Journal of Language Teaching, *6*(1), 1-15, 2026
https://doi.org/10.54475/jlt.2026.006

Check for updates

Original Research OPEN ACCESS

# I know nothing, I can do nothing, can I do the work? Teacher selfhood and English-only mandates in a transitional U.S. environment

**Maria Halkias**

**School of Education, Stockton University, Galloway, NJ, United States**

Received: April 13, 2026 / Accepted: June 28, 2026 / Published Online: June 30, 2026
© Pioneer Publications LTD 2026

## Abstract

The designation of English as the official language of the United States on March 1, 2025 (Executive Order 14224) may have far-reaching implications for classrooms and federal agencies at various levels. While the ultimate effects of this first-ever designation remain uncertain, teacher preparation programs should continue to prioritize the development of teachers' professional identities, so as to enable educators to find meaning and purpose when working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In response to this policy shift, I developed targeted postsecondary coursework that encourages my students to critically engage with their identities as they deepen their understanding of the intersection of language and policy. This vulnerable, self-reflective process represents a journey towards selfhood, a concept that Ashworth (2016) defines as the cultivation and maintenance of identities, values, and a sense of agency. Throughout a semester, teachers enrolled in a graduate-level course explored how various language policies influence the practice of bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL). This qualitative, interpretive study incorporates policy sensemaking and critical language awareness as frameworks to explore feelings of helplessness, uncertainty, and frustration that often constrain daily classroom practices.

**Keywords** bilingual education, English as a Second Language, language policy, selfhood, policy sensemaking, critical language awareness, translanguaging

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Bilingual Education Policy

The United States has historically lacked an official language designation, instead relying on the de facto recognition of English as the primary language (Grant, 1978; Spolsky, 2011). Several factors have contributed to this policy approach, including economic considerations, conceptions of national identity, attitudes towards assimilation, and differing perspectives on multiculturalism across the country (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015; Spolsky, 2021). Consequently, English was not designated as the U.S. national language because the Founding Fathers valued linguistic diversity and sought to attract, rather than alienate, immigrants settling in the nation (Wiley, 2004, as cited in Wang, 2016).

The United States has a long history of bilingual education policy, and its effects on classroom practices remain divisive (Garrity et al., 2018; Wang, 2016). The current debate centers on whether English-only mandates undermine both student outcomes and teachers' abilities to support linguistic diversity. In contrast, many policies in European Union member states promote and protect bilingualism, plurilingualism, and linguistic diversity (Modiano, 2023). Cognitive benefits of bilingualism are well documented (Bratož et al., 2024; Castey Moreno & Paz-Albo Prieto, 2020), yet ESL and bilingual program teachers often face challenges that limit their support for diversity in the United States (Barros et al., 2021; Mahalingappa et al., 2022). Persistent confusion over the role of students' first languages in second-language acquisition complicates these challenges.

Approaches like translanguaging challenge English-only mandates by supporting students' full linguistic repertoires (Gatil, 2021; Vogel & García, 2017; Qureshi & Aljanadbah, 2022).

These pedagogical beliefs have gained more attention, in part, due to the recent shift in the Federal U.S. language policy. For the first time in U.S. history, on March 1, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14224, making English the official language of the United States (Moore, 2025). This policy rescinds prior Clinton administration policies that required agencies to provide programs and assistance for people with limited English proficiency (Moore, 2025). More importantly, this has broad implications for school district programs serving the growing number of multilingual learners who speak other languages, as variable language-learning policies and practices pose a variety of barriers to learning English (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022; Padilla, 1991; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015).

English-only policies can have lasting impacts on America's diverse communities and students (Beykont, 2002; Padilla, 1991). These policies may hurt English language learners' academic performance, make classroom teaching more difficult, and require changes in teacher training (Padilla, 1991). Even more concerning, English-only rules focus on short-term English acquisition skills and do not clearly show which program models support students' first languages more effectively (Beykont, 2002). Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2015) highlight the bigger picture, saying, "embracing immigrant children and cultivating their full potential is the education challenge of our generation" (p.13). Espinoza-Herold (2013) notes that states like Arizona, with strict English-only rules in public schools, have created an unhealthy imbalance in language learning emphasizing English acquisition at the expense of students' first language. These policies also limit teachers' professional judgment, constraining their autonomy and ability to use proven teaching methods (Espinoza-Herold, 2013).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 22 percent of people in the United States age 5 and over speak a language other than English at home (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022). This number has grown significantly, from 23.1 million people in 1980 (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022) to 67.8 million in 2019. This threefold growth rate has far outpaced the 47 percent increase of the overall U.S. population during the same period. These demographic shifts are reflected in K-12 classrooms. As a result, school districts across the country are experiencing more diversity (Espinoza-Herold, 2013; Ukpokodu, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). By 2050, it is expected that 66% of school-aged children in the United States will come from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Ukpokodu, 2011).

Given the current state of language policy in the United States, bilingual education and ESL programs face many challenges. These challenges include policies that can conflict with educators' knowledge of effective practices, especially those that recognize students' cultural and language strengths. This research explores the complex negotiations that occur when both bilingual and monolingual educators seek a balance among institutional language policies, their language awareness, and their professional understanding of effective teaching techniques. Russell et al. (2024) state that the real importance lies not in the policies themselves but in how initiatives are carried out in the classroom. More importantly, as teachers apply their understanding of policies, they need to implement practices that benefit multilingual students and enhance their classroom practices (Diaz-Rico, 2018).

### 1.2. Critical Language Awareness and Policy Sensemaking

The direct effects of Executive Order 14224, issued in 2025, are still unfolding and little research has examined how teachers working in bilingual and ESL classrooms interpret the policy, despite these professionals being positioned at the intersection of policy and practice. In this qualitative interpretive study, I draw together Critical Language Awareness (CLA) and Policy Sensemaking to create a functional framework for graduate-level teacher education. Rather than treating these as separate theories, I position them as essential tools for educators who are trying to navigate the real-world friction between shifting federal language policies and the core values that drive their teaching. This approach provides the pedagogical scaffolding teachers need to reconcile top-down mandates with their own equity-oriented classroom practices.

CLA is an approach that helps teachers confront their own biases and advocate for multilingual students, which is essential for their response to language policies and for developing their professional identities in the context of their schools' specific demands (Mahalingappa et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2024). When paired as a framework with translanguaging, CLA enables educators to develop a more nuanced understanding of how language use is connected to power and politics (Zhang-Wu & Tian, 2023).

Obeso (2026) argues that a policy sensemaking approach enables educators to critically reflect on and

derive meaning from the policy messages they receive, integrating them into their daily work. Obeso (2026) describes a framework that is nested in three layers: institutional, program, and personal, through which educators can negotiate meaning with policies across these different spaces to develop their professional identities or selfhood. Educators build on their prior experiences, allowing them to evolve their stance at each level of understanding.

Both Obeso's policy sensemaking framework and the concept of Critical Language Awareness serve as vehicles to foster a teacher's professional vision or selfhood. A goal for this research is to identify the tensions and conflicts that arise for teachers as equity becomes an unavoidable part of daily work with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2017; Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2022; Ortiz et al., 2022). This study is guided by two research questions: (1) How do teachers with monolingual or bilingual linguistic backgrounds enrolled in a graduate ESL/bilingual endorsement course make sense of the 2025 official-English designation through their language autobiographies, journal reflections, and group dialogues? (2) How does this sensemaking shape their professional selfhood and advocacy for multilingual learners, and does it reveal differences between monolingual and bilingual educators in how the policy reinforces or reshapes their existing beliefs?

### 1.3. U.S. and Institutional Context

To understand policy sensemaking in this study, it is essential to discuss the decentralized structure of the U.S. educational system. Since the 1980s and 1990s, Cohen et al. (2018) emphasize that the system has shifted toward federal and state policies that establish external frameworks for academic standards, assessments, and accountability, while instructional decisions are left to individual schools and teachers rather than being tightly managed from the top. Local educational agencies (LEAs) offer diverse school types and flexible pathways, including vocational training and honors programs. In European systems, schools were more centralized, structured, and tracked specific paths in both vocations and academics (Cohen et al., 2018).

The participants were enrolled in the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) Alternate Route program in the Northeastern United States. Specifically, the university offers a state-endorsed track in ESL and Bilingual Education. The Stockton Master of Arts in Education (MAED) Program helps certified professionals become master teachers by offering 100% online coursework leading to an array of graduate-level instructional and educational services endorsements. The coursework leads to a New Jersey Department of Education endorsement in ESL and/or Bilingual/Bicultural for eligible candidates.

## 2. Methodology

This study used a qualitative interpretive design (Billups, 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) to answer the research questions above by documenting how teachers with monolingual or bilingual linguistic backgrounds made sense of the 2025 official-English designation (Executive Order 14224) through their language autobiographies, journal reflections, and group dialogues, and how this sensemaking shaped their professional selfhood and advocacy for multilingual learners.

### 2.1. Participants

Participants were eight graduate students enrolled in one of two required courses within a state-approved ESL/Bilingual Education endorsement program: either a course on current issues in language policy and bilingual education or a course on methods of teaching ESL/bilingual education. All participants were in-service teachers currently employed in K-12 classrooms while pursuing an ESL/Bilingual Education endorsement. Participation in the study was completely voluntary, and signed consent was required. Of the 30 students enrolled across both sections, eight consented to participate in the research component, while all students completed the course activities regardless of consent status. Participants' linguistic backgrounds were self-identified through their language autobiographies: seven identified as monolingual English speakers and one as bilingual or multilingual. Participants had teaching experience across a range of grade levels and reported prior experience working with bilingual students and English Language Learners (ELLs).

### 2.2. Course Context

The methods course examined the historical foundations and current research related to ESL and bilingual instructional methodologies. The current issues course focused on the history of language diversity in the education of school-aged students, the political factors influencing English language and bilingual education, standards and assessment practices, and the evolving role of ESL professionals. Both courses were delivered

fully online and included required synchronous discussion sessions and small-group collaborative work.

### 2.3. Positionality and Ethical Considerations

Following the framework laid out by Herr and Anderson (2014), in which researchers act as reflective practitioners engaging in an ongoing process of examining and improving their own teaching practices, I occupy a dual role that shapes this research in important ways. My goal is to improve teacher education programs in which I serve and to ensure I remain relevant to changing times. As the daughter of immigrants, I grew up valuing the unique contributions that language and bilingualism can make to education.

As a former reading specialist, I used an asset-based pedagogical approach in my work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. My own stance toward the 2025 official-English designation has guided my approach to teaching in that I explicitly work to honor linguistic diversity. I recognize that this perspective may shape how I interpret participants' reflections, particularly in identifying patterns related to advocacy and professional agency. To manage this influence, I maintained reflexive memos throughout the coding process and triangulated across all three data sources as detailed below.

### 2.4. Trustworthiness

This study established trustworthiness through three primary strategies. Shenton (2004) explains that trustworthiness is not established through a single method. Instead, researchers can use strategies such as data triangulation, detailed and thick descriptions, and reflexive memos, which ensure that final findings emerge genuinely from the participants' experiences and perspectives rather than the researcher's assumptions.

First, triangulation was achieved by comparing multiple teachers' perspectives through language autobiographies, journal reflections, and small-group dialogue transcripts. Second, rich descriptions, or contextually rich vignettes, were used to represent and preserve teachers' own words, experiences, and perspectives, accurately reflecting their lived experiences. Third, reflexive memos were kept throughout the coding process to track and document my decisions, remain continuously aware of my own assumptions, and consider my role as both instructor and researcher.

### 2.5. Data Collection

Reflective practice tools used in both courses included language autobiographies to capture teachers' linguistic histories, baseline beliefs, and evolving sensemaking throughout the 15-week course semester. While both courses required six journal reflection assignments and four small-group discussion activities as part of regular coursework, only the assignments titled Journal Reflection #2 and Small-Group Discussion #3, both of which directly addressed participants' sensemaking of Executive Order 14224, were designated as data sources for this study, as specified in the IRB-approved protocol.

Across the two courses, the eight participants who consented to the research component were grouped together for the Phase III small-group discussion activity.

**Table 1.** Overview of Qualitative Data Sources and Timeline

| Data Source | Quantity | Approx. Length | Timing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Language Autobiographies | 8 (1 per participant) | Minimum 500 words | Weeks 1 - 2, Phase I |
| Journal Reflection # 2 | 1 per participant (8 total) | Minimum of 750 words | Weeks 5 - 6, Phase II |
| Small Group Discussion #3 Transcripts | 3 transcripts (1 transcript per group) | 50–55-minute Zoom recordings | Weeks 10 - 11, Phase III |

### 2.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study employed a three-phase hybrid approach. Prior to formal coding, I read each participant's full data set, including language autobiographies, journal reflections, and small-group discussion transcripts, to gain a comprehensive understanding of their experiences before beginning analysis. In the first phase, I began with open inductive coding applied to participants' language autobiographies to develop individual vignettes and identify emergent themes related to participants' linguistic histories and educational values.

Miles et al. (2014) explain that "vignettes serve as a focused description of a series of events taken to be representative or typical" and that "evocatively written vignettes can be a useful corrective when your data

coded, displayed, and pondered on somehow lack meaning and contextual richness" (p. 166).

These themes were used to explore and discover teachers' perspectives and experiences. Developing these vignettes allowed me to honor each teacher's unique story and create a foundation for understanding how participants see themselves professionally.

Language autobiographies are defined as "written reflections about meaningful moments in their own experiences of learning, using, and engaging in language(s)" (Bacon, 2018, p. 5). They serve as a powerful tool in qualitative research, highlighting how individual lived experiences relate to broader educational policies (Bacon, 2018; Shin & Jang, 2023). Within this study, these narratives were used to emphasize the perceived practicality or real-world constraints of policy implementation (Bacon, 2018). To elicit these reflections, participants were prompted to provide a comprehensive language autobiography addressing their linguistic identity, professional teaching history, and specific experiences with bilingual or English Language Learner (ELL) populations. Crucially, the assignment required educators to reflect on the potential impact of designating English as the official language of the United States on their classroom practice.

In the second phase, deductive coding was applied to the participants' Journal Reflection #2. Using Obeso's (2026) Policy Sensemaking framework, journal entries were categorized according to vertical, horizontal, and contained juxtapositions. Finally, in the third phase, the same deductive framework was applied to the Small Group Discussion #3 using the established patterns to identify patterns of collective sense-making.

This approach enabled a thorough examination of how participants leveraged the course's pedagogical scaffolding to navigate the tension between their internal values and the 2025 federal language mandate. These categories have been adapted into three pedagogical navigation lenses. Drawing on Obeso's (2026) logic of juxtapositions, the terms Policy Balancing, Bridging Life-Worlds, and Reality Checking are used to more accurately capture the developing sociocultural consciousness and advocate-oriented nature of the sensemaking observed in this graduate course.

# 3. Findings

This section presents findings from the language autobiographies, journal reflections, and small-group discussions. First, initial inductive coding of the language autobiographies enabled the development of vignettes and individual profiles, presented as snapshots of each participant's background and teaching context, and surfaced thematic patterns in how participants made sense of the official-English designation, with particular attention to differences between monolingual and bilingual backgrounds. Second, analysis of journal reflections traces participants' individual sensemaking as they progressed through the course, including their movement toward professional agency. Finally, collective sensemaking analyzes how participants negotiated meaning together during small-group discussions.

## 3.1. Profiles in Selfhood

### 3.1.1. Joyce

Joyce's upbringing was defined by the "Great American Melting Pot" ideal, raised in a monolingual household within a community where English was the default. She acknowledges that this gave her an "easy" path; college applications and employment opportunities were never gatekept by a language barrier. Joyce currently works as a World History teacher, and she treats her classroom as a daily celebration of global cultures.

Regarding the new executive order declaring English as the official language, along with the dismantling of the federal Department of Education, she has concerns about what this means for immigrant students and their families, and for their ability to access ELL services. Current political shifts worry her as she believes these changes are xenophobic and will take away valuable resources from those who need them most.

Joyce remains deeply committed to serving multilingual learners, and her dedication to supporting her students, regardless of their backgrounds, is unwavering. She believes that it is within her capacity to create positive change for her students and their families. Ultimately, Joyce's account captures a similar "melting pot" ideal shared by many of her monolingual participants: the belief that everyone can blend together. Yet, in confronting classroom realities, she acknowledges the significant challenges this ideal presents in practice.

### 3.1.2. Amelia

Amelia considers herself monolingual but has a strong desire to be bilingual. She began her ESL career

working in a piloted bilingual kindergarten program. Amelia shares that some of her colleagues believe ESL students "know nothing, can't do anything, and are not able to say anything or do any work." This frustrates her because this mindset assumes that the student is not "smart" or capable of success. She explains that her Spanish-speaking students and their families feel compelled to learn English in order to be successful. Amelia believes she needs to improve her Spanish language skills in order to move ahead in her career and that knowing only English has negatively impacted her professional growth. If she were bilingual, Amelia believes that more opportunities would become available.

Amelia believes that declaring English as the official language will impact ESL and bilingual programming. While she wants to believe that this mandate is intended to support the economy and business, it saddens her to think that it could also limit the resources available to students. As English has been designated as the official language, she believes that educators must do everything possible to ensure that English learners are supported and given access to high-quality instruction. Overall, Amelia shares a belief common among the other monolingual participants that her lack of bilingualism represents a professional weakness rather than a personal characteristic.

#### 3.1.3. Dawn

Dawn describes herself as a monolingual person of color. She grew up in an urban community, and her experiences learning language shaped her belief that language learning should go beyond memorization and formal patterns and focus instead on meaningful interactions and conversations. Building connections and relationships with students is at the core of her instructional practices. She grew up thinking that a lack of language is a barrier to success. Dawn also sees active engagement as an area for improvement, as low student engagement leads to less practice and ultimately limits mastery of complex ELA skills. More importantly, Dawn's evolving sense of professional responsibility regarding equity, fairness, and accessibility mirrors a broader shift across the participant profiles.

#### 3.1.4. Claire

Claire has always worked in schools that serve multilingual learners and students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Coming from a monolingual family, she explored both French and Spanish in high school. She has always enjoyed learning languages, and her family emphasized that she should perform as well in foreign language classes as she did in her other content classes.

As an ESL teacher, Claire has noticed that some of their other teachers are reluctant to modify assignments or adapt instruction for her students. Some teachers assume their students are not ready and advocate removing them from general education classes and placing them instead in bilingual content classes. Claire noted that some of her students have expressed that they have faced racial bias from some teachers, and the students believe that these teachers have limited their opportunities for equitable experiences.

Through her work and with the insight she gained from her students, Claire knows firsthand how difficult learning a new language can be. While it can be a daunting task, students who are open to learning and are provided a safe environment where mistakes are not only accepted but encouraged can thrive and build confidence in their abilities. Crucially, even as Claire's reflection critiques the unfair treatment of her students by some colleagues, she emphasizes that this inequity existed prior to, and is distinct from, the government policy currently being studied.

#### 3.1.5. Arturo

Arturo shared that at age 37, he felt his parents had coerced him into moving to the United States. He brought with him a lifetime of habits, values, and ways of thinking shaped by the French and Creole languages and cultures. Because of that, adjusting to life in the U.S. was not just about learning to speak English. He explains that "becoming Americanized" involves more than simply learning English; it requires adopting new cultural habits and ways of thinking. When speaking in English, he felt intimidated and confused because everything was unfamiliar to him.

Arturo also observed that social interactions in the United States tend to be more emotionally reserved and practical. People often avoid overt displays of emotion, deep emotional bonding in everyday interactions, or heavy sentimentality, especially in public or professional settings. At times, he found himself in opposition to these beliefs because of his French mindset, and he perceived Americans as blunt or even rude compared to the more polite and less formal behavior he was accustomed to.

Because of these experiences, Arturo emphasizes the importance of teaching and interacting in ways that account for different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Although learning English was difficult, he believes the rewards far outweigh the struggle. Learning a new language and culture helps people understand one another more deeply, express themselves more fully, and recognize that, despite differences, we all share a common humanity. In contrast to the monolingual profiles, Arturo, who grew up bilingual and as an immigrant, viewed language as central to his identity and to how he navigates between cultures. For him, advocacy meant shifting instruction to treat students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds as a resource for engagement rather than an obstacle to success.

This difference illustrates how teachers' own linguistic backgrounds shape the form their advocacy takes. More importantly, Arturo does not address professional competence in the same way as the monolingual participants did about bilingualism. Rather, his struggle is not a personal one, but a cultural one. His struggle and initial opposition to American norms look different, but it is nonetheless a shift from personal uncertainty toward a more assertive professional advocacy.

#### 3.1.6. Lucia

Lucia explains that she had always known only one language: English. Their biggest challenge in teaching is not understanding what students are saying, especially when other students have reported inappropriate remarks that have been made. Students sometimes need to rely on other students to explain what was said or try to guess from words and phrases they have picked up over time, because of the language barriers. Lucia finds this situation to be both difficult and frustrating.

She took French throughout high school but began to struggle toward the end of the course, and she is no longer able to recall much of what she learned. In college, she decided to try American Sign Language (ASL) for a change and loved the experience. She goes on to express her belief that the United States was intended to be a melting pot of cultures, but unfortunately, it isn't always a place of acceptance. She recognizes that this can make certain people feel like they do not belong, especially in a classroom setting. Lucia also notes that in her school district, many students enter already speaking more than one language. She views bilingualism as a strength and a "superpower". She wants to be a positive role model for her students by supporting them and showing respect for their experiences. She hopes to eventually learn another language herself, to better connect with her students and show that their language and culture are valuable. Lucia's view of bilingualism as a "superpower" reflects a broader trend in the study toward supporting and advocating for multilingualism.

#### 3.1.7. Delia

Delia states that her language identity is monolingual, with English as her only language. In her classroom, she faces daily challenges related to languages spoken by students and their families that she does not speak. Although her school has support in place to facilitate communication between families and teachers who do not share a common language, she feels that these supports are not the same as being able to communicate directly, and she wishes she had taken Spanish more seriously in grade school.

Delia notes that some people claim they are "good" at a language yet may not actually know any of the spoken language. She explains that she is always seeking opportunities to learn more about how to teach English language learners and multilingual learners effectively. Delia believes her school treats the different languages spoken by students with great respect and honor.

She also explains that some teachers make assumptions about students' intelligence based on their English proficiency, particularly how well a student can speak the language. While these assumptions are unhelpful, teachers must recognize that fluency involves more than speaking; students must also be able to listen to and comprehend the language in order to use it as a functional skill. Delia's experience reflects another pattern observed among other monolingual participants, who shared that speaking only English had made it harder to connect directly with some students and families.

#### 3.1.8. Nina

Nina identifies as a monolingual individual. She grew up speaking only English and was not really around people who spoke other languages. Nina's background makes her especially aware of how extraordinarily difficult the experience of English Learner students can be. These students are learning a new language while simultaneously learning all of their other school subjects in that same language, all while navigating the emotional highs and lows of adolescence.

An experience that deeply shaped Nina's perspective was working with bilingual high school students on their college application personal statements. She worked as an English teacher at a charter school for many years, and themes of language learning, migration, and immigration often appeared in the essays written by her students.

Students wrote about seeing snow for the first time, the memory of the plane ride that brought them to a new life or promises made and broken about what that new life or home would look like. Most frequently, they wrote about how isolating those first years were. They described feeling shunned or rejected by classmates who spoke English at school, while also being judged for only speaking Spanish. They remembered teachers who were cruel, treated them like a burden, or simply ignored them. Some recalled their parents or grandparents being treated as less than in grocery stores or malls for speaking Spanish in public or struggling to understand native English speakers.

Nina does not know of any monolingual English speakers like herself whose lives would be improved by a presidential declaration making English the official language of the United States. She can, however, think of many ways it could make life harder for people living in the country who are not fluent in English. She writes explicitly that "this so-called declaration in the name of unity and national identity seems like it will just make people feel additional shame or exclusion for not having fluency in English." She believes it would embolden the "this is America, speak English!" types who mocked her students and their parents in grocery stores.

Such a declaration also ignores the reality that the United States is home to many native-born Americans who do not consider English their native language. Nina argues that if more people with her skill set and experience worked in public education, we would all be better off. Schools would have stronger communication between families and teachers through more multilingual staff. In addition, when colleagues regularly step in to help translate, students see the value of bilingualism and how these skills are useful and respected. Underlying these views is Nina's empathy for her English learners, deeply rooted in her own language-learning struggles and echoing a pattern observed in other monolingual profiles.

Across these eight profiles, notable themes emerged regarding how participants' monolingual, bilingual, or immigrant backgrounds have shaped how linguistic competence affects their professional practice. Secondly, and more profoundly, participants reacted against systemic and institutional inequity, a separate critique from the federal Executive Order. The following sections discuss these patterns across the data.

### 3.2. Identity-Centered Sensemaking

The language autobiographies provided insight into their initial reactions to the recent executive order designating English as the official language. When addressing this specific prompt, the analysis captured both the obvious concerns and the deeper, less visible issues that might arise. Across Language Autobiographies, a prominent theme that emerged among monolingual participants was their inability to speak another language. They identify the lack of bilingualism both as a barrier and a professional handicap. Amelia, Delia, and Lucia expressed that being bilingual would have opened more professional doors for them, and it was clearly a skill they wished to possess.

Collectively, these reflections reveal how language shaped not only their professional identities but also their broader beliefs about belonging. The concept of a "melting pot" was discussed by both Joyce and Lucia as an ideal they had grown up with, the belief that the United States was a place where people from diverse backgrounds could find belonging. They described a shift in this thinking, noting that their classrooms and schools were not always spaces of acceptance. While these individual journeys highlight the personal desire to learn English, they also underscore the broader classroom challenges faced by English Language Learners. Focusing on the theme of language acquisition challenges, teachers reflected on their growing understanding of the obstacles students encounter and the support they need. Participants described the obstacles both students and teachers encounter in developing English proficiency, including biases from teachers who may underestimate the capabilities of students based solely on their English proficiency.

Across these accounts, monolingual participants consistently positioned their own linguistic background as a limitation rather than a personal detail. Arturo's profile offers a contrasting case. As the study's only self-identified bilingual immigrant participant, he steered away from framing language as a deficit, instead describing his own experience and his students' language learning as an ongoing process of "becoming American," a cultural negotiation rather than an academic task alone. Because this bilingual-immigrant perspective is represented by a single participant, it is best understood as one distinct sensemaking orientation rather than a pattern shared broadly across monolingual and bilingual educators.

### 3.3. Journal Reflections

Consistent with Bowen's (2009) framework for document analysis, reflective journals were analyzed to "track change and development" in participants' perspectives and to allow individuals to structure and record their learning paths as they unfolded. In addition, transcripts from small-group discussions provided insight into the dialogic negotiation of policy and practice. Additionally, the journal reflections in this study engaged participants with current scholarship related to linguistic diversity and with approaches that recognize students' strengths, helping them to distinguish between asset-based and deficit-based perspectives when working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students.

The assignment also invited teachers to explore their own language histories and consider how these experiences relate to their students' cultural and linguistic resources. As part of the wider sensemaking process, the study further analyzed how participants interpreted the concept of funds of "knowledging" (as developed by McConnochie & González, 2023; and Moll et al., 2006). Through the lenses of Policy Balancing, Bridging Life-Worlds, and Reality Checking, I assess participants' professional growth and document the development of their sociocultural awareness. Together, these categories clarify the processes underlying their sensemaking and reveal deliberate shifts in response to restrictive language policies.

### 3.4. Individual Sensemaking: Policy Balancing, Reality Checking, and Bridging Life-Worlds

The following sections illustrate how teachers used their journal reflections to interpret their personal backgrounds, connect course readings with local school realities, and evaluate the relationship between policy, practice, and professional responsibility. Students use their journal reflections as a tool to shape their understanding of larger systemic policy in relation to research-based practices, while also weighing their professional expertise within it. Subsequently, teachers may begin to apply a reality check on policy practices by analyzing institutional mandates to their local programs and their intended classroom outcomes. Above all, the participants were able to find ways to bridge their own lifeworlds by connecting their personal histories and their professional roles as teachers to their work with their own students.

Amongst the participants, the emphasis was on the gap between the most direct methods for implementing English-only policy goals and prior pedagogies based upon evidence-based research. Nina, for instance, analyzed policy history in her district and acknowledged the existence of a sizable gap. She points out that some have viewed bilingualism as a new threat to her community. She highlights that there have been historical efforts to expand bilingual education programs, followed by attempts to reduce the expenditures on such programs, which were often driven by views on immigration and language diversity of the governing party. Nina challenges this common belief that English-only programs result in better outcomes and do not necessarily prevent higher dropout rates and lower academic performance. She defines her professional identity as an expert who values research-based best practices.

Other participants apply the same critical lens within their own local contexts, illustrating how Reality Checks take shape in practice. Through a policy balance lens, Joyce notes that her district's decision not to offer a program does not align with the "thriving multilingual reality" she observes daily. She explains that bilingualism is often perceived by some as hindering immigrants' assimilation, despite research consistently contradicting this view. On the other hand, both Lucia and Amelia emphasized a social-emotional Reality Check, revealing how the feelings and motivations of CLD (culturally and linguistically diverse) students directly impact their academic success.

However, these Reality Checks are not only related to policy, as they also relate to a more personal space. Lucia and Delia both value their connections with students and recognize the importance of a strength-based approach to their teaching. Lucia describes herself as a Culturally Responsive Educator, meaning that she is a white educator who recognizes the need to reflect on her own experiences while validating the knowledge her students bring to the classroom. Delia emphasizes that district tools are insufficient without teachers actively documenting and using student assets to create a safe, shared space where the perspectives of CLD students are valued. She also recognizes the risk of unintentionally marginalizing the students she works with, explaining that "I have five students who speak English at school and Spanish at home. Most want to improve their English, so it becomes the dominant language in the classroom."

Reality Checks serve as a mechanism for sense-making and for identifying discrepancies between policy goals and actual results, helping teachers to recognize and protect their professional identity. For example, by using the Reality Check lens, Joyce highlights that her district's decision not to offer a program is misaligned with the thriving multilingual reality she observes daily. Similarly, Nina raises concerns about inequity in the

system, notably how language support services are allocated based on language density rather than individual need. In her district, students who speak commonly represented languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese, or Haitian Creole, typically receive high-intensity support, while students who speak less commonly represented languages, such as Tagalog, may receive fewer services unless they are placed in a particularly supportive classroom. Nina argues that a more equitable system should consider factors such as linguistic distance from English or whether students are refugees who have experienced trauma or interrupted schooling.

Arturo sees a Reality Check in the fact that his district also allocates resources in what he believes is an inequitable manner. He sees that the goal of resources in his district is driven by a focus on improving standardized test scores, primarily to secure government funding. Arturo believes that such funding would be better spent genuinely supporting students' learning, since "training them just to do well on tests is not effective for their education."

Alternatively, Amelia's reflections illustrate Bridging Life-Worlds by highlighting how her students navigate two different worlds and distinct lives when they travel back to their home countries. She recognizes the importance of family and the "hard work" instilled in her students, often seeing the reality of their overworked parents and financial struggles. For Amelia, this bridge is formed by connecting her own drive for educational achievement with her students' exposure to physical labor. She believes that despite the different ways it is experienced, a shared understanding of the value of hard work allows her and her students to relate to each other, validating their lived experiences across cultural boundaries.

In her reflections, Joyce illustrates the concept of Bridging Life-Worlds by weighing institutional academic standards against her students' cultural heritage. She shares that while family traditions may not always be seen as supporting academic success, they remain crucial for students' development as members of their religious and community groups. Joyce emphasizes that students should take pride in their family practices and preserve these important traditions even amid the demands of school and work.

Arturo illustrates his understanding of Bridging Life-Worlds by acknowledging his Haitian background and emphasizing the importance of incorporating personal and community stories into the curriculum. He views this as an essential means of engaging students in critical thinking and self-awareness. For Arturo, learners are not bound by rigid, pre-designed curricula; instead, he believes they are active participants who must connect with their own experiences and prior knowledge.

Taking a more personal approach, Delia identified a cultural routine that shaped her knowledge and skills from childhood: the family mealtime. She described growing up in a family that sat down together to talk about their workdays and concerns, which taught her the importance of communication. By bridging life-worlds, she connects her upbringing to her teaching, instilling that same value in her students and encouraging them to bring their own family stories into the classroom.

In another instance, Lucia reflects on her own privileged background, including vacations to Disney World, which is very different from her students' lived experiences. She recognizes that many of her students would not have the resources or opportunities to enjoy this type of vacation. To bridge these lifeworld gaps, Lucia provides experiences that help students learn about the struggles of a particular culture in ways that allow them to relate the lessons to their own lives and experiences.

Taken together, these reflections reveal a sequence of sensemaking in which language autobiographies prompted participants to name a professional limitation, while later journal reflections revealed a slightly more assertive form of judgment. This appears in Nina's challenge to English-only programs, in Joyce's recognition of misalignment between district policy and classroom realities, and in Delia's account of her lack of institutional tools. Together, these shifts suggest a transition within the participants from feelings of uncertainty or inadequacy toward stronger forms of professional agency.

### 3.5. Collective Sensemaking

In the final round of deductive analysis, small group transcripts were used to develop a collective understanding of how policies relate to classroom practice. Coburn (2005) emphasizes that policy sensemaking is not just an individual process but a socially constructed one. Therefore, as part of their assignment, teachers prepared for their group meetings by answering guided prompts about the effectiveness of different English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education (ESL/BE) program models based on the course readings and assignments. They then participated in small-group discussions where they shared their personal experiences and discussed how and whether these policies influence their classroom instruction. During the discussion,

they were asked to respond to the following questions: 1) Which ESL/BE program model (e.g., pull-out ESL, dual-language immersion, transitional bilingual) do you think is most effective for English Language Learners (ELLs)? 2) What are the pros and cons of widely used program models for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students?

An analysis of these shared accounts can examine how teachers interpret and justify program models within the context of both historical and current mandates and how they evaluate the effectiveness of these models for culturally and linguistically diverse students. As a whole, participants discussed issues related to teacher agency, student identity, emotional well-being, and societal views.

A pattern across the data suggests that a graduate course can serve as a space in which educators actively reinterpret how language, policy, and their own professional roles intersect, moving toward a more advocacy-oriented professional stance. We see this directly when monolingual teachers, who viewed speaking only English as a limitation, show in their later reflections a movement from expressions of uncertainty or inadequacy toward more assertive forms of professional agency and advocacy over the course of the semester.

#### 3.5.1. Teacher Identity and Accountability

The group collectively discussed teacher identity and accountability in various ways, often validating each other's perspectives. Dawn discussed how English-only program models give some teachers a "pass" to adopt a "fixed mindset" that discourages them from improving their instructional approaches to support CLD students. She says, "I feel like the English-only model gives the teacher a pass for not meeting their students' needs. Sometimes they think, 'Can I teach this kid? I really can't reach this kid, because he doesn't know English.'" She goes on to say that some teachers see the language barrier as an excuse to avoid being flexible or taking extra accountability to work with a student.

Nina and Joyce described a similar understanding of accountability, comparing it to conducting hospital "triage." As content-area teachers, they explained, you may be stitching the work together with minimal support while being told to find a way to make it work. The sense of panic is overwhelming because you understand how challenging it is and how much effort it will take, but over time, you get used to it because it happens year after year. Dawn explains that ultimately, the teacher's role is to advocate for their students and their families by helping them access resources, supporting them in school systems, and speaking up when families cannot.

#### 3.5.2. Student Well-Being

Amelia explains to the group that the more she thinks about the English-only policy, the more it seems to be detrimental to students' identity and well-being, because they feel forced to learn English. She also explains that students don't feel supported enough to use their first language. Lucía goes on to contrast this concept of losing identity with building inclusive education, reflecting on a population she worked with before working with deaf children. She notes that this is harmful because "culturally, it's really bad for their identities, like we were talking about… Kids want to go to a school where they feel safe." Lucía acknowledges the need to build mutual respect so that students can manage the "psychological stuff" including, the impact of the "rough life outside of school" that many face. Arturo adds that teachers have a responsibility to nurture students and understand the realities they face beyond the school walls.

Additionally, Nina compares the historical heritage language mandates related to the historical residential school education of Native American children, where language and identity were systemically stripped away. She believes bilingual programs work to repair harm and prevent the loss of language for future generations. She explains, "Having a system that can give it back to people, and even maybe share it with more people." Similarly, Dawn believes that her classroom is welcoming and comfortable. She intentionally creates an environment where students feel safe, because she believes it's important to the well-being of her students and fosters positive energy between herself and her students.

#### 3.5.3. American Values

Finally, the group discussed their overall understanding of how the English-only paradigm is promoted in our educational system. Amelia uses the term "hamster wheel" to describe her perspective, pointing out the economic value of individuals who speak and learn English. She explains that Americans value people who can contribute to the workforce, earn money, and support the overall economy. Amelia shares "it helps newcomers engage in their communities, participate in national traditions, and give back to our society." Nina contributes to this understanding by sharing that English-only policies tend to be framed as a more unifying American value even though it may actually create the opposite. Ultimately, both Joyce and Nina question the idea of a national

identity as more of an assimilationist approach. Joyce shares that “What does ‘unified’ mean, and for whom? Do people who only speak English feel more unified, or does it include everyone?” Arturo goes a step further, arguing that English-only policies discourage students from learning because they don’t feel connected to the subject matter when their native language is not valued.

# 4. Discussion

This study explored policy sensemaking in response to the recent executive order designating English as the official language of the United States. The findings extend existing research on policy sensemaking (Obeso, 2026) and Critical Language Awareness by demonstrating that a graduate teacher education course can function as a structured space for educators to actively reinterpret how language, policy, and their own professional roles intersect, moving toward a more advocacy-oriented professional stance.

### 4.1. Sensemaking of the Official-English Designation

To address the first research question, the triangulated findings suggest that participants’ sensemaking of the 2025 official-English designation was shaped by their perceived professional efficacy, personal and prior experiences, linguistic backgrounds, and existing knowledge of multilingual education. Teachers questioned their ability and confidence, reflecting a primary concern about whether they could effectively support culturally and linguistically diverse students in the classroom in light of policy dictates that are not aligned with previous teaching models. This process often mirrored their students’ own perceptions in the classroom of what they could or could not do. This form of resistance was shaped by the interplay of how teachers’ sense of self and professional identities are recognized and interpreted by others (Andrews et al., 2022; Ashworth, 2016). Participants reflected on their understanding of language policy and described how it shaped their instructional decisions, professional identities, and advocacy.

### 4.2. Professional Selfhood

The second research question how does this sensemaking shape educators' professional selfhood and advocacy for multilingual learners, and does it reveal differences between monolingual and bilingual educators in how the policy reinforces or reshapes their existing beliefs, can be addressed by analyzing how educators balance policy requirements with the practical realities of their classrooms. Teachers’ actions were often strategic, evolving as they moved from understanding the policy implications to identifying opportunities to effectively support multilingual learners. Critical Language Awareness was used as a framework to uncover the multilingual realities that inform educators’ work with culturally and linguistically diverse students (García, 2017; Mahalingappa et al., 2022). As teachers progressed through the course, they developed greater confidence, which they used to articulate their personal beliefs more effectively to their peers.

# 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. A Transitional U.S. Environment

The professional environment prior to the designation of English as the official language was never legally mandated. This hands-off policy treated English proficiency as a goal but was not restrictive or strictly enforced (Nieto, 2009; Spolsky, 2011; Wang, 2016). However, Wang (2016) noted that "teaching approaches are often determined by political rather than pedagogical factors” (p.37). More importantly, research has shown clear academic outcomes and benefits of developing bilingualism (Ferjan Ramírez & Kuhl, 2017; García & Kleifgen, 2010; Oshchepkova et al., 2023).

### 5.2. The Art of Teaching

This research has important implications for how we strategically design teacher preparation programs, particularly in the field of bilingual education and ESL instruction. These programs should not only provide a pedagogical foundation to help educators recognize effective instructional strategies but also support the development of their selfhoods as teachers. More importantly, their training must lay the groundwork for a sense of purpose and a calling to the work, especially in light of policies that are emphasized across multiple layers of federal, state, and local discourse, often in ways that contradict research- and asset-based approaches in the field of bilingual education.

Teaching is an artful craft. Some may argue that no amount of formal schooling can fully prepare someone for the realities of the classroom, and that true preparation comes only from stepping into the world of students

and engaging in daily practice. While experience is essential, teacher education still plays a critical role. It is within these programs that teachers begin shaping their professional selfhoods and understanding who they are in relation to their students and communities.

Developing teachers' selfhoods and bridging lifeworlds are especially important when there are shifts in the political climate. Teachers must cultivate a sense of self that allows them to reach across political ideologies and remain grounded in what they believe is right for students. This commitment is more than just sound instructional methods; it must grow from within teachers' own recognition of their beliefs, responsibilities, and moral purpose as educators.

**Maria Halkias, Ed.D.**, is an Assistant Professor in the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) program at Stockton University, where she specializes in the ESL and Bilingual Education tracks, including the MAED Alternate Route ESL/BE program. Her research explores the intersection of teacher professional identity and policy sensemaking. Dr. Halkias grounds her work in social justice advocacy, trauma-informed strategies, and narrative-based pedagogy to foster academic belonging.

Email: maria.halkias@stockton.edu

## References

Andrews, T., Hodge, N., & Redmore, N. (2022). The potential of the fractions of lifeworld for inclusive qualitative inquiry in the third space. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *26*(2), 143–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1642398

Ashworth, P. D. (2016). The lifeworld – enriching qualitative evidence. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 13*(*1), 20–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2015.1076917

Bacon, C. K. (2018). "It's not really my job": A mixed methods framework for language ideologies, monolingualism, and teaching emergent bilingual learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 71*(2), 172-187. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118783188

Barros, S., Domke, L. M., Symons, C., & Ponzio, C. (2021). Challenging monolingual ways of looking at multilingualism: Insights for curriculum development in teacher preparation. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *20*(4), 239–254. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1753196

Beykont, Z. F. (2002). English-only language policies in the United States. Linguapax. https://www.linguapax.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CMPL2002_T1_Beykont.pdf

Billups, F. D. (2021). *Qualitative data collection tools: Design, development, and applications*. Sage.

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2), 27-40. http://dx.doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Bratož, S., Štemberger, T., & Pirih, A. (2024). Slovenian children's perceptions of and attitudes towards foreign languages. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *21*(3), 1239–1256. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2022.2156520

Castey Moreno, M., & Paz-Albo Prieto, J. (2020). Bilingual cognitive and language development in the early years. *Ensayos: Revista de la Facultad de Educación de Albacete*, *35*(1), 151–161. https://doi.org/10.18239/ensayos.v35i1.2270

Coburn, C. E. (2005). Shaping teacher sensemaking: School leaders and the enactment of reading policy. *Educational policy*, *19*(3), 476 509. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904805276143

Cohen, D. K., Spillane, J. P., & Peurach, D. J. (2018). The Dilemmas of Educational Reform. *Educational Researcher*, *47*(3), 204-212. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17743488

Diaz-Rico, L. T. (2018). *The crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development handbook: A complete K-12 reference guide*. Allyn and Bacon.

Dietrich, S., & Hernandez, E. (2022, September). *Language use in the United States: 2019* (Report No. ACS-50). U.S. Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/acs/acs-50.html

Espinoza-Herold, M. (2013). The great wall of "English Only": Teacher perceptions of classroom ecology in Arizona's post proposition 203 era. *NABE Journal for Research and Practice*, *4*(1), 3-30. https://doi.org/10.1080/26390043.2013.12067766

Ferjan Ramírez, N., & Kuhl, P. K. (2017). Bilingual baby: Foreign language intervention in Madrid's infant education centers. *Mind, Brain, and Education*, *11*(3), 133–143. https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12144

García, O. (2017). Critical multilingual language awareness and teacher education. In J. Cenoz, D. Gorter, & S. May (Eds.), *Language awareness and multilingualism* (pp. 263–280). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02240-6_30

García, O., & Kleifgen, J. A. (2010). *Educating emergent bilinguals: Policies, programs, and practices for English language learners*. Teachers College Press.

Garrity, S., Aquino-Sterling, C. R., Van Liew, C., & Day, A. (2018). Beliefs about bilingualism, bilingual

education, and dual language development of early childhood preservice teachers raised in a Prop 227 environment. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *21*(2), 179-196. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1148113

Gatil, T. B. (2021). Translanguaging in multilingual English language teaching in the Philippines: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Language, Literature and Translation*, *4*(1), 52. https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.1.6

Gay, G. (2017). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Goldenberg, C., & Wagner, K. (2015). Bilingual education: Reviving an American tradition. *American Educator*, *39*(3), 28. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1076564

Grant, S. A. (1978). Language Policy in the United States. *Profession*, 32–42. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595294

Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin Press.

Herr, K., & Anderson, G. L. (2014). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2022). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. John Wiley & Sons.

Mahalingappa, L., Polat, N., & Meyer, C. K. (2022). Critical language awareness in teacher education: An experiment at the intersection of language, identity, and ideologies. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2160727

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

McConnochie, M., & González, E. M. (2023). Developing teacher critical language awareness through narrative (funds of) knowledging. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *22*(4), 308-322. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2023.2202585

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Modiano, M. (2023). The vicissitudes of bilingualism and plurilingualism in the European Union. *Journal of European Studies*, *53*(1), 53-69. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472441221141976

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (2006). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. In Funds of knowledge (pp. 71-87). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410613462

Moore, E. (2025, March 1). Trump signs executive order making English the official language of the U.S. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2025/03/01/trump-signs-executive-order-making-english-the-official-language-of-the-u-s

Nieto, D. (2009). A brief history of bilingual education in the United States. *Perspectives on Urban Education*, *6*(1), 61–72.

Obeso, O. E. (2026). Ideological clarity and educational language policy sensemaking. *Educational Policy*, *40*(4), 493–517. https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048251353478

Ortiz, A. A., Fránquiz, M. E., & Lara, G. P. (2022). Educational equity for emergent bilinguals: What's wrong with this picture? *Bilingual Research Journal, 45*(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2022.2101318

Oshchepkova, E. S., Kartushina, N. A., & Razmakhnina, K. O. (2023). Bilingualism and development of literacy in children: A systematic review. *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art*, 16(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.11621/pir.2023.0101

Qureshi, M. A., & Aljanadbah, A. (2022). Translanguaging and reading comprehension in a second language. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *16*(4), 247-257. https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2021.2009158

Padilla, A. M. (1991). English only vs. bilingual education: Ensuring a language-competent society. *Journal of Education, 173*(2), 38-51. https://doi.org/10.1177/002205749117300205

Russell, S. G., Fabo, C., Jones, V., & Colic, A. (2024). Language policies and ideologies for socialization and identity-building in U.S. schools: The case of newcomer and refugee students in Arizona and New York. Social Sciences, *13*(11), 601. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13110601

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, *22*(2), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201

Shin, H., & Jang, I. C. (2023). Language learning autobiographies, identity texts, and critical teacher education. *English Teaching*, *78*(1), 197–223. https://doi.org/10.15858/engtea.78.1.202303.197

Spolsky, B. (2011). Does the United States need a language policy? Center for Applied Linguistics. https://www.cal.org/resources/digest/digest_pdfs/does-the-us-needs-a-languagepolicy.pdf

Spolsky, B. (2021). Rethinking language policy. Edinburgh University Press.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9781474485487
Suárez-Orozco, M., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2015). Children of immigration. *Phi Delta Kappan, 97*(4), 8-14. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721715619911
Ukpokodu, O. (2011). Developing teachers' cultural competence: One teacher educator's practice of unpacking student culturelessness. *Action in Teacher Education, 33*(5-6), 432-454. https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2011.627033
Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of teacher education, 53*(1), 20-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053001003
Vogel, S., & García, O. (2017). Translanguaging. In G. W. Noblit & L. C. Moll (Eds.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.181
Wang, D. (2016). From English-only to multilingualism: English in the language policy of the United States. *International Journal of English Language Teaching, 3*(1), 32-41. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijelt.v3n1p32
Zhang-Wu, Q., & Tian, Z. (2023). Raising critical language awareness in a translanguaging-infused teacher education course: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *22*(4), 376-395. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2023.2202589

## Conflict of Interest

The author declares that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

*Copyright © 2026 Halkias. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution, or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution, or reproduction is permitted that does not comply with these terms.*

JLT Journal of Language Teaching

Peer-reviewed | Open Access | Google Scholar | MLA | Crossref | DOI

# Call for Papers

## Submit via https://jlt.ac/

Areas of Interest:

Language teaching intervention and experiments; Curriculum development; Language teacher education; Bilingual education; New technologies in language teaching; Testing, assessment, and evaluation; Educational psychology, and more.

We accept the following types of submission:

1. Research article: (6,000 to 8,000 words)
2. Review: (3,000 to 8,000 words)
3. Book review: (up to 3,000 words)
4. Features: (3,000 to 8,000 words)

Scan to submit your articles* & read more articles for free.

*Article Processing Charges Apply.

Contact: editor@jlt.ac

Pioneer Publications

ISSN (Online) 2770-4602