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# Let them learn English: Reader response to media discourse about dual language education

Jia Lu
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, jialu@unl.edu

Theresa Catalano
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, tcatalano2@unl.edu

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Jia Lu, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA
Theresa Catalano, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA

Despite the multilingual reality and the effectiveness of dual language education (DLE) being adequately documented by language and literacy researchers, the US is progressing at a slower rate in embracing and implementing DLE compared with other countries. The purpose of this study is to understand why progress in this area has been so slow by examining the public discourse that frequently shapes policy decisions about DL programs. To do this, the authors analyzed reader comments of 16 online news articles that centered on DLE. Findings revealed the intersection of language, national identity, race, and power relationships, which could be categorized under four different discourse frames similar to those found in Valdez, Delavan and Freire (2014): a multilingual or monolingual global human capital frame, and a multilingual equity/heritage or monolingual vs. equity heritage frame. The significance of this study lies in the careful analysis of how monolingual/multilingual discourses play out in daily online dialogs, and suggestions for how DL stakeholders can counter monolingual and racist discourse aimed at these programs, in the hopes of gaining more public support for them.

**Keywords:** Dual Language Education; Media Discourse; Online Comments; Critical Discourse Analysis

## 1. Introduction

With an estimated 7,106 languages spoken in about 200 sovereign countries around the world, about 2/3 of all children grow up in a bilingual or multilingual environment (Cummins, 2009; Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2014). In the United States, 20.8% of the population speaks a language other than English in their homes (Catalano & Moeller, 2013). Yet despite the multilingual reality and the effectiveness of dual language education (DLE) being adequately documented by language and literacy researchers (Cummins, 2009; Field, 2008), the US seems to progress much slower in embracing and implementing DLE compared with its North American neighbor and European counterparts—not to mention other places such as

Ethiopia and Odisha, India (Benson, Heugh, Bogale, Gebre & Mekonnen, 2011; Benson & Kosonen, 2011; Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy & Gumidyala, 2009; Mohanty & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013). In addition, "there is little evidence to support the claim that the capacity to be bilingual is a pressing American goal" (Pregot, 2013, p. 45). With strong ideological and financial support for dual language education at the federal level in the mid to late 1990s, former Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley was ambitious enough to attempt to increase the number of dual language (DL) programs to 1,000 within five years (Field, 2008). Yet almost 15 years have passed since Riley's challenge, and there are only 441 DL programs currently running in the United Sates (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2014), which barely makes up to half of his 1,000-program goal[1]. Such a small increase in the number of DL programs suggests that in the ideological debate about language education—Whether linguistic pluralism or linguistic assimilation should be adopted, and to what extent? (Cummins, 2009)—the assimilationist approach seems to maintain the dominance. To explain such dominance, recent language education scholarship has paid more attention to how linguistic ideology is communicated through discourse (Catalano & Moeller, 2013; de Jong, 2013; Valdez et al., 2014). The purpose of this study is to add to the scholarship in this area by examining the public discourse with a focus on reader reaction to DL programs.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. DLE in media and policy discourse

In 2013, de Jong provided an historical account of the development of multilingual/pluralistic and monolingual/assimilationist discourses in US language policies. With more than 20 states declaring English the official language (Schildkraut, 2001) and policies like 'No Child Left Behind' (2002) valuing English-only outcomes, there emerged "a modern Americanization movement" and "a return to a strong assimilationist discourse" in the United States, as de Jong noted (p. 104). Despite the dominant monolingual discourse, de Jong also identified attempts of creating multilingual spaces to resist such monolingual dominance, which corresponds with the slow but steady growth of DL programs. In conclusion, de Jong suggested constructing alternative pluralist discourses to achieve educational equity for linguistically and culturally diverse learners.

Catalano and Moeller's (2013) critical linguistic analysis of online news reports about DL programs provides a starting point to examine how DL programs are represented in the media. Their analysis revealed two prevailing metaphors in the media discourse about DLE (dual language education) in the United States; LANGUAGE/ENGLISH AS WATER and DLE AS

BUSINESS/FACTORY. The metaphor LANGUAGE/ENGLISH AS WATER refers to the way in which the characteristics of water have been mapped onto language learning processes such as in the words "immersion" "immersed in it". These metaphors convey the idea that language learning can be as easy as a sponge soaking up water. The authors found that these same metaphors were used by English only advocates who have co-opted this terminology (and the idea that English can be absorbed into the body easily such as in the process of osmosis) to justify "sink or swim" language policies that have been disastrous for minority language populations. The other dominant metaphor of DLE AS BUSINESS/FACTORY, manifested itself frequently in the discourse as a way of evaluating the quality of education in terms of profitability through the use of terminology typically applied in business situations such as "marketing challenge" to talk about recruitment of students to DL programs and students being "competitive in world markets". The authors also captured frequent use of linguistic strategies such as metonymy, pre-suppositions, legitimization and deictics in presenting both positive and negative images of DLE, revealing the presence of both multilingual and monolingual discourses in those reports. Based on their findings, Catalano and Moeller recommended strategies such as avoiding water metaphors (as found in labels such as "dual language **immersion**" and verbs such as **immersed**) to talk about the programs and using a standard name for DL programs to avoid confusion when communicating with the media, which may affect how readers perceive these programs.

Another important study on DLE in the media is a critical content analysis of newspaper reports about DL and bilingual education (BE) programs in Utah (Valdez et al., 2014). With a focus on value discourses related to DLE/BE, the researchers identified a shift from an equity/heritage (EH) policy framework to a global human capital (GHC) policy framework in US language education policy discourses. Such a discursive shift, as Valdez et al. argue, represents a change in the audience to which language education programs are primarily marketed. They cautioned against the overpowering GHC value discourses and suggested reframing a GHC policy framework *alongside* an EH framework so that marketability does not overshadow equity.

A final study relevant to this paper is Dorner's (2011) study of how public debate shapes education policy in DLE[2]. An important finding from this study hails from the analysis of online reader comments discussing dual language program policies and their implementation. The author found that English-dominant participants dominated the discourse while immigrant voices were largely absent which persuaded policy advocates to implement dual language programs throughout the district rather than in targeted areas that would have benefited immigrant families. Thus, knowing (from Dorner's work) that public reaction (as seen in online comments) can have direct effects on the

implementation of DL programs, an important application of this work to the present paper is the analysis of whose voices dominate online reader responses to discourse about DLE. Knowing this can help us understand how we might provide a more equitable way for policies to be debated.

The above-mentioned studies all contributed to our understanding of public discourses related to DLE yet none of them directly examined how the public responds to media discourse about DLE in daily interaction. Therefore, the current study aims to build on this work with a critical discourse analysis of reader comments in online news reports about DLE with the purpose of learning more about the current state of public opinion in regards to media discourse about these programs, and the type of discourse that might be most effective in promoting DLE for all students, but particularly those who need it most—i.e., minority language learners. Examining reader comments (as opposed to the actual media discourse) allows us to view a third space in which we can gauge actual reactions of the public to programs and ideologies present in the media discourse they are responding to. Although DLE often involves minority language students, DLE scholarship has never explicitly addressed the issue of race and its intersection with language; however, race talk and accusation of racism emerged in our analysis of reader comments. Therefore, we also draw on Critical Language and Race Theory, or LangCrit (Crump, 2014) and discursive studies of race talk (Goodman & Rowe, 2013) to enlighten our examination of how readers negotiate the relationship between language, identity, and race in online discussions about DLE.

## 2.2. LangCrit and racist talk

Inspired by the recent movement that draws on critical race theory in TESOL scholarship, Crump (2014) argued for a similar link in the broad area of language studies. She proposed LangCrit, or Critical Language and Race Theory, as a theoretical and analytical framework to explore how race, racism, and radicalization intersect with issues of language, belonging, and identity. We find LangCrit particularly useful for our study because it "accounts for socially constructed and negotiated hierarchies and boundaries among social categories, such as language, identity, and race, which constitute a continuum of possibilities from fixed to fluid" (p. 220). Since LangCrit acknowledges that the "doing of language is intricately intertwined with the performativity of identity" (p. 210), it can be used in our study to better understand how people's attitudes toward DLE are related to how they negotiate and enact their identities. Following critical race theory scholarship, Crump also pointed out that because of the stigma attached to race and its derivatives, language scholarship tends to mask the issue of racial differences with more "neutral" terms such as cultural and linguistic differences, which makes it more difficult to theorize how "linguistic identities intersect with racial(ized) identities." In

theorizing the intersection of language and race, Crump cited Matsuda's (1996) essay on language, race, and power in public space in the context of the English Only movement in the 1990s in California. "Linguistic anxiety is the new proxy for racial anxiety" (Matsuda, 1996, p. 90, as cited in Crump, 2014, p. 218), therefore, the opposition to multilingualism became the new language of exclusion. In our analysis of reader online interaction about DLE, we examine similar racial anxiety disguised as linguistic anxiety as well as a radicalized perception of American national identity, and report these results in the 'findings' section.

Another important study is Goodman and Rowe's (2013) analysis of the ways in which talk about racism and prejudice is managed in an online discussion forum about Gypsies (a.k.a Roma). This study is unique in that the researchers examined online talk that involved explicit use of the R-word and its derivatives. Specifically, they outlined three ways of talking about racism, namely "(1) making direct accusations of racism, (2) responding to accusations of racism and (3) attempts to reposition racism" (p. 36). As Goodman and Rowe pointed out, in online forums, the norm against prejudice seemed to be reduced or absent; instead, discussion forums about Roma promised to be a fertile source of unguarded race talk (p. 35). We find this study helpful because it aids in unpacking the racist comments that emerged when people expressed their attitudes toward DLE.

## 3. Method

The data of the current study was collected using the same criteria as per Catalano and Moeller (2013), with the extension of the time frame from 2013 to 2014 to make sure our data represent the latest public discourses and the addition of a fifth criterion that aligns with the research purpose of this study:

(1)  Articles published within the time frame of 2012-2014;
(2)  Articles found using the search term "dual language" that mention "dual language" at least once in the article;
(3)  Articles that adhered to a length of 150-2000 words;
(4)  Articles derived from a news source (e.g., TV Station "kmov.com") and not an educational source such as a school district or university resource center (Catalano & Moeller, 2013); and
(5)  Articles that had at least one reader comment.

A google search using the term "dual language" led to 16 articles with 252 reader comments. The articles reviewed in this study featured DL program growth and development, challenges or benefits to the community in eight US states, including California, Wyoming, Utah, Minnesota, North Carolina, Washington, Oregon, and Kansas. These states vary in the number and types

of DL programs offered. A list of the articles reviewed in this study can be found in Appendix A with accessible links.

All reader comments were converted to plain text format as one file. An initial reading of the comments was conducted for general themes. Our initial analysis of the reader comments was focused on the use of metaphor, however, our attention was quickly drawn to the interaction between readers; specifically, we noticed in reader comments the interplay between the multilingual-monolingual ideology (de Jong, 2013) and the GHC-EH value (Valdez et al. 2014) in relation to their perception of, and attitudes toward, DLE. Therefore, we used a four-quadrant discourse framework derived from the monolingual-multilingual and DHC-EH frame to code reader comments in relation to their perception of DLE (illustrated in Figure 1).

| Multilingual-GHC | Monolingual-GHC |
|---|---|
| Multilingual-EH | Monolingual vs. EH |

*Figure 1.* Discourse framework.

Whether the readers support or object to DLE, their perception of DLE is always communicated through one or more of the four discourse frames: multilingual-GHC, multilingual-EH, monolingual-GHC, and monolingual vs. EH. Special attention was given to the linguistic strategies employed when people interact within and across those discourse frames. Several rounds of in-depth coding of the data were conducted to verify our findings. All examples are presented here as they appeared in the original posts so any spelling or grammatical errors remain and are noted with the use of [sic].

## 4. Results

How do readers' perceptions of dual language education (DLE) reflect the multilingual-monolingual/GHC-EH policy discourses embedded in news report about DLE? How do readers communicate and reproduce such discourses in their daily communication/online interaction? While readers' perceptions and attitudes are not static, and are often represented through multiple frames, the comments demonstrate consistent patterns that could be captured by the above discourse framework. First, we will explicate our findings as to the types of readers that responded (English dominant vs. minority language dominant) to DLE discourse in our analysis followed by a description of each frame with related reader comments. Finally, we will explain how readers reflect and/or reproduce the policy discourses by discussing the linguistic strategies used in their comments.

### 4.1. The text consumers

Table 1 illustrates the language background of the text consumers (a.k.a.

readers) of the articles analyzed. By language background, we refer to whether or not the text consumer was English dominant (and therefore not a native speaker of the language featured in the DL program), or a native speaker of the language in question for the article they commented on.

Table 1
*Number of Responders*

| Language Dominance | Number of Responders |
| --- | --- |
| English Dominant | 149 |
| Non-English Dominant | 2 |
| Not discernible from data | 7 |
| Total | 158 |

Table 1 reveals that our findings support those of Dorner's (2011) in that the majority of the people making comments are English dominant, and not parents of the English learners in the DL programs. Thus, although many of the commenters also support the programs, the voice of the people that can benefit most from these programs is largely absent; as a result, public reaction to the programs is often skewed, and appears much less positive than it actually might be, had minority language community members such as parents had more of a voice. The following excerpts illustrate the largely supportive viewpoint that immigrant parents often have of DL education and of its benefits for their children (often heritage learners of the language) when they do comment publicly:

- I think these inmersio [sic] programs are great. The only thing that I may not agree is that they are not available to everybody . . . . (Gabriela C., Text 13)

- . . . To improve the strength of next generation American[s], providing the immersion at schools will encourage more kids learning Mandarin language in the long term . . . . Chinese American community pay our property taxes at much higher value as they moved in last couples of years, they deserve the same chance as others' races. (LY, Text 16).

LY's example above not only demonstrates her support for the program, but a defensive tone that is necessary to respond to some of the comments which question the advantages that Chinese American students have over students that don't have Chinese heritage or language background in these programs. The excerpts below exemplify the comments that cause LY to respond defensively about the right to have Mandarin immersion in Palo Alto:

- If you are a **Mandarin speaking household** and wish your family to have a Mandarin immersive K-12 experience, then you really should send your kids to a **private school** that focuses on this type of education. (English First., Text 16)

- I don't know the number of kids who didn't make it through, but I can think of at least three. **Parents who aren't Mandarin speakers seem to feel at a disadvantage**. (OhlonePar, Text 16)

Returning to the fact that so few immigrant parents commented on the programs, we cannot be sure as to why this is so, although it is most likely due to language issues (all of the articles are in English, and thus some community members may not feel comfortable responding in English), a fear of blowback if they support the programs for their children (e.g., the above comment) and a preference for immigrant parents or community members to receive their news from other venues.

### 4.2. Multilingual-GHC

GHC (Global human capital) value in DLE discourse is associated with the need to understand people around the world, thus *global*, and the economic benefits of being multilingual, thus *human capital* (Valdez et al., 2014, pp. 22-23). The marriage of GHC value and multilingual ideology is well received and communicated by the reader: the vast majority of the readers who are in favor of DLE are speaking within this frame and the DLE AS BUSINESS/FACTORY metaphor is prevailing in their comments. In the following comment, expressions such as "3 languages", "world's", "global", "getting work", "smart", "understanding the world", and "growing" combine to articulate a clear multilingual-GHC frame.

- **Every educated American** should speak **3 languages**. **1. English** 2. One of the **world's major global** languages: Arabic, Mandarin, Hindi 3. A European language. If you raise your child to do that, there will be no issue **getting work, staying smart, understanding the world better, growing**. (Ashok_Hegde, Text 1)

Also noticeable in the above excerpt is the use of presupposition to construct an argument for the need to be multilingual in order to prosper in a globalized society. Presupposition involves what is presented as given, and not requiring definition (Machin & Mayr, 2012). By claiming that "every educated American should speak 3 languages", the reader establishes being multilingual as some widely accepted common sense and legitimizes the language hierarchy presented immediately. English is listed at the top of the hierarchy. Below are

three "major global languages" excluding Spanish although first-language speakers of Spanish around the world outnumber Arabic and Hindi (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2014). In third place is a non-specific European language, indicating an even greater variety of choices at the same time excluding all non-European languages. The text consumer's language hierarchy is highly Anglo-European biased although this bias is somewhat diluted by the choices offered in the hierarchy. The many benefits associated with being multilingual, "getting work, staying smart, understanding the world better, growing", are also presented as a natural conclusion requiring no explanation; the high models such as "will" enhance the truthfulness of his argument. Although his whole argument is mostly established through presupposition, this comment serves as a good summary of the views shared by many readers speaking within the multimodal-GHC frame.

First of all, they support DLE from an English-speaking linguistic majority perspective. For many of them, DLE "makes sense as long as we emphasize English first" (jd2020, Text 2). English is assumed as the primary language for every American although many Americans do not even speak English, and the first Americans definitely did not speak English. Learning another language besides English is beneficial in a global market therefore DL programs are understood as enrichment programs for linguistic majority students. "Like it or not, we are a multi-lingual society, and it is those that only speak English who will be at a disadvantage in the job market" (Text 1).

Secondly, as evident in the above excerpt, when one views language in a GHC framework emphasizing the value of languages in terms of career opportunities, there is a clear hierarchy of languages, with some languages considered more important than others. Therefore, readers speaking within this frame tend to express doubts about DL programs that teach students world languages that are considered less "useful" in the global business market. For example, the following quote indicates that Chinese and Spanish are more valuable than French, Portuguese and German in the business world and the career market:

- These programs are too important to be cut. Having said that, I think if they have to make cuts, they should **keep Chinese and Spanish** available. It would seem that these two languages would be **more valuable** since Spanish is so **prevalent** here and the **business** we do with China is such a huge part of our **economy**. **Carreers** [sic] are plentiful with a knowledge of these languages. **I'm not so sure about French, Portuegese** [sic] **and German**. (Jeff B., Text 2)

While we don't disagree that Chinese and Spanish are important world languages for students to learn, the valuing of languages only for the purposes

of career opportunities ignores one of the main reasons for DL programs, which is to benefit mother tongue speakers of other languages by providing them access to their first language as well as the dominant language in their schooling. In addition to the comparative value and usefulness of the world language that is offered by a DL program, the availability of the program can also influence readers' attitudes toward DLE. Since people within this frame consider knowing a second language as "a major advantage", they tend to hold a negative view towards DLE when such programs are not available to all, especially their own children.

- **What a joke** this is, from the way the State runs it. If you dont [sic] live in the greater metropolitan area then you have no access to this program. **Everyone** in the State pays for it, only **the select few** have access to it. **I would love for my kids** to have access to this. (Archer101 in reply to Utah Doomed, Text 13)

Although this reader doesn't directly oppose DLE, the negative message is conveyed by ridiculing ~~by ridiculing~~ the implementation of the DL program (e.g., joke) and suggesting that such program is unfair because not everyone who pays for it can have their children enrolled in the program.[3] This view is shared by many readers who view DL programs as "a select program benefitting [sic] the very few", therefore they "oppose it" and holds that "it should be overhauled." (former PALY parent, Text 16) Such opposition is inconsistent with the finding of previous DLE/BE scholarship: the opposition to DLE or bilingual education in educational policies is "highly selective" in that "it focuses only on the provision instruction to students from minority or socially subordinated groups" (Cummins, 2009) while DL programs "which target English (language majority) speakers are increasingly positively evaluated and funded in the USA" (Field, 2008). Readers who perceive DLE within a multilingual-GHC frame tend to express opposition to DL programs for lack of access to the programs.

### 4.3. Multilingual-EH

Valdez et al. (2014) summarize that the EH (Equity/Heritage) value in DLE discourse emphasizes the necessity of addressing the needs of English Learners (ELs) in ways that respect their cultural and linguistic background and highlight the maintenance and fostering of heritage language and cultures (p. 22). Readers speaking within the multilingual-EH oriented frame tend to pay more attention to the needs of linguistic minority students and support DLE with a pluralistic and inclusive tone. However, very rarely do reader comments demonstrate such features in our analysis. When comments of this category do appear, they are often spurred by another comment that

articulates a monolingual viewpoint showing prejudice to linguistic minority students. The following comments can be put under this category in that one is advocating for teaching ELs in their native language and the other uses Native Americans as an example to challenge cultural assimilation.

- If **that many Hispanic kids** are **entering the public schools** and thus **pulling down the statistics** upon graduation, why would you not **help them** graduate proficient in all subject areas by **allowing them** to learn in their **native tongue**? (L Smith in reply to Jeffrey, Text 6)

- (In response to comments about the English language being the common denominator that has kept the country together and how English is the language Americans should speak) Wow. I have to say I am truly shocked and disgusted at what some of you have to say regarding the teaching of Spanish to elementary school children . . . . it's the **'brown' people** who lived here first, not **us Euros**. You want to go find a **Native American** and see how much compassion they have for your whining about **cultural assimilation**? (gwenbear7, Text 11)

The lack of evidence found in this category seems to be consistent with the declining trend of EH values in DLE identified by Valdez and colleagues (2014). Also worth noticing is that while people are arguing for equity for linguistic minority students, they may at the same time reproduce the majority-minority power division discursively, which is exactly why this type of analysis is needed. As Paulo Freire (1970) once stated "true reflection leads to action", and we cannot change the discourse if we are not aware of what we say and the underlying consequences of our language (p. 66). Machin and Mayr (2012) point out that "how people are presented as acting or not acting can promote certain discourses and certain ideologies that are not overtly stated" (p. 105). In the first example, although L Smith uses an "if" to indicate that what follows is a condition, the use of the present continuous verb tense, "are entering", "are pulling down", indicates a real condition that is happening now. He also constructs a causal relationship between Hispanic kids entering public schools and the falling graduation rate. Therefore, linguistic minority students are presented as actors responsible for a negative consequence (rather than the system which has put them in educational situations in which they are disadvantaged), "pulling down the statistics"; on the other hand, "you", are presented as the powerful, with the ability to "help them" by "allowing them to learn in their native tongue". In this case, the already marginalized Hispanic students are at the mercy of linguistic majority.

A similar power structure is also implied in the second example through a

clear distinction between a more "objectified them" and a more "civilized us". "Shocked and disgusted" by people's assimilationist view, gwenbear7 challenges this view by asking a tag question which questions the compassion of Native Americans for assimilationist discourse. Given that people who do not hold a pluralistic view may not perceive cultural assimilation as something negative, Native Americans who do not want to assimilate may be perceived negatively. Although gwenbear7 is questioning "you", who is "whining about cultural assimilation", she still includes "you" as one of her own, "us Euros." Here it is also important to examine the use of metonymy, which can be defined as "the substitution of one thing for another with which it is closely associated" (Machin & Mayr, 2012) or from a cognitive linguistics point of view, the profiling or highlighting of certain aspects of an event, action or person while backgrounding other elements (Hart, 2011). In the data examined, the metonymy DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY, in which "the brown people" stands for Native Americans, (but also refers to Spanish speakers living in areas of the country previously part of Mexico), privileges a view based on skin color; while in the case of "us Euros," an abbreviated name indexes a more intimate relationship and is combined with the second person plural pronoun (which in a different context is also the name of the currency used in many European countries) and unites the reader with the previous commenter who she is opposing. In addition, the metonymy "Euros" stands for Europeans or those of European descent, which indexes their cultural heritage and geographical location, as opposed to their skin color. Thus, the text consumer (unconsciously) further distances Native Americans and Hispanics (recognized by skin color only) from the more cultural European Americans (through use of the metonymies mentioned above), even though her goal was to defend programs that benefit Spanish-speaking children. When interacting with people with monolingual perspectives, such discourses may intensify the conflict between a monolingual ideology and the EH value, which will be discussed in the next section.

## 4.4. Monolingual vs. EH

As its name suggests, the two components in this frame do not go together. The monolingual perspective is characterized by the one-nation-one-language ideology which indicates assimilation; while the EH value communicates a pluralistic understanding of linguistic diversity with particular attention paid to marginalized languages. People within this frame demonstrate the strongest and the most explicit opposition to DLE. It is also within this frame that we find identity, race, and power relationships associated with language manifest themselves most in readers' objections to DLE. Along with objecting to DLE, they often advocate for English only, based on the pre-constructed

assumption that there exists a homogeneous English-speaking American nation, as in the following example:

- Teaching **ENGLISH** in schools.

  If you are selling me a Big Mac or any other item, you should **do it in English**, there should be **no other language option**. If you don't like **the way things are here**, **go back** to where you came from and **change your own country**! If you were **born here and don't like it . . . you are free to move**. **Illegal is illegal** no matter what the lawyers think! The **American flag** should be **the only one allowed** in AMERICA! This statement **DOES NOT mean I'm against immigration!** YOU ARE WELCOME HERE, IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WELCOME TO **COME LEGALLY**. **Speak ENGLISH** in the home and **Learn the LANGUAGE**, **as immigrants have in the past**! (**Concerned for Facts**, Text 11)

As shown in the above example, speaking English is presented as "the way things are here", which is exacerbated even further by the text consumer's alias of "Concerned for Facts", which pre-supposes that the comments include facts, when they are instead, opinions. The statement "the ways things are here" legitimizes the claim that there should be "no other language option" and therefore justifies the text consumer's objection to DLE. In addition, the reader associates American nationality with the English language and uses the "American flag" to replace "English" in his argument to avoid evoking opposition. If we rewrite "The American flag should be the only one allowed in AMERICA!" as "English should be the only one allowed in AMERICA!", which is what the reader is really proposing, we will see immediately that the patriotic appeal in the statement is taken away. Besides drawing on patriotism and national pride to maintain the English-speaking norm, the reader also speaks through liberal ideals for illiberal ends (a strategy where egalitarian principles and ideals such as freedom, equality, and individualism are drawn on to account for and rationalize racial discrimination, exclusion and oppression) (Augoustinos & Every, 2007, p. 134). For those Americans who don't agree with English only, he reminds them of their freedom to leave this country. Under this superficial freedom is the unchallengeable norm— "ENGLISH!!!! That's what our country speaks!!" (Specialss, Text 11)

The relationship between nationality and language is also conveyed through another pre-constructed assumption that DLE is for immigrants, especially "illegal" immigrants. In this case, the legal status of the learners is metonymically highlighted, ignoring the fact that regardless of the legal status of ELs, these students are already in the US and the law mandates their education. DL learners are instead presented as immigrants who are coming to the US "illegally" and who are changing the linguistic norms of America by

not speaking English. In addition, besides the fact that the text consumer stereotypes all ELs to be "illegal" (although the majority are not), he also demands that English is spoken in the home (which is not a public domain and not relevant to DL schooling) and demonstrates his unfamiliarity with multilingual contexts. In this frame, the non-English speaking DL learners are viewed as a potential dividing force toward national integration. BE literature has documented that maintenance-oriented BE programs are often viewed as divisive because they result in minorities reproducing themselves as minorities  (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008, p. 117). What is meant by this is that asking for linguistic rights (such as the right to maintain and further develop the mother tongue) is viewed by opponents to BE programs as a first step in the eventual desire for cultural, economic and political autonomy which may lead to eventual disintegration of the nation state. People in this category share the same view for DLE. In the excerpt below, DLE is presented as a dividing and excluding mechanism in the community, creating a "schism" because there is "little interaction". Although his claim is completely groundless, it reflects the view of languages as potentially divisive and the creation of many separate sub-groups (i.e., minorities reproducing minorities) that fail to interact.

- Additionally, these programs create a great **schism** among students, faculty and staff, as well as the community. There is **little interaction** between students in the language immersion cohort and those who are not. (Britt E., Text 2)

To proponents of the ideology as seen in the above statement, a symbolic barter is assumed in which it is agreed that minority rights should be surrendered as a type of payment to being admitted into the receiving nation. In this case, language and cultural maintenance represent "a type of self-imposed isolation that divides the nation state", and therefore the host has a right to require linguistic assimilation (Bianco, 2008, p. 40-41). The linguistic anxiety over minority languages can also be expressed through a reversed power relation between the linguistic majorities and minorities. In the analysis, presuppositions were found to be used frequently to present English speakers as making sacrifices to provide accommodations for minority language speakers. In the excerpt below, the real power structure is concealed by presenting DLE as compulsory language education that forces English speaking Americans to learn Spanish although many of them don't want to, while Spanish-speaking immigrants are presented as not learning English. Expressions like "have Americans learn [S]panish", "unless", "elective" indicate the unwillingness and vulnerability of English speakers. Underneath such distortion of the reality of DLE and the reversed role of the dominated and the dominator is the fear of losing or sharing the symbolic power associated dominant languages to a minority language. If we look closer at the statement,

we can still identify the real power relationship: only Americans have the linguistic right to learn Spanish as an elective; whoever "them" refers to, needs to learn English because "this is the USA". Language education and language rights are perceived against the norms centered on an (imaginary) homogenous English-speaking American people.

- This is the USA **let them learn English** NOT have Americans learn [S]panish, unless they want to take it as an elective. (dogbone, Text 15)

Last but not least, readers within this frame are most likely to (re) produce anti-immigration talk and are most likely being accused of being racist. Some readers explicitly equate DL learners with illegal immigrants, saying that "Most likely only the illegals don't know [E]nglish and so do the right thing and send them back where they came from or to jail" (BudFuller, Text 11), or suggest that "the parents of illegal aliens should be responsible for teaching their kids English" (skippy42, Text 1). Such narrow and misinformed perceptions of DL learners demonstrate an indexical relationship between the English language and the American national identity. Such association and the presumed loyalty that proficiency in the English language implies can "overwhelm scholarly evidence of cognitive benefits from bilingualism" (Bianco, 2008). This explains why readers still air such strong objection to DLE continuously although news articles often report its effectiveness.

### 4.5. Monolingual-GHC

Readers speaking from this frame tend to hold negative views about DLE and emphasize the teaching of English. The GHC value is communicated mainly through two major arguments: First, English is the global language, especially in the business world, thus no need to learn any foreign languages; second, compared with foreign languages, the basics such as reading, writing, mathematics, and science will better help students to find a job, therefore, there is no need for DLE. Immediately evident is the view that is centered on the English-speaking majority, which is not a surprise among people who hold a monolingual perspective.

- **English** should be the **only language** taught in the **United States**. **The world runs on English**. (PatriotEagleHERO, Text 2)

In the example above, the one-nation-one-language ideology is clearly articulated through an English only view. This exaggerated statement, presented as reality, that "the world runs on English" may be found at one extreme of the spectrum; however, this can also indicate how  misinformed the ethno-centric public perception can go, which is not a welcoming sign for

the development of DLE. More typical, and more linguistically strategic, is a response shown in this excerpt:

- Given that **so many** kids graduate high school unable to **read, write, and do basic math**, it **seems** that we **should** be focusing on **the basics**. **Anyway**, this idea of **learning a foreign language is overrated** as **English is the language of commerce**. (Jeffrey, Text 6)

One discursive strategy used is hedging, purposefully being ambiguous or less assertive about what is claimed (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In the above example, the auxiliary verb "seems" and low modality modal verb "should" combine to reduce the assertiveness of the following claim about focusing on the basics. The reason for doing so is presented as fact that students perform poorly in high school; the use of the approximator "so many" conceals the exact number of students who graduate "unable to read, write, and do basic math" yet gives the impression of urgency, which makes his claim of focusing on the basics reasonable; also made reasonable is focusing on English, which is one of the "basics". An additional reason to focus on English is introduced by the adverb "anyway", softening the tone of his claim that the "idea of learning a foreign language is overrated".

Whatever tone they may adopt when objecting to DLE, text consumers in this category are alike in that they view DLE as a form of foreign language education. Unlike some of the readers from the multilingual-DHC category who also view DLE as an alternative form of foreign language education, readers in this category are so deeply influenced by the monolingual ideology that they have a very low opinion of learning an additional language (and seem to not understand that two languages could be learned at the same time, which is the premise of DLE). For example, one reader says that "Dual Immersion is a joke"(Wofdragon, Text 13); another thinks that "teaching Spanish and Chinese is ridiculous"(thirtysomething, Text 13); another claims that "technology is quickly making the need to learn a second language obsolete" (curtisb, Text 13). To sum up, for many of readers in this category, whether to have DLE equals whether it is useful for English-speaking students to learn a language other than English.

Before we move to the next section, we would like to reiterate that we did not originally plan to label each reader comment with a certain discourse frame, since the same reader may articulate multiple frames, especially when interacting with other readers. Given the complexity of the topic and the multiple factors that may affect each individual participant, it is not possible to describe the ideology behind each comment as static, isolated and unchanging. Therefore, the discourse frame described earlier serves more as a guide to locate each of the comments rather than a judgment as to the

ideology of each text consumer, and we use the discourse frames to make meaning of the reader comments and to describe how each frame is related to readers' perception of DLE. By unpacking the discursive strategies employed in the comments, we explore how people reflect, reproduce, and challenge the policy discourses when interacting with the text and each other. Table 2 briefly summarizes how each discourse frame is related to the text consumers' perception of DLE.

Table 2

*Summary of Reader Perception of DLE in Relation to Policy Discourse*

| Discourse frame | Positive | Negative |
|---|---|---|
| Multilingual-GHC | DLE as an asset in the global market | DLE as an asset but not available to all |
| | ---------- | DLE teaching less valuable languages is a waste of money |
| Multilingual-EH | DLE for educational equity & cultural diversity | ---------- |
| Monolingual-GHC | ---------- | DLE is not needed as English is the language of world business |
| Monolingual vs. EH | ---------- | DLE for (illegal) immigrants |

## 5. Discussion

As shown in the previous section, the interplay of the multilingual-monolingual discourse with the GHC-EH value adds to the complexity of this topic. Previous DLE/BE literature shows that opposition to BE or DLE tends to be highly selective. It is more likely for a program to receive opposition when the program focuses on the provision of L1 instruction to minority or socially subordinated groups, compared with a program that targets English (language majority) speakers (Cummins, 2009; Field, 2007). Such selective objection is also demonstrated in our study in the objection from monolingual vs. EH oriented readers who perceive DLE as language education for (illegal) immigrants and the support from multilingual-GHC oriented readers who view DLE as an asset in the global market for English speakers. However, what is not adequately addressed in previous research is the new variation coming along with the GHC value. In this case, objections come from parents who cannot get their children enrolled in a DL program or who believe the language taught in a DL program is less valuable in a global market, although they view learning an additional language as an opportunity.

The GHC value may sound more appealing to the language majority; however, we agree with Valdez et al. that overemphasis on the GHC value will not create a healthy environment for the development of DLE. As they cautioned, exclusive focus on GHC values would guarantee continued educational

inequality for ELs and linguistic minority students (Valdez et al., 2014). What we find even more problematic is that this deep-rooted inequality may be masked by the unfairness mentioned by many English speakers that the program is not available to all or they have no freedom regarding the choice of language. While they are drawing on democratic ideals such as equality and freedom to gain more advantages or to prevent the privileged to be more privileged through DLE, the equal rights of the ELs and language minority students remain neglected and unaddressed. Therefore, we agree with Valdez et al. in that we do not think that market value of language learning should be abandoned; however, it must go along with the equity/heritage value. After all, DLE is not just about learning two languages; it's literacy in two languages for both linguistic majority and minority students. Most importantly, by providing education in a minority language that is spoken in a certain community social justice is promoted for speakers of that language.

Another prominent theme that emerged in our analysis is the intersection of language, national identity, race, and power relationships. The strongest opposition to DLE comes from readers who perceive DLE as language education for illegal immigrants, which is inconsistent with BE scholarship that has identified that opposition to BE for linguistic minority students "derives primarily from ideological concerns related to immigration and national identity in societies that are increasingly diverse" (Cummins, 2009, p. 169). In our analysis, we also identified a strong anti-immigration sentiment related to monolingualism. Readers often refer to DL learners as illegal immigrants and draw on patriotism and national pride to defend their prejudiced view. As we showed in the comment "Illegal is illegal no matter what the lawyers think!", the reader equates non-English speakers with illegal immigrants although he also claims that it "DOES NOT mean" he is against immigration; "illegal is illegal" but immigrants are "WELCOME TO COME LEGALLY." The disclaimer indicates that he is aware of the anti-prejudice norm; however, the frequent reference to words like "illegal" and "legal" also demonstrates a reduced norm against prejudice, as Goodman and Rowe (2013) point out, online discussion seems to be a more likely venue for unguarded discriminatory talk. In fact, we find that when such discriminatory talk does occur, it tends to generate higher levels of reader interaction. The following comment spurred the most heated and most highly-engaged conversation with a total of 10 readers joining the conversation.

- When did they give California back to Mexico and why weren't we told about it? My little town that I have lived in for 45 years now looks and sounds like Tijuana. Disgusting. (Bannca67, Text 1)

Although this comment is accused of being racist by another reader, overall,

the direct mention of race/racism/racist is still rare in reader comments. It's more common for readers to express their complaint by talking about personal feelings, such as "I should never have to push 1 for English" (Specialss, Text 11), or "I am tired of being a foreigner in my own nation"(coffeeandpapper in reply to chezpoppie, Text 11). What is embedded in these complaints is a deep anxiety over minority languages and the symbolic power associated with languages. The following excerpt is taken from an essay on language, race, and power in public space in the context of the English Only movement in the 1990s in California (Matsuda, 1996, p. 89 as cited in Crump 2014):

> As a California politician said "when I drive downtown, in my little town . . . the signs are all in Chinese . . . . Then you feel like you're not really quite home. You feel like an alien, or that you're in a foreign country."  . . . What is America supposed to like? . . . sign ordinances are about who controls linguistic space: who says what, where, and when . . . . *Linguistic anxiety is the new proxy for racial anxiety*. Jim Crow, restrictive covenants, and burning crosses are now considered socially inappropriate. So the new language of exclusion becomes 'Those signs make me feel like it's not America, like I'm excluded. I have nothing against them, but why can't they use English?'

It is frustrating to see that the California politician quoted above can in fact find many spokespersons today in many different states. The dominant discourse is reiterated in online discussion about DLE; however, the number of responses generated by such discourse indicates that people are also trying to challenge the dominant discourse when there is an opportunity, which definitely deserves more attention from DLE scholars.

## 6. Conclusion

In summary, we call for more scholarship on DLE that focuses on discourse in public spaces. As we demonstrated in our study, both multilingual and monolingual discourses are represented in the debate about DLE. However, the overpowering GHC value does not necessarily help win more support for DLE and at the same time runs the risk of further marginalizing the marginalized minority language speakers. Our analysis of reader comments does not show a dominance of monolingual discourse over multilingual discourse; however, how the GHC and EH values are mediated within both the monolingual and multilingual discourse makes more of a difference in how people perceive of DLE.

The findings also revealed many cases where people were opposed to DLE partly due to their incomplete or misinformed understanding of DLE. This

misinformation (such as believing that all or most ELs do not have proper authorization to be in the US) can lead to negative attitudes toward DLE. Therefore, it is crucial that more information about DL programs in media discourse is dispersed by educators and scholars in the field, and that reporters that cover the programs have adequate (and accurate) information that is double-checked with program leaders and advocates. In addition, DL program administrators and policy-makers should consider the addition of professional responders to online discourse about their programs that can correct such mis-information.

For future study, we suggest more emphasis on the interaction of the multilingual-monolingual GHC-EH in public discourse, and research that determines ways in which minority language voices can be more present in public forums (such as online comments to media discourse about DLE) since we know from Dorner's (2011) study that public discourse influences policy creation and implementation. In addition, we suggest that program advocates increase opportunities for public engagement through public panels in which students and parents in the program can talk to the public, documentary film showings and language fairs, which will increase the chances of getting more balanced input. Furthermore, information given in these public spaces will increase opportunities to share the effectiveness of DL programs. We agree with Valdez et al. (2014) that there is a need to reprioritize the EH orientation of DLE; however, we also caution that promotion of the EH value should also be considered within the specific demographic, linguistic, and cultural context. As demonstrated in our study, the EH value may cause the strongest opposition among people who hold a monolingual perspective. Therefore, how policy makers and educators communicate the EH value is of crucial importance; the same holds true for the GHC value. More research on how the GHC-EH discourses are negotiated and/or challenged in a local context will be able to provide more insights for policy makers and educators.

Finally, while this article has touched on the unique linguistic context of the United States, we believe the findings are applicable to many international contexts in which dual/multilingual education programs exist (or fail to exist), and in which minority language students are often at a disadvantage. We encourage more scholarly work on public discourse within these international domains, particularly in places where minority language rights are ignored or backgrounded in light of a GHC value that favors English.

**Notes:**

1. For a complete and more thorough review of the history of bilingual/dual language education in the United States, see Dorner (2011).

2. In the United States educational context, there are three types of DLE: (1) foreign/second

language immersion programs for English-speaking students, (2) developmental Bilingual Education (BE) programs for English learners, and (3) two-way immersion, which combines these two student groups (Hamayan, Genesee, & Cloud, 2013). For the purposes of this paper, DLE is used as the umbrella term for all of these program types.

3. This ridiculing comment is an example of a covert strategy often utilized by trollers (deliberately antagonistic or offensive commenters on computer-mediated-communication (CMC)) called "mocking" (Hardacker, 2013, p. 67).

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### The Authors

Jia Lu (Email: jia.lu@huskers.unl.edu) is a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests include language and literacy education with a social justice focus, foreign language pedagogy and teacher education, and discourse analysis.

Theresa Catalano (Email: tcatalano2@unl.edu) has a PhD in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching from the University of Arizona. As Assistant Professor of Second Language Education/Applied Linguistics she teaches courses related to second and foreign language education, linguistics, intercultural communication, schooling and the multilingual mind, and multimodal discourse analysis. Her research focuses on issues related to language teacher education, language and ideology, social justice, immigration, and democratic education incorporating the arts. Additionally, she employs scholarly perspectives from critical discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics to the educational arena.

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## Appendix A: Texts used in the corpus

Text 1:    Su, E.Y., 2012, March 22. DL programs growing in popularity across California. Huffington Post. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/22/dual-language-programs-gr_n_1372804.html

Text 2:    Iyamba, N., 2012, March 7. Will Utah's immersion language programs grow or stagnate? KSL.com. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=19499926

Text 3:    Brown, A., 2012, May 14. St. Paul Hmong two-way immersion programs face challenges of enrolling non-Hmong students, developing curriculum. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/news/2012/05/14/st-paul-hmong-two-way-immersion-programs-face-challenges-enrolling-non-hmong-student

Text 4:    Ellenby, J., 2012, May 14. The need for dual language immersión. Partisans.org. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.partisans.org/2012/05/language-immersion

Text 5:    Magee, M., 2012, January 23. Learning in multiple languages: more parents demand immersion programs to help children thrive in a global society. U-T San Diego. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2012/jan/23/learning-in-multiple-languages/

Text 6:    Conner, E., 2013, March 17. Dual-language classes interest grows in Natrona County, Wyoming. Trib.com. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://trib.com/news/local/casper/dual-language-classes-interest-grows-in-natrona-county-wyoming/article_1daa05f6-6232-58d2-bf54-b664b9a3bb20.html

Text 7:    Suman, J., 2014, April 5. Two-way teaching | BSD dual- language program providing curriculum for culturally changing future. BellevueReporter.com. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.bellevuereporter.com/news/201096141.html

Text 8:    Conner, E., 2013, April 7. Dual-language immersion could start in 2014. Trib.com. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://trib.com/news/local/casper/dual-language-immersion-could-start-in/article_a18273db-f7dc-5b55-bc95-14314fabce6e.html

Text 9:    Pollreisz, A., 2013, January 14. Dual-language immersion discussed at NCSD board meeting. K2radio.com. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://k2radio.com/dual-language-immersion-considered-at-ncsd-board-meeting/

Text 10:   Warth, G., 2013, January 15. OUSD increases building fees, plans dual-language kindergarten. U-T San Diego. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/jan/15/ousd-increases-building-fees/

Text 11:   Llopis-Jepsen, C., 2013, January 3. Parents make impassioned plea for dual-language program at Whitson Elementary: Spanish-English program offered in kindergarten through third grade. The Topeka Capital-Journal. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://cjonline.com/news/2013-01-03/parents-make-impassioned-plea-dual-language-program-whitson-elementary

Text 12:   Regan, S., 2013, January 11. St. Paul's Jackson Magnet School: first in nation with Hmong dual language program. Twin Cities Daily Planet. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/news/2013/01/11/jacksons-hmong-dual-immersion-program

Text 13:   Wimmer, N., 2012, December 3. Utah immersion program the envy of the nation. KSL.com. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=23233541

Text 14:   Barr, S., 2014, May 13. Wake schools highlight successful language immersion program. The News & Observer. Retried September 7, 2014, from http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/05/13/3858806/wake-schools-highlight-language.html

Text 15:   Nirappil, F., 2014, January 23. Dual language immersion program comes to Tualatin's Bridgeport Elementary. OREGONLIVE. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.oregonlive.com/utalatin/index.ssf/2014/01/dual_lamguage_immersion-progra.html

Text 16:   Kadvany, E., 2014, Aug 15. Parents urge board to consider middle school Mandarin immersion program: Group hopes to bridge gap between Ohlone program and high school courses. Palo Alto Online. Retrieved September 7, 2014, from http://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2014/08/15/parents-urge-board-to-consider-middle-school-mandarin-immersion-program