Power, Language, and Ideology: Historical and Contemporary Notes on the Dismantling of Bilingual Education

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The authors situate the politics of language surrounding the passage of California's Proposition 227, by discussing the historical and contemporary conditions that have led to the recent dismantling of bilingual education. They review the dynamics of power, language, and ideology since precolonial times, through the colonial period, the era of the Treaty of the Guadalupe Hidalgo, the process of Americanization, the Civil Rights decades, and up to the current 227 law. These are used to bear the point that the negemonic bond of language is a continual thread that carries over to the new millennium, as we witness the spread of English-only legislation.

KEY WORDS: bilingual education; language; Proposition 227; history; ideology.

INTRODUCTION

Power, as unveiled by numerous contemporary writings, has always inscribed itself in language . . . and language is one of the most complex forms of subjugation, being at the same time the locus of power and unconscious servility. (Minh-ha, 1989, p. 52)

The renunciation of language is the admission of failure. (Todorov, 1984, p. 71)

It is so simple for us. So clear-cut! For Susana, a Mexican immigrant, and for Enrique, the Chicano son of Mexican immigrants, we have had to become bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate, straddling multiple spaces and navigating cultural and linguistic borderlands. We understand the value of linguistic and cultural fluency. For us, language acquisition and language maintenance are both additive processes. With this in mind, one of us speaks exclusively Span-

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ish with our toddler, while the other often code-switches into English with him. Together we have made a conscious decision to raise our son in a household that values both Spanish and English. We, the authors, cannot understand why one language is better than two. How has the public, our own families at times, been duped into thinking that one language is better than two, that English is better than Spanish, and Spanish is somehow Other?

One of our nieces, at the tender age of 3, has learned a very important lesson, a hidden linguistic transcript (Scott, 1990). She understands Spanish but will not speak it with us. After much grief and pain at seeing that this lovely girl will not be able to communicate with her own grandmother, we realize that the most important lesson she learned is that Spanish is not something to be valued. Spanish as a language is devalued and derided. Spanish is associated with los recien llegados, the recently arrived immigrants, who with their distinctly not middle-class way of dressing distinguish themselves from her with her GAP and Gymboree clothes. She views herself much differently than "them." Even her parents pretend this difference is real and not a function of time. The only difference between the recently arrived immigrant and "ourselves" is that we have been here longer, and not that we are somehow superior as some would like to imagine. Enrique enjoys the rights of American citizenship,1 having been born on this side of the U.S.-Mexican border, and Susana enjoys the "privileges" of legal residence thanks to the 1986 IRCA legislation, which provided amnesty to undocumented workers and their families.

Then there is one of our brothers who will also not speak Spanish to his 1½-year-old. Susana lectures him religiously any chance she gets about the merits of being bilingual, about BICS and CALPS,³ about language politics, and anything else he indulges her in. But finally we get to the heart of the matter. He feels that his Spanish is inferior. That his Spanish is the equivalent of a fourth- or fifth-grader (which is what grade he was in when we came from Mexico) and that he would not do an adequate job teaching his daughter "proper" Spanish. We remind him of the difference between academic Spanish and everyday spoken Spanish. We tell him that his daughter will need a second language to enter college and that being bilingual is an incredible asset. We reassure him that his Spanish is "better" than what her future Spanish teachers' Spanish will probably be. He is reminded that his own mother did not complete the third grade and how wonderfully poetic and expressive is her use of language.

We try to convince him but cannot breach this wide sea of misunderstanding, of devaluing and of feeling less than, because we cannot on the one hand speak Spanish well enough, and on the other that we can't get rid of this linguistic marker that informs the world that we are and will always be "foreigners" in this land. Attinasi (1997) concludes:

Speakers of other languages other than standard English and of vernacular dialects suffer devaluations and negative language attitudes and their social-psychological consequences. These consequences, broadly, are societal and personal: the inequities of institutional racism without overt racists, and the silencing of inchoate ideas if they are not framed in accepted linguistic form. (p. 293)

Experiences like these are not unique. Even prolific, eloquent writers feel the tongue-tying, throat-tightening effects of the devaluing of their native tongue. Ana Castillo (1994) writes:

The vast majority of us were taught to be afraid of a certain type of English: the language of Anglos who initiated and sustained our social and economic disenfranchisement, who consciously or unconsciously instigated our traumatic experiences in monolingual Anglo schools, and who subscribed to and exacerbated the racism under which we have always lived in the United States, even though we are citizens. At the same time, we were equally intimidated by the Spanish spoken by people of middle class or higher economic strata who come from Latin America. (p. 167)

Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) calls this process linguistic terrorism. Like the experience mentioned, Anzaldúa at one point internalized the belief that she spoke "bad" Spanish. She writes, "It is illegitimate, a bastard language . . . and because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other" (p.). Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) coined the term "Linguicism" to describe this process. Linguicism occurs when the linguistic resources of some social groups are valued over the linguistic resources of another social group. Galindo (1997) writes that the debates over linguistic resources are really debates over the valuing and devaluing of languages in the competition for status between groups of speakers.

NARRATIVES OF LINGUISTIC DEVALUATION

Enrique was raised in South East Los Angeles. When they first moved in, no nonwhites had lived on their block prior to his family. Immediately, the neighbors had written up a petition that they didn't want the house sold to "chilieating beaners." On numerous occasions, sheriff's officers had come to the front door to harass his parents. Enrique's mother recounts how the neighbors would called in false complaints to the police, in hopes that their onerous presence would scare his family off. Though only a child, Enrique was the victim of racism and prejudice and only realized as an adult why the neighbors wouldn't let their little white kids play with him.

In school, Enrique recalls that he and the other Mexican students were punished for speaking Spanish. The entire schooling process was sink-or-swim. In general, as a young student, he had lived and internalized a bifurcated reality. One life was about the United States, school, homework, and suspensions, and the other life was about México, home, values, and extended family. As early as in kindergarten, Enrique recollects a lesson on numbers. When asked, he responded in Spanish, "uno-dos-tres." The Anglo teacher quickly bashed his response by stating, "No, it's one-two-three." He responded innocently that his mother had taught him, but the teacher swiftly snapped to remind him, "Well your mother is not here right now—is she!"

On another occasion when young, Enrique remembers his father being pulled over by the police one afternoon after school. The officer harassed him, telling him he needed to learn better English if he was to live in the "his" country. While poking fun at him, the officer mimicked his broken English with a thick stereotypical accent. On a similar occasion, some referees at a youth basketball game, who, upon his father complaining about their biased and erroneous judgment calls made against the Mexican kids (in favor of the white team), also made fun of his English. They too mimicked him, speaking in thick Spanish accents. These experiences of symbolic violence lead Enrique to often feel shameful of his language and heritage, preferring English over Spanish, sandwiches over tacos.

As a recien llegada from Jalisco, Susana couldn't have been in Los Angeles for more than 6 months when she remembers trying to buy a churro (a fried, long pastry) from a street vendor in front of Johnson's market on Whittier Boulevard by saying, "I will have one churro, please." The vendor looked at her and said, "Hablame en español que no ves que tienes el tremendo nopal en la frente" (roughly translated this means, "Speak to me in Spanish. Can't you see that there is a huge cactus⁴ on your forehead?"). Susana was at first ashamed of speaking Spanish, but the vendor made her feel ashamed for pretending not to speak Spanish. Susana remembers this lesson to this day, because now that she has words to attach to the memory, she realizes that the shame she felt was a form of symbolic violence enacted in schooling on a daily basis. In school, she was viewed from a lens of deficits. Placed in low-ability groups despite having been a top student in Mexico only weeks before, as a student she was on the other side of the border labeled as intelligent and on this side of the border constructed as "problem."

With the passage of time, she, too, began to see herself as a problem. The sink-or-swim classroom did help her learn English quickly. However, many of us paid a price for acquiring English. Susana remembers the days of staring at her teachers as they switched from math to science, to social studies, to language arts, not understanding a word they were saying. Had she been in a bilingual program, she might have kept up with social studies, math, science,

and literature. Her labeled status as limited-English-proficient crippled her ability to acquire core content knowledge. Pedagogically, this was not the most sound practice. Her linguistic capital was devalued in school, and her self-worth plummeted. However, Susana was not a passive victim. She participated in this violence by having used language differences against one another, in this case the vendor. As Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) suggests in our opening quotes, Susana was subjugated by the hegemony of the English language and simultaneously unconsciously servile to it.

It is stories like these, the authors' own lived experiences, narratives of symbolic violence and stunted academic growth that proponents of bilingual education know through research and practice can be averted!

As teachers we carried with us memories of the shame we felt and did everything in our power to resist the hegemony of the English language by placing a value on the language of our students. We sought to become the teachers we never had. We spoke Spanish, we flourished in Spanish, we laughed, we cried in Spanish, we learned, we practiced, we wrote in Spanish, we shared, we resisted in Spanish. We dared to dream of our highest potential in Spanish. For a time, at least, in classrooms all across California, many educators, parents, and students were learning to value their cultural and linguistic capital. In some schools, teacher populations were beginning to mirror the school's demographics.

The experiment of bilingual education was barely given time to succeed. How many generations under bilingual education would it take for minority failure to turn into minority success? It was happening, albeit slower than we would like. But schools like Hooper Avenue Elementary and Carver Middle in South Central Los Angeles with a majority Latino population were finally getting the numbers of teachers necessary for bilingual programs to succeed. As part of an ethnographic study Susana is conducting with Latino teachers of Latino students, she inquired about the impact of Proposition 227. One Salvadoreño teacher remarked how in the 11 years he has been an educator at this middle school, the numbers of bilingual, bicultural Latino teachers has grown by 1,000%. But now these teachers are unable to use all of their pedagogical and cultural tools for instruction since the passage of Proposition 227. He laments the tongue tying of the increasing Latino teacher population.

In this essay, we situate the politics of language surrounding California's recent Proposition 227 in a cultural and historical context. On the one hand, we attempt to speak to members of our families as educators and academics. On the other, we seek to inform practitioners, researchers, and consumers of educational research and policy about key junctures and findings that led to the creation and dismantling of bilingual education in California, and most recently in Arizona, with passage of Proposition 203. We briefly review the use of power, language, and ideology since precolonial times, through the colonial period, the

era of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the process of Americanization, the civil rights decades, and up to the current trilogy of propositions culminating in the passage of Proposition 227. These are used to bear the point that the hegemonic bond of language is a continual thread that carries over to the new millennium, as we witness the spread of English-only legislation.

LANGUAGE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE COMPANION OF THE EMPIRE

Menchaca (1999) and Todorov (1984) outline the formal educational system of precolonial and early colonial México. For example, the Mexica (Aztec) state school system was composed of nonrigid tracked curricula and was divided into different schools and levels whose educational goals were distinct. Some schools served only boys and some only girls, while others were coeducational and served both.6 Of the various models of formal education among the ancient Mexicans, most noted are the Calmecac, which produced priests, judges, and dignitaries among the children of gentry, and the Telpochcalli for the children of the common people, whose goal was to produce warriors and military scientists. The relationship between power and language mastery is clearly marked among the Mexica. The Calmecac was a school of higher education, and students learned astronomy, mathematics, hieroglyphics, meteorology, botany, history, and more important "speech, rhetoric, and hermeneutics" (Todorov, 1984). Such an emphasis on oratory skills was necessary because the Calmecac pupils served as the repositories of the collective social memory of the community. At the Telpochcalli, children learned more practical subject matter related to agriculture, domestic economics, and ceremonial rituals. Excellence at the Telpochcalli could translate into recommendation into the Calmecac school, since Aztec parents, no matter what their social class, could send their children to the Calmecac based on their child's aptitudes and abilities. Students of the Calmecac, upon graduation, entered into the Mexica society's ruling social class.

At the time of European contact, it is widely accepted that over 1,000 languages and dialects were spoken on this Turtle Island, known today as the American continents (Molesky, 1988, p. 36). During this period of invasion, issues of language were clearly and directly tied to expansion and the conquest of the "New World." It is a sound conclusion therefore that language ideology was highly prevalent at the end of the 15th century, as stated succinctly in our subheading. It is perhaps not a major coincidence that the first Spanish grammar guide was published at the same time the "New World" was "discovered," the Jews exiled, and the Arabs defeated. The importance of language beyond the one-to-one communication between individuals and its practical utility was expanded to include analysis and consciousness of its possible applications in

the conquest of the Americas (Todorov, 1984). Columbus's own journals reveal the intersection of language ideology and power in the "New World": "If it please our Lord, at the moment of my departure I shall take from this place six of them to Your Highness, so that they may learn to speak." Columbus didn't recognize the diversity of languages and made the erroneous assumption that the native peoples were incapable of language. For him, the dominance of Spanish was naturalized and language differences were to be corrected. In Todorov's analysis of the conquest of the Americas, he asserts that for Columbus the differences in systems of organization or governance was the "equivalence to the absence of a system, from which he infers the bestial character of the Indians" (p. 38). We explicate this point to assert that the devaluing of the indigenous languages and the hegemony of Spanish in Latin America, and English in the United States, is a continual trend that carries over into our present social and cultural context.

A pivotal document in the subjugation and eventual enslavement of the indigenous populations of the Americas was the Requerimiento. The Requerimiento was a pronouncement to be read when encountering groups of indigenous peoples on newly "conquered" soil. The Requerimiento established a hierarchical order that began with Jesus and ended in Spain (via Saint Peter, who gave power to the popes, who gave power over the Americas to the Spaniards). The native populations were provided with two "options": acceptance, in which case the Spaniards could not enslave them but would make them serfs, or rejection of the Requerimiento, which would automatically give the Spanish the right to enslave them. The crude fact that the European conquerors did not speak the native languages, nor did the indigenous peoples speak Spanish or Latin, was a nonissue. There are numerous accounts of the intentionality of not having interpreters present at the reading of the Requerimiento. And without either the reader or the captives understanding the language, the natives had no opportunity to reply, being immediately carried away as prisoners. Hernan Cortés personally appreciated the role of language in the conquest of ancient México. He had a profound understanding that language could be used to integrate the community as well as to splinter and manipulate it. Thus can be explained his rumored participation and manipulation in the creation of an "authentic" myth of Quetzalcoatl, with Cortés himself as the previously marginal, now central, mythical god.9

Just as in the precolonial context, schooling too had been at the very heart and soul of México's colonial history. Colonial schooling was responsible for the creation of a nationality of similar consciousness, psychology, and spirituality. The early colonial period saw the creation of schools by the Catholic church. There were two models of schooling set up for *indio* and *mestizo* children, the doctrina and the formal schools. The doctrina schools defined education as the teaching of the basic tenets of Christianity and Catholicism. The

curriculum and tolerance of the doctrina schools was personality-driven. At some doctrina schools, maintenance of indigenous cultures and languages was actually tolerated and utilized as a means to teach Catholicism, thereby creating, as some argue, a religious syncretism. In this way, the indigenous languages served the practical purpose of manipulating and fracturing the native communities.

However, the Spanish were careful not to "contaminate" their religion, which brings us to the dilemma of how much of Mexican culture is really syncretic and how much of it is a European transplant. The mission to substitute religion by the Spanish friars is clear, but the fact that they utilized existing educational forms and language confuses the issue. Heath (1972) has researched how Nahuatl was preferred at first by the missionaries since it allowed for uniformity of dissemination. The Spanish saw a practicality in using existing native forms since they served as the best instruments.10 Groups of friars would create interethnic "salons" for dialogue and informal instruction. Specifically, native adults taught the friars how to decode the intricate Aztec and Maya hieroglyphs. In return, the friars taught the indigenous their Spanish language and culture. Menchaca (1999) notes that these native pupils went on to become translators and cultural brokers. Gallegos's (1992) study on literacy correlates this model of instruction with the assimilation of Native Americans in New Mexico into the dominance of Spanish ideology. The act of reading played a pivotal role in this assimilation (conquest). In his analysis, literacy as a construction of meaning and as transmission of language contributed to a shared and dynamic group consciousness.

Spanish attitudes toward indigenous populations, overall, were one of total hispanicization, if from language, religion, social organization, dress, to work habits. The crown had already concluded the political advantages of uniting and integrating natives under a common language, but the Mexican-born Spaniards thought differently. After Spain's 300-year reign, *criollos*¹² eventually broke off from their mother country to run their own affairs. *Criollos* in the postindependence era changed this stance on language out of the convenience in the realization of Spanish language as a means to integrate and create a sense of nation, separate from Europe. Native peoples were to learn Spanish exclusively, but the resistance was coopted so that education was the means to participate in society. Unfortunately the native people had to deny themselves to integrate into the new society. Schools were used to propagate the sense of nation so as to create the hegemony needed by the new elite to maintain their power relationship over the *indios* and *mestizos*. Schooling was the tool to disseminate the ideals of a new society.

The 1848 signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended President Polk's expansionist war against México and fulfilled the "manifest destiny" of the United States, witnessed the further propagation of formal schooling throughout what is now considered the U.S. Southwest. This was particularly so

after the 1870s (San Miguel and Valencia, 1998; San Miguel, 1999), when schools were no longer just sponsored by the Catholic church, but sponsored as well by Protestants. The particular thrust of these new schools and public schooling in general was explicit in its efforts at deethnicizing the Mexicans, and all immigrants, in the grand process of Americanization. This process of Americanization can be characterized as an assault against language, identity and family.

The Catholic church gained a stronghold in the newly annexed territories and took the opportunity to rebuild its churches and revitalize its parishes. Same-sex schools were created to maintain clear gender roles and for the perpetuation of patriarchal structures. Another central goal of the Catholic schools was to impart in the Mexican population a higher sense of morality. Students were instructed in Spanish and the Mexican population wanted to preserve their cultural identity and language. The Mexican population sought to establish an additive education for their children. They wanted their children to become bicultural and bilingual, accepting U.S. rule but wishing to retain their distinct ethnic identity. According to San Miguel (1999):

They promoted the acquisition of a distinct bicultural and bilingual identity in the merging Anglo social order and demanded that religious, education, and governmental institutions value that identity. (p. 33)

After 1848, Protestants jumped on the opportunity to convert the Mexican population. Protestants saw the education of Mexican children as an indirect means of converting them to their beliefs (San Miguel, 1999, p. 34). They developed a strategy for converting the Mexican population that entailed building schools where educational resources were scant. They filled in the gaps. These new elementary and secondary schools had as their goals (1) the inculcation of Protestant beliefs, making the new converts moral beings; (2) Americanization; and (3) the creation of a class of Mexican Protestant leaders.

Generally, Catholic schools promoted an *additive* approach to educating Mexican children. This additive Americanization

promoted cultural maintenance or when they specifically valued minority participation in education, encouraged the development of a bicultural identity, and promoted minority communities, languages, and cultures in their curriculum and operations. (San Miguel, 1999, p. 38).

The church needed to strengthen its parishioner base, and although mistrustful of the church and especially English-only institutions, Mexican parents recognized that they were accommodating of their culture and language and, in general, supported the establishment of Catholic schools. Students were instructed in Spanish, schools were named after Mexican religious figures, and

most important, the community was encouraged to participate in the life of the schools.

Conversely, Protestant schools practiced subtractive Americanization. San Miguel (1999) defines subtractive Americanization as the devaluing of "particular minority groups and their specific cultural heritages" and then "replace the identities of these groups with an idealized American one, or when they sought to remove minority communities, languages, and cultures from the curriculum and educational structures" (p. 38). Initially the Protestant schools proved hostile places for the Mexican children. Mexican children were viewed as immoral, lazy, unmotivated, and slow. Instruction was in English. Later the schools eased their subtractive stance for fear of losing their converts. They occasionally used Spanish as a form of instruction.

During this period, the creation of locally run public schools was also on the rapid rise. These, too, employed an additive approach to the education of Mexican children. This was due to the nature of school control. The majority of inhabitants in the Southwest were of Mexican origin and were involved in state assemblies as well as local school boards. Therefore, the curriculum was culturally relevant, instruction was in Spanish, the weaving of Catholic doctrine with the curriculum was welcomed, and the maintenance of culture and language was integral to the schools.

All of this began to change when Anglo bureaucrats realized that the schools were not Americanizing the Mexican population fast enough. The first step necessary for the Americanization process to succeed was the Americanization of the schools, by removing local control from the Mexican community and replacing it with Anglo control. Americanizing the schools was the logical antecedent to Americanizing the curriculum and the process of schooling. San Miguel (1999) explains, "their goal was to transform public schooling into an essentially American institution before they could successfully embark on the transformation of ethnic identities of those perceived to be different" (p. 40). The primary task at hand was the removal of Mexican officials from assemblies and school boards and the creation of English-only policies. In this way public schools were transformed from additive to subtractive institutions. By the early 1890s, Mexican legislators and participation of Mexicans on school boards or as superintendents had been eroded due to concerted efforts by Anglo officials and also because of the demographic shifts caused by western expansion. This nativist13 movement was occurring in places with large "foreign" populations. In the Southwest, Spanish was conceived of as a "foreign" language and extirpated from the educational institutions.

Another critical step in the Americanization of Southwest schools was the removal of Catholic officials from school boards and replaced with Anglo Protestants. Among the primary goals of this movement were the development of Anglo cultural purity, the consolidation of the nation through establishment of a common culture and a common language, and preservation of white political

power. With the transformation of the schools came an even more painful loss, the loss of pride in one's language and culture. After Spanish was banned from public schools, its status as a language declined. By the end of the 19th century, textbooks had become Anglocentric and Mexicans were effectively erased from textbooks. When they were mentioned, it was usually in disparaging terms.

While the Spanish were first busy Hispanicizing, and the Anglos subsequently Americanizing the Mexican and other indigenous populations of the Southwest, English settlers were dislocating, decimating, and assimilating the native populations of the eastern and midwestern United States. The protection¹⁴ afforded to Mexicans under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) was broken by the United States in the same way that they violated treaties with the other indigenous nations. The United States could not assimilate and Americanize the Native Americans fast enough. First, it sent Christian missionaries to reservations (1) to "teach" the natives how to speak (English that is); (2) to develop a sense of patriotism; (3) to impose a work ethic based on the accumulation of property and the conquest of the natural world; and (4) to teach them manual labor skills to serve the English. In the 1880s, Indian boarding schools were created to accomplish these goals. The English assumed that they could do a better job of de-Indianizing the natives and making them more "American." Molesky (1988) asserts that as a result, native languages were severely eroded, along with the traditional family structure and culture. Mary Crow Dog (1990, p. 31) recounts finding a poster among her grandfather's things given to him by missionaries to tack on his wall. The poster read like a 10 commandments of Americanization:

- 1. Let Jesus save you.
- 2. Come out of your blanket, cut your hair, and dress like a white man.
- 3. Have a Christian family with one wife for life only.
- 4. Live in a house like your white brother. Work hard and wash often.
- 5. Learn the value of a hard-earned dollar. Do not waste your money on giveaways. Be punctual.
- 6. Believe that property and wealth are signs of divine approval.
- 7. Keep away from saloons and strong spirits.
- Speak the language of your white brother. Send your children to school do likewise.
- 9. Go to church often and regularly.
- 10. Do not go often to Indian dances or to the medicine men.

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF THE WHITE BROTHERS

Americanization was not just for the indigenous and Mexican populations of the Southwest. Americanization efforts were well under way for all immigrant groups with the eradication of European languages such as German, Dutch, Polish, French, Spanish, Russian, and Swedish. Contrary to what many Englishonly advocates claim, in the United States there has never been a time, not during its colonial nor national period, when only English was spoken in all of its land (Galindo, 1997). Yet it is the idea, however erroneous, of a common language binding and uniting the nation that pervades the English-only discourse. In fact, after the American Revolution, Pennsylvania was a bilingual state, with its inhabitants speaking English and German (Molesky, 1988). Germans published their own newspapers in New York, Boston, and Pennsylvania. At the turn of the century Germans in the Midwest were able to maintain their language through the press and, most important, through both public and parochial schools who delivered instruction in German. Language maintenance by the schools was alas enjoyed by Poles and Swedes. But schools were not the only organizations that provided opportunities for language maintenance. Churches and community organizations worked in conjunction to preserve the cultural heritage of these "huddled" masses. During the great wave of immigration, ethnic groups created "language islands" throughout the United States. which provided the immigrants a level of insulation against the onslaught of "Americanization" efforts.

Language planning and ideology are rooted in the politics of the day. Prior to the 1920s being bilingual was considered an asset. When World War I began, "foreigners" were viewed with suspicion. President Teddy Roosevelt encouraged the nation to become one nation, to speak one language, the language of the forefathers. In a speech in 1917 Roosevelt appealed to the nation:

We must have but one flag. We must also have but one language. That must be the language of the Declaration of Independence, of Washingon's farewell address, of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech and second inaugural. We cannot tolerate any attempt to oppose or supplant the language and culture that has come down to us from the builders of this Republic with the language and culture of any European country. The greatness of the nation depends on the swift assimilation of the aliens she welcomes to her shores. Any force which attempts to retard that assimilative process is a force hostile to the highest interest of our country.

It was not until World War I and subsequently the economic depression beginning in 1929 that nativist fears about "foreigners" taking away jobs from "Americans" readily came to the forefront. The German population in particular experienced this anti-immigrant sentiment. German schools were forbidden from speaking German. By 1923, 34 states had put English-only legislation on their books. These laws were struck down as unconstitutional, but according to Molesky (1988), by then "the damage had already been done not only to Germans maintenance but also to foreign language education in general" (p. 42).

The damage inflicted on linguistic minorities took on many forms. In this essay we are concentrated on those issues related to schooling. One of the manifestations of this damage is the use of intelligence testing on linguistic

minorities and their concomitant devaluing of non-English languages and their speakers. Intelligence testing rose to prominence in the 1920s, and not surprisingly, minorities scored at levels well below Anglo-American students. ¹⁵ These tests were normed and standardized deliberately on White, middle class males. According to Valencia (1999), the testing of Mexican-American students can be characterized by the following: (1) The supposed intellectual inferiority of Mexican-Americans, and by extension other minorities, was proof that they were genetically inferior, reinforcing biological arguments of the superiority of the white race; (2) "low scores" on standardized test resulted in differentiated curricula for "slow learners" (i.e., Mexican-Americans), and finally; (3) standardized tests have endured and even flourished despite a barrage of criticisms (particularly with respect to cultural biases inherent in these tests) since their inception.

George Sanchez was one of the first psychometricians to question the use of intelligence testing for minority children in the 1930s. He did not advocate completely abandoning the use of intelligence testing for Mexican-American children; rather, he questioned the mismatch between students' language and culture with the tests. Some psychologists paid mind and created nonverbal intelligence tests. However, as Sanchez asserted, these tests were just as culturally biased as the verbal intelligence tests. He especially critiqued the use of intelligence testing results as yet another tool for marginalizing Mexican-American students (Donato, 1997, p. 29).

Mexican students were segregated partially because of intelligence testing. At one point, one official report from Texas stated that Spanish-speaking migrant children were educationally retarded on average 1–3 years (Sanchez, 1997, p. 129). Texas schools codified the practice of having first-graders with Spanish surnames spend 3 years in the same grade. Sanchez was an advocate of bilingual education. He added that he was

amazed at the persistence of the assertion that bilingualism is bad, that a foreign home language is a handicap, that, somehow, children with Spanish as a mother tongue were doomed to failure—in fact, that they were ipso facto less than normally intelligent. (p. 127)

The above processes of deethnicizing all "foreigners" and creating a unique American identity was forged at the end of the 19th century and continued through the 20th century.

THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE SOUTHWEST

According to Donato (1997), many of us are familiar with African-American struggles for Civil Rights, and particularly with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). These dominate our "historical memory" of the civil rights movement.

What has been omitted from the history of the movement and the struggle for equal education is the parallel, and preceding, struggles by other minority groups. Donato's work documents Mexican-Americans' struggle for equal education during the 1960s and 1970s in a school district in California. His work details (1) how Brownfield experienced a dramatic demographic growth of Mexican-Americans; (2) the reactions by a school system dominated by whites; (3) the active resistence by Mexican-American parents to unequal educational access and outcomes; and (4) how combined with the larger state and federal legislation resulted in educational reform. Donato presents a counterintuitive portrait of Mexican-American parents, not the docile, sleepy, lazy, complacent, "accept your lot in life" concepts that are ingrained in the public consciousness. Donato portrays resistance and struggle rooted in the needs and desires of working class parents. The struggle in Brownfield was about improving the educational opportunities of Mexican-American working class students led by an organized group of parents.

The Brownfield struggle in California is only one in a long line of struggles for equal education. In 1930, the case of *Del Rio Independent School District v. Salvatierra* proved that Texas schools were illegally segregating Mexican-American students on the basis of race. Texas had a segregation mandate which called for separate facilities for "colored" (in this case strictly defined as "Negro") and white students. The lawyers for the plaintiffs, who were a part of LULAC, successfully argued that Mexicans be considered white. Although the decision was later overturned, it set the legal precedent for subsequent challenges to segregation.

The Lemon Grove district in California proposed construction of a new school for Mexican-American students, since the integrated school was overcrowded. Mexican-American parents protested the new construction, which was known as the stables, or la caballeriza (San Miguel and Valencia, 1998, p. 375). The parents organized themselves and in a concerted effort were able to bring about a legal challenge. In 1931, the judge ruled in favor of the parents stating that there were no provisions in the California Constitution that allowed for the legal segregation of Mexican-American students on the basis of race. Furthermore, the judge found that segregation of Mexican-American students resulted in retardation of their English development and of their assimilation into the American way of life. Alvarez v. The Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District (1931) was the first successful legal challenge to segregation. Filmmaker Paul Espinosa made a documentary about this called The Lemon Grove Incident. According to Sammy Ybarra, grandson of Juan Gonzalez, the parent who organized the parents in Lemon Grove, a student with the last name Alvarez was chosen for the lawsuit because he was the only one wearing shoes and was fluent in both English and Spanish.

Fifteen years after the Lemon Grove incident (1931), and nearly a decade

before Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), another similar court case was settled. The court case of Mendez v. Westminster (1946) in California ruled that schools had segregated Mexican-American students based on their "Latin looks" (in San Miguel and Valencia, 1998, p. 375) and Spanish surnames and had, furthermore, gerrymandered to guarantee that students would attend those Mexican schools. The judge in the case reinterpreted Plessy v. Ferguson's "separate but equal" doctrine of 1896. This was the first federal decision in the area of school segregation. The 1948 Texas court decision, in Delgado v. Bastrop, stated that segregation of Mexican-Americans, and more specifically Spanish-speaking children, was illegal and discriminatory. Segregation was impingeing on students' constitutional rights. The court decided that schools could segregate Mexican-Americans students in the first grade if they were limited-English-proficient. The court rulings did away with the segregation of Mexican-American students on paper. In practice, de facto segregation has increased nationwide.

A RETURN TO BILINGUALISM

The county of Miami Dade witnessed the birth of two related but oppositional movements, that of bilingual education and that of English-only. The first bilingual education program was created in 1963 in Dade County as a response to large numbers of Cuban refugees arriving at the rate of 3,000 per day. The Miami Dade School District, with Ford Foundation monies, designed an experimental bilingual program and piloted it at Coral Way Elementary. From the start, educators realized that the needs of the community could best be met with a program that would help achieve cultural maintenance, without ethnic segregation. The Cuban community perceived bilingualism as an asset, both symbolically and economically. This model of two-way bilingual education inspired other districts to design similar programs.

According to Max J. Castro (1992), the first battle in the language wars of the 1980s was waged in Dade County. In a relatively short period of time, Miami Dade demographics were radically altered by the arrival of Cuban refugees.¹⁷ While the dominance of English was never placed in any type of real danger, long-time residents of the area felt threatened by the "Latin onslaught" and widespread use of the Spanish language in public places, on television, on the radio, and in Cuban businesses. This alienation and resentment created anti-immigrant, antibilingual sentiments that invigorated the English-only movement.

In November 1980, an antibilingual ordinance was passed that prohibited any county monies to be spent "for the purpose of utilizing any language other than English, or promoting any culture other than that of the United States," and that all "county governmental meetings, hearings, and publications shall be

in the English language only." Castro (1992) points out that the Dade county antibilingual campaign "was a harbinger and model of future language struggles" (p. 180). The model of citizen-initiated referendums, begun in Dade County, has been replicated most successfully in California. First, this model exploits voter sentiment in times of economic recession and the general feeling that one has to compete for economic resources with "foreigners." Second, it finds in linguistic minorities an explanatory scapegoat. Rallying support for antibilingual measures in this context is not an act of great organization power but rather one of "spontaneous combustion" (Castro, 1992, p. 178).

In a rather eloquent speech in support of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, Senator Yarborough (1992) declared:

The time of action is upon us. I am introducing today the Bilingual American Education Act... activities such as bilingual educational programs, the teaching of Spanish as the native language, the teaching of English as a second language, programs designed to impart Spanish-speaking students a knowledge of and pride in their ancestral culture and language, efforts to attract and retain as teachers promising individuals of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, efforts to establish closer cooperation between the school and the home ... we have a magnificent opportunity to do a very sensible thing—to enable naturally bilingual children to grow up speaking both good Spanish and good English, and thereby be in a position to go forth confidently to deal with the world, rather than retreat in embarrassment from a world which speaks a language which they can understand only imperfectly. (p. 324)

The act provided federal monies for selected schools to design experimental bilingual education programs nationwide. More important, this act shifted the focus from viewing students with limited English skills as deficient to viewing them for their positive potential to become fully bilingual. It also linked bilingualism with higher cognitive achievement (Garcia, 1999). In practice, students were first taught to read and write in Spanish before transitioning to English. The sort of bilingual education programs that proliferated were what we now call *transitional bilingual education*. This brand of bilingual education places an emphasis on a rapid transition to all English instruction, and not in maintaining students' mother tongue while simultaneously developing fluency in the second language. 19

The Bilingual Education Act did not mandate that all students with limited English skills receive bilingual education. In fact, prior to Lau v. Nichols (1974), it was widely assumed that in order to provide an equal education, all schools needed to do was provide all students with the same resources (i.e., textbooks, teachers, and curriculum). Challenging this assumption, Kinney Lau and 1,800 Chinese parents and students brought suit against the San Francisco public school, charging that the schools were effectively denying their children

equal educational opportunities. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, where Justice Douglas delivered the court's decision:

The District Court found that there are 2,856 students of Chinese ancestry in the school system who do not speak English. Of those who have that language deficiency, about 1,000 are given supplemental courses in the English language. About 1,800, however, do not receive that instruction . . . no specific remedy is urged upon us. . . Under these state-imposed standards there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education. It seems obvious that the Chinese-speaking minority receive fewer benefits than the English-speaking majority from respondents' school system which denies them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program—all earmarks of the discrimination banned by the regulations. (January 17, 1974)

The Supreme Court overturned the ruling by the district court and the court of appeals and sided with the non-English-speaking parents. However, Lau v. Nichols makes no recommendations or mandates for the instruction of limited-english-proficient students in the public school system. As a result of the ruling, the Commissioner of Education created the Lau remedies, which allowed for stricter interpretation, or clarification, of the ruling. The Lau remedies spelled out the guidelines for dealing with schools not in compliance with Lau's interpretation. The Lau remedies also favored native language instruction and considered English-as-a-second-language instruction alone as inappropriate (Jiménez, 1992, p. 246).

Another important Supreme Court ruling came with *Plyler v. Doe* (1982). The class action lawsuit was brought about on behalf of "undocumented" school-aged Mexican children in Texas. The case involved a statute that withheld all state funds to local school districts for the education of children of undocumented immigrants. In 1975, schools in the Tyler Independent School District had begun to charge tuition to students who were unable to prove their legal status in the United States. The court issued a majority opinion, with Justice Brennan writing the majority decision:

The illegal alien of today may well be the legal alien of tomorrow, and that without an education, these undocumented children, already disadvantaged as a result of poverty, lack of English-speaking ability, and undeniable racial prejudices, . . . will become permanently locked into the lowest socio-economic class. . . . But 21.031 is directed against children, and imposes its discriminatory burden on the basis of a legal characteristic over which children can have little control. It is thus difficult to conceive of a rational justification for penalizing these children for their presence within the United States. Yet that appears to be precisely the effect of 21.031 . . . thus, even making the doubtful assumption that the net impact of illegal aliens on the economy of the State is negative, we think it clear that charging tuition to undocu-

mented children constitutes a ludicrously ineffectual attempt to stem the tide of illegal immigration"

The Court extended protection to all living within its borders under the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. More important, the case set a strong precedent concerning the educational benefits afforded to children of undocumented status. This ruling became crucial in later years when California passed Proposition 187.

CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

The last 5–7 years in California have brought about a host of concerns and issues that affect the quality of teaching and learning where the majority of Latino school-age children attend public schooling. Proposition 227 represents the latest attempt to attack and seriously restrict civil rights to equitable educational opportunity, access, and outcomes. It is the "third part of California's anti-civil rights trilogy" (San Miguel and Valencia, 1998), 20 together with Proposition 187, designed to restrict public schooling and medical services to undocumented persons, 21 and Proposition 209, designed to prohibit local and state agencies from granting "preferential treatment" to racial and ethnic minorities and women, ending affirmative action in public higher education throughout California. 22

California is in fact a very unique situation, with highly politically charged racial trends and dynamics. However, what happens in California has very deep ruffling implications and stirs up and causes far-reaching ripples. Many people concur that whatever trends and dynamics that play out in California often serve as a prophetic barometer to what can be expected for the rest of the country. Currently, demographic changes in the state's ethnic balance are accelerating 5 years ahead of projections. In fact, changes in the racial composition of Californians are occurring so rapidly that from the year 2000 on, no single racial/ethnic group compromises a majority of the state's population (Los Angeles Times, October 20, 1999).²³

California has indeed become a "majority-minority" state, with reports indicating the white population soon dropping to 50%, the lowest since the Gold Rush. It is also reported that while the number of whites is decreasing, the growing Latino population now accounts for almost a third of California's 34 million people, with the projection that by the year 2021, Latinos will compromise the state's largest ethnic group (estimated at 40%). As previously stated, these same disparities in growth starkly illustrate demographic trends occurring throughout the rest of the country. A new "minority-majority" is radically transforming the complexion of the entire U.S. society (Johnson-Webb and Johnson, 1996). People of color (i.e., Asians, African-Americans, Latinos, and Native

Americans) are projected to surpass whites to become (numerically) the "majority" population of the United States by the midpoint of the 21st century. This unfolding demographic transition has been referred to as the "browning of America" (Johnson, Farrell, and Guinn, 1997).

One could even move one step further, citing the new demography of the entire globe that is being created in this era (it is moving and growing). Economic restructuring and globalization have begun both international and internal shifts (increased interstate/interregional/transnational migrations) that have led in turn to increased social heterogeneity. Not since colonialism, due to new technologies of production, communication, and transportation and changes in the markets of capital and labor, have citizens of now-former "colonizers" (like the United States) been forced to respond to increased diversity from reconfigurations in local economies and workforces (Lamphere, Stepick, and Grenier, 1994). Indeed, Latinos have dramatically changed the face of U.S. regions, cities, and towns in response to the demands of a global economy.

Currently, with massive reconfigurations in the structure of the economy, the devolution and disintegration of social programs, an expansive retreat from civil rights, political realignments, and dissolution of the meaning of cultural democracy, racialized inequalities have shifted, if not worsened. Economic restructuring and cultural and demographic shifts, including the knowledge that nonwhites will soon be the majority populations, have brought about and fed newly fashioned discourses and practices, which can be located within this current "rhetoric of exclusion" (Chavez, 1997) of anti-immigrant, reversal of civil rights' gains, attacks on affirmative action, bilingual education, ethnic studies, and promotion of English as the official language. While although this racism can often remain at the level of language, the relationship between racist statements and their effects on people's lives is direct (Macedo, 1999). Despite public rhetoric of equality and inclusion, Latinos are often regarded as "problems" in the dominant discourse and remain liabilities in the public sphere. Moreover, the corrosive effects of continuing ideologies of white superiority and nativism hold local democracies at hostage.

Since its inception, the United States has embodied this fundamental contradiction. It has purported basic rights of inclusion, equal opportunity, and justice for all yet simultaneously has systematically excluded certain groups and individuals perceived to be different from the dominant Anglo-American population. Unparalleled change in economic and political structures have exacerbated these patterns of exclusion, be it on racial, cultural, or political terms. What we have witnessed with the emergence of the New World Order and envisioned global marketplace, and the ending of 60 years of entitlements and devolution of social programs and spending from the federal level to the states is increased social coding of racial minorities in both new and refashioned ways that are market-driven and -defined. The moral imperatives of the civil rights

movement have gradually passed out of sight; many of the reform laws to remedy racial inequality have been undermined before they could be fully implemented. Legal claims of objectivity, meritocracy, and neutrality have obscured the self-interest of more powerful members and sectors of society.

Proposition 227 is solely the most current manifestation of this systematic exclusion. Passed on June 2, 1998, with a vote of 61% "yes" to 39% "no," the 227 law attempts to dismantle bilingual education for limited-English-proficient and non-English-proficient students, specifically Latino/Chicano/Mexicano and immigrant students attending public schooling. In essence it is designed to eliminate instruction in the native language (mostly Spanish) to these same students. Ironically, the passage of this current antibilingual legislation occurred in the same year (1998) as the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), a treaty that accorded to protect the language rights of Mexicans living in the newly annexed and conquered territories of the U.S. Southwest (Rendón, 1971; Acuña, 1981; San Miguel and Valencia, 1998). Given our long history of struggle and plight for educational rights in this country during the last 150-plus years, the cultural assault posed by this 227 law epitomizes the most current educational crisis faced by Latinos.

Perhaps an ending story, from before the implementation of bilingual programs, will drive home our point. Albeit striking, our friend Miguel recounts his true story, and why to this day he stutters, although interestingly only he speaks Spanish. When he was in school at 9 or so years of age, the teacher scolded him one day for speaking Spanish. Miguel recalls that he was simply asking some other students for hints to what the teacher was saying, since his mastery of English was still very limited. When he began to cry, the teacher scolded him even harsher and told him he would not dirty her or dirty up her classroom. She forced him to stand in front of the entire class and, while holding a large coffee cup in his hands, collect his tears as they ran off his face.

Have we returned to this era?

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NOTES

- American is of course a contested term. Unqualified, as in this case, we are referring to the United States. Further, citizenship is most often wrongly framed legalistically, without regard to the histories of struggle for equity and parity, nor contributions to prosperity.
- 2. Privileges is in quotes to highlight the sociopolitical and historical irony that we didn't cross the borders, the borders crossed us, that in fact Mexicans and other indigenous peoples cross over into ancestral lands that were invaded and annexed and are currently occupied by the United States of America. (Who's the real illegal alien?—pilgrim.)
- 3. We bother to teach children to read in Spanish, though the obvious need may be to learn English, because learning theories demonstrate that it isn't conversational English (BICS) that leads to academic English (CALPS) but rather academic Spanish (CALPS) that leads to academic English (CALPS). The best means to an academic road for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students is the students' native language.
- Reference is made to the *nopal*, or cactus, on one's forehead when one looks so "obviously" Mexican or stark indigenous features, that to deny it is an exercise in futility.
- Antonio de Nebrija in Todorov (1984). Nebrija published the first guide to grammar of a modern European language.
- For a detailed discussion of both formal and informal education among the Mexica (Aztec), see Kobayashi (1974).
- 7. Our use of "New World" and "discover" are in the traditional hegemonic sense, when speaking

- of Columbus's arrival on the island of Hispaniola. We surround them in quotation marks to reveal the irony and arrogance embedded in the concept of "discovering" a "new" continent that is already populated by advanced civilizations, including the city of Tenochtitlan, a metropolis bigger than any in Europe at the time.
- 8. From Columbus's journal, as quoted in Todorov (1984). He announces this upon encountering the indigenous peoples on October 12, 1492. He refuses to acknowledge other languages at first, then deems them different. In this case difference is seen as less than.
- 9. Quetzalcoatl translates literally as "plumed serpent" in the Nahuatl language. He was a divine spiritual leader who, as legend goes, was forced to flee his empire and disappeared there where the sun appears (the Atlantic). Spanish chroniclers of the Mexican conquest, Bernal Diaz and Bernardino De Sahagun, document that by the year 1-reed (1519), reports about the appearance of the Europeans had arrived to Moctezuma, the then Mexica ruler. He gathered his priests and sages to interpret the event and meaning of these strange foreigners. Though opinions differed, some announced Cortés as the return of Quetzalcoatl to his empire.
- 10. We would argue that this purpose mirrored much in the same way how "English for the children" utilized prominent Latinos, Gloria Mata Tuchman and Jaime Escalante (of Stand and Deliver fame), to manipulate and fracture competing communities.
- 11. While the French did not seek to radically alter the indigenous peoples, they did capitalize on their knowledge of the natural world and their allies to expand the fur trade. Most ruthless of the European colonists we believe were the English, who sought to assimilate the native peoples forcibly, having exterminated or forced them from their own lands.
- 12. Criollos became the classification used to distinguish Mexican-born Spaniards from European-born Spaniards. Although most were born into wealth, they were politically discriminated by Spain. Inspired by the American and French revolutions, a full-scale rebellion was won against Spanish administrators. Although the insurrection was first led by mestizos and criollos alike, militant criollos had taken it over, and after an 11-year struggle, had gained political independence. The lives of the majority, indios and mestizos, changed barely at all. They were to remain as slaves to the new criollo masters for another 100 years.
- 13. J. Perea (1997, p. 1) defines nativism as "the intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e., un-American) connections" and cites that during nativist times in the United States, democratic processes are turned against the internal minorities, resulting in immigration restrictions and discriminatory legislation.
- 14. Most historians and scholars begin their discussions of the struggle and plight for Mexican American equality with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), a treaty that agreed to protect the civil rights of Mexicans in the conquered Southwest The document guaranteed former Mexican nationals living in the newly annexed territories legal rights beyond those defined in the U.S. Constitution. Examples of the broken treaty are the systematic denial of land-grant holdings, second-class citizenship, and the numerous violations of linguistic and cultural rights. See Rendón (1971) and Acuña. (1981).
- 15. French psychologist Alfred Binet, along with Theodore Simon, developed the first test of children's intelligence in 1905. The test included vocabulary, understanding of social situations, and verbal and pictorial problems. Lewis Terman adapted the test for U.S. schoolchildren in 1916 and then revised it in 1937, where it was renamed the Stanford-Binet Test.
- 16. League of United Latin American Citizens.
- 17. In 1960, only 5% of the Miami population was Latino. By the 1980 census, this number had risen to 41%, mostly due to the influx of the Cuban population.
- 18. According to Sonia Nieto (1996), transitional bilingual education is the most common model. Students receive their content area instruction in their native language while learning English as a second language. Then, when ready, they are mainstreamed or exited. The rationale behind this model is that native language services should serve only as a transition

- to English. In 1971, Massachusetts, the first state to mandate bilingual education, established the limit to 3 years.
- 19. Sonia Nieto (1996) describes maintenance bilingual education, where students receive content area instruction in their native language while learning English as a second language. But unlike transitional bilingual education, there is no time limit. The rationale is that a child's native language is worth maintaining because it is an asset in its own right and therefore an appropriate channel for continued learning. The objective is for children to become fluent in both languages by using both for instruction.
- 20. Legal challenges were promptly initiated after all three propositions/bills passed; for example, key components of the 187 law have since been challenged and overturned in the courts.
- Passed in November 1994 in midst of anti-Latino sentiments and a "weak" California economy, it utilized immigrants as the scapegoat. It served as a precursor to the continuing pattern of assaults.
- 22. Passed in November 1996 and self-labeled as the "Civil Rights Initiative."
- 23. This population forecast is found in the latest report compiled by the California Research Bureau (1999), which relied on population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as the state Department of Finance.
- 24. M. Goldfield (1991) cites that the "Spirit of 1776" had already developed what W. E. B. DuBois named the "American Blindspot" (p. 118).
- 25. The initiative faired well among Republican voters, 77% of whom backed it according to an exit poll of the Los Angeles Times (June 4, 1998). It was opposed by leaders of both parties, President Clinton, the four gubernatorial candidates, and practically every education organization in California.
- 26. Ron K. Unz, the Silicon Valley millionaire and one-time Republican candidate for governor who wrote this Proposition 227 initiative, spent abundantly to see it pass. Under his initiative, in most cases, it was intended that students would be taught no more than 1 year in "special" English classes before transitioning into the mainstream.

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