual programs have not been effective, there is evidence that bilingual

programs- when funded and done well- can be effective. There is ample linguistic evidence that a child who is taught to be literate in his or her mother tongue can more readily become literate in other languages. Children who are plunged into immersion of languages not spoken in the home- may in fact become fluent, but with serious social and cultural consequences.

Culture

I think we need to look at our multilingualism as future potential and as “linguistic -human capital” allowing us to take on new challenges and seizing new opportunities. In addition to helping new members of our society learn English, I think we need to make an ideological shift toward valuing and supporting foreign language acquisition and learning. The last few years have demonstrated clearly that we need linguistic resources to understand the world around us. The way to change our thoughts and actions about multilingualism is to understand the dynamics and function of language.

Business

While it is clear that English is growing as an international language, we also see the need for language skills as the world becomes more global. One economics paper talks about the value of world markets at the ends of the bell curve. Small but rich markets fall out of the major languages such as English or Chinese, and will be appealing for businesses looking

for new markets. In addition, since 9/11, there has become an awareness of how we lack the resources of speakers of middle eastern languages such as Arabic and dialects from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The English Only advocates also believe that English is the way to an economic future. Indeed it is. However, studies show that Surprisingly, Latinos who speak only English fare worse economically than those who speak no English. Spanish language skills offer Latinos a cultural, social and economic community. Latinos who lose the benefits of the Spanish-speaking community do not gain reciprocal rewards from the American English-speaking community. . . . (Englishweed) While there is no doubt English is an essential language to meet many economic goals, the importance of English should not diminish or undermine the growing importance of many other languages that have markets, influence and meaning to so many people

Language Loss

Language Loss is one phenomenon that is occurring in the environment where there is not tolerance or policy to encourage a mother tongue.

With language loss comes loss of a cultural and creative perspective of the world we live in. In addition forcing language policy has incredible and lasting human affects. Martin Ridge states:

“It is worse than cruel; it is devastating to a child’s self respect, when a child is forced to give up a family language when attending school. This

denigrates not only the mother tongue, but also the value system of the home culture. Educating children in part in the language of their homes- at least until they have mastered it is as important as learning English. Critics want to accelerate the assimilation of non and limited English speakers into the mainstream of society as quickly as possible. They are appalled by the nurturing of bilingual maintenance through federal, state or local laws. The discussion of bilingualism was inconceivable prior to the growth of the civil rights movements and the age of entitlements. Historically only parochial schools have a pluralistic perception of America.” The new bilingualism edited by Martin Ridge., 1980

Lilly Wong talks about the American approach of assuming that second language learning requires a loss of mother tongue. English gives access to participation in American society, but in other parts of the world this access does not need to result in the loss of other languages.

Wong suggests three key approaches

1. Understand the importance to provide children to obtain a mature command of their first language
2. Be aware of the trauma children undergo trying to fit themselves into the schools and society
3. Neutralize the negative forces on non native speakers

MOTHER TONGUE DEVELOPMENT

- **Bilingualism has positive effects on children's linguistic and educational development.**
- **The level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development.**
- **Mother tongue promotion in the school helps develop not only the mother tongue but also children's abilities in the majority school language.**
- **Spending instructional time through a minority language in the school does not hurt children's academic development in the majority school language**
- **Children's mother tongues are fragile and easily lost in the early years of school.**
- **To reject a child's language in the school is to reject the child.**

What would an English Plus policy look like?

1. English Plus would increase investments in language education for all Americans. It would strengthen programs that teach English, especially adult classes in English as a second language, which are now in short supply in many areas. At the elementary and secondary level, it would stress pedagogies that conserve minority language skills while children learn English, such as developmental and "two-way" bilingual education.
2. English Plus would take a more systematic approach to providing essential services, due process, and access to government for those whose English remains limited.

3. English Plus would guarantee language rights: both freedom from language-based discrimination and freedom to speak, learn, and maintain the language of one's choice.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Treat languages as an asset
- Understand importance and dynamics of providing children a mature command of their first language
- Be aware of trauma children undergo trying to fit into schools and society
- Increase investments in language education
- Encourage multicultural exposure and awareness
- Take a systematic approach to minority language needs
- Protect language rights

Language can be a true asset and a door that offers a wonder of new information and opportunities. Today is the day to encourage our children to become language learners and to experience other cultures. Today is the day to help people with non English mother tongues to find a place in the U.S.A., without forcing them to give up their own cultures and languages. Today is not the day to pass “English Only” legislation.

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