Teacher language ideologies mediating classroom-level language policy in the implementation of dual language bilingual education

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A B S T R A C T

Drawing on multiple measures of language ideology, this paper examines the language ideologies of two third grade teachers tasked with implementing a dual language bilingual education (DLBE) program to explore the relationship between teachers' language ideologies and local language policy. After situating the classrooms within their respective broader language ideological contexts, the language ideologies of each teacher are presented followed by a discussion of its relationship to classroom-level language policy. Each teacher espoused both hegemonic and counterhegemonic language ideologies, which was reflected in classroom language practices. The cases illuminate the ideological struggle of each teacher within their own contexts, including how different levels of language policy (i.e. district, program, school) shaped or constrained teacher agency. While both teachers constructed pluralist classroom spaces for students to draw on their full linguistic repertoires, each classroom was simultaneously embedded within a transitional language ideology and influenced by the monoglossic ideologies of standardized assessments.

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1. Introduction

Considerable research attention has been given in recent years to exploring ways classrooms can be pluralist spaces for students to engage and interact drawing on their full linguistic repertoires (García, 2005, 2009; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999; Palmer & Martínez, 2013). How these spaces are created (or not) is dependent, in part, on the teacher; teachers are at the metaphorical heart of language policy implementation and how teachers interpret, understand, and implement language policy connects intimately with the local construction of classroom-level language policy (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Menken & García, 2010; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

The importance of language ideologies in the implementation and construction of language policy is established in research (Freeman, 2004; Makoe & McKinney, 2014; Palmer, 2011; Pérez, 2004; Rajuan & Beckerman, 2011). Indeed, Freeman (2004) argued that the central issue for implementing an enrichment-based dual language bilingual education (DLBE) centered on ideologies. She wrote, "The real challenge is destabilizing established language ideologies and replacing them with alternative language

ideologies" (p. 82). Current research on language ideologies in bilingual education recognizes and takes into consideration ideological complexity and multiplicity (Gal, 1998; Hill, 1998; Martínez, 2013; Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2014). To consider the "destabilization" or "replacement" of language ideologies requires an understanding and recognition of how multiple and contradictory language ideologies can exist simultaneously within school contexts and individuals and the connections to local language policy.

This paper will examine two third grade bilingual teachers language ideologies in two different schools in the same district both tasked with implementing a DLBE program. The central purpose of the study was to identify the language ideologies articulated and embodied by each educator in order to explore the relationship between teacher language ideologies and local language policy. After situating the classrooms within their respective broader language ideological contexts, the language ideologies of each teacher will be presented followed by a discussion of its relationship to classroom-level language policy.

2. Local language policy and approach to language

This investigation builds from a language ecology perspective and draws on a language planning and policy (LPP) framework to explore teacher language ideologies and local language policy. When language policy (LP) is passed, enacted or, in this case,

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mandated, the policy is reinterpreted and renegotiated by the local actors at each level (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007, 2011; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Interpretability opens up space for local actors at all LP levels to defend or fight for their social, political and/or economic interests (Phillips, 2003). Thus, educator language ideologies become of critical importance being that teachers represent the "heart" of LP.

Substantial research reinforces a LPP framework that places local actors at the center; teachers have been identified extensively as critical LP makers (Johnson, 2010; Menken & García, 2010; Skilton-Sylvester, 2003; Stritikus & García, 2000). The teachers in this study were in potential positions of power with respect to (not) implementing the districts DLBE policy mandate. The complexity of implementing additive bilingual programs including DLBE is connected to the crucial role of language ideologies (Freeman, 2004; Makoe & McKinney, 2014; Palmer, 2011; Pérez, 2004; Rajuan & Beckerman, 2011). Makoe and McKinney (2014) explored language policy in two schools in Johannesburg, and argued that until the language ideologies informing policies and practices are understood, the home language practices of students will continue to be viewed by educators as a problem rather than a resource for learning. Pérez (2004) in her study of a DLBE program in southern Texas found that parent and educator ideologies were contradictory and complicated throughout the implementation process. Freeman (2004) in an investigation of LP and DLBE program implementation in Philadelphia described how the (dis)congruency of a program's ideological assumptions with the local language ideologies impacted program implementation. This study extends this work by exploring the role of teacher language ideologies in the creation of classroom language policy within a district-mandated DLBE implementation context.

To explore language ideologies and language policy in practice, it is equally important to clarify how language and bilingualism are theoretically framed. Rather than a decontextualized system, this research builds on the perspective of language as a set of practices within a particular social and cultural context (García, 2009; Pennycook, 2010). Adopting this perspective necessitates an understanding of bilingualism that goes beyond dual monolingualism (Fitts, 2006) also referred to as the two solitudes model (Cummins, 2008). The language practices and meaning making processes of bilinguals has been called *translanguaging* (García & Wei, 2014) framing language performances in a verb form, rather than speaking a "language" in the noun form. One issue with adopting this perspective is the methodological challenge of not referring to named languages. In practice, speakers still associate their performances with named languages and ideologically orient themselves toward these practices. As such, throughout this paper, "Spanish," "English", "Spanglish," and "code-switching" are terms used with the understanding that the teacher or student was engaging in language practices associated with these named languages or features associated with both named languages. Currently, DLBE models prescribe strict separation of language. The DLBE implementation context description in the methods section below further considers how decontextualized, autonomous approaches to language are problematic in bilingual education.

3. Language ideology and identity

This research was grounded in the theoretical perspective that discourse, defined as language in use or representations of social life (Jaworski & Coupland, 2014), is invested with particular ideologies: "Ideologies are generated and transformed in actual discursive events" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 25). This exploration focusing specifically on the language ideologies embedded in teacher discourse draws from traditions of its use in linguistic anthropology. Key

for the purpose of this paper was Kroskrity's (2004) definition of language ideology as "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (p. 498). This conception of language ideology allows for "uses" that are potentially dominant or counterhegemonic (or both) as well as multiple and contradictory. This definition also encompasses language ideologies used in both spoken forms of communication (articulated language ideologies) as well as in practice (embodied language ideologies). In other words, teachers' *use* of language indexes both individual and dominant language ideologies (Gal, 1992; Kroskrity, 2004; Razfar, 2006).

Also important for the analysis of the data is the connection between language ideologies and identity. Language ideologies mediate how a person can use language to perform a certain identity (Gee, 2014a) and identities are imposed on individuals, including students, based on their language performances (Bunyi, 2001; Makoe, 2014). The language ideological perception of distinct language practices are, in part, dependent on the social identify of the person using the language, and the significance or meaning of an ideology can differ substantially for different subgroups or subject positioning (Kroskrity, 2000; McGroarty, 2010; Sayer, 2012). Flores and Rosa (2015) explicitly addressed this intersection in their conceptualization of *raciolinguistic ideologies* or the conflation of "certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices" (Flores & Rosa, p. 150). Appropriate use of language, framed by educators in this context as "correct" language use, can reflect subject positioning rather than actual language performances (Flores & Rosa, 2015). The distinct subjectivities and experiences of the teachers were taken into consideration for the analysis and discussion.

Research exposes the multiple and contradictory nature of language ideologies. These inconsistencies can occur within a community of speakers (Gal, 1998; Hill, 1998) or even within an individual speaker (Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Martínez, 2013; Martínez et al., 2014). For example, Martínez et al. (2014) explored teachers' ideologies toward translanguaging in two DLBE elementary classrooms and found that the teachers' perspectives reflected both ideologies of linguistic purism and counter-hegemonic ideologies valuing bilingualism. Arguably, DLBE programs represent a counter-hegemonic additive ideology in comparison to a more dominant assimilationist ideology in the United States (de Jong, 2011; Freeman, 2004). DLBE is not ideologically neutral. This paper demonstrates how the (mis)alignment (or both) of teachers' language ideologies with the circulating ideologies within a language policy implementation space has direct consequences on the construction of classroom language policy.

4. Methods

In order to address language ideological complexity, this study draws on multiple measures (survey, interview and observation) of language ideologies. Building on a prior language ideology study that surveyed a random sample of 323 educators in this central Texas district (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Palmer, & Henderson, 2015), I conducted follow-up interviews in the participants language of choice with 20 randomly selected DLBE teachers who volunteered to participate in the interviews. Building on the interview outcomes, two third grade teachers (Mariana and Michael) were selected purposefully, based on differences in espoused ideologies, as case studies for classroom observations. Mariana was selected because she articulated language ideologies that aligned closely with the larger population of teachers. Michael articulated a pluralist orientation toward language hybridity, which made him a language ideological exception in the sample. Of the twenty teachers, only one other teacher articulated only positive views toward language mixing, and it was not as prevalent. The teachers also