

## Marginalization of U.S.-Born English Language Learners through English-Only Policies: Myths, Reality and Implications

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### Abstract

*This article presents a comprehensive look at U.S.-born English language learners (ELLs), the fastest-growing demographic in U.S. schools today, by exploring the current research-based policies and practices in place in the United States to meet this population's unique needs and the role that second language acquisition plays in this process. Specifically, the authors examine both the efficacy of and politics behind the English-only movement and dual-language programs such as bilingual education, and provide a rationale for why English-only educational policies may not be the best vehicle to help native-born ELs reach academic parity with native speakers of English.*

**Keywords:** English-only policy; bilingual education; English language learners; native-born ELs

### 1. Introduction

Many imagine that English language learners (ELLs), also known as ELs or English-learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), are immigrant children who have no knowledge of English or American culture. While this assumption may have held true several years ago, the majority of ELs are actually native to the United States. In fact, 85% of pre-kindergarten to fifth grade and 62% of 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade ELs are native-born citizens of the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2015). With ELs becoming a fast-growing demographic in public schools ("English Language Learners," 2016), it is vital that teachers, administrators, and educational policy-makers be made cognizant of research-based policies and practices relevant to this population's unique needs. And, it is the goal of this article to accomplish this through a comprehensive look at relevant, published research on this topic.

### 2. Purpose of the Research Review

The purpose of this critical review is to provide a case for removing discriminatory English-only policies in order to better serve the growing population of U.S.-born ELs. In this article, the authors examine characteristics of native-born ELLs, second language acquisition theories, and bilingual programs. As native-born ELLs' experiences vary from both native English speaking (NES) and foreign-born ELLs, the characteristics of this population must be analyzed in order to ensure the academic success of this population. Logically, the authors purport that second language acquisition theory should be the foremost driving force of policies for multilingual students, due to the fact that the goal of many bilingual and ESL programs is to accelerate ELs' proficiency in English. It is therefore necessary to analyze what the current theories claim is best practice and compare it with English-only legislation in order to provide an effectiveness litmus test. Finally, studies concerning bilingual programs are analyzed in this article for their effectiveness, particularly achievement gap closure, to see if they provide a superior alternative to English-only settings.

### **3. English-Only Education vs. Bilingual Education**

Collier (1987) reported that ELs (referred to as limited English proficient or LEP students in her study) who enter an English-only education system between kindergarten and second grade, actually perform *worse* than students who enter between third and fifth grade. As almost all U.S.-born ELs begin school in either preschool or kindergarten in the United States, foreign-born ELs outperformed U.S.-born ELs longitudinally in English-Only settings, despite U.S.-born students' early immersion and exposure to English. This discrepancy highlights a potential failure to provide adequate support for language minority students in their early years. Thomas and Collier (1997, 2002) reported that as a whole, English-only programs keep all ELs far below their peers academically, yet many bilingual programs help students achieve parity. When data show being born in the United States is a disadvantage for language minority students in English-only programs (Collier, 1987) and bilingual programs are a viable solution to this issue (Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002), why do many states pass legislation that specifically prohibits dual language instruction?

Cummins (1996) explains the impetus against bilingual education occurred predominantly in the mid-1980s and 1990s, due to the false logic put forward by U.S. English, an English-only advocacy group. The latter claimed that less time spent on English in the classroom could not necessarily produce greater gains in English, and putting children into bilingual education was equivalent to child abuse. Despite the evidence produced by achievement comparisons of English-only and bilingual schools, as well as second language acquisition theory, this logical fallacy convinced policy makers at the state and federal levels to discourage, if not ban, bilingual education.

With the implementation of English-only policies *en masse*, attempts to make both ESL (English as a second language) and content-specific courses richer in oral and written academic language in English-only settings, through methods such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Short & Echevarria, 1999), became popular. However, these *solutions* treat the symptoms of the achievement gap between language minority students and native-English speakers (NES), but do not address the core issue. Cummins (1979) claims the underlying issue is that language minority students are struggling with their second language (L2) due to a weak foundation in their first language (L1). His theory largely explains the poor achievement of language minority students in English-only settings found in Collier's (1987) and Thomas' and Collier's (1997) research, especially when compared with the student success and achievement gap closure in bilingual settings. It also explains why many studies show that Latino kindergarteners' and first graders' Spanish abilities, particularly in reading, accurately predict their achievement in English, giving further incentive to develop students' home language (L1) skills in order to aid their L2 language acquisition (Cárdenas-Hagan, Carlson & Pollard-Durodola, 2007; Gottardo, 2002; Lindsey, Manis, & Bailey, 2003; Manis, Lindsey, & Bailey, 2004; Reese, Garnier, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 2000; Royer & Carlo, 1991).

Contrary to the evidence proving the importance of L1 development on L2 achievement, English-only policies actively prevent students from developing their L1 outside of their home environment and prevent teachers from using their L1 to instruct or assess students. As an ESL educator, the first author had to tell too many enthusiastic teachers that it was against Tennessee state policy to translate tests into Spanish, even for students who had been in the country less than a year, despite their willingness to do so. While the states could make a weak case against widespread bilingual education (such as limited qualified teachers, inability to serve every language group equally, and funding issues), explicitly prohibiting teachers from implementing authentic assessment and research-based best practices for the ELs in their classroom would not be tolerated with any other demographic. Based on the growing population of language minority students who are born in the United States and systemically left behind with seemingly insurmountable achievement gaps, the authors argue that bilingual education needs to become the norm (when possible) rather than the exception due to the potential harmful effects of English-only education and policies on native-born ELLs.

### **4. Who are the Native-Born ELs?**

#### **4.1 Characteristics**

While studies have researched characteristics of Generation 1.5 students (Connerty, 2009; Roberge, 2002), few, if any, have specifically focused on characteristics of ELs who were born in the United States. This lack of research causes misconceptions/myths about these students to abound. Some believe that these students exhibit the same characteristics as other U.S. born children who speak English and are baffled when they come to kindergarten with minimal English proficiency. Others believe this population to be essentially the same as foreign-born ELLs.

While these students may share a common language with their U.S.-born peers, foreign-born ELLs likely lived in an environment where their first language was used in most settings in their country, in environments where their language was respected. U.S.-born ELLs live in an environment that views their native language as diametrically opposed to the *lingua franca*, English. All students spend the majority of their time in two places: their home and school. In the following section, both environments are analyzed, and the authors outline the inadequacy of English-only policies for native-born ELs, based on the evidence presented.

#### **4.2 Family Life**

Roberge (2002) discusses the challenges that U.S.-born ELLs and their families face culturally and linguistically. For the parents of native-born ELLs who have limited English skills, their children frequently serve as “language brokers” (p. 112), translating for their parents and other parties. Parents also feel pressure from society to speak English to their children so that they will not be behind when they go to school. This awkward language negotiation situation is largely ameliorated when parents embrace their home language, and ideally teach their children literacy in their L1, which has been proven to greatly increase student achievement in English reading (Reese, et al., 2000).

EL students also may experience pressures from their family to conform to cultural “norms, values, roles, and expectations” (Roberge, 2002, p. 112) that conflict with American culture. Similarly, students may view learning English as “a symbol of assimilation into mainstream culture and with it, a loss of ethnic identity” (Rumberger & Larson, 1998, p. 70). Due to this cultural conflict, EL students may also experience higher levels of depression and anxiety (Roberge, 2002).

#### **5. Education in the United States: Does it truly meet the Needs of ELs?**

Native-born ELLs face “linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination” not only in society, but also in the education system (Roberge, 2002, p. 112). As cited in Cummins (1996), Epstein describes situations that occurred before and during the 1960s and 1970s where “children [were] forced to kneel on the playground and beg forgiveness if they [were] caught talking to each other in Spanish” (p. 31). While school systems in general have become more lax about language used outside of the classroom, ELLs still face challenges related to peer and teacher perceptions, particularly relating to perceived intelligence and academic ability.

##### **5.1 Tracking and Performance of ELs**

Connery (2009) asserts that ELs who are either born in the United States or arrive at an early age are frequently viewed as students in need of remediation, and are frequently placed in lower-level classes, despite their ability to speak in two different languages. Two reasons this tracking occurs are due to an increased pressure to mainstream the students as quickly as possible, even if the students are not prepared to have their ESL or bilingual classes removed, or due to programs keeping students enrolled for too long in an ESL class (Roberge, 2002). Both situations are problematic in terms of teacher perceptions about EL student ability. When students are exited too soon, teachers believe their students should be entirely prepared to receive grade-level instruction in only English just as well as any native-English speaking peer; EL students’ poor performance can then be inferred to be a lack of ability instead of due to problems with English acquisition. If students remain in ESL classes too long and unnecessarily, teachers assume the students are not ready to handle grade-level coursework and these students will be discouraged from taking higher-level courses. Either way, EL students are viewed as being deficient.

Collier (1995) asserts the primary problem with the deficit-perspective of EL students by teachers, administrators, and policymakers, is that the ELs’ very bilingualism is viewed as a *problem* in need of remediation instead of an *asset* that is akin to the perception of the gifted and talented program.

##### **5.2 English-Only: A Deficit Perspective**

Cummins (1996) contends that English-only policy encourages a deficit perspective, as any language spoken other than English is viewed as a potential roadblock to the language of instruction in need of elimination. The researcher also claims that English-only education, and American culture as a whole, participate in “victim blaming” students because “linguistic and cultural diversity are seen as a threat to social cohesion,” it “reinforce[s] the myth of bilingual group inferiority,” and causes “even more intense efforts by the school to eradicate the ‘deficiencies’ inherent in bilingual children (i.e., their language and culture)” (p. 34). Due to this systemic deficit perspective, EL students’ chances of being encouraged to take advanced courses and pursue a college degree are much slimmer than their peers (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010).

### 5.3 Conflicting Identities of ELs

Through an analysis of the information presented above, the authors' understanding of the characteristics of native-born ELLs shows EL students with conflicting identities between the culture of their heritage and the culture of their birthplace. Therein lies a systemic discrimination in the school system based on their linguistic background by viewing ELLs through a lens of deficiency. The authors suggest that the very nature of English-only policy relies on the notion that in order to get ahead in life, at least in the United States, students need to assimilate to American ideals and American English, preferably with little to no accent in their speech as well. This zero-sum attitude pressures students to sacrifice their heritage, their family norms, and their first language in order to be *successful*. Students who struggle acquiring English (as many ELs in English-only settings do) are therefore considered to be in need of remediation; they have a *problem* that needs to be fixed. Labeling lack of English proficiency due to fluency in a different language as a *problem* in need of *fixing*, implies that EL students and their families *are* the problem rather than the English-only environment that does not allow for success outside of the medium of English. Language and culture are closely intertwined, as indicated in Rumberger and Larson (1998), thus, by perceiving EL students' language to be deficient, their very culture may also be viewed as being inferior. If EL students' culture and language, core elements to their identity, are viewed as being inadequate or inferior, the students themselves are viewed as sub-par. The authors purport that ultimately, English-only policies marginalize all ELLs, native-born ELLs in particular, by preventing them from demonstrating success on grade level due to English serving as a gatekeeper.

### 6. Second Language Acquisition Theory

Another force that stands in direct opposition to English-only policies, particularly for native-born ELLs, is current second language acquisition theory. This section of the analysis is particularly vital in that the claimed *goal* of English-only policies in education is to rapidly accelerate English acquisition. If policymakers genuinely wished to accelerate second language acquisition, then surely their policies would align with the current theories; however, all of the major theorists in this field argue that English-only is not only unhelpful, but harmful (Cummins, 1979, 1996; Krashen, 1981). If English-only policies in schools are diametrically opposed to actual second language acquisition theory, then either politicians or policymakers have failed to do *any* research into this topic, or accelerating language acquisition is not the actual purpose of these policies.

#### 6.1 Threshold Hypothesis and Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis

Cummins's (1979) threshold hypothesis explains that stunting the development of students' L1 significantly hinders not only their advancement in L2, but also their cognitive development. In contrast, students with high level of achievement in *both* languages have been shown to have cognitive gains. Given the nature of English-only, providing resources solely in English, assessing only in English, and using exclusively English for everything except for parent conferences and letters home, the burden of L1 development lies solely with the parents, many of whom are from a lower socioeconomic status and who had fewer educational opportunities (Rumberger & Larson, 1998). By refusing to provide any support in the L1 as a system, and even explicitly demanding that teachers only use English for all assessments, English-only by its very nature stunts L1 development, affecting not only ELs' English advancement, but also their cognitive development.

Cummins's (1979) developmental interdependence hypothesis further explains that the students' ability in L2 largely depends on their competence in L1 when they first received "intensive exposure to L2" (p. 233). After discussing the benefits to experiencing L2 after obtaining competence in L1, he adds, "For children whose L1 skills are less well developed in certain respects, intensive exposure to L2 in the initial grades is likely to impede the continued development of L1. This will...exert a limiting effect on the development of L2" (p. 233). While this concept seems to be counterintuitive (after all, how can more English negatively affect English proficiency?), numerous studies have supported his hypothesis (Collier, 1987; Gottardo, 2002, Lindsey, et al., 2003; Manis, et al., 2004; Reese, et al., 2000; Royer & Carlo, 1991). In addition, it is illogical to expect a child to master the abstract concept of reading when he/she is taught in an unfamiliar language. In 1977, Smith (as cited in Cummins, 1979) claims, "children who can make sense of instruction should learn to read; children confronted by nonsense are bound to fail" (p. 238). Expecting students to learn a second language and how to read both their L1 and L2 simultaneously, is holding them to an impossibly high standard that teachers would not ask of majority-language students, yet the system treats these EL students as if *they* are deficient.

When taken together, both theories indicate the best determiner of success for ELLs in English acquisition and cognitive development is encouraging students to advance their first language in order to provide fertile ground for their English proficiency to grow and blossom. English-only actively discourages this very concept.

Lindsey, Manis, and Bailey (2003), Manis, Lindsey, and Bailey (2004), and Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, and Christian (2005) all found that phonemic awareness in Spanish correlated positively with English reading ability, and that it could even serve as a predictor for future English reading ability. Comeau, et al. (1999) discovered the same trend for French immersion students in Canada and asserts that word decoding as well as phonological awareness transfer across languages. Royer and Carlo (1991) found that Spanish reading ability also predicts English reading ability. Like Royer and Carlo (1991), Cárdenas-Hagan, Carlson, and Pollard-Durodola (2007) also discovered that students' competence in their first language mediates the acquisition in their second language. Gottardo (2002) also found that reading skills as well as phonological processing transfer within and across languages.

While a case could be made that Spanish and English share many of the same phonemes, particularly when written and read, Wang and Geva (2003) found that even Chinese students greatly benefit from L1 literacy. In fact, out of five spelling tests, ESL Chinese students outperformed the native English-speaking students in all but the pseudo word spelling test (which was delivered orally) largely due to their "whole word" approach to spelling words that mimic their experience in writing Cantonese (p. 17). Taken together, this evidence shows that students perform better in their L2 when they have even a basic foundation in L1. In sum, native-born ELLs in English-only programs are denied access to the very thing that would help them succeed in English in the name of teaching them English.

## 6.2 Collier's Language Acquisition for School Prism

Collier (1995) argues that second language acquisition is more than simply learning a language, but a process that must have four elements present in order to be successful: "social and cultural processes," "language development," "cognitive development," and "academic development" (p. 2). Social and cultural processes relates to an ELLs' emotional well being while learning his/her second language, as affective filters (Krashen, 1981) may potentially block a certain level of language acquisition due to the anxiety, motivation (also mentioned in Cummins (1979), and self-confidence of students. When students are immersed in an environment where the adults and children do not speak the same language as they do, especially at a young age, students' anxiety levels increase due to the inability to adequately express their needs to their teachers and peers. While many ESL programs may feel that they are addressing language development needs based on Collier's (1995) prism, the researcher includes both L2 development *and* L1 development in her model, a need that can only be addressed for native-born ELLs by either bilingual education or a rich, intentional literacy environment in L1 in their homes (Lambert, 1987; Ramirez & Politzer, 1975). Academic development has more recently been accepted into mainstream ESL contexts, particularly with the widespread adoption of WIDA standards (WIDA Amplified ELD Standards, 2012) that focus on academic content language and the popularity of the SIOP model in content classrooms (Echevarria & Short, 2004). Cognitive development has largely been neglected, as many teachers assume that imperfect language use by ELs implies that they need less rigorous concepts, though that trend is changing and many teachers are incorporating rigorous materials with accessible language.

## 6.3 BICS and CALP

Cummins (2008) addresses the differences between simple language development and academic and cognitive language development in his widely accepted theory of Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Many teachers express bewilderment at the low academic achievement of ELs who seemingly *speak English just fine*, particularly in reading and writing. These misconceptions/myths are largely due a lack of their understanding about the nature of BICS and CALP. ELLs may not be prepared to write an essay on cell division simply because they can discuss a pop culture icon with their friends in the hall or talk about their weekend.

While language acquisition varies from person to person, generally speaking, it takes 2 to 3 years to acquire BICS, or basic communication skills, and 5 to 7 years to acquire CALP, or the language needed to participate in scholastic topics, though Collier (1987, 1995) found that students with minimal proficiency in their home language take about 2 to 3 years longer to achieve parity with students who had proficiency in their L1. This discrepancy largely affects ELLs born in the United States who are enrolled in English-only programs.

By denying them access to literacy in their home language, native-born ELs in English-only programs take 7-10 years to fully develop English academic proficiency (Collier, 1995), though their BICS develop relatively quickly. In other words, U.S.-born ELLs who attend an English only program in kindergarten may not be fully proficient in English until they are in ninth grade, whereas students who come to the United States in the second grade with a strong literacy background from their home country could potentially become fully English proficient by seventh grade, even though they were exposed to English three years fewer than their native-born peers.

Taken as a whole, Cummins' (1979) threshold and developmental hypothesis, Collier's (1995) Language Acquisition for Schools Prism, as well as Cummins' (2008) BICS and CALP theory support the premise that students' L2 cannot thrive without L1 support, academic language incorporation, and a safe environment where ELLs feel that their heritage and language have value. With such a gap between second language acquisition theory and actual practices by those who provide service to ELLs, at best politicians have not even done a cursory search for best practices; at worst, they are intentionally widening the gap to keep language minority students ever reaching, yet never attaining full parity with their peers.

## 7. Bilingual Programs

Based on an analysis of both characteristics of native-born ELs and second language acquisition theories, it is clear that English-only policies do not adequately meet the needs of ELs born in the United States; however, the removal of one policy calls for replacement with another. As mentioned before, English-only policies lack crucial deliberate development for L1 (Cummins, 1979) as well as providing a safe place for ELs to learn their L2 (Collier, 1995). Bilingual education has several forms, yet all of them allow for instruction in students' L1, especially in the crucial early years when literacy development begins. It also provides a safe environment where students understand the rules and expectations, and can actually demonstrate what they know due to removing English as the sole medium of communication. The following section of this article will compare results of bilingual education with English-only education, and the many benefits bilingual education bestows upon its students, even those who are *not* ELs.

While all bilingual programs include some instruction in their students' L1, the long-term goals and the length of time students are in the program widely vary.

### 7.1 Types of Bilingual Programs Compared with English-Only Programs

Cummins (1996) and Thomas and Collier (2002) define multiple varieties of bilingual education implemented throughout the world, but *transitional*, *one-way developmental*, and *two-way developmental* are the most discussed in research based in the United States.

Transitional bilingual programs aim "only to promote students' proficiency in English" (Cummins, 1996, p. 99). In other words, the program administrators largely understand the futility of teaching a child how to read in a language they do not understand, *in a language they do not understand*, but they view bilingual instruction as a means to the end goal of being mainstreamed. Their ultimate goal is to mainstream students into English-only settings as quickly as possible, not to develop students as functional bilinguals. This program is more effective than any form of ESL coursework embedded in an English-only program (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Students enrolled in transitional bilingual programs achieved between the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> percentile on a standardized reading test, outperforming students who were in English-only environments who achieved between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> percentiles on the same test. However, this form of bilingual education views bilingual classes largely as remediation to help their students *catch up* not as an enrichment vehicle that helps students achieve academic success in both languages.

One-way developmental bilingual programs focus predominantly on developing bilingual achievement for language-minority students. Unlike their transitional counterparts, the goal is not to remove students from bilingual classes as quickly as possible, but to have them develop academically in both languages. Thomas and Collier (2002) found that students who received 50 % of their instruction in English and 50 % in their L1, in one-way bilingual programs, scored in the 72<sup>nd</sup> percentile, significantly higher than both the transitional programs and the ESL programs. However, students in a 90-10 program, where students are instructed mostly in their L1 and English is phased in over time, only scored in the 34<sup>th</sup> percentile, showing that an even balance between L1 and L2 appears to be the ideal scenario.

Two-way bilingual programs are similar to one-way, but they serve two different language groups, such as native-English speakers and Spanish speakers in order for both groups to gain proficiency in both languages. In 90-10 two-way bilingual programs, students scored in the 51<sup>st</sup> percentile, which, while lower than the 50-50 one-way program, is significantly higher than the comparable 90-10 one-way program (Thomas & Collier, 2002). The 50-50 two-way bilingual program data did not have equivalent percentiles to compare programs, but “58 percent met or exceeded Oregon state standards in English reading by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades” (p. 307), even though the school was located in a low socioeconomic area.

Thomas and Collier (1997) support these findings. Students in two-way bilingual programs as a whole scored at the 61<sup>st</sup> NCE, 52<sup>nd</sup> NCE in one-way programs, 38<sup>th</sup>-44<sup>th</sup> NCE in transitional bilingual programs, 34<sup>th</sup> NCE in ESL content programs, and 24<sup>th</sup> in ESL pullout, demonstrating an incredible significance between the effectiveness of bilingual programs on reading. While all types of bilingual education have demonstrated higher long-term achievement than English-only settings by a significant margin, only development programs, especially 50-50 developmental programs, close the achievement gap between language minority students and native-English speakers in reading (Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002).

In a short-term study conducted by Farver, Lonigan and Eppe (2009), the researchers analyzed the effectiveness of a pullout intervention program, but conducted one exclusively in English, and the other bilingually, using a transitional model. The students in the bilingual program outperformed the English intervention and the control group in every area, albeit only by a small margin when compared with the English-only intervention group on English outcomes. This study was only conducted for about six months. Most bilingual programs take time to show their effectiveness, as students are learning two languages instead of simply one. Yet, this study reported that students were able to achieve the same level of English proficiency *and* gain achievement in Spanish in a 6-month period; even in short term gains, bilingual programs provide the best option for students from multilingual households.

## 7.2 Benefits of Bilingual Education

Lindholm-Leary and Rodriguez (2015) highlight how not only ELLs benefit for dual language programs, but also native English speakers who are acquiring a second language. In advocating for more dual language programs in secondary schools, they delineate the following benefits that secondary students in dual language programs have over students in English-only environments:

- 1) Score at comparable or higher levels in standardized assessments in English;
- 2) Are as or more likely to pass the high school exit exam and are less likely to drop out of school;
- 3) Are as or more likely to be enrolled in higher-level math courses;
- 4) Are more likely to attain higher levels of bilingualism; ... tend to score higher on standardized reading and math tests ...
- 5) Most students rate themselves as bilingual and feel that they have the partner language and the English skills in reading and writing to do well in school at their particular grade. (p. 1)

Considering the numerous benefits to bilingual education, and that the outcomes of bilingual education meet and exceed the stated, yet rarely achieved goals of English-only education, it is critical that all language minority students, but especially native-born ELLs who lack literacy skills in their L1 be given the opportunity to achieve parity with their English-speaking peers.

## 8. Conclusions

Based on the synthesis and analysis above, it is suggested by the authors that bilingual education appears to not only help U.S.-born ELs reconcile their heritage with their birth country (Roberge, 2002; Rumberger & Larson, 1998), develop the necessary competence in L1, particularly in literacy, to enhance their L2 acquisition (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1979; Gottardo, 2002; Lindsey, et al., 2003; Manis, et al., 2004; Reese, et al., 2000; Royer & Carlo, 1991), and acquire ability in their first language while providing no inhibition for students' English acquisition (Goodrich, et al., 2015), but it is the only program that helps close the achievement gap that exists between language minority students and their native-English speaking peers (Collier, 1987; Farver, et al., 2009; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Thomas & Collier, 2002). With this mountain of evidence, why did the Bilingual Education Act get repealed and replaced with Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act, absent of any language encouraging bilingual education (“No Child Left Behind,” 2016)? Some may argue that a lack of qualified bilingual teachers is at fault, yet, that issue could be addressed in teacher education at the state level.

Additionally, if two-way bilingual programs are implemented throughout the state at primary and secondary schools, many qualified students would be available within a few years to help *grow* the programs. Macedo (2000) claims the English-only movement has little to do with effectiveness of conveying instruction or the future success of ELLs, but is rather an active attempt to *colonize* language-minority students by undervaluing students' home languages and cultures in order to fully *Americanize* them.

Both Cummins (1996) and Macedo (2000) address the systemic marginalization that language minority students undergo in English-only settings where they are told, verbally or non-verbally, that success in the United States is a zero-sum situation: either they are American enough to be successful, or they will not be able to achieve what they wish. This situation even further impacts language minority students who are native to the United States, who are by definition American, but are treated as foreigners and part of an "unmeltable population" (Cummins, 1996, p. 36) in the lauded American melting pot because they come to school with a language other than English. In fact, Rumberger and Larson (1998) found that many third-generation American students do *worse* than second-generation students, despite more exposure to English, sometimes even exclusive use of English, and more indoctrination in American ideology.

Ultimately, the authors contend that bilingual education needs to be advocated for all students from language minority backgrounds when feasible, or *at least*, English-only legislation that prevents teachers from accommodating their assessments for ELLs, needs to be removed. As Macedo (2000) asserts, English-only policies ultimately have nothing to do with language, but with racism and discrimination against groups that are deemed less *able to be assimilated* than other immigrant groups in the past. In order to give ELs the opportunity to achieve academic parity, educators, therefore need to denounce this active discrimination and make state legislators aware of the chasm that must be bridged by ending English-only policies.

### **9. Implications and Recommendations**

ELs who are born in the United States are by far the largest nationality represented in ESL education today, therefore, more research needs to be conducted on native-born ELLs' dual-culture negotiation, how their achievement in English-only settings longitudinally compares with peers born abroad, and if they are ever able to reach parity with their native-English speaking peers through English-only methods. Without more longitudinal studies like Collier's (1987) and Thomas' and Collier's (1997), only a limited picture of keys to EL success will be visible, providing only short-term *fixes* rather than long-term *solutions*.

The authors recommend that all mainstream teachers need to validate language-minority students' cultures and languages by incorporating the following into their practices.

- Encourage students to celebrate their heritage, to try to read in their home language, encourage parents to read to them in their home language, and to teach them how to read in their L1 since they cannot get that instruction in school.
- Use texts like "*Names/Nombres*" by Sandra Cisneros that celebrate bilingualism.
- Uphold the works and accomplishments from students' cultures and incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy, as explained in Ladson-Billings (1995).
- Incorporate strategies that have been time proven and implemented in many ESL classrooms into mainstream content classrooms with ELLs.

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