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ORIGINAL PAPER

Culturally sustaining pedagogy within monolingual language policy: variability in instruction

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Abstract This 5-month ethnographic comparative case study of two culturally and linguistically diverse U.S. elementary classrooms juxtaposes restrictive educational language policies with the theoretical principles of culturally sustaining pedagogy to explore a gap in our understanding of how teachers reflect educational language policies in the range of pedagogical approaches they take. Triangulating data sources from state and local policy documents, classroom observations, and teacher interviews, we identify three salient dimensions of state and local policies that manifested in these two upper-elementary classrooms: teachers' curricular and pedagogical choices; student–teacher participation structures; and teachers' views on language. Similarities and differences between the two classrooms highlight how policy exerts influence on these dimensions while also affording degrees of instructional freedom that varied by teacher, with implications for the learning opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Overall, however, a limited range of culturally sustaining practices was observed, highlighting the need to understand the spaces in language policy where teachers can mitigate some of the effects of restrictive regulatory approaches to learning.

Keywords Culturally sustaining pedagogy · Language-in-education policy · English-only policy

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Introduction

The impact of language-in-education policy may be best understood when studying the practices of teachers and students who are at the epicenter of multilayered educational policy contexts (Hornberger and Johnson 2007; Menken and García 2010, p. 95; Ricento and Hornberger 1996). Although language policy has traditionally been studied at the macro levels of governmental planning to understand how formal institutions have managed languages as societal resources, Chau and Baldauf (2011) argue that the success or failure of language planning depends on how standardized policies at the national level work with the practices of local agents to better characterize variability in the impact of macro planning. Particularly with respect to planning educational language policy, the exploration of the role of the educator is crucial to better theorize the complexity between the policy and the individuals (García and Menken 2010; Ricento 2000). Indeed, state and local language-in-education (LIE) policies in the US are often framed as responding to the needs of language-minority students (e.g. laws in California, Arizona, Massachusetts, and the federal No Child Left Behind Act), but align with a "regime of monolingualism" (Suarez-Orozco 2012), privileging English. This tension presents a unique challenge to teachers in culturally and linguistically complex classrooms (Ball 2009).

One way in which teachers can respond to the needs of language-minority students has been through incorporating culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris 2012), in which knowing and understanding the unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students is placed at the center of effective classroom instruction. Yet, within the English-only backdrop of many state and local LIE policies, children are all too often reduced to language learner status, and the goals of policy are squarely focused on English language acquisition as an end in itself, with neither consideration of the unique backgrounds that students bring to the classroom, nor to building cultural knowledge alongside English proficiency. This gap, between what we know about culturally sustaining pedagogy and the expectations of many LIE policies, is broad, and little research has endeavored to explore its nature as it plays out in diverse classroom settings. Examining the choices of actors at the micro level of the language planning process can reveal what, and who, influences language use (Menken and García 2010; Zhao 2011) and the outcomes of language policymaking more generally (Shohamy 2010).

This was the express purpose of this ethnographic comparative case study, in which we characterize two U.S. upper-elementary teachers working with language-minority students (from homes where a language other than English is used; August and Shanahan 2006) in the context of an English-only LIE policy. We asked: (1) *How do teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms respond to the English-only policy environment through their instructional practices,* and (2) *How do those practices shape learning opportunities for their culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

Culturally sustaining pedagogy

Shulman's (1986, 1987) early articulations of pedagogical content knowledge rooted teachers' practices in both knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of teaching,

and have since been refined to include teachers' personal practical knowledge (e.g. Connelly and Clandinin 1995), and subject-specific conceptualizations, like Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching (Ball et al. 2008), which emphasize knowing one's students. This approach shifts conceptualizations of teaching as a discrete set of behaviors or skills governed by subject matter, to teaching as responsive to personal, social, and cultural contexts. The increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in US public school classrooms presents challenges to such responsive teaching, particularly when teachers are overwhelmingly from majority cultural (White) and linguistic (English) backgrounds (Strizek et al. 2006).

Paris (2012) contends that the multiethnic and multilingual profiles found in US schools today represent valuable resources for educational opportunity, particularly with regard to language, literacy, and the varied cultural practices of youth in schools. Paris reminds educators and policy planners that instruction ought to be situated in relation to earlier articulations of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 1995), which drew pedagogy more centrally into the debates on diversity and improving educational opportunity. Culturally and linguistically marginalized students must become not only academically successful, culturally competent, and socio-politically critical, but active, with their teachers, in maintaining the multicultural and multilingual practices of demographically changing communities (Ladson-Billings 1995; Paris 2012). In service of these goals, researchers have highlighted a number of interrelated factors in the lived experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse students including: (a) the language patterns and characteristics of home and school contexts (e.g. Lee 2001; Moje et al. 2004; Orellana and Reynolds 2008); (b) the cultural knowledge of students (Moll et al. 1992); and (c) the language and literacy practices at home and at school (e.g. Heath 1983; Moje et al. 2001, 2004; Orellana et al. 2003).

Language-in-education policy research

Recent studies suggest that US English-only language policies, combined with high-stakes assessments, exacerbate deficit-oriented ideologies of culturally and linguistically diverse students and reinforce recitative approaches to literacy instruction in elementary schools (Olson 2007; Pacheco 2010; Stillman 2011; Stritikus 2003). Research in Arizona, one of three states with English-only laws governing public school instructional practices for language-minority students, has offered mounting evidence that monoglossic policies not only negatively affect English language learners (ELLs), but other language-minority and even English-dominant students (Rios-Aguilar and Gándara 2012; Wright 2005). Other studies found inadequate ELL identification procedures to target those students the law purports to aid (Goldenberg and Rutherford-Quach 2012), questionable validity of current English-medium, high-stakes tests for ELLs (Abedi 2004; Florez 2012), and inadequate teacher training requirements for those working with ELLs (Hopkins 2012, p. 95). Tollefson (2002) has argued that teaching and learning rely on linguistically complex interactions between teachers and students, and policies that prohibit the instructional use of students' native languages overlook how primary language

practices serve as significant resources for learning (Cummins 2005; Gutiérrez et al. 1999) and for building rich multiethnic learning communities (e.g. Gutiérrez et al. 1999; Paris 2009). An emergent line of research stemming from analyses of policy and large-scale student outcomes in Massachusetts has yielded similar findings, specifically that state policy governing the education of ELL children legally sanctions language-based discrimination (Viesca 2013), and that the policy has had no differential impact on overall student reading achievement since its inception in 2002 (Guo and Koretz 2013), despite the text of the law emphasis on equal opportunity (excerpts in Table 3).

While these studies clearly document large-scale associations between restrictive educational language policies across a host of macro-level domains, far less research has endeavored to investigate the roles that schools and teachers play as actors in the policy context. The extant research base yields findings that are both varied and intriguing, and show that schools and teachers may indeed discover a relative freedom within restrictive educational language policy environments. In a study of three schools in the Massachusetts English-only policy context, for example, Smith et al. (2008) found that schools which mobilized parents, offered flexible English programs, and utilized state training contributed to the academic success of their language-minority students. Canagarajah (2005) contends that tensions between LIE policies and classroom practice are normal, since language policy demands constant negotiations between various stakeholders, and the resulting inconsistencies can provide some space for teachers to respond to their students in ways that policy may deem unacceptable. However, the role of the teacher as policy actor remains under-researched generally, and more specifically, we know even less about the intersections between LIE policy and the forms of classroom-based educational opportunities afforded to language-minority students in subtractive language policy environments (see, e.g. Menken and García 2010).

Thus, the interplay between the imposition of educational language policies and the ways in which teachers reflect on, and instantiate, policy in their practice is an area of needed research. We still lack studies that closely examine variability between what occurs in classrooms in relation to policy, both within and between teachers (for exceptions, see Brown 2010; Creese 2010; Hélot 2010). Teachers' shifting responses, which may be seen as "inconsistencies" in the pedagogical enactment of policy, may be beyond the reach of legislation. Indeed, Shohamy (2010) has asked if language practices, embodied by teachers, students, and the community, are in fact *more* powerful than declared language policies. Her work and that of others (e.g. Chau and Baldauf 2011; Menken and García 2010; Ricento and Hornberger 1996) reflects a shift from understanding learners as objects of policy to be acted upon, toward an understanding of learners and their teachers operating at the micro level of policy contexts. This possibility presents an intriguing site for further inquiry, focused on how pedagogical modifications (or "inconsistencies") present an empirical imperative for research on the impacts of language policy and studies of teaching and learning in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. By conceptualizing the means by which LIE policy manifests in specific sociocultural and sociolinguistic contexts, we gain a better sense of the role

of policy in teaching and learning. The current study was designed specifically to address this gap in the language policy literature.

Methods

We frame the current study in the context of understanding the intersections and divergences of LIE policy and teacher practice in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. We use an extended case methodology to examine two English-only, upper-elementary classrooms with a broad range of multilingual learners. Originally, researchers used extended case method to examine discontinuities between everyday practices and normative prescriptions in African post-colonial societies (Burawoy 1998). This method of drawing attention to moments of incongruity or dissonance, what Tavory and Timmermans (2009) call "disruptive processes" to the normative order, triggered two significant analytic moments: proximally, how what was occurring related to the learning opportunities of culturally and linguistically diverse students; and distally, how teachers were responding to the larger context of language policies. In this sense, extended case method can provide an appropriate logic of inquiry to examine the theoretical basis for extending conclusions out from the research site (i.e., the school and the classroom) and from the actions of actors therein (i.e., of the teachers and students) to the larger socio-political context, attending to incongruities in order to better understand distal contexts of a given site.

Given the framing of the current research, the case study approach provides an important context in which to explore the nature of teachers' instructional responses to English-only policy, and the implications for their students' learning opportunities (see Yin 2009). Top-down, English-only educational language policies rarely specify the nature of classroom instruction that ought to occur, providing rather an ideology that frames the language of instruction. Thus, while the language of instruction is controlled, there are few policy levers in place to alter the nature and quality of the instruction to which students are exposed. That policies do not specify what teachers and students ought to be doing in classrooms raises important questions about whether and how teachers invent practices to accommodate policies, similarities and differences between those practices, and the nature of the learning opportunities such practices afford culturally and linguistically diverse learners in those classrooms. A comparative case study approach allows for the reduction of data in the service of identifying those themes that describe and explain the individual teacher (Ayres et al. 2003) to document a coherent case narrative or social process (Burawoy 1998; Stake 2006), the features of which can be compared across cases to answer targeted research questions.

It is in this context that we return to the two research questions that frame the current study: (1) *How do teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms respond to the English-only policy environment through their instructional practices,* and (2) *How do those practices shape learning opportunities for their culturally and linguistically diverse students?*

Our data draw from a larger study investigating the growth of monolingual and bilingual students' literacy skills over a 2-year period.[1] The data reflect 5 months of ethnographic fieldwork in two elementary school classrooms. Like most US elementary schools, classes at Hillside School had one classroom teacher working with the same students for the majority of the school day. This allowed for extended observations of teachers' pedagogical practices in working with the same culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Setting

Hillside School (all names are pseudonyms) was one of six elementary schools serving a densely populated semi-urban city of almost 60,000 residents. Median household income in 2010 was $66,000, with 11.5 % of residents living below the federal poverty level (U.S. Department of Commerce 2012). At Hillside School, 40 % of students qualified for free or reduced lunch in 2010–2011. The city's schools were increasingly serving ethnic/racial minority, immigrant, and language minority students across grade levels (see Table 1). In 17 years, the percentage of Hispanic students, for example, doubled (from 14 to 28 %). In as many years, White students went from representing 61 % of the population to 48 %. Moreover, by 2010, 35 % of the students spoke a language other than English at home and 10 % qualified for English language support services. At Hillside School specifically, the last 17 years similarly reflected a decrease in English-dominant and White students, and an increase in Hispanic and "limited English proficient" (i.e., ELL) students.

Educators at Hillside School were predominantly mid-career professionals. The faculty was mainly White, monolingual English-speaking and female, which reflects national trends (Strizek et al. 2006). Every teacher was considered highly qualified as defined by the state, a designation that, at the time, did not include training to teach language-minority students.

Participants

Teachers whose students were participating in the larger study were approached by the first author to participate in the current research. Four teachers consented to having her as a participant observer in their classes over 5 months. The two focal classrooms were purposively selected because they had the most number of students on whom we had collected demographic and achievement data. The students in these classes were also familiar with the observer, and most importantly, these two classes were representative classes at Hillside School. Both were general education classes, which meant they did not have special education students or language-minority students designated as ELLs in need of sheltered English instruction. At the time of the study, both teachers, Ms. Napoli and Ms. Kyle, taught fourth and fifth grade, respectively. Both were White, monolingual women who had taught for

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Table 1 Changes in enrollment by race/ethnicity and language

Student designation	% of hillside school		% of district	
	1993/1994	2010/2011	1993/1994	2010/2011
African American	11.1	9.1	7.2	10.0
Asian	4.8	7.0	6.3	6.2
Hispanic	23.1	34.4	14.1	29.9
White	60.9	46.4	72.3	52.0
First language not English	25.6	35.4	24.4	35.7
Limited English proficient	9.0	13.3	5.2	10.6
Low-income	36.9	39.3	24.5	34.3

8 and 15 years, respectively, mostly at Hillside school. As part of a recent state initiative, they took three professional development courses on second language acquisition. Ms. Kyle also completed two methods courses in Science and Social Studies over the course of this study.

Ms. Kyle regularly worked with 17 of her 23 registered students; the six others attended the fifth-grade substantially separate special education classroom. Just over a third of her students were language-minority students, US-born or immigrants who had completed most of their schooling in the US. Ms. Napoli regularly worked with 18 of her 23 registered students; the other five students received most of their instruction in a substantially separate special education setting. Half of her students were language minorities schooled in the US, with the exception of two boys who arrived 2 and 3 years ago from Central America. Table 2 presents the demographic data of the two classrooms.

Data sources

Classroom observations

The first author took observational field notes in her role as participant observer and research liaison for the larger study ($\sim$75; 4–6 h per week). Field notes were observations of reading, writing, social studies and math instruction, language use in managing behavior, student participation, and the explicit use of "culture" as a learning resource (e.g. use of multicultural texts, learning tasks that incorporated students' prior cultural experiences). Four lessons were audio recorded and transcribed for instructional talk. As the analysis developed, field notes were more narrowly focused on culturally and linguistically responsive (and non-responsive) events in the classrooms.

Teacher interviews

The focus teachers treated the primary author as a tangential colleague and observer. This meant the teachers incorporated the researcher into discussions of instruction, the progress of particular students, and their teaching plans, and at other times, ignored her presence in the classroom. These conversations occurred on most days,

Table 2 Number of students by race, bilingualism, and ethnicity in the two classrooms

Student designation	Ms. Kyle (gr. 5)	Ms. Napoli (gr. 4)
African American (bilingual n*, ethnicity)	2 (0)	4 (3, Haitian American)
Asian	1 (0)	2 (1, Chinese American)
Latino/a	5 (5, Central American)	4 (4, Central American)
White	9 (1, Russian American)	8 (1, Italian American)
Low-income**	10 (5)	9 (6)
Title I targeted assistance in reading and math	1 (1, Latino)	2 (2, Latino, Latina)
Total general ed. students	17 (6)	18 (9)
Substantially separate SPED	6 (1, Latina)	5 (2, Latino)
Total students	23	23

* Bilingual = First language not English (from the district's Home Language Survey)

** Low-income = Free or reduced lunch qualification

lasting anywhere from 5 to 20 min before and after lessons. Overall, approximately 3 h of formal interviews and 15 h of informal interviews were conducted with teachers at the school over 5 months of fieldwork.

Language policy documents

Educational and language policy documents were coded and analyzed using the same analytic procedure as other data in this study (see "Data analysis" below, and Table 3). First, the 'Findings and Declarations' section of the MA Chapter 71A law was analyzed, being the main document that provided schools in Massachusetts with guidelines for the instruction of language-minority and ELL students. Second, the district and the Hillside school improvement plans were analyzed. Both were publically available documents that provided teachers with guidelines for improving reading, writing and math achievement through curricular and instructional initiates. Some excerpts of these documents are listed in Table 3. Both improvement plans were created by a committee of administrators, teachers, parents and community members and were explicit in their attention to standardized test scores as important success indicators, assessing student learning in English using "standards-based" and "common formative and summative" assessments.

Data analysis

Using LIE literature and extended case methodology that attend to disruptive processes to reveal norms and responses to social forces like language policies (Tavory and Timmermans 2009), we triangulated data across the policy documents, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. Data sources were coded using Atlas.ti 6.2 (Scientific Software Development 2011), and coding categories were iteratively refined, re-conceptualized, and finalized into three categories. First, *Curricular and Pedagogical Choices* identified the instructional materials and activities observed and noted in interviews and policy documents. Next, practices

Table 3 Final codes and exemplars

Code	Description	Examples			
		Field notes	Text of legislation	District improvement plan	School improvement plan
Curricular and pedagogical choices	Teachers' use of curricular materials; teachers' explicit and implicit choices of instructional tasks and activities	Ms. N is near the front of the room with the overhead on. She has some triangles drawn and the angles labeled. All sts are sitting at their desks with worksheets in front of them, worksheets copied from text	(e) Immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency and literacy in a new language, such as English, if they are taught that language in the classroom as soon as they enter school	Priority 2: … Develop common end-of-course assessments that are aligned with objectives in every course and subject … Utilize standards-based assessment practices to provide quality feedback and to focus teaching	ELA Goals, Action Steps: … Grades 4–5 will incorporate explicit small-group and guided-reading instruction
Participation structures	Who is talking, chosen to talk, and how teacher participates in discussions (with students, colleagues.); who is paying attention, who is off-task	M reads last section quietly aloud, Ms K helping her along at a couple of points, hard to hear her only 3 rows away. Nobody asks her to speak up. Most sts are reading their books it seems	(c) The government and the public schools of Massachusetts have a moral obligation and a constitutional duty to provide all of Massachusetts's children, regardless of their ethnicity or national origins, with the skills necessary…	Priority 1: … Establish a student-centered learning environment with a focus on student performance; … Address needs of diverse learners, including our ELL, Special Education and advanced learners	Math goals, action steps: … Classroom teachers will collaborate with special educators and support staff to incorporate strategies to scaffold learning for all students
Views on language	Explicit comments about language by students, faculty, materials; Language views demonstrated through behaviors of students, teachers, admin	In the counseling foyer just across from the office, the Spanish-speaking counselor is talking into phone. Three K sts out in hall, hollering *hola* to each other as they run by	(a) English … is the common public language of the United States of America… and…the leading world language for science, technology, and international business, thereby being the language of economic opportunity	Not addressed in document, other than excerpt above	Math goals, action steps: … Teachers will use correct mathematical vocabulary … and standard units of measurement (both US/ English and metric)

that elicited students' verbal responses or on-task behavior were coded as *Participation Structures* because they typically set the expectations and parameters of student participation through language. Finally, interactions which revealed teachers', students', or policy views of using English (or other languages) were coded as *Views on Language*. Table 3 summarizes these final codes with examples from the coded data.

Findings and discussion

Findings revealed there to be some qualitative differences between teachers in the characteristics of the three categories, such that Ms. Kyle, the fifth grade teacher displayed limited evidence of culturally sustaining pedagogy, and relatively strong alignment with a monolingual and culturally rigid orientation across the three categories. Ms. Napoli, by contrast, showed more evidence of disruption to these norms with respect to curricular and pedagogical choices and participation structures, but not with regard to views on language. The findings are organized by teacher and data from both classrooms are organized into three sections reflecting the categorical coding results: *Curricular and Pedagogical Choice*, *Participation Structures*, and *Views on Language*.

Ms. Kyle: practice consistent with policy

Curricular and pedagogical choice

While Hillside teachers had some curricular flexibility with supplemental texts and learning activities, the improvement plans clearly articulated the district and schoolhouse concern for standardizing curricula and assessments. There were district-mandated textbooks for Language Arts, Social Studies and Math. The district's improvement plan prioritized the improvement of "student learning and achievement" by "utiliz(ing) standards-based assessment practices to provide quality feedback and to focus teaching" along with "twenty first century skills and a global perspective." The school plan listed improved scores on annual state tests (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, or MCAS) and common benchmark assessments as success indicators for most of the math and language arts goals.

Ms. Kyle routinely expressed frustration with the mandated curricula, referring to the fifth-grade history textbook as "useless." Ms. Kyle also disliked the language arts basal reader, reporting that she used it only "sometimes." Field notes, however, suggest Ms. Kyle relied heavily on the history textbook and basal reader, and seldom used materials from the supplemental library. These curricular choices influenced her instruction by routinizing and narrowing her instruction to follow the format of the mandated curricular texts.

For example, during a typical language arts or social studies lesson, students independently copied the textbook's multiple-choice and short-answer questions into notebooks, and submitted their work at the end of class. Ms. Kyle seldom

assigned the extension questions, which were arguably more cognitively challenging and creative. Even when she was not using the mandated curriculum, Ms. Kyle's instruction adopted a read, practice, reproduce format. In a lesson on authoring "voice," where students were introduced to the idea of a writer's unique voice, she walked students through the brief examples and then asked that students write short paragraphs using different voices, like that of a universal "teenager" and "old man," rather than open up to the possibility of unique voices among her students. Ms. Kyle's orchestration of whole-class discussions was similarly narrow, and followed an initiate-response-evaluation interactional pattern (Cazden 1988; Mehan 1979). Her introductory lesson on early European explorers had students following along in their texts as she led a whole-class read aloud, periodically posing closed questions for clarification (e.g. "What is a missionary?" "What was the religion that most people in Spain followed?"), with limited student talk.

Ms. Kyle's curricular and pedagogical choices were not easily explained by a lack of professional development. During the study, Ms. Kyle was enrolled in a university-based course on teaching history through narratives. Throughout the fall term she expressed excitement about using narratives because it was "just the way she likes to teach." Indeed, for an early American Social Studies unit, she had students read *Sign of the Beaver* (Speare 1983), a historical fiction novel told from the perspective of a young white protagonist. Apart from that lesson, however, the use of narrative was not observed. Her limited use of narrative-based teaching went beyond a missed opportunity for integrating professional development and practice; rather, for a culturally diverse classroom, it represented a missed opportunity to understand "history" as "histories," including those of the students in the room. Akin to the lesson on voice, which limited students to using *other* voices and not their own, this lesson represented a culturally and linguistically narrow form of instructional practice, corroborating findings in Arizona and California contexts (Pacheco 2010; Rios-Aguilar et al. 2012).

Ms. Kyle was well aware of the limits of her instructional choices, expressing in interviews that she was not "doing anything well" (interviews 9/28/10, 11/19/10). The limited nature of Ms. Kyle's curricular and pedagogical choices grew partly from what she saw as needed for supporting the academic success of her students—choices linking her classroom and English-only, standardized testing. Ms. Kyle would often make this link between testing and instruction explicit. For instance, at the end of a writing lesson she noted that she "needs to do more [writing], especially more to do with MCAS writing; how to write for MCAS." In the following excerpt, Ms. Kyle explicitly linked testing policy with her pedagogical decisions:

> [First author] I ask Ms. Kyle what she is up to tomorrow, and she tells me, in a whisper that gets louder as we talk, about upcoming projects. She launches into her plans about a short unit on Aztecs, Incas, and Mayans.

Ms. Kyle: The students are going to make posters with the three civilizations' cultures represented on them, so they have to decide how to organize the three. They have to present information on the poster, using pictures and writing paragraphs about key information. I want to hang them outside in the hallway to replace the volcano projects … In the past, I

did a lot more on the Aztecs—they are really interesting and the kids like them—but there is no more Social Studies MCAS. There were always questions about the Mayans, the Aztecs on the test, that and the [American] Revolution, specific times and dates (*rolls eyes a bit*). But now it is only a short unit, only until Thanksgiving. (field note, 11/18/10)

Three school days later, I am sitting with Ms. Kyle at the back table talking about the projects as students finish their posters at their desks.

CM: This project is interesting because it draws upon some of the kids' connections to Latin and South America. I mean, you have quite a few Latino students in here. Did they express an interest in the cultural or geographic aspects of these ancient civilizations?

Ms. Kyle: Well, we didn't really discuss much of that, but Ricardo did say that he would take pictures of Mayan sites when he goes back in the summer. Whether he does that or not, who knows? (field note, 11/23/10)

Ms. Kyle covered the ancient civilizations unit in 4 days and limited discussions and explorations by using record and recall activities. Moreover, when asked about opportunities to link content with linguistic or cultural knowledge of her students, she replied they hadn't discussed that much and then described a student who may have been attempting to do precisely that. Her conclusion about what connections Ricardo might make or not suggested a level of disinterest in incorporating students' out-of-school knowledge, and an understandable interest in improving students' standardized test outcomes through her delivery of the official, test-driven curriculum. In interviews, her attention to standardized test scores revealed her sense of accountability to the school and district improvement plans and MCAS requirements, more so than directly to language policy. The incongruity she saw between good instruction (projects, narrative-based history instruction) and the mandated curriculum and materials was solved by aligning her instructional decisions with district and state policies of accountability through English-only standardized tests.

Participation structures

Ms. Kyle frequently called on monolingual-English students to clarify meanings, or provide answers that would move the lesson forward. During the writing lesson on voice, Ms. Kyle called on Ben, a monolingual English-speaking student, to read his work the three times she wanted students to share. In fact, Xavier, a language-minority student whose hand was constantly raised but overlooked for Ben's, developed an alternate strategy for participating by answering Ms. Kyle's questions immediately after they were posed and before his hand was fully raised. Another student complained directly to Ms. Kyle by asking why Ben was always chosen. She shrugged and responded, "It was just today." Field notes, however, suggest Ms. Kyle regularly chose monolingual-English students in whole-class discussions.

During a read-aloud on Mayan achievements, monolingual English speakers were chosen to read aloud four of the five times (field note 11/19/10), and Ben was asked to read frequently. By way of contrast, Natalie, a language-minority student, shared with the first author that there were ruins a "few miles from [her] house in Guatemala" (field note, 11/18/10). Since Natalie was not a persistent participant, this knowledge remained suppressed and with it, Natalie's opportunity to be positioned as knowledgeable within the classroom community.

Limiting ourselves to the context of the classroom would suggest either that Ms. Kyle was operating with malice, or with benign neglect: neither interpretation, however, is accurate. The need for English proficiency on the district and state assessments may push teachers to rely on native speakers as linguistic models for language-minority students. Despite an emphasis on "differentiated instruction strategies" and common assessments in the Hillside improvement plan, Ms. Kyle strategically chose to focus her instruction on getting students prepared for the assessments that she saw as driving the curriculum. Ms. Kyle emphasized rapidity and efficiency (General Laws of MA 2002, section f), making the resulting stratified participation seem somewhat inevitable. This sense of urgency was reinforced by common assessments at regular intervals and the breadth of material on the MCAS, resulting in summative whole-class conversations that cherry picked who was (perceived as) knowledgeable, and who could (presumably) communicate that knowledge quickly.

Views on language

When differences in language or culture became evident in students' remarks or actions, Ms. Kyle elided any instructional benefits to explore such differences. For example, in a "wrap-up" earth sciences lesson on extreme phenomena, Ms. Kyle showed a documentary comparing earthquakes in Kobe, Japan to Northridge, California (NOVA 1996). The unit had, up until that point, relied on American examples of extreme phenomena in the textbook and accompanying readers. However, when the documentary revealed dramatic scenes of wreckage in Kobe, every time Japanese was audible over the English voice-over, students giggled. Ms. Kyle did not interject or comment on students' reactions during or subsequent to the film. When the documentary showed an African-American man climbing over rubble in Northridge, Manuel asked aloud why *he* was in Japan. Suggesting incongruity between being Black and living in Japan, Manuel's comment began a series of giggles and racial comments. Ms. Kyle reprimanded the class and remarked that it was "rude" to talk about "that." By ignoring or minimally addressing what doesn't "fit" with students' conceptions—particularly those notions related to language or culture—Ms. Kyle glossed over an opportunity to help students make connections (ideological or interpersonal) around language and culture within the context of her classroom community. This culture- and language-blind stance is consistent with the fundamental assumption of MA Chapter 71A, that the language of power can solve incongruities that arise from diversity and inequality (Tollefson 1991; Viesca 2013).

Incongruity around language and literacy achievement presented Ms. Kyle with a challenge on how best to support Mandy, a language-minority student from Guatemala, recently exited from the district's sheltered English immersion program. Throughout the fall Ms. Kyle worried about Mandy's academic performance and brought her up for evaluation testing because Ms. Kyle thought Mandy "processed things too slowly." She reasoned that Mandy should at least get some support by middle school next year, where she would be "eaten alive" (field note, 11/5/2010). This perceived lack of support in middle school, an adherence to English-only instruction and materials, and the fact that six of her students were already supported by a separate program made Ms. Kyle's decision to have Mandy tested a sensible one. This outsourcing of students to specialized programs was a policy structure that allowed Ms. Kyle to maintain rather than modify her literacy instruction, and to gloss over disconfirming evidence that bilingual students can "easily acquire full fluency" solely through their second language (MA Chapter 71A, section e).

Ms. Napoli: some disruptive processes to the norm

Curricular and pedagogical choice

Ms. Napoli was generally ambivalent toward the fourth-grade mandated textbooks and materials. She seldom spoke of these materials and when she did, it was typically to critique their lack of depth. The only positive response to materials was that she liked the math stories in the text, but "didn't use them much because we don't have time" (field note 12/2/10). Unlike Ms. Kyle, however, Ms. Napoli relied frequently on supplemental materials in her language arts instruction. In two units of instruction in Language Arts, Ms. Napoli chose materials that more closely linked to her students' experiences and cultural heritages.

In a short unit on immigration, which was not part of the mandated curriculum, Ms. Napoli read her students a picture book recounting the forced emigration of a young Russian-Jewish girl to the United States (Woodruff 1999). After reading the story together and answering numerous text comprehension questions, the students wrote about a special object that they would take with them if they emigrated in the same circumstances. Though the notion of immigration was familiar to a majority of her students, many struggled to choose a special object for this situation. Rather than return to the text for guidance, she directed students to think more deeply about their personal histories and cultural practices. For example, Ms. Napoli repeatedly asked Will, a monolingual English-speaking student, to think about something *more* special than his most immediate thought: hockey equipment. Ms. Napoli asked Juan and Josue, two Latino bilingual students who were struggling with the assignment, to think about their families' immigration from Guatemala and Puerto Rico, respectively. In this way, Ms. Napoli positioned each student as knowledgeable within this discussion of text. She also selected one text, *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan 2002), that represented divergent experiences of "history" in the United States. Students engaged with ideas of cultural dissonance and the view that immigration was only about gaining opportunity in a "new land" during whole-class discussions, where Ms. Napoli asked how students might sympathize with Esperanza's struggles.

Though her choice of materials responded to her students' experiences, Ms. Napoli's instructional approach to working with her culturally and linguistically diverse students also mirrored the English Language Arts MCAS assessment, which included selections from multicultural fiction and asked students to find information from texts, define vocabulary, and make text-based inferences. In the following excerpt, Ms. Napoli paused during a read aloud of the text to check for vocabulary comprehension. Although ostensibly an activity of recall, Ms. Napoli attended to students' guesses and inferences by pressing for clarification and directing students to textual references, rather than displacing student sense-making with simple textbook or teacher-driven definitions.

Turn	Speaker	Talk
1	Ms. Napoli	[*Reading aloud*] He had been orphaned when he lost his parents in an epidemic. And there were still times when he would run to the alley behind the synagogue where he could be alone to grieve. [*Stops reading*] So what does it mean, we know that it means when your parents die and you become an orphan, right? What's an epidemic? … Can anyone guess by the way it says, he had been orphaned when he lost his parents in an epidemic? Jimmy?
2	Jimmy	A seizure? Is it a seizure?
3	Ms. Napoli:	A seizure? You're thinking of epilepsy, I think. [Students: Oh!] But "E-P," that's pretty close. Jake?
4	Jake	A war?
5	Ms. Napoli	Not necessarily a war.
6	Juan	Fight?
7	Ms. Napoli	Hmmm. Not a fight. Kelli?
8	Kelli	A conqueror or a physical [*unintelligible*]?
9	Ms. Napoli	Not conqueror. You know, these are great guesses. An epidemic is usually, like, an outbreak of some sort of disease, usually. Ok? Or like -
10	Students	[*Unintelligible—overlapping voices*]
11	Ms. Napoli	Like—what's that?
12	Student	Like the swine flu?
13	Ms. Napoli	Exactly. But during these times, there was not as much medication as there is now. Ok? [*Ms. Napoli turns the book toward her to begin reading again.*]
14	Student	Wait, what was it?
15	Ms. Napoli	We don't know yet. Ok? And then, do you know what a synagogue is? These people are Jewish. Anyone know what a synagogue is?
16	Jake	A synagogue is something that Jewish people have. It's, like, this hat that they wear
17	Ms. Napoli	Not quite. Anyone?
18	Aisha	A coat?
19	Ms. Napoli	Not a coat. Ok, it says, "there were still times when he would run to the alley behind the synagogue where he could be alone to grieve"
20	Student	Church
21	Ms. Napoli	Good. Kind of like a church. Yes. (*transcript 1/24/12*)

Ms. Napoli's whole-group text comprehension lesson followed the often-critiqued IRE interactional pattern where the teacher dominates the talk and limits student responses. However, Ms. Napoli's use of IRE was centered on student sense-making of prior knowledge (Lines 3, 11, 13, 15, 21) or interpretation of the text (Lines 1, 18–20). Ms. Napoli remained accountable to text comprehension (recall and interpretation) akin to the activities prioritized on the English Language Arts MCAS. Her verbal encouragement and compliments for student effort (Lines 9, 21) may have also signaled to students that the process of engaging with text is as salient as the product of this engagement. In this and similar lessons centered on supplemental texts, Ms. Napoli offered opportunities for students to express cultural knowledge or focus on issues of multiple cultural experiences, instruction in line with much work on cultural responsiveness (Ladson-Billings 1995; Lee 2001; Paris 2012), and did so through academic content and without breaking from the expectations of English-only instruction or the MCAS assessment format.

Participation structures

Ms. Napoli's pedagogy tended to widen the scope of participation for all students. Her whole-class discussions emphasized inclusion of students more than moving rapidly and efficiently through her instruction. When Ms. Napoli's used whole-class discussions, she called on a range of students, which sometimes meant waiting for students to find their words. When a language-minority Haitian student struggled to define 'factor,' Ms. Napoli patiently waited for her, ignored other raised hands, encouraged her to say it in her own words, and then prompted her to give an example in numbers. In another instance, Julie, an English-dominant Latina, tried to define "product." Ms. Napoli supported her efforts by offering an equation in which Julie could point out the product as part of her definition. In this way, Ms. Napoli did not explicitly differentiate her instructional approach based on students' language proficiency, but rather by what the student demonstrated in terms of her academic proficiency. Moreover, during whole-class discussions, when the more self-assured and verbose students would jump in to answer or correct their peers, Ms. Napoli would reprimand them for talking out of turn, or purposefully ignore them to keep the attention of the class on the student who held the floor at that moment. Thus, Ms. Napoli used whole-class discussions to regulate and model a more equitable share of participation across students, where English language proficiency was not conflated with academic understanding.

Ms. Napoli was subject to the same pressures of efficiency and rapidity as Ms. Kyle, but her understanding of how those pressures shaped moment-to-moment interactions in the classroom community differed. Ms. Napoli's structure of participation resisted stratification of who "knows" and who doesn't as a function of English proficiency. She regularly stopped a precocious but disruptive boy from providing explanations in favor of struggling students, many of whom were her language-minority students. Her approach to participation even resisted institutional separation and stratification of learners. For example, Ms. Napoli instituted periodic "open circle times," where her general education and special needs students and their teacher, who were otherwise separated into different classrooms, came

together. In so doing, Ms. Napoli and her colleague modeled everyone's equal place in the learning environment regardless of the larger hierarchical structures that enveloped them.

Views on language

Unlike the cultural responsiveness that characterized Ms. Napoli's instruction and patterns of participation of her students, there were no instances of disruption to the norms around language in Ms. Napoli's classes. When Jamal and his peer, both African American students from devout religious families, questioned their participation in a writing assignment about Halloween, Ms. Napoli attempted to assuage her students' concerns by taking out the word 'Halloween', but did not adjust the writing task further to better suit these students' cultural backgrounds. Instead, she standardized the assignment by arguing that all students were to complete the activity because scary stories "could be anytime, not just Halloween," despite the students pointing to contrary evidence (field note 10/28/10). This standardization of learning tasks was corroborated in other data: two other teachers at Hillside voiced frustration at delivering the curriculum to devout students who were not allowed to attend a field trip (it contained a burial ground), and another was clearly frustrated but resigned to following the district math curriculum built on a pacing calendar that was not appropriate for his students (field notes 3/17/2011). Similarly, while some of Ms. Napoli's instructional practices were somewhat aligned with the Hillside principal's newly established "community-building" assemblies, in which the principal focused on the importance of literacy in English and Spanish, publically lauding Spanish-speaking soldiers who read to the school's ELLs, she (and Ms. Kyle) also seemed to resist the principal's efforts as intrusions on her instructional time with her class (field notes 10/28/10, 2/18/2011).

Both Ms. Napoli and Ms. Kyle's views on language and cultural difference were consistent with the egalitarian concern of the MA Chapter 71A law that "all Massachusetts's children, regardless of their ethnicity or national origins, [be provided] with the skills necessary to become productive members of our society" (section c), perpetuating a monolingual (English) and monocultural (mainstream American) fallacy that language and content be best taught through one language and cultural lens (Phillipson 1992). Both the policy documents and classroom instruction fell far short of capitalizing on or sustaining "linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (Paris 2012, p. 95), where students have the ability to be part of specific cultural and linguistic groups as well as dominant societal groups. Ms. Napoli demonstrated some pluralistic and culturally responsive tendencies, but her pedagogy was not transformative in a culturally sustaining sense.

The range of culturally sustaining pedagogy in this English-only context

In this comparative case study, we asked how two teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students responded to an English-only educational language policy environment through their instructional practices, and how these practices

shaped learning opportunities for their language-minority students. By studying the possibilities for culturally sustaining pedagogy in typical classrooms under a restrictive language policy, we recruited these two teachers into the regulation and restriction of language use during their pedagogical practices, adding insight into an understudied domain of policy research.

Both Ms. Kyle and Ms. Napoli's teaching evidenced a sense of accountability to English-language standardized assessments, and thus to de facto English-only language policy buttressed by the explicit English-only policy of the Massachusetts Chapter 71A law and the improvement plan documents that centralized state accountability systems into instruction. Accountability to such policies, however, was manifest differently across the two teachers. Specifically, Ms. Kyle regularly used materials in ways that reinstated a culturally dominant and singular perspective on academic content, consistent with the state language and assessment policies. Ms. Napoli supplemented her textbooks in ways that invoked students' prior experiential and cultural knowledge, or drew attention to a plurality of perspectives. In answer to our second research question, Ms. Napoli's curricular and pedagogical choices offered a wider landscape of learning opportunities for students than might otherwise be thought possible within the terrain of English-only policy, particularly when contrasted with Ms. Kyle's practices.

In addition, the teachers had different strategies in working with language-minority students. Ms. Kyle relied more on monolingual-English speakers to move discussions forward, while Ms. Napoli engaged student thinking regardless of language and academic proficiency. The contrast is significant because it demonstrates how the "sink or swim" logic in MA Chapter 71A can be variedly taken up in classroom practice. Within this context, there was space for the individual teacher to mitigate the privileging of native-like proficiency: participation in Ms. Napoli's classroom reflected greater equity and support of language-minority students' opportunities for learning.

Despite these important differences, facility in English for academic success was unquestioned and normalized, as was the message of equal opportunity through English, regardless of the transnational and bilingual nature of both US economic life and many of these students' lives. This ideology of monolingualism is a "common sense" notion that one language is a solution to linguistic inequality in multilingual societies (Tollefson 1991), a notion that all the policy documents analyzed rested upon, either explicitly or covertly. When this norm was disrupted, with Mandy's literacy skills or Jamal's concerns over a writing assignment, both teachers responded by fitting these learners into standardized practices. Absent in these cases, unlike Ms. Napoli's curricular and participation choices, was a step toward culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. Only English was a sustained cultural and linguistic instructional practice.

Both Ms. Kyle's and Ms. Napoli's instruction evidenced the tensions between delivering quality learning opportunities for their culturally and linguistically diverse students while complying with policy mandates, such as adjusting curricula in response to standardized testing. By drawing on students' cultural and experiential knowledge and still adhering to mandated texts and pacing calendars through equitable participation in learning tasks, Ms. Napoli demonstrated some possibilities

to disrupt standardizing language and cultural practices. The contrast between the two teachers' pedagogical choices and the ways students' voices were managed shows a range, albeit attenuated, of responses to the policy pressures. Ms. Kyle tended to manage a community of individual learners, while Ms. Napoli attempted to establish a learning community that could have been a first step toward a sense of collaboration within a multicultural and multilingual classroom, putting her at odds with the state LIE policy, but also in alignment with her principal's attempts to create a school community accepting of bilingualism. These efforts emphasized the "valued practices" of these students (Gutiérrez and Rogoff 2003), leveraging language patterns of home/community for school purposes (e.g. Lee 2001; Moje et al. 2004; Orellana and Reynolds 2008), and focused on the importance of literacy and community over the importance of learning the majority language.

By defining students by their linguistic status only, the de facto language policy of the state assessment system, and the explicit language policy of the voter-approved legislation in Massachusetts rest on a theoretical foundation at odds with Ms. Napoli's more sociocultural pedagogy. Language policies underpinned by a monoglossic ideology, that ultimately frame pedagogy as an individualized linguistic process absent of the pluralistic reality in schools like Hillside, ignore the potential of culturally sustaining pedagogy. This theoretical mismatch between policy, curricula, assessments, and instruction did allow Ms. Napoli some space to provide a limited range of this pedagogy. The consistency of Ms. Kyle's instruction with these same pressures demonstrated a more transmission-style, deficit-oriented approach with students like Mandy whose literacy skills diverged with grade-level norms. By recognizing that classroom practices and interactions embody a response to such policies, LIE policy in moment-to-moment instruction can place equal attention on how the conditions and intentions of teachers allow for possibilities to mitigate policy for the complexities of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Without further data from teachers and administrators at Hillside, however, we cannot say whether this attenuated range of practices is mitigated by the policy context, or by teachers' knowledge and training, or both. While Ms. Kyle drew clear links between assessment policy and her instructional and curricular decisions, it remains to be seen if her colleagues' attempts at culturally and linguistically responsive practices will be sustained themselves.

Conclusion

The differences in how pedagogy supports language-minority students demonstrates how instruction is the ultimate test for language planning (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997), and begs greater attention to the difficult task of teaching in settings when language law governs the language of instruction, and standardized tests act as de facto language policy (Menken 2008). Furthermore, culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms highlight the importance of an integrated theory of language planning and language acquisition (Tollefson 1991). An integrated theory would, at a minimum, address the ways cognition originates in interaction with others, through language and the use of cultural tools (e.g. Hornberger and Johnson 2007;

Vygotsky 1978; Wertsch 1998). Culturally sustaining pedagogy is one recent perspective that engenders such a notion by emphasizing multilingualism and multiculturalism through the development of "linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality necessary for success and access in our demographically changing US and global schools and communities" (Paris 2012, p. 94). For US LIE policy to remain relevant in such pluralistic educational contexts, it must draw on this sociocultural framing of pedagogy to support the success of teachers and students in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.

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