



# The Making of Multilingual Schools in Monolingual Spaces

Cambio de Colores – June 26, 2014

Lisa M. Dorner, Ph.D.

University of Missouri-Columbia

# The Research Site

- Spanish Immersion Elementary School (SIES)
  - 80-100% of instruction in Spanish
  - Serving ~85% monolingual English speakers
  - One of few such schools in the area
  - Charter school
  - Three goals (Tedick, Christian, & Fortune, 2011):
    - Bilingualism
    - High academic achievement
    - Intercultural competence



# The Research Context

- Midsized Midwestern city
- Population around 300-400,000
- Residents identified on 2010 Census as:
  - Black or African-American (40-45%)
  - White or Caucasian (40-45%)
  - Foreign-born (5-7%)
- State-wide
  - Education for English Learners = English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Language
  - No state certification in bilingual education





# The Research Questions

- 🌐 What cultural scripts are employed in planning multilingual education in monolingual areas?
- 🌐 What goals and values were voiced by SIES leaders, as they recruited students?
- 🌐 How did parents respond, and what were their goals?

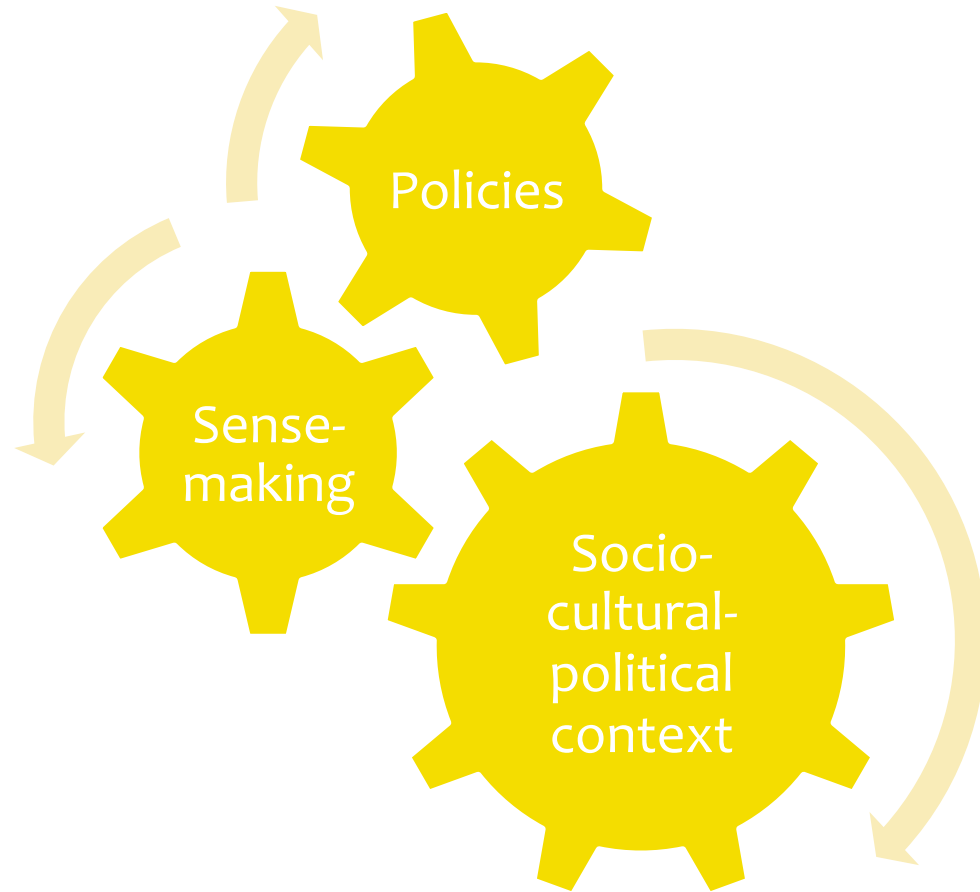




# The Theoretical Framework

1. Organizations/policies are shaped through local interactions.
  - 🌐 Neo-institutional theory (Colyvas, 2012)
  - 🌐 Bottom-up studies of language policy and planning (Hornberger, 2003)
2. Local interactions are strongly shaped by “cultural scripts” (meta-narratives or storylines)
3. Individuals employ these cultural scripts as they negotiate their organizations’ objectives/policies (Hamann, 2011), as they make sense of their work (Spillane, 2004).

# The Theoretical Framework



# The Methods: Data Collection

- Longitudinal ethnography (18 months)
- Participant observation
  - 36 recruitment/enrollment events
  - 18 board meetings
  - 17 parent meetings
  - Artifact collection
- Interviews
  - 10 parents
- Survey of parents, Year 1 (n=60)





# The Methods: Data Analysis

- Constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2010)
  - Open coding, axial coding, memo writing
- Constant comparison among:
  - Goals/values of school leaders
  - Goals/values of parents
  - Goals/values from the literature review
    - Language as a problem, right, resource, identity (Ruiz, 1984; Baker, 2011)

# Findings

1. Multilingualism was viewed as a right and future resource by both leaders and parents.
2. However, parents also valued multilingualism as an immediate cognitive resource for their children, and a marker of identity.
3. In addition, parents valued the choice they had for safe, socializing spaces for their young children.

*Cultural scripts beyond those about language shape the bottom-up language planning of new, multilingual schools.*

# 1. Leaders' Cultural Scripts

- 🌐 Language as a right and future resource:
  - 🌐 Multilingualism
  - 🌐 Global Access
  - 🌐 Social Equity





# 1a. Leaders & Multilingualism

- 🌐 **SIES' first television advertisement: *Welcome to [our state's] first International Baccalaureate schools with a total language immersion curriculum. What does that mean? That means a real world-class education for all of our children, where they learn their entire elementary curriculum in at least two languages.***
- 🌐 **SIES recruitment presentations: *Students will learn all of their course work in a second language from native and near native speakers.***

# 1b. Leaders & Global Access

- 🌐 SIES recruitment presentations: *citizens of the world*
- 🌐 SIES mission: *to position all children for success in local and global economies.*



# 1c. Leaders & Language (Rights) for All

- 🌐 SIES school board meetings: *Continual conversations about how to recruit low-income families, who may not otherwise seek out specialized charter schools*
  - 🌐 50% African-American/Black students
  - 🌐 30% White/Caucasian
  - 🌐 10% Latino/Hispanic
  - 🌐 10% Multiracial/Other
  - 🌐 50% Low-income





# 2. Parents' Cultural Scripts



- 🌐 Language as a right and resource
- 🌐 Language as a cognitive resource
- 🌐 Language as an identity marker

AND

- 🌐 Schools as safe, socializing spaces

# 2a. Parents & Language as a Right

- 🌐 *“Me gusta mucho para que ellos van a tener más oportunidad de aprender.”* (I like a lot that they [my children] are going to have more opportunity to learn).
- 🌐 *“Me interesó mucho porque está en español y en inglés, que es lo que más batallo con mi hijo mayor, que no sabe leer en español.”* (I was very interested [in SIES] because it is in Spanish and English, which is what was so challenging for my oldest son, who cannot read in Spanish).

## 2b. Parents & Language as a Resource

- One survey respondent's expected SIES to provide: "the best education possible to equip my daughter for a global workplace."



- An African-American mother explained that SIES would: "Give [students] a greater opportunity [...] because if you notice, you look in a paper, a lot of things are veering toward, it's better to have a second language. So if you're bilingual, that's a plus" (Ms. D).



# 2c. Parents & Language as a Cognitive Resource

- 🌐 “Language immersion provides both a valuable lifelong skill and critical brain development” (Mr. C).
- 🌐 Language immersion is important for my “gifted” children (Ms. K).
- 🌐 I want my children “challenged” by learning new languages (Ms. J).





# 2d. Parents & Choices for Safe Schools

In answer to the question: What do you expect from SIES?



- Bilingual/multicultural/global development
- Cognitive development/learning in general
- Socialization/social growth
- Safe/respectful school environment



# 2d. Parents & Choices for Safe Schools



- **Half of the respondents highlighted positive social growth/socialization or safe school environments:**
  - *I am expecting SIES to provide a safe and secure environment.*
  - *We expect our son will feel safe and he will be protected both physically and emotionally.*
  - *We hope SIES will provide a structured and respectful environment where she will be encouraged to do her best as a student and an individual.*

# Conclusions



- Multilingual schooling can be planned in monolingual areas.
- Multilingual schools (and diverse groups of parents want them to) provide more than multilingualism/global access/future job opportunities.
- Must consider contextual cultural scripts in policy planning.

# Questions, Comments?

- 🌐 Dorner, L. (In press). From global jobs to safe spaces: The diverse discourses that sell multilingual schooling in the U.S. *Current Issues in Language Planning*.
- 🌐 See more related research at [www.lisamdorner.com](http://www.lisamdorner.com).



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the website [www.lisamdorner.com](http://www.lisamdorner.com). The page features a dark green sidebar on the left with a profile picture of Lisa M. Dorner, Ph.D., and navigation links for BIO, CV, RESEARCH, and a copyright notice for 2014. The main content area has a white background and features a blog post titled "What do YOU like about your school?" dated June 16, 2014, by Lisa Dorner. The post includes a photo of a child looking at a screen displaying the words "LEARN SOCIAL". The text of the post discusses a research project where fifth graders in a language immersion program created advertisements for their school. The sidebar on the right is dark green and lists "RESEARCH AREAS" (Language Policy & Planning, Educational Policy Implementation, Immigrant Integration, Program Evaluation), "RESEARCH PROJECTS" (Families & Two-Way Immersion, Creating One-Way Immersion, Language Brokering), and "BLOGGERS" (Graduate Students, Organizations).



# References

- Baker, C. (2006). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (4th ed.). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Charmaz, K. (2010). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In W. Luttrell (Ed.), *Qualitative educational research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice* (pp. 183-207). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Colyvas, J. A. (2012). Performance metrics as formal structures and through the lens of social mechanisms: When do they work and how do they influence? *American Journal of Education*, 118(2), 167-197.
- Dorner, L. & Layton, A.\* (2013). What makes a "good" school? Data and competing discourses in a multilingual charter network. In D. Anagnostopoulos, S. Rutledge, & R. Jacobsen (Eds.), *The infrastructure of accountability: Mapping data use and its consequences across the American education system*, pp. 145-162. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Hamann, E. T. (2011). The Anglo politics of Latino education: The role of immigration scripts. In D. L. Leal & K. J. Meier (Eds.), *The politics of Latino education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hornberger, N. H. (Ed.). (2003). *Continua of biliteracy: An ecological framework for educational policy, research, and practice in multilingual settings*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Orellana, M. F., Ek, L., & Hernández, A. (1999). Bilingual education in an immigrant community: Proposition 227 in California. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 2(2), 114-130.
- Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal*, 7, 15-34.
- Spillane, J. P. (2004). *Standards deviation: How schools misunderstand education policy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

# Background Research

- Language (bilingualism) as a problem (Ruiz, 1984)
  - English-only initiatives in CA, MA, AZ
  - “Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs” → “Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students”
  - See also Dorner & Layton, 2013
- Language (bilingualism) as a right and resource (Ruiz, 1984)
  - Parents choose bilingual programs for integrative/instrumental reasons
- Language as a marker of identity (Orellana, et al., 1999)
  - Children (and adults) recognize languages reflect particular identities, and allow them to interact in new ways with a variety of people.