The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available on Emerald Insight at:
www.emeraldinsight.com/2053-535X.htm

Linguistic hegemony today: recommendations for eradicating language discrimination

Lakia M. Scott and Elena M. Venegas
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to discuss issues of contemporary language conflict in educational contexts.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a conceptual paper which examines current educational practices and policies through the lens of linguistic hegemony.

Findings – The authors identify three primary areas in which linguistic hegemony persists at present, including English-only policies, varied perspectives on language difference and harsh graduation mandates.

Originality/value – The authors extend upon Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemonic culture as well as Robert Phillipson's concept of linguistic imperialism in identifying current instances of linguistic hegemony in educational policies and practices throughout the USA.

Keywords Language, Multilingual, Ethnicity, Race, Critical

Paper type Conceptual paper

The role and use of language in the classroom has been a heavily debated topic since the formation of schooling. As early as the 1920s, English immersion policies threatened educational opportunity for minority student populations. Since then, national initiatives within the USA, such as the *Bilingual Education Act of 1968* and *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* have attempted to rectify inequalities surrounding language diversity through: allocating funds to support statewide core and supplemental programs and initiatives for economically disadvantaged language minority students [students whose first language differs from Standard American English (SAE), including African American Vernacular English (AAVE)]; increasing literacy programs for English Learners' (ELs) families; and providing professional development opportunities for educators that will increase their abilities in language instruction. Additionally, federal court cases have fought to combat linguistic hegemony by creating laws that support educational equity in public schools.

However, despite national initiatives and legislation, there is still much to be done with regard to providing equitable and meaningful learning experiences for language minority students. In particular, at all levels of schooling, there is a critical need to recognize the linguistic capital these student groups bring to the educational experience. More recently, some state education agencies have either proposed or enacted English-only legislation in support of creating a monolingual learning environment. In other cases, districts have restricted and/or defunded programs that celebrate cultural and linguistic difference – one example was the elimination of the La Raza Studies Program in Tucson Unified School District in 2009 (Cabrera *et al.*, 2011).

Journal for Multicultural Education
Vol. 11 No. 1, 2017
pp. 19-30
© Emerald Publishing Limited
2053-535X
DOI 10.1108/JME-09-2015-0028

www.m

The theoretical lens of linguistic hegemony is used to situate current literature on the politicized nature of language, curriculum and assessment measures. Linguistic hegemony is an adaptation stemming from Antonio Gramsci's notion of a hegemonic culture and Robert Phillipson's work on the concept of linguistic imperialism. Phillipson (1992, p. 47) defines English linguistic imperialism as: "the dominance of English asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages". He asserts that more resources are allocated to English than any other language (Phillipson, 1992). In this case, structural resources are financial and institutional, whereas cultural resources include attitudes, ideologies and pedagogies (Phillipson, 1992). Most importantly, those who benefit from these structural and cultural resources are proficient in English.

It is important to note that more than one demographic of American students counters linguistic hegemony in the current public schools. However, in recognizing that a "one size fits all" model for recommendations would not befit the best interests of all linguistically diverse students, there is a particular focus on African American and Latino(a) students because of which these students are disproportionately represented in many research studies and national achievement trends in literacy. Similarly, both African American and Latino(a) students face ethnic/racial and social stigmatizations in schools, partly because of their differences in written and oral language. Subsequently, in this paper, the authors draw upon examples of recent educational policies that perpetuate linguistic hegemony in public school classrooms for both African American and Latino(a) students.

This paper will discuss how despite national action, linguistic hegemony continues to exist at all levels of education by way of mono-linguistic preference, assessment measures, graduation mandates and educational policy. Following this discussion on the pervasion of linguistic hegemony, recommendations for eliminating language discrimination in educational structures at the federal, state and district/school level are provided. This paper is a conceptual analysis of existing educational policies and practices as opposed to a paper disseminating findings from a research study conducted by the authors. Therefore, the authors synthesize existing theoretical papers and data collected from secondary sources in melding a framework for linguistic hegemony and describing how it pervades current educational policies and practice within the USA.

Review of literature

The politics of language in US schools

On a national level, federal legislation has ruled in favor of providing equitable educational opportunities to linguistically diverse learners as specified in *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Nearly a decade later, in 1974, the US Supreme Court ruled that school districts must address educational barriers for non-English speakers in the monumental case of *Lau* v. *Nichols*. Other federal court rulings have served as historical benchmarks for attempting to rectify state-level discrimination against language minority students. These cases include the following: *USA* v. *State of Texas (1971)*, *Serna* v. *Portales (1974)*, *Rios* v. *Reed (1978) Castaneda* v. *Pickard (1981)*, *Keyes* v. *School District #1* (1983) and *Gomez* v. *Illinois (1987)*. While pivotal in the fight for educational equity, more recent attacks on linguistic diversity have ensued.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.m

Educational policies that adopt an English-only position stem from the assumption that equal opportunities truly exist in the USA (Orozco, 2011). However, English-only policies limit students' opportunities to capitalize upon the literacy they have developed in their native language as well as the linguistic capital they bring to the classroom. Orozco (2011) asserts that culturally insensitive education policies therefore contribute to socially systemic racial/ethnic inequalities. The Oakland School Board controversy surrounding Ebonics illustrates how culturally irrelevant policies contribute to social inequalities. One of the Oakland School Board's objectives was to distinguish AAVE as a language to access federal *Title VII* bilingual funds (Tamura, 2002). Former Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, immediately rejected the school board's notion in an effort to stop other districts from targeting *Title VII* funds for African Americans (Tamura, 2002). Secretary Riley's response to the proposition angered many board members and community constituents, but ultimately, it was Oakland's students who were at the greatest loss. In this case, Secretary Riley's actions demonstrate the limited perspective often held by persons in power concerning language and dialects that vary from SAE.

Sociolinguists validate the equality of various English dialects and recognize AAVE as logical and rule-governed with unique grammatical, phonological and stylistic features (Godley and Escher, 2012). Thus, Tamura (2002) asserts that public reaction to school board controversies related to AAVE and other dialects is primarily due to a lack of understanding and stigmatization of nonstandard languages and dialects. This stigmatization is perhaps due to a study conducted by Harrison (1884) which declared "Negro English" to be inferior. According to Tamura (2002), the Harrison study was influential in contributing to the stigmatization of language used by African Americans, and this sentiment was echoed in similar studies until about 1950. The highly detrimental perspective that languages and dialects other than SAE are inferior continues to negatively permeate society to this day.

According to Godley and Escher (2012), academic and professional elites hold the expectation for others to verbally communicate in SAE. Thus, those who cannot and do not communicate using SAE are perceived as unintelligible and inferior. Similarly, Valenzuela (2000) stipulates that a political climate committed to the privilege of SAE speakers exists, though it further stifles academic potential for ELs. Such was the case in the negative reaction of Former Secretary of Education Richard Riley during the Oakland School Board controversy and his subsequent denial of the school board's request to receive funds to meet the needs of AAVE-speaking students.

The politics of language consequently trickle down into the classroom as Godley and Escher (2012) found that teachers may view speakers of AAVE as lazy, unintelligent and lacking proper grammatical skills. Harris and Schroeder (2013) found similar opinions as Caucasian teachers categorized AAVE as inferior and indicative of intellectual deficiencies. The perception of AAVE held by racial/ethnic majority teachers contributes to what linguists refer to as "standard language ideology" (Tamura, 2002). According to Tamura (2002), standard language ideology denotes institutionalized bias toward a version of the English language used by the upper middle class and consequently imposed upon minoritized groups. By explicitly stating that American English is the *standard* language form, we (albeit educators, researchers, policymakers and national constituents) are implicitly asserting that all other languages are substandard. So for the sake of recognizing that SAE is the preferred language both written and spoken in classrooms, the authors will now use the term Classroom English when referencing language use in an educational context.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.m

Culturally (Ir)responsive curriculum and instruction

Language minority students, no matter if they speak AAVE, Spanish or another native language, are subject to minoritization due to culturally irresponsive curriculum and instruction. By refraining from embracing students' native language and/or dialect, schools emit and reproduce detrimental messages about minoritized cultures and communities. In this way, Valenzuela (2000) suggests that academic failure among minoritized students is greatly influenced by the harsh denial of native language use and the aggressive push toward mainstream culture. Several researchers postulate that students speaking AAVE begin to disassociate with schooling and may begin to give minimal academic effort because of the stigmatization so often attached to their language (Harris and Schroeder, 2013; Godley and Escher, 2012). Consequently, Valenzuela (2000) asserts that minority students begin to become disinterested in school, are more apt to drop out or are frankly pushed out because of a lack of culturally sensitive curriculum, instruction and assessment. The role and use of language via the student's cultural background becomes another micro-aggressor for African American and Hispanic students to combat in their educational environments (Allen *et al.*, 2013). Culturally responsive teaching, thus, is necessary for the academic success of language minority students.

Culturally responsive teaching involves using curriculum and providing instruction in a student's primary language, or at the very minimum, teaching in a way that encourages students to become aware of the language rules that exist in varying environments. Culturally responsive teaching enhances a student's conceptual understanding and facilitates the transfer of knowledge to academic tasks in his or her second language (Valenzuela, 2000). Godley and Escher (2012) assert that literacy instruction should undoubtedly include Classroom English while also acknowledging and respecting dialectal differences in the English language. Undoubtedly, the need for culturally relevant curriculum and instruction extends beyond literacy instruction and is imperative across the content areas for all students.

Language and standardized assessments

Cultural and linguistic bias in testing is not a new issue for many education researchers. Wiggan (2013) found that as early as the 1920s, Black psychologists set out to debunk intelligence quotient (IQ) research that affirmed academic inferiority among non-White students. In 1973, Hall & Freedle provided a culturally relevant assessment of the IQ test to African American children by giving the assessment in Ebonics. Results indicated that students performed comparably to their Caucasian counterparts who were tested using SAE (Hall and Freedle, 1973). Hall and Freedle's (1973) study is significant because it explicitly demonstrates that language minority students have been historically cast as academically inferior based on language difference.

More recent literature recognizes the cultural and linguistic biases of standardized tests used to evaluate language minority students (Harmon, 2004; Reese, 2013; Whiting and Ford, 2009) despite legislation mandates for unbiased assessments. Reese (2013) shares that Black students are at an immediate disadvantage because of the inherent cultural bias within assessments. Low performance from students equates to low achievement for the school. Oftentimes, the district's response is to close the school, which is even more detrimental to schools that are in lower-income neighborhoods where families have limited education resources. This was the case in Chicago Public Schools where 129 schools (all located in poorer areas of the city) were scheduled to close for the 2013-2014 school year (Reese, 2013).

Grant *et al.* (2009) offer three culturally relevant alternatives which include assessments that are contextualized, ecological and curriculum-based. Contextualized assessment allows

المنارة للاستشارات

www.m

for consideration of the context in which a skill is demonstrated (Grant *et al.*, 2009). Ecological assessment is typically used within the context of special education and involves assessing the student in the different environments in which he or she operates to determine how different contexts influence the student's school performance (Leach, 2010). Ecological assessment therefore better enables the teacher to assess the child because it accounts for the many factors that influence the child, including the contexts of his or her home and community, as opposed to only the school setting. Consequently, observing students in a variety of contexts (i.e. outside of school) allows them to demonstrate their competence in a context that values their linguistic diversity. Curriculum-based assessments are valid standardized assessments based upon the actual curriculum encountered by the student (Grant *et al.*, 2009). As a whole, culturally relevant assessments prove to be more indicative of academic knowledge and skills for ELs in accounting for each student's unique cultural background and instructional experiences.

The underperformance of culturally and linguistically diverse students is due primarily to assessment measures that are both culturally and dialectally insensitive. Thus, the evaluation of these students via culturally relevant assessments is imperative. Supporters of standards-based education, including contributors to No Child Left Behind, also stipulate this notion. Per the sanctions put forth in the legislation of *No Child Left Behind*, schools must fully address their students' needs, including their language needs. Unfortunately, too often, schools are more concerned with assessing students' English language proficiency rather than authentically assessing their current levels of understanding (King and Scott, 2014). Thus, our current educational system operates more often than not within the framework of linguistic hegemony.

More recent cases of linguistic hegemony

At a time when US public schools comprise more ethnic and racial minorities than ever before (Strauss, 2014), there is still much work to be done if *all* students are to receive a quality, equitable education. Language education policy and practices over the past decade has not favored ELs, and as a result, these students are at great risk of academic failure. In this section, the authors will elaborate on district and state-level English-only policies, graduation mandates and the ongoing debate over the legitimatization of AAVE as a recognized dialect in Classroom English. Following each topic, the notion of linguistic hegemony is further explored.

The English-only movement

In 2000, the state of Arizona passed Proposition 203, commonly referred to as "English for the Children" (Mackinney and Rios-Aguilar, 2012). "English for the Children" mandates Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) for ELs (Mackinney and Rios-Aguilar, 2012). Proponents of SEI believe that concentrated exposure to English in an isolated setting will result in more rapid English language acquisition and consequently improve academic achievement (Mackinney and Rios-Aguilar, 2012). Subsequently, in 2008, the Arizona English Language Learners Task Force mandated a 4-h English Language Development (ELD) block emphasizing the structure, syntax and semantics of the English language (Mackinney and Rios-Aguilar, 2012).

As one of five states with the highest concentration of ELs, the educational policies enacted by the state of Arizona are significant (Mackinney and Rios-Aguilar, 2012). The policies set forth by the Arizona State Department of Education were contested by parents of ELs in the Supreme Court case *Horne* v. *Flores* (Supreme Court of the USA, 2009). In the majority opinion, the court affirmed the use of SEI over bilingual education (Supreme Court of the USA, 2009). The *Horne* v. *Flores (2009)* ruling set a precedent for other states and

المنارة للاستشارات

www.m

resulted in both California (another of the five states with the highest concentration of ELs) and Massachusetts mandating SEI while restricting bilingual education.

SEI mandates are commonly referred to as "English only" policies. These policies are problematic in both theory and practice. Placing students in the ELD block further segregates ELs by ethnicity, native language and, oftentimes, socioeconomic status. Additionally, SEI has proven detrimental to the attainment of these students' educational goals by severely limiting their academic opportunities. A recent study conducted by Lillie *et al.* (2010) supports this notion and found that ELs placed in SEI programs for several hours per day are apt to fall behind in their core academic courses. According to results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2005), a large achievement gap exists between ELs and native English speakers in states that have adopted "English only" educational policies (Perie *et al.*, 2005). Rumberger and Tran (2010) assert that the achievement gap on the same National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was not as wide in states that support bilingual education. Beyond increasing the achievement gap between ELs and native speakers, the dropout rate has risen for ELs in Massachusetts since enacting "English only" policies in 2002 (Gandara, 2012). Similarly, the number of ELs receiving special education services in Arizona has increased since its implementation of "English only" policies (Gandara, 2012).

Linguistic hegemony arises in states that have adopted "English only" policies. "English-only" curriculum and instruction fails to capitalize upon the literacy and prior knowledge attained by ELs in their first language. Similarly, forcing monolingual instruction upon students devalues their first language and native culture. ELs placed in SEI are also further minoritized in that they are segregated from other students physically as well as academically. Due to being placed in the ELD block, ELs are not able to attend all of their courses and subsequently miss critical content area instruction. Thus, students are deprived of content area learning such as mathematics, science, social studies, etc., for the sake of becoming more proficient in English. This is problematic because the ELD program is inadvertently further stratifying students into a low-achieving group by limiting their educational exposure to core subjects. In this way, language serves as a powerful tool that restricts one's ability to learn other subjects, which results in a more difficult trek toward meeting graduation requirements. Students that are unable to meet graduation mandates are more prone to dropping out of high school, less likely to pursue postsecondary education and often limited to low-status as well as low-paying jobs.

Another educational policy passed in 2002 by the Massachusetts English Language Education in Public Schools Initiative completely disregarded students' cultures as well. The law enabled schools to place children with various native languages in the same classroom so long as they had a relatively similar level of English proficiency (Lucy Burns Institute, 2014). Thus, children in these SEI classrooms are limited to communicating only in English – a language in which their proficiency is limited – and may not be able to even communicate with their peers. The promotion of English-only educational policies has led to a 50 per cent decline in certified bilingual teachers (Gandara, 2012). The decline in highly qualified bilingual teachers hinders the ability of schools to meet ELs' needs, as bilingual teachers are more likely to rely upon research-based pedagogy in meeting their students' needs (Gandara, 2012). With such culturally irrelevant pedagogy and culturally insensitive policies in place, is it any wonder that ELs drop out of school or fall behind their peers academically?

English-only graduation mandates

Unfortunately, some ELs are forced to drop out of school because they cannot pass the state standardized exam, though they have met all other graduation requirements. In some states, such as Texas, ELs are required to pass the state standardized assessment to graduate from

المنارة للاستشارات
www.m

high school; yet, these students are not provided accommodations on the assessment that mediate their limited English proficiency. Beginning in 1986, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) required all students to pass the state standardized examination to receive their high school diplomas [Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2009]. In 1990, a Spanish version of the third grade exam was introduced to eligible ELs [Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2009]. Spanish-language versions of other grade-level state standardized assessments were later introduced [Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2009]. However, a Spanish language version of the exit-level examination has yet to be introduced. The 2009 passage of House Bill 3 by the 81st Texas Legislature solidified that exemptions for ELs would not be provided on the exit level state exam [Texas Education Agency (TEA), 2010). Similarly, Massachusetts requires all ELs to take the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessments (MCAS) as a part of its graduation requirements with the exception of first-year EL students (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). Despite its English-only educational policies, ELs who receive test variations in their classrooms or for assessment are permitted the same variations on the California High School Exit Examination (California Department of Education, 2014).

Standardized assessments impede the educational progress of language minority students. Phrasing and terminology of exam questions as well as the overall suitability for the students being assessed are unreliable in measuring a student's educational progress. According to a report by Kim (2011), approximately 25 per cent of ELs drop out of school compared to 15 per cent of non-ELs. Students still classified as ELs in high school are 33 per cent likely to drop out as opposed to students who were formerly classified as ELs prior to high school (Kim, 2011). The English-only nature of these exit-level examinations often deters students from graduating, though they may have successfully completed all of their course requirements. Valenzuela (2000) found that many Mexican immigrants and Mexican-American adolescents refused to even hope to attend college because they did not want to be discouraged should they fail the exit-level English-only exam. In fact, though many ELs perform well in their academic courses, the majority of these students do not pass the exit exam due its English-only format (Valenzuela, 2000). As a result, the minority dropout rate in Texas has risen to approximately 40 per cent since the mid-1980s when high-stakes standardized testing was first introduced (Hanley, 2001). This is a major violation of students' rights as professional standards mandate that students be tested in a manner that appropriately accommodates them. As previously mentioned, in both Texas and Massachusetts, a Spanish-language version of the state standardized exam is available to eligible ELs or appropriate accommodations and/or modifications are available to students in previous grade levels.

The lack of linguistic accommodations and/or modifications for students taking the exit-level exam again hinders their ability to obtain a high school diploma and greatly limits their opportunities for postsecondary education and entrance into the labor markets. In a survey of employers conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, employers ranked verbal communication fourth out of the ten most desirable skills they look for in college graduates (Adams, 2013). It is important to emphasize that these are skills that potential employers desire from *college* graduates. As previously mentioned, some ELs drop out of high school and, therefore, are unlikely to even attend college, which makes them less marketable for higher-status, higher-paying jobs. Undoubtedly, to gain access to college and consequently a wider array of job opportunities, ELs need the opportunity to further hone their verbal communication skills in English. However, the authors contend that this can be done within the context of bilingual education, as it capitalizes upon ELs' existing (first language) literacy while simultaneously further developing their literacy in English. Again,

المنارة للاستشارات
www.m

the pervasiveness of linguistic hegemony hinders the opportunities for some ELs to attain graduate high school, obtain a postsecondary education and/or limits their future occupational success.

Deficit versus difference debate over African American Vernacular English

Linguistic hegemony in our current educational climate also exists in the debate over AAVE. Several school districts across the nation have worked to embrace AAVE and capitalize upon students' first language literacy. As early as 1989, the Los Angeles Unified District implemented the Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP). The AEMP focused primarily on students whose first language is AAVE and approached SAE through second language instruction while being culturally sensitive to African American students. Similarly, Dekalb County Schools in Georgia sought to appreciate AAVE while educating students on dialect switching according to one's context. In 1996, the Oakland School Board drew controversy for its Ebonics Resolution, which legitimized Ebonics as a language. In response to the controversy, the school board amended its resolution; however, in 2006, the California Curriculum Committee encouraged schools to provide additional support for those students who speak AAVE.

Linguistic hegemony is evident in the debate among scholars and educators concerning whether students who speak AAVE or Ebonics should be treated as if they have a learning deficiency or if the language merely calls for different instructional approaches. Some who identify AAVE and/or Ebonics as a learning deficiency assert that this language form interferes with students' literacy development and results in low performance on standardized literacy assessments. The overrepresentation of African American children identified as having speech and/or language disabilities in special education and/or remedial classes may perhaps be attributed to the role of language, in particular AAVE or Ebonics, on standardized measures.

In addition to negligent assessments, educational policies have also discriminated against AAVE or Ebonics speakers. As a result, these policies have directly conflicted with federal law precedents. Back in 1979, the plaintiffs in the *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children et al.* v. *Ann Arbor School District* case asserted that AAVE is a distinct language. The plaintiffs also argued that children speaking AAVE were discriminated against in assessments determining their placement in special education and remedial classes. The court found that the Ann Arbor School Board violated *Title 20* of the *1974 Equal Education Opportunity Act* by failing to overcome linguistic barriers which impeded equal participation by students in instructional programs. Consequently, the court mandated that the school district create protocols for identifying children that speak AAVE and provide professional development for teachers to identify and assess AAVE speakers as well as transition students to Classroom English.

Though the 1979 *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School et al.* v. *Ann Arbor School District* case was seminal in asserting the rights of AAVE-speaking children, educators as well as the public as a whole still seem to be at a loss in terms of how to embrace AAVE (Whitney, 2005). Whereas, studies by Stanford University researchers found that teaching through Ebonics improved African-American children's ability to read and write Classroom English (Whitney, 2005), many educators and policymakers are still hesitant to capitalize upon AAVE or Ebonics. The refusal to capitalize upon children's pre-existing literacy albeit in another language and/or dialect again denotes the pervasion of linguistic hegemony. Baron (1997), a professor of English and linguistics, attributes the lack of recognition of AAVE or Ebonics to a lack of power amongst those who speak these dialects. Politics and culture are influential in defining languages (Baron, 1997), and thus, to refuse to recognize

www.m

AAVE and Ebonics is in some respects refuse to grant power to those who speak these dialects. This again speaks to the aforementioned notion of Phillipson that structural and cultural clout is afforded to only those who speak SAE.

Those who oppose the recognition of AAVE as a language form continue to promulgate the notion of linguistic hegemony. Primarily, in failing to legitimize AAVE or Ebonics as a language and/or dialect, opponents fail to the make the necessary modifications to curriculum and instruction that will encourage African American students' academic success. Similarly, opponents of AAVE stand firm on validating culturally insensitive standardized assessments as reliable. However, these measures often misidentify African American students as having language and/or learning disabilities and lead to their overrepresentation in special education and remedial classes. There is also negligence in failing to provide teachers with professional development that will enhance their abilities to provide effective instruction to students who speak AAVE. Opponents of AAVE continue to minoritize African American students by devaluing their language and culture while promoting a disdain for traditional education due to cultural insensitivity. To affirm the culture and language of minoritized students, the authors make several recommendations to combat linguistic hegemony. Recommendations for research, schooling practice and society at large are further discussed below.

Recommendations

Federal recommendations

There is a critical need for federal programming to re-center its focus on bilingual and English immersion programs. Federal funding should be allocated to improve salary structures for bilingual educators and provide increased salaries for those who commit to working in Title I schools or those teaching a large population of non-English-speaking students. In this way, federal resources can support the teaching force by equipping more teachers with the needed instructional and pedagogical tools to teach linguistically diverse student groups.

Second, education lobbyists should rally, petition and propose new educational programs that are more culturally specific to the demographic needs of the nation. As previously mentioned, public school classrooms at present have the most diverse student population the nation as ever seen. As such, curriculum and instructional programs should reflect the changing student demographic. Perhaps, a special committee of prominent education scholars such as Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Christine Sleeter, H. Richard Milner and Geneva Gaye could be formed to create culturally relevant teaching indicators that would also be aligned with Common Core State Standards.

State-level recommendations

One of the main ways in which state education policies can eradicate linguistic hegemony in schools is by comprising a school board representation that is symbolic of the cultural and linguistic needs and experiences of the districts' student demographic. Often times, an elite majority-minority sets and imposes the standards for the minority-majority, which as a result continues to promote stratification between social classes and ethnic groups. This is especially the case when considering school district leadership in states such as Arizona and Texas. Conversely, some district administrators are supportive of cultural and linguistic diversity as a part of the American educational experience. For example, the Los Angeles Unified School district recently proposed that the Ethnic Studies Program become a graduation requirement for students. This student-centered policy reform initiative will allow for an interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity and culture in Chicano and African American history.

المنارة للاستشارات
www.m

Another way in which educational policies could support language diversity would be more allocation of funding for language-intervention programs specifically in urban populations. By divvying out more financial resources to accommodate language difference, students will have increased opportunities in understanding how to appropriate language styles. Additionally, language transition skills such as dialect shifting and code switching will become more automatic practices for urban students rather than developmental. In fact, researchers have identified code switching as a high-order thinking skill because of the ability one must make in swift language transitions. In this way, students become organically intellectual – as Gramsci would note – because they will be able to articulate through their culture and background ideals and concepts in which the mainstream society and those in power cannot address.

District/Local recommendations

There is also a need to reconsider the way in which the classroom is socially and culturally situated. The nature of continuing a mono-dialectal classroom environment further perpetuates linguistic hegemony because it communicates a level of linguistic inferiority imposed on students who do not natively speak Standard English forms. Allen *et al.* (2013) call for a culturally affirming educational environment by centering on racial consciousness to develop a more critical view of the learning experience. Additionally, professional development that aims to increase perspectives about linguistic and cultural diversity would significantly increase teachers' level of understanding. More emphasis should be placed on educators receiving specialized training to learn more about dialect patterns and shifts as well as the presence of linguistic hegemony through traditional practices and pedagogies. At the in-service level, teachers could stand to find out more about ways to increase students' abilities to code-switch and appropriate language as necessary for their academic performance and excellence.

Conclusion

Linguistic hegemony continues to lives on in US public schools at present. Despite national trends in an increasingly diverse classroom for many schools, language discrimination continues to exist. Recent surges for English-only policies and graduation mandates along with continued controversies over language difference ultimately negate an equitable classroom experience for minoritized students. To combat these academic travesties, those at the federal, state and local levels must work to implement more policies and practices that are sensitive to the needs of linguistically diverse students. Only then can education and academic opportunity be afforded to *all* students.

References

Adams, S. (2013, "The 10 skills employers most want in 20-something employees", *Forbes*, available at: www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2013/10/11/the-10-skills-employers-most-want-in-20-something-employees/#c8a2b4e752d5

Allen, A., Scott, L.M. and Lewis, C.W. (2013), "Racial micro-aggressions and African American and Hispanic students in urban schools: a call for culturally affirming education", *Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 117-129.

Baron, D. (1997), "Hooked on ebonics", *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. B4-B5.

Cabrera, N.L., Meza, E.L. and Rodriguez, R.D.C. (2011), The fight for Mexican American studies", *The North American Congress on Latin America*, available at: https://nacla.org/article/fight-mexican-american-studies-tucson

المنارة للاستشارات

www.m

California Department of Education (2014), "Q and A for test variations", available at: www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/qandatestvar.asp

Gandara, P. (2012), "The impact of English-only instructional policies on English learners", available at: www.colorincolorado.org/article/50832/

Godley, A. and Escher, A. (2012), "Bidialectal African American adolescents' beliefs about spoken language expectations in English classrooms", *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Vol. 55 No. 8, pp. 704-713, available at: http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1002/JAAL.00085

Grant, S.D., Baker, J.A. and Oka, E.R. (2009), "The culturally relevant assessment of Ebonics-speaking children", *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, Vol. 25, pp. 113-127, available at: http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1080/15377900802484588

Hall, W.S. and Freedle, R.O. (1973), "A developmental investigation of standard and nonstandard English among black and white children", *Human Development*, Vol. 16 No. 6, pp. 440-464.

Hanley, W. (2001), "Revisiting the myth of the Texas miracle in education: lessons about dropout research and dropout prevention", available at: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0hx1v4cw#page-17

Harmon, D. (2004), "Improving test performance among culturally diverse gifted students", available at: www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10477.aspx

Harris, Y.R. and Schroeder, V.M. (2013), "Language deficits or differences: what we know about African American Vernacular English in the 21st century", *International Education Studies*, Vol. 6 No. 4, pp. 194-204, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v6n4p194

Harrison, J.A. (1884), "Negro English", *Anglia*, Vol. 7, pp. 232-279.

Kim, J. (2011), *Relationships Among and Between ELL Status, Demographic Characteristics, Enrollment, History, and School Persistence (CRESST Report 810)*, University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), Los Angeles, CA.

King, E.T. and Scott, L.M. (2014), "English as a gatekeeper: a conversation of linguistic capital and American schools", *Journal for Multicultural Education*, Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 226-236.

Leach, D. (2010), "Using ecological assessments to set meaningful goals for ABA interventions", available at: www.specialeducationadvisor.com/using-ecological-assessments-to-set-meaningful-goals-for-aba-interventions/

Lillie, K.E., Arias, M.B., Estrella, A., Markos, A., Nguyen, T., Perez, K., Trifiro, A., Peer, K. and Wiely, T.G. (2010), "Policy in practice: the implementation of structured English immersion in Arizona", available at: http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/language-minority-students/policy-in-practice-the-implementation-of-structured-english-immersion-in-arizona/lillie-policy-practice-sei-2010.pdf

Lucy Burns Institute (2014), "Massachusetts English in public schools initiative, question 2 (2002)", available at: http://ballotpedia.org/Massachusetts_English_in_Public_Schools_Initiative,_Question_2_(2002)

Mackinney, E. and Rios-Aguilar, C. (2012), "Negotiating between restrictive language policies and complex teaching conditions: a case study of Arizona's teachers on English learners", *Bilingual Research Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 350-367, available at: http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1080/ 15235882.2012.734545

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2015), *Requirements for the Participation of English Language Learners in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, MCAS, and PARCC: A Guide for Educators and Parents/Guardians*, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Malden, MA.

Orozco, R.A. (2011), "'It is certainly strange…': attacks on ethnic studies and whiteness as property", *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 26 No. 6, pp. 819-838, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2011.587540

المنارة للاستشارات

www.m

Perie, M., Donahue, P. and Grigg, W. (2005), *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2005 (NCES 2006-451)*, US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC.

Phillipson, R. (1992), *Linguistic Imperialism*, Oxford Press, New York, NY.

Reese, R. (2013), "Minority testing bias persists", available at: www.huffingtonpost.com/ronnie-reese/test-bias-minorities_b_2734149.html

Rumberger, R. and Tran, L. (2010), "State language policies, school language practices, and the English learner achievement gap", in Gandara, P. and Hopkins, M. (Eds), *Forbidden Language: English Learners and Restrictive Language Policies*, Teachers College Press, New York, NY, pp. 86-101.

Strauss, V. (2014), "For first time, minority students expected to be majority in U.S. public schools this fall", *The Washington Post*, available at: www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/08/21/for-first-time-minority-students-expected-to-be-majority-in-u-s-schools-this-fall/

Supreme Court of the United States (2009), *Horne, Superintendent, AZ Public Instruction v. Flores et al.*, Supreme Court of the United States, Washington, DC, available at: www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/08pdf/08-289.pdf

Tamura, E.H. (2002), "African American Vernacular English and Hawai'i Creole English: a comparison of two school board controversies", *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 71 Nos 1/2, pp. 17-30.

Texas Education Agency (2009), "Historical overview of assessment in Texas", Technical Digest 2008-2009, available at: http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/techdigest/yr0809/

Texas Education Agency (2010), "English language learners (ELLs) and the state of Texas assessments of academic readiness (STAAR) program", *House Bill 3 Transition Plan*, pp. I-67-I-74.

Valenzuela, A. (2000), "The significance of the TAAS test for Mexican immigrant and Mexican American adolescents: a case study", *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 524-539.

Whiting, G. and Ford, D. (2009), "Cultural bias in testing", available at: www.education.com/reference/article/cultural-bias-in-testing/

Whitney, J. (2005), "Five easy pieces: steps toward integrating AAVE into the classroom", *English Journal*, Vol. 94 No. 5, pp. 64-69.

Wiggan, G. (2013), *Education for the New Frontier: Race, Education and Triumph in Jim Crow America (1867-1945)*, Nova Science Publishers, Huntington, NY.

Further reading

Gramsci, A. (1971), *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, Lawrence & Wishart, London.

Corresponding author

Lakia M. Scott can be contacted at: Lakia_Scott@baylor.edu

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:
www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm
Or contact us for further details: **permissions@emeraldinsight.com**

المنارة للاستشارات

www.m

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

المنارة للاستشارات

www.m