

## **Views on Bilingualism in the United States: A Selective Historical Review**

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### **Abstract**

As the United States population becomes increasingly diverse, debates over bilingualism have intensified. For example, many ask should English be declared the nation's official language? Or should bilingualism be encouraged? The present article offers a contextual historical sketch as a backdrop to current national bilingual issues. Salient historical events and selected factors are reviewed that reveal views on bilingualism in the United States from pre-colonial times to the present. A pattern in the development of views of bilingualism is identified. From pre-colonial times to the late 1800s, there was generalized acceptance, perhaps even embracement, of bilingualism. From around 1880 until about 1920, English-only sentiments grew markedly. This period was filled with strident and overt challenges to bilingualism. From the 1920s to today, the debate has continued, but on the whole, supporters of bilingualism have been less publicly active. Finally, I summarize factors associated with various attitudes in our history and try to understand our current situation in relation to these past occurrences.

### **Background and Purpose**

Ethnic and racial diversification in the United States is increasing. Currently, more than 30 million language-minority individuals reside here, with projections to reach about 40 million by the year 2000 (Trueba, 1989). In New York and several states in the West and Southwest, language-minorities constitute more than 23% of the state population over age 4 (Trueba, 1989). Currently, there are about 2.3 million students in our schools identified as having "limited English proficiency" (United States Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, 1992). About 80% of these students are Hispanic (Trueba, 1989). In California, about 50% of all Californian students speak a language other than English as their primary, or only, language. The figure is projected to reach about 70% by 2030 (Garcia, 1992a). Notably, as non-white and Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander presence in schools increased considerably from 1976 to 1986 (up by 6% and 116%,

respectively), Caucasian and non-Hispanic enrollment decreased by 13% (Garcia, 1992a).

As our population has become more diverse, debates surrounding bilingualism have intensified. Should English be declared the nation's official language? Should languages other than English be prohibited in government and public services and schools? Should language-minority students be taught in their native language or in English only or in both languages? In short, should bilingualism be simply allowed, or should it be supported and encouraged? Or, on the other hand, should it be prohibited outright or simply discouraged?

Perhaps through a better understanding of prior generations' experiences with, and reactions to bilingualism, more insight can be gained into contemporary attitudes. The purpose of this article is to offer a contextual historical sketch as a backdrop to current national bilingual issues. Specifically, salient historical events and selected factors are reviewed that mark positions on bilingualism in the United States from pre-colonial times to the present. A pattern in the development of views of bilingualism is identified. Major historical delimiters in that development are noted, and potential factors related to shifting views are drawn out. Finally, historical patterns are assessed in relation to the present-day situation.

I wish to emphasize that this article merely provides a framework to show superordinate patterns of views over time; it does not offer in-depth rich elaboration. Nor does the article address the potential symbolisms involved in controversy over bilingualism. One symbolism, for example, is that language can represent cultural identity, and opposition to bilingualism can reflect deep-seated language prejudice and xenophobia. Readers who desire fuller details on the major points in the present article and/or on related issues such as potential symbolisms involved in debates over bilingualism might be interested in further reading of entries in the reference list, perhaps beginning with the comprehensive texts by Crawford (1989; 1991; 1992a,b) and Hakuta (1986).

### **From Protection to Controversy**

The overarching form of the development of views on bilingualism in the United States is movement from early and perhaps general acceptance of bilingualism, at least from the 1600s, to gradual emergence of English-only sentiments, beginning most

visibly around 1880, to increasingly heated controversy over bilingualism, intensifying from about the 1920s on.

### **Early Times Until the 1880s**

From pre-colonial days into the mid-1800s, bilingualism was not only widespread, it was respected and appreciated. Before the first Europeans arrived on the continent, between 200 and just over 500 languages in about 15 language families were spoken in the land (Casanova & Arias, 1993; Castellanos, 1992; Heath, 1981). In 1664, when New Netherland was given to the British crown, at least 18 non-native American languages were spoken on Manhattan Island (Crawford, 1989). There was tacit agreement that, dating back to 1776, with the possible exception of the Native Americans and African-American slaves, people were to share the English language (Heath, 1976a; Heath & Mandabach, 1983; San Miguel, 1983, 1986, 1987; Trueba, 1989). However, bilingualism continued to be supported and was considered an advantage for everyday trading, teaching, and spreading the gospel (Castellanos, 1992). Unlike the Spanish who created specific language policies for their New World holdings, the English as they began to settle their New World colonies, had no early language policies (Heath, 1976b). Intellectual and political leaders, social and religious organizations, and newspapers encouraged the study and maintenance of non-English languages (Casanova & Arias, 1993; Heath, 1981). Bilingualism continued to be common into the mid-19th century, and not just in educated classes. For example, in the mid-18th century, newspaper advertisements for runaway servants (both African-American and Caucasian) frequently referred to their multilingual abilities (Crawford, 1989).

Further, bilingualism was politically protected at least from early post-Columbus times until the late 19th century. One view of the reason for political protection is that pilgrims coming to the continent saw preservation of heritage as an individual right. Since language is strongly tied to heritage, native-language loyalty would also likely be considered a right (Crawford, 1989). Continuing into the mid-1880s, there were several significant signs of the social and political rights involved in embracing bilingualism. One was that the Continental Congress tried to accommodate non-English speakers. For example, many of its official documents were published in German and French, including the Articles of Confederation (Crawford, 1989). Shortly after the acquisition of Louisiana, all

federal laws pertinent to the territory were printed in both French and English (Leibowitz, 1969). A second was that, as the United States Constitution was being drawn, John Adams proposed that English be the official United States language. After debate, the founding fathers declined the proposal on the grounds that it was “incompatible with the spirit of freedom” from which the Constitution was borne (Hakuta, 1986, p. 165). A third was that until the late nineteenth century, bilingual education, and even monolingual education in the native language, was pervasive (Leibowitz, 1971; United States Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, 1991). For instance, in the late 1600s, German Americans tried to maintain their language through schools which used German, or both German and English, as the language(s) of instruction (Crawford, 1989; Hakuta, 1986). Also, during much of the nineteenth century, many immigrant groups, including Italians, Poles, Czechs, French, Dutch, Spanish, and Germans, incorporated mother-tongue instruction in their schools (Casanova & Arias, 1993; Kloss, 1971). Beginning in the mid-1800s, some states passed laws which prevented interference with public school instruction in a non-English language, particularly German (Hakuta, 1986).

### **1880s through the Early 1900s**

In the 1880s, attitudes began to change, English nativism intensified, and support for bilingualism began to waiver. An “Americanization” campaign was launched, and fluency in English, the language of the dominant Anglo-Saxon race, became associated with patriotism (Casanova & Arias, 1993; Tamura, 1993).

Shifts in attitudes were likely related to several factors including the following. First, the English had governed the country since colonial days. It would appear their language became dominant at least in part because of their majority presence and their power and authority. After almost 400 years of non-native-American presence on the continent, generations of people had adopted English as their only language, many having lost the languages of their forefathers. Over time, originating loyalties to native languages, as well as reasons for the loyalties, waned. Second, one immigration peak period had just occurred and another was in process (Frick, 1990). One was from about 1830 to 1854, when large numbers of Irish, Russian Jews, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Sicilians, and Neapolitans immigrated. Another was from about 1880 to 1900, when large numbers of Chinese immigrated. The “melting pot”

metaphor for life in North America implied that the large numbers of recent immigrants should conform to the ways, and therefore, the language, of mainstream North America. Third, the Spanish-American War may have led to greater desires to breed a spirit of nationalism, at least in part, through ensuring a common language base throughout the country. Fourth, as the 20th century began, and World War I was imminent, suspicions about allegiances were fueled by language differences. Fifth, North American society had begun a transformation from a predominantly agricultural and low-skilled labor economy to a more urbanized, industrial economy in which English literacy and orality were indispensable in major sectors of the work force.

Some important events signaled the growing presence of anti-bilingual attitudes from the late 1880s into the early 1900s. The first restrictive immigration laws appeared in 1882, directed primarily against Chinese. Following the Spanish-American War, the United States government imposed English as the mainstream school language in the new colonies, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, in spite of the fact that the Puerto Ricans were entirely Spanish-speaking (Resnick, 1993). In 1916, the requirement was relaxed somewhat to allow in Puerto Rico Spanish mainstream instruction in first through fourth grade, Spanish and English in fifth grade, but only English thereafter. This lasted until 1940. The Nationality Act of 1906 was the first legislation requiring immigrants to speak English to become naturalized citizens (Leibowitz, 1982). Around 1900, the first large-scale United States adult English instruction was undertaken (Crawford, 1989). Intolerance for German mainstream instruction in schools began in the late 1880s and peaked around 1919, with the rise of anti-German feelings and the advent of the American Protective Association (Baron, 1990; Crawford, 1989; Hakuta, 1986). By 1923 34 states had legislation prohibiting public instruction in languages other than English (Acuña, 1981; Andersson & Boyer, 1971; Drake, 1973; Heath, 1976a; Kloss, 1977; Leibowitz, 1971; Trueba, 1989). Between 1919 and 1950, over 1,000 individuals were jailed for subversive speech, and thousands of cases were litigated citing non-English language as a sign of “clear and present danger” (Trueba, 1989, p. 85). In a landmark 1923 case, *Meyer v. Nebraska*, a parochial school teacher “was charged with the crime of reading a bible story in German to a ten-year-old child” (Crawford, 1989, p. 24). Although the United States Supreme Court subsequently declared as

unconstitutional laws prohibiting the use of foreign languages in schools, the charge itself is a telling indicator of the climate with regard to bilingual issues. During the 1930s, for the first time ever, English-as-a-second-language (ESL) methodology was developed. Finally, during World War II, Japanese-language schools were closed (Crawford, 1989).

### **Mid-1900s to the Present**

Since the mid- 1900s, the core issue of concern has become increasingly explicit: Should individuals maintain and use original native language alongside English, or should English supplant the native language? Virtually no one argues that English should not be learned and used. The controversy can be represented by cases which might be interpreted as supportive of, or sympathetic toward, bilingualism versus instances which undercut it. At least five categories of such cases emerged from the historical literature: Federal policies, acts, and funding decisions; state policies; court decisions; political organizations; and bilingual education programs and their evaluation and research. In the following sections, historical highlights in each of the five areas will be shown.

**Federal Policies, Acts and Funding Decisions.** A number of significant federal policies, acts, and funding decisions have occurred since the mid-1960s. Table I shows that earlier events tended to be more supportive of bilingual issues, while later ones have tended to undercut them. Perhaps the most important event was the establishment in 1964 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal monies (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1991). The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) was set up to oversee compliance with Title VI.

In its formative years, OCR was evidently more proactive on language-minority issues, and was therefore viewed by bilingual advocates as supportive of their cause. For example, in 1970, OCR sent a memo to school districts stating that OCR policy required effective instruction for language-minority students (Crawford, 1989; National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1991). In 1975 OCR published standards for school systems to ensure their compliance with the now famous *Lau v. Nichols* decision

**Table 1**  
**Federal Policies, Acts, and Funding Decisions**

More Supportive	Less or Nonsupportive
(1964) OCR established (1968) Title VII and OBEMLA established  1970 OCR Memo  (1974) Title VII reauthorized (1974) EEOA established (1975) OCR's Lau Remedies	(1978) Title VII Reauthorized but weakened support for bilingual education (but added literacy)  (1981) Lau remedies replaced  (1984) Title VII reauthorized but began funding SAIPS  (1980-88) Secretary of Ed, William Bennett, worked against bilingual education  (1988) English Proficiency Act (1988) Title VII reauthorized, weakened native-language instruction

(discussed below). The compliance standard that evolved prescribed transitional-bilingual education and specifically rejected ESL instruction (Hakuta, 1986). However, these so-called “Lau Remedies” became fiercely debated, partly because many regarded them as levying undue federal influence over what should have been state and local policies. In 1981, OCR withdrew the Lau Remedies and replaced them with a series of nonprescriptive measures (National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1991). For the last decade or so, OCR has not been as active in language-minority protection. Today, OCR reviews schools on a case-by-case basis.

Any program or method is accepted that ensures language-minorities effective educational participation.

Federal shift in position on bilingual issues can also be seen in changes made in monies directed towards special educational programs for language-minorities. In 1968, Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act (an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) was enacted after substantial political organization efforts by the Hispanic community (Santiago, 1983). First year funding was \$7.5 million (Hakuta, 1986). The act was to support programs for language-minority children in schools having high language-minority concentrations, with families who had incomes below \$3,000 a year (Crawford, 1989). While this act did not require schools to use the children's native language, it was called the Bilingual Education Act, and it was the first major federal effort to address educational problems of language-minorities (Rotberg, 1982).

In 1974, the Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized and amended to drop the poverty criterion and to require schools receiving grants to include instruction in native language and culture as necessary for effective education (Crawford, 1989). The next three reauthorizations of Title VII (in 1978, 1984, and 1988), however, had the net effect of dramatically weakening support for native-language instruction and boosting monies for English-only programs. The 1978 reauthorization amended language stated that native language would be used strictly to transition into English. Notably, the Act was also expanded to cover all language-minority children, including those who needed help reading and writing English, even if speaking/listening abilities were adequate (Crawford, 1989). The 1984 reauthorization committed funds to Special Alternative Instructional Programs (SAIPS) that used no native-language instruction. The 1988 reauthorization went even farther to undercut bilingualism. A prior 4% cap on English-only programs was removed, and all restrictions on support for alternative methodologies (alternatives to bilingual programs) were lifted. Although \$10 million was added to the budget, 70% to 75% of the new money, along with monies diverted from Title VII's teacher-training account, was reserved for English-only methods. Further, students could be enrolled in bilingual education programs for no longer than three years. Although monies authorized for the current spending period (1989-1993) total about \$674.6 million, this

figure is down from about \$679.7 million in the previous period (1984-1988) (Chapman, 1993).

Other notable federal events from the 1960s to the present include the following. Commensurate with the launching of Sputnik, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 authorized funds to thousands of students for foreign language training (U. S. Department of Education, 1991; Simon, 1980). Some authors have pointed to an apparent “schizophrenic” U.S. attitude, whereby foreign-language learning for native-born, predominately English-speaking individuals, over this century, has sometimes been supported, while bilingual education programs for language-minorities have simultaneously been disfavored (Crawford, 1989). In 1974 the Equal Education Opportunities Act (EEOA) was enacted (Crawford, 1989). A section of the Act required schools to work to overcome language barriers that interfered with language-minority students’ learning (Crawford, 1989). Also, in 1975, Congress amended the Voting Rights Act to require bilingual ballots in jurisdictions where language minorities exceeded 5% of the population and where illiteracy rates exceeded national norms (Lessow-Hurley, 1990). Throughout the Reagan presidency, Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, was a vocal antagonist of bilingual education. He made public speeches attacking the Bilingual Education Act, and in 1985, he appointed antagonists of bilingual education to the National Advisory and Coordinating Council on Bilingual Education. Finally, in 1988, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus brought special monies to address language-learning issues, but solely for support of learning English. They sponsored the English Proficiency Act which was enacted as part of an omnibus education measure and authorized \$25 million a year for adult ESL programs (Crawford, 1989).

**State Policies/Laws.** Table 2 shows that until the mid-1980s there were not many notable state-level activities. In 1971, Massachusetts was the first state to enact a law promoting bilingual education (Crawford, 1989), and in 1981, the California State Department of Education began an innovative Case Studies in Bilingual Education project.

However, in recent years, several events signify state-level eroding support for bilingual education (Crawford, 1989). In 1986, in a referendum, Proposition 63, Californians voted 3-to-1 to declare English California’s official language. Simultaneously, and again in 1987, California Governor Deukmejian vetoed a bill to

**Table 2**  
**State Policies/Laws**

More Supportive	Less or Nonsupportive
(1971) Mass. enacted bilingual educ. law (1981) California State Dept. of Ed. began innovative Case Studies in Bilingual Education	(1986) CA:Proposition 63 (1986) CA Governor Deukmejian vetoed bilingual education extension bill (1987) Governor Deukmejian again vetoed (1987-88) Eight more states passed "Official English" legislation
(1990) By now, 22 states had statutes permitting or requiring native- language instruction	(1990) One state still prohibited native-language instruction

extend the bilingual education law, a law which many considered "the nations' most detailed and prescriptive bilingual education law" (Crawford, 1989, p. 52). In 1987 and 1988, eight more states passed "official-English" legislation (Crawford, 1989). Similarly, by 1989, seven states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and West Virginia) still had laws prohibiting school instruction in languages other than English. However, the laws apparently were not enforced (Crawford, 1989), and by 1990 only West Virginia retained its law (August & García, 1990). On the other hand, by 1990, 22 states had statutes expressly allowing or requiring native-language instruction (August & García, 1990).

**Court Decisions.** As Table 3 shows, several landmark cases were brought to the court system during the 1970s and early 1980s. It is significant that few legal cases and no highly pivotal ones

**Table 3**  
**Court Decisions**

More Supportive	Both	Less or Nonsupportive
	(1970 & 1974) Lau v. Nichols	
(1972 & 1974) Serra v. Portales		
	(1981) Castañeda v Pickard	

surrounding bilingualism or English- as-a-second language have been brought to the courts now for over a decade. (For a few examples of late-1980s and early-1990s court cases on the question of minority-language rights, see Crawford, 1992b.) Lau v. Nichols was the first class action suit brought to court regarding educational programs for language minorities. Chinese public school students held that the San Francisco Unified School District had no special programs to meet their linguistic needs and that they therefore had an educational disadvantage (Crawford, 1989). Initially, federal district courts found for the defendants. Later, the Supreme Court found for the plaintiffs, although bilingual education was not mandated. That is, the schools were required to provide assistance, but it could be ESL pullout instruction, bilingual instruction, or some other possibility. In making its decision, the Court relied on the 1970 OCR memo and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of national origin, race, or color.

The first court mandate for bilingual education came in Serra v. Portales Municipal Schools (Crawford, 1989). In 1972, a federal judge ordered the schools to provide instruction in the children's native language as part of a desegregation plan. The decision was upheld in 1974 by a Circuit Court of Appeals.

A final significant court case was Castañeda v. Pickard. In 1981, the judges on the United States 5th Circuit Court of Appeals used the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 and outlined three criteria for serving language-minority students: Instruction

based on sound educational theory, effective program implementation with adequate resources and personnel, and program evaluation (Crawford, 1989). Again, bilingual education was not required, but some sort of special provisions had to be made. The three criteria laid out in this case still remain in effect today.

**Political and Other Organizations.** Expanding concern about teaching English to language-minority students through the mid-1900s led to the formation of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 1966 (see Table 4). From 375 founding members, the organization has grown to over 23,000 today. Although the organization firmly supports bilingual education, it does, as its title implies, focus on English learning. The National Association for Bilingual Education was formed in 1975 and currently has about 4,500 members.

During the civil rights movement, language-minority groups, most notably Hispanics, formed political coalitions and lobbied for federal support of bilingual education (Crawford, 1989). One of the most notable political groups figuring in the bilingual versus English-only language issue was La Raza Unida party, often portrayed as a militant Mexican-American group, in Crystal City, Texas. In 1970, La Raza Unida boycotted schools to protest unequal treatment of Spanish-speaking students. They also won a majority of school board seats and immediately thereafter instituted a bilingual education program in their schools.

In 1983, the "U.S. English" organization gained momentum. The organization was founded by Senator S. I. Hayakawa to lobby for a constitutional amendment making English the U.S. official language. The amendment forbade the making or enforcement of law, ordinance, regulation, order, program, or policy requiring use of a language other than English. Its proponents opposed bilingual education. U.S. English was an offshoot of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a Washington, D.C. based lobby advocating tighter restrictions on immigration (Crawford, 1989). U.S. English became an influential force on the national scene. For example, they were called to testify before Congress in 1983 when President Reagan worked to cut the federal budget for bilingual education and to relax regulations on schools. Between 1986 and 1988 the organization supported efforts in 40 states to make English the official state language (Casanova & Arias, 1993).

**Table 4**  
**Political Organizations**

More Supportive	Both	Less or Nonsupportive
	(1966) TESOL formed	
(1975) NABE formed		(1983) U.S. English
(1985) English plus launched		
(1987) English Plus Information Clearing-house founded		
(1987) NABE, NCTE, MLA, LSA, & TESOL supported English Plus		

The legislation passed in 10 states, including California, Florida, and Illinois, which rank in the top five states for number of language-minority students. In most recent years, the organization continues to be active, although significant figures, including in 1988, its Hispanic President, Linda Chavez, and Advisory Board member, Walter Cronkite, have left the organization because of undercurrents of racism (Crawford, 1989).

In 1985, the English Plus organization was launched and also became influential on the national scene. The organization was founded by The League of United Latin American Citizens and the Spanish American League Against Discrimination. In 1987 the English Plus Information Clearinghouse (EPIC) was established. English Plus continues to be the main national effort to combat the English Only movement. Several educational groups support its goals, including: The National Association for Bilingual Education, National Council of Teachers of English, Modern Language

Association, the Linguistic Society of America, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

**Bilingual Education Programs: Evaluation and Research.** Part of the controversy over bilingualism involves questions of whether we should have bilingual education programs in our schools, and if so, to what end. In the mid-1960s, substantial bilingual education initiatives surfaced (García, 1992b). However, teacher training in bilingual education is remarkably recent, dating to 1974, when Congress authorized resources for bilingual education training in institutes of higher education (García, 1992b) (see Table 5).

**Table 5**  
**Bilingual Education Programs/Evaluation and Research**

More Supportive	Less or Nonsupportive
(1974) Higher education training programs in bilingual education developed	(1977-78) AIR Study
(1985) Willig reanalyzed Baker deKantor	(1983) Baker deKantor report

Research in this area is significantly wanting (q.v., Lam, 1992); most of the closer looks at bilingual education programs have been under the guise of program evaluation. However, three studies stand out in the debate. One is the AIR report of an evaluation of 38 Spanish-English federally funded bilingual education programs (AIR, 1975). The authors concluded that there was no consistent significant impact on the LEP (Limited-English-Proficient) students' education. In fact, they reported that in English reading, children scored higher in sink-or-swim classrooms. The 1983 Baker and deKanter report reviewed 28 studies on bilingual education, and the

authors concluded there was no consistent evidence to support the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education (Baker and deKanter, 1983). However, in a pivotal piece, Willig (1985) reported a meta-analysis of 23 of the 28 studies reviewed by Baker and deKanter and concluded there were small-to-moderate effects in favor of bilingual education.

### **Summary and Lessons Learned**

A pattern emerged in the development of views on bilingualism in the United States from pre-colonial times to present. There was early generalized acceptance, perhaps even embracement, of bilingualism, from pre-Colonial times to the late 1800s. From around 1880, English-only sentiments grew markedly, intensifying from around 1920 and still present today.

From the colonial days into the mid-1800s bilingualism was widespread and politically protected. Maintenance of native language was seen as a right, perhaps a right to preserve one's heritage. For example, important government documents were printed in languages other than English, and many schools used languages other than English for everyday instruction.

In the 1880s through the early 1900s, significant events marked shifting attitudes toward bilingualism. Among these events were: United States imposition of English as the mainstream school language in Puerto Rico and the Philippines; many states enacted legislation prohibiting public instruction in languages other than English; and thousands of cases were litigated in courts over individuals' public use of languages other than English.

Whereas the period from the 1880s to the mid-1900s was filled with strident and overt challenges to bilingualism, as well as strong response, the period from the mid-1950s to present, with the exception of the work of U.S. English, might be considered more subdued in tone. In general, federal and state power and authority to use policy and financial fortitude to encourage bilingualism were not yielded. Nor were the power and authority of either the judicial system or federal organizations such as the Office of Civil Rights fully exercised to support bilingualism. Federal movement was clearly in the direction of broadening and strengthening opportunities for helping individuals to learn English, rather than fully backing bilingual programs. At the state level, various directions and positions may have been taken. However, recent enactments of official English legislation in 10 states also suggests

movement toward stronger emphasis on English development than on bilingualism. Notably, major court decisions regarding bilingual issues were rare, with none in the last decade. Even in the landmark court cases, decisions might generally be considered only weak victories, because in only one case was native-language support required. It is also not insignificant that the plaintiffs in the few notable court cases held during this period were members of language-minority groups. Among political organizations, the English-only movement may have gained more ground than those supporting bilingualism. Finally, although considerable program evaluation occurred, very little research on bilingual education was conducted.

The shifts in views on bilingualism in the United States are associated with configurations of selected factors. In the following section, I will describe the conditions inferred from this review that seem most closely associated with various attitudes toward bilingualism and then relate what is learned from history to our current situation.

The first three history lessons may help to explain why widespread acceptance of bilingualism currently might be difficult. First, in pre-colonial and colonial times, bilingualism was at least accepted and protected, if not widely appreciated or embraced as a societal benefit. An important coincident condition at least during colonial times was a generalized dedication to the spirit of individual rights and freedoms or to will or moral principle. Other simultaneous factors, such as political instability and economic problems did not seem to deter a prevailing sentiment favoring bilingual protections. Today, such dedication to principle does not generally seem to take precedence over other considerations such as the economy or health issues.

A second lesson from history is that peak immigration can be associated with decline in acceptance of bilingualism. It is likely that increasing immigration creates a feeling of instability among citizens. The feeling of instability could be due to an unsettling aura of change, increased job competition, and/or a general inability to communicate with the newcomers. Normally, instability can lead to fear of the unknown, and therefore, recalcitrance and increased conservatism, in an effort to protect and save the here-and-now. Insistence on using status quo language is one manifestation of such recalcitrance.

In the 1980s the largest group of immigrants arrived in the United States since the beginning of the century (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). There is no question that many citizens feel that the numbers of immigrants, refugees, and illegal entrants have generally increased. Many currently feel threatened by the societal burden placed on U.S. citizens by these individuals. At least as portrayed by the media, recalcitrance and conservatism appear to be on the rise.

A third history lesson is that when the United States is involved in strife in other parts of the world, there is increased sentiment toward nationalism, even desire for isolationism, in the citizenry. Nowadays, the United States seems constantly involved in other countries' problems. Such world-wide involvement could again be associated with lack of support of bilingualism in the United States.

On the other hand, two history lessons applied to present circumstances suggest support for bilingualism may be on the rise. One lesson from this brief review is that gradually, over time, the language of the majority in positions of power and authority (predominantly, the Anglo-Saxons) became the language of political and social transactions. As language minorities continue to grow in numbers and increasingly find positions of power and authority, bilingualism could take on an unprecedented preeminence in our society.

Finally, dramatic structural changes in the workplace, such as moving from an agricultural to an industrial society, were also coincident with changes in predisposition toward supporting bilingualism. This was in part probably due to increased needs for English literacy and orality in the work place. Today, as our society becomes increasingly technological, these needs increase almost daily. However, at the same time, technology also seems to make the world become smaller and smaller, and as a result, more international connections are made in the business world. Hence, currently, technology places greater and greater demands on the importance of bilingualism.

In sum, lessons learned from the history of how bilingualism has been viewed in the United States may help us to understand selected aspects of current positions on bilingualism. On one hand, some current factors are associated with a general public disposition toward greater emphasis on English; but on the other hand, other factors suggest the possibility of an increasing recognition of societal need for bilingualism. The configuration of current

antithetical conditions also suggests the bilingual-issues debate is likely to continue for some time to come.

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Applied Psycholinguistics 28:3 Pearson: Social factors in childhood bilingualism in the United States. 400. Figure 1. The input-prociency-use cycle. [A color version of this gure can be viewed online at [www.journals.cambridge.org](http://www.journals.cambridge.org)]. However, the system does not exist in a vacuum. Other factors play a role in how much input is delivered and how much is taken up. the United States, at least one parent born in the United States; and Depth 6 at least one grandparent (and parent) born in the United States. When Hakuta and Andrea (1992) graphed the scores different depths of bilingual teenagers earned on a language task they did in English and in Spanish, the generations did not behave strictly according to the rule. Stephen Fry celebrates bilinguals' life stories and discovers the bonuses of bilingualism. Bilinguals have big advantages. Those who are bilingual from birth acquire human empathy earlier and all bilinguals have advantages that go beyond language skills. Stephen delights in the stories of different bilinguals ranging from 4 year-old Luca, becoming fluent in English and French simultaneously, to 70 year old Barry Davis, bilingual in Yiddish and English. Stephen talks to him about how he uses his skill as an interpreter helping members of the London Chasidic community, many of whom have Engl The subject of bilingualism, with its attendant pros and cons, has been surrounded by myths. This Card File is based on a series of lectures by Irina Dubinina, Associate Professor at Brandeis University, discussing the phenomenon of bilingualism, its impact on the human brain, and whether it is possible to raise a bilingual child in the Russian context.

1 What is bilingualism? Bilingualism is one's ability to use two or more languages in one's daily life both with adequate proficiency for effective communication but not necessarily at the same level as an educated native speaker. A comm "BE021540: Views on Bilingualism in the United States: A Selective Historical Review." Welcome to NCELA. N.p., n.d. Web. argue that there is a need for a common national language. State law says "a student should be taught English as quickly as possible so they can be "mainstreamed," that is, transferred into regular classrooms" (7). Finally, the author writes, "Bilingualism proponents emphasize that language is an important vehicle through which culture is transmitted".

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