

From global jobs to safe spaces: The diverse discourses that sell multilingual schooling

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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



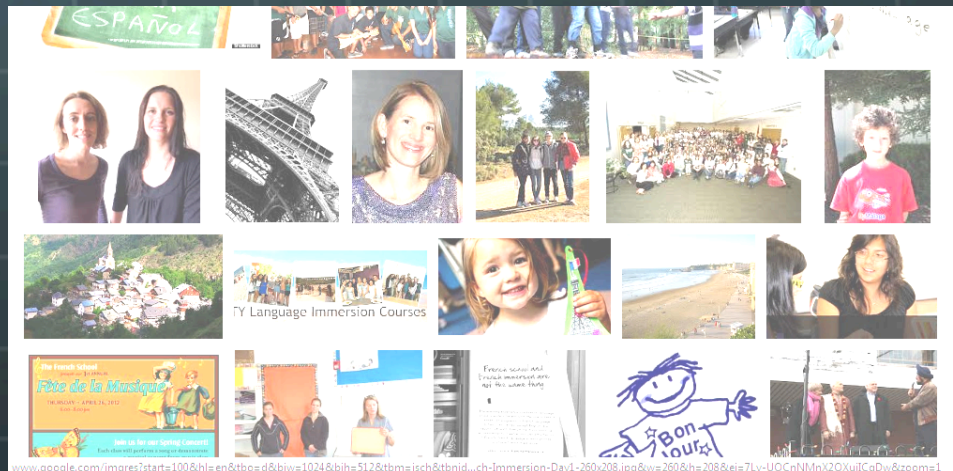
The Research Context

- 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 2nd Language
 - No state certification in bilingual education



The Research Questions

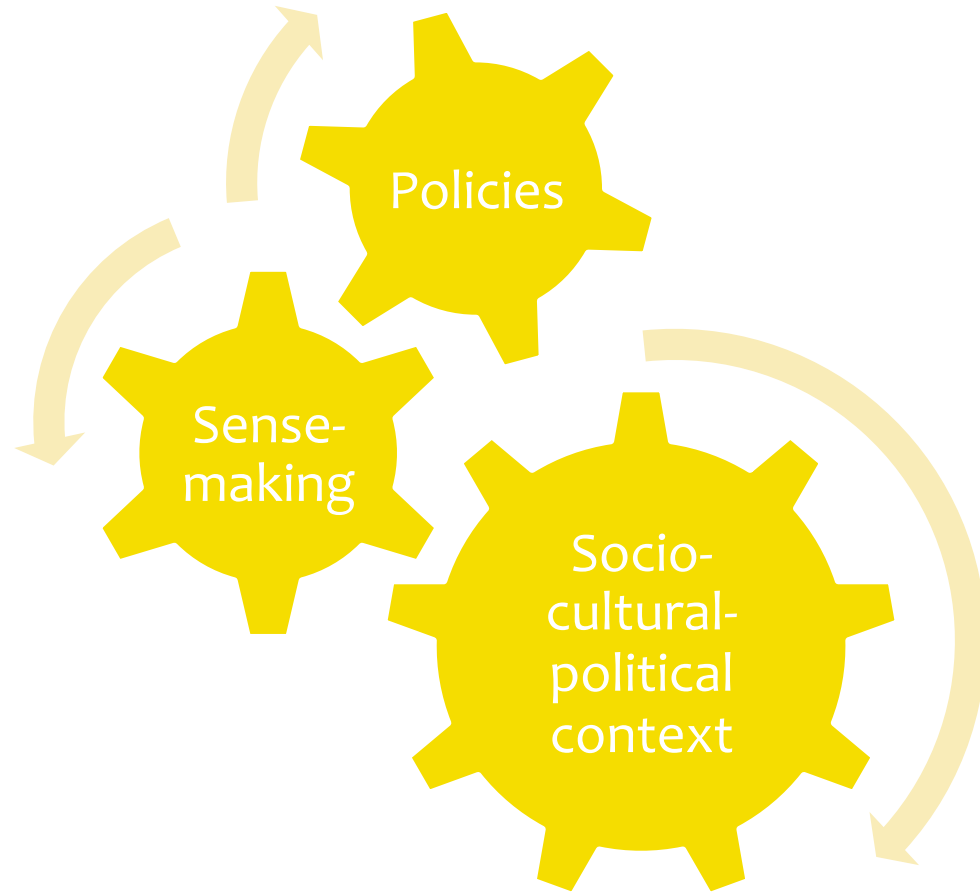
- 🌐 What cultural scripts are employed in planning multilingual education in monolingual areas?
- 🌐 What goals and values were voiced by SIES leaders, as they recruited students?
- 🌐 How did parents respond, and what were their goals?



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).



Parents & Language as an Identity

- “My [L1 English-speaking] husband speaks Spanish, so I’ve had a lot of interaction with immigrant families,” and I want that for my children as well. (Ms. E)



- “We’re very committed in terms of—my husband’s family almost primarily speaks Spanish—and so we’ve been very committed to ensuring that [our daughter] speaks Spanish as well.” (L1 English-speaking White mother, Ms. K)
- “My husband is Hispanic and came from a small border town in south Texas. . . it was very important to us that the children be raised in both of our cultures and in both languages.” (Comment on school poster, L1 English-speaking mother)

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.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website www.lisamdorner.com. The page layout includes a dark sidebar on the left with a profile picture of Lisa M. Dorner, Ph.D., and navigation links for BIO, CV, and RESEARCH. The main content area 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 board with the words "L.A.R.T. SOCIAL" and text describing a research project where fifth graders in a language immersion program created advertisements for their school. The right sidebar lists "RESEARCH AREAS" (Language Policy & Planning, Educational Policy Implementation, Immigrant Integration, Program Evaluation) and "RESEARCH PROJECTS" (Families & Two-Way Immersion, Creating One-Way Immersion, Language Brokering). At the bottom of the page, there is a link to "Missouri Values Immigrants!".

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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.