

Promising Yet Challenging: Ethnographic Insights On Head Start Teachers' Language Policy Negotiations In New Immigrant Settlements

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Author's Note

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Abstract

This is a comparative ethnography that focuses on Head Start programs and their educators in four New Immigrant Settlement areas in Pennsylvania, investigating Head Start educators' understanding and implementation of Head Start's language policy of 2007. The focal point is under this asset-based policy for multilingual children, how the mostly monolingual educators construct their language practices, how they turn the policy into their daily classroom practices, reflecting dialogical relationships they have had with surrounding facets, such as their language ideologies, backgrounds, training, organization, community, and children. Findings indicate gaps in understanding of policies and language practices among educators reflecting their language ideologies. In conclusion, the author encourages educators to be policymakers themselves and the author illustrates alternative approaches to currently established notions.

Keywords: Head Start / New Immigrant Settlements / Anthropology of Language Policy

Introduction

It was morning circle time in a Head Start classroom. Three and four-year-old children were sitting on a colorful round carpet, their legs and feet touching numbers and letters. In front of them, Ms. Ariel, the classroom teacher, led circle time with a big smile.

Ms. Ariel: Everybody, now it's time for the classroom rules; say it with me. "Quiet Voices, Listening Ears, Gentle Hands and Walking Feet."
Very good, y ahora en español, "Voces Silenciosas, Oídos Escuchando, Manos Suaves, Pies Para Caminar. Muy bien."

The children, whose skin colors ranged from café au lait to dark chocolate, followed Ms. Ariel's lead. I watched as they uttered the rules, expectations, and pledges adeptly in English and Spanish. The children's recitation was energetic. After the routine, Ms. Ariel took out a picture book about the fall. She showed pictures while reading the text and asked questions about the season. She did so by switching seamlessly between Spanish and English. This read-aloud was a typical linguistic practice in this classroom, led by Ms. Ariel and the assistant teacher, Ms. Erika.

The program I described is situated in a rural, historically White-dominated area of Pennsylvania. Census data indicates Pennsylvania is an overwhelmingly White state;

over 81% of the population claims European American ancestry (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020), and in rural and semi-rural areas, monolingual European American people are far more concentrated. However, some of these homogeneous areas have experienced massive influxes of immigrants since 2000, and now they are categorized as New Immigrant Settlements (NIS). The demographics of Ms. Ariel's classroom are a result of this new migration trend. Despite the overwhelming research evidence supporting bilingual preschool programs, rural areas are typically less studied (Schafft, 2016), let alone NIS. Consequently, the linguistic reality of young multilingual children who reside in rural areas and/or New Immigrant Settlements (NIS) and their teachers have been overlooked in various fields.

This article is drawn from a four-site comparative ethnographic study of Head Start policy and programs in NIS in Pennsylvania and investigates Head Start teachers' understanding of the federal language policy of Head Start and its implementation through teachers' language ideologies, focusing on the areas that had experienced a rapid increase in the Latin@ population.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Recently, the importance of appropriate and equitable education for immigrant children has been recognized globally. In the United States, although early childhood education (ECE) has also been recognized as a crucial facet of society, ECE for immigrant children still remains at the intersection of two fields: ECE and immigrant education.

There is hope in the form of a federal policy. In 2007, to correct this long-standing injustice, Head Start, the US's preeminent federal preschool program, enacted what would become the most comprehensive language policy in preschool history. The policy states:

1. For dual language learners, a program must recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths and implement research-based teaching practices that support their development.
2. For a preschool-age dual language learner, include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language; or
3. If staff do not speak the home language of all children in the learning environment, include steps to support the development of the home language for dual language learners such as having culturally and linguistically appropriate materials available and other evidence-based strategies.
(Head Start Program Performance Standards 45 CFR, Office of Head Start)

Equity-based language policies can result in increased outcomes, as shown in Axelrod's 2017 study in an urban context. My goal with this project is to understand if the policy brings out the same positive outcomes in areas where immigrants are a "new" phenomenon, such as in New Immigrant Settlements (e.g., Hamman, 2004; Litcher & Johnson, 2006; 2009; Litcher, 2012). No matter how well-written a policy is, if it is not understood and implemented in the expected manner, the policy would be meaningless and could be harmful to certain situations and populations. Three main research questions guide this study:

1. How do Head Start educators in four new immigrant settlement areas understand linguistically equitable education for multilingual children under the language policy of 2007?
2. How do policy implementation and bilingual education as a result of the policy look in four Head Start programs located in three areas? Are they similar or different? What causes those similarities and differences?

3. What discourses, pressures, and influences shape how educators in each program conceptualize their linguistic practices in educating multilingual children?

I sought the answers to these questions by observing teachers' and multilingual children's linguistic interactions in their daily lives and using applied ethnographic and comparative approaches to determine how teachers implemented classroom language policies informed by their own language ideologies.

Background Contexts New Immigrant Settlements (NIS)

NIS are areas that have experienced rapid demographic changes in the last few decades. Within 10 to 20 years, immigrant populations outnumbered the original populations in those areas. In one area, the Latin@ population increased from .5% to 67% within 20 years. Following the nationwide migration trend (Davis et al., 2022), most NIS in Pennsylvania are in rural, suburban, and nonmetropolitan areas. Native-born White residents in those areas tend to be less tolerant of immigrants, and they are less likely than their urban counterparts to view immigrants positively (Prins & Toso, 2012). They are assumed to be more reluctant to accept change in their local communities. These factors have caused tensions between newcomers and local people in these areas (e.g., social service, ESL programs, etc.) (Negi, 2019).

Bilingual Education Policy in the United States

In the United States, bilingual education policies have had a rocky road, reflecting the social atmosphere at various times. The US has implemented various bilingual education policies, from assimilation to asset-based, throughout its history, which exemplifies the challenges in establishing equitable educational environments for multilingual children. These concerns are intensified in ECE, which is historically underfunded, inequitable, and too often adopts Euro-centered, monolingual approaches. The data (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2017) shows that though ECE has more multilingual attention compared to elementary schools, the state implemented bilingual policies are limited to only five states: Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Texas, and Nevada. The tireless efforts to advocate for children and their teachers are needed more than ever in this shifting time.

Reflecting on the tradition of the bilingual education policy in the United States, the federal-level Head Start's language policy legislated in 2007, which responded to the rapid growth of Spanish-speaking DLL students in the programs, was groundbreaking. As a unique federally-funded ECE program, Head Start has the potential to guide the flow of other ECE linguistic policies in more equitable directions if the policy is implemented in an expected manner.

However, one of the critiques of the policy is the lack of articulation of concrete practices: The policy states educators should implement "research-based teaching practices," which can be confusing because there are various types of bilingual practices.

Types of Bi/multilingual Education Programs

Mackey (1970, Cited in Cenoz, 2013) categorized 250 types of multilingual programs. The categorization reflects educational, linguistic, and sociolinguistic factors affecting multilingual education. In the United States, there are roughly three types: monolingual form, weak form, and strong form. The monolingual form is based on the assimilation notion, and the purpose of this type of program is the mastering of English. It pays little attention to maintaining students' mother tongue. The weak type also aims at English

fluency, and they consider students' mother tongue as a tool to accomplish fluency. The last type, the strong form programs, aims at bilingualism as an outcome and focuses on maintaining students' mother tongue. Dual Language Bilingual Education programs, Immersion programs, and Two-way programs are examples of the strong form. Currently, many states implement a second, weak-form type of bilingual program, such as a transitional program. Garcia and her team (Garcia et al., 2018) propose the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy into a bilingual program, which is expected to advance a perspective toward bilingual education further. Among these various practices, the Head Start language policy text seems to imply Dual Language Bilingual Education practice.

Conceptual Frameworks Dialogism

Dialogism, according to Mikhail Bakhtin (1989), is not a systematic philosophy (Holquist, 1990). Rather, it is a way of looking at, thinking about, and ultimately, understanding human communicative actions. Bakhtin defines communicative actions such as conversations as phenomena that temporarily occur under the influence of numerous factors, such as people's thoughts, feelings, health conditions, power dynamics, weather, timing, etc. They are not merely exchanges of words but complex exchanges in time among humans. Dialogism functions as a backbone for this project, and it also indicates and supports how I looked at phenomena: I perceive language as "languaging." Namely, I perceive languages as active agencies in our society. Additionally, the methodology I use, ethnography, is quite dialogic. This method of inquiry is similar to Bakhtin's argument that dialogue happens as a result of people's complicated relationships.

Translanguaging

Translanguaging relies on a conceptualization of the usage of more than two languages as a dynamic semiotic system integrating various lexical, morphological, and grammatical linguistic features in addition to social practices and individual linguistic embodiment (Garcia & Kleyn, 2016). This is a theory that perceives bi/multilingualism positively (MacSwan, 2017), rejecting the deficit perspective toward people who speak English as their second or third language and accepting multilingual people's linguistic practices as they are.

Anthropology of Educational Policy Study

The anthropological study of educational policy implementation is an established inquiry field. Studies in this field focus on the educational community, such as a classroom, where the policy has been applied. Hamann and Vandeyar state that "what policy *is* cannot be understood apart from what policy *does*" (*Italics in original*), and policy "becomes constituted through its implementation" (2018, p.2).

Another tenet of anthropology in education policy implementation is its historical focus on educational equity. The field was established in 1954 in the aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* by anthropologists who believed that policies are directly related to power and regulation (Castagno & McCarty, 2018). Therefore, studying and grasping how the policy has been implemented for equitable practices is crucial.

In summary, using these theories as a framework, this project evaluates the education of young immigrant children in NIS, in which the children are prepared to attend English-only kindergarten programs while their language rights and multilingualism are respected and preserved.

Research Design Ethnography

In this project, ethnography served as both a theoretical framework and a method of data collection techniques. Ethnography focuses on determining the connections and relations that occur during cultural events or processes. Ethnographic practices are similar to dialogism in their approaches to examining and making sense of phenomena. Thus, Bakhtin's dialogism is embedded in the methodology and supports the current study in various aspects, including observations, interviews, and data analysis.

Video-cued Multivocal Ethnography

Among variations of ethnography, this study borrows from Video-cued multivocal ethnography. Joseph Tobin's work, *Preschool in Three Cultures* (1989), is the foundation of my understanding of this method. The uniqueness of this method is the usage of video footage as a cue for interviews, not as data to analyze. Tobin and his research team visited preschools in three countries, Japan, China, and the U.S., in 1981 and recorded a typical day in the classroom after initial observations. Then, they edited the video footage with the teachers of the classroom. The interview process started with the teachers in the video footage, asking reflective questions, such as "Can you help us understand what your intention was for this practice?" Then, the team expanded the circle of participants to include other teachers in the same school, administrators of the school, and teachers from other schools in the same country. Eventually, they brought the video footage to different countries to interview educators. The core data were interview data that emerged from watching the video footage. According to Tobin, participants establish dialogical relationships through the video footage across cultures.

In the current project, instead of conducting ethnographic studies equally at multiple sites, I focused on one site for the traditional ethnographic study and then brought the video footage from the main site to other sites for interviews. Using this version loses multi-directional communications, but it allows the conversation to expand. Colegrove (2019) stated that "the video-cued ethnography method's dialogic aspects allowed participants to explore their ideas and to share their experiences" (Colegrove, 2019, p.307).

Data Analysis Method Comparative Study

Among various comparative methods, the vertical case study (VCS) method, otherwise called the comparative case study (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006; 2009; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014; 2016; 2017), plays an essential role in educational policy studies. This method consists of three comparative points: vertical, horizontal, and transversal. The vertical axis shows how the policy is carried out and reaches classrooms. The horizontal axis lets us focus on each layer through which the policy is carried, and the transversal axis follows chronological changes. These three axes allow us to grasp the phenomenon within a complex context, which leads us to a holistic understanding of it.

Before applying the VCS analytic method, data was organized by the following themes: teachers' dialogues with students, personal beliefs, backgrounds, training, local culture, directors, colleagues, schools, and parents.

Positionality

Ethnography is a method that includes researchers' subjectivities, and naturally, this stance holds validity threats. To avoid reflecting my subjectivity too much, I clarified the sources and logic of the discussion. Additionally, I cross-checked the data sources at least

twice, relying on combinations of fieldnotes, interview transcripts, videos, classroom materials, unofficial conversations, and factual figures. Yet, my position as a multilingual, multicultural, minority, and critical researcher emerges as I reflect on the systemic factors that influence teachers' everyday implementation of policy in the classroom.

Method

Main Site: Heinzburgh, Pennsylvania

Heinzburgh is one of the NIS areas that has experienced rapid demographic change. A typical former mill town, the town's demographic shift started in the 1990s; within four years, 6,000 Hispanic immigrants migrated from the New York metropolitan area (McElwee, 2018) to seek job opportunities and a quiet environment for their families. The immigrants were mainly Dominicans and Puerto Ricans.

School & Classrooms

The school where I conducted the ethnographic study was located in Western Heinzburgh. It had five classrooms—four of them were open, with two English-speaking lead teachers and two bilingual lead teachers. Other associates/assistant teachers, center managers, and family workers were mostly bilingual. Other staff, such as nurses and nutritionists, were White females. I visited classrooms 1 and 5, reflecting on my research purposes.

Table 1

Classrooms 1 & 5 in Heinzburgh

	Classroom #1	Classroom #5
Lead Teacher	Ms. Margarita (English)	Ms. Ariel (Bilingual)
Assistant Teacher	Ms. Maria (Bilingual)	Ms. Erika (Bilingual)
Number of children	17	17
Spanish only children	Around 5	Around 4
English only children	2	0
Bilingual children	Around 10	Around 13

* All names are pseudonyms.

I visited those classrooms alternately three times a week (mostly on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) starting in the second week of their school year of 2022-2023 until right before the winter break in December. My observation started at 8:50 (children's arrival) and ended at 3:00 (children's dismissal). Their routine includes breakfast, teeth brushing, morning circle time, free time, outside recess, lunch circle time, lunch, small group work time, outside recess, and dismissal circle time. The main focus of the observation was teachers' language choices on each occasion, such as the morning greeting, circle time, and unofficial conversations, as well as individual conversations between teachers and children and among children.

In week 6, I started to interview teachers. Table 4 shows the teachers who worked with classrooms 1 & 5. They chose their pseudonyms.

Table 2

Teachers in Heinzburgh

Name (Pseudonym)	Position	Language	Years of working
Belle	Center Manager	English=Spanish	15
Margarita	Lead Teacher	English>>Spanish	5
Ariel	Lead Teacher	English=Spanish	1
Macy	Classroom Aid	English << Spanish	10
Tiana	Classroom Aid	English < Spanish	-
Mary	Education Director	English	16

All the interviews, including at comparative sites, started with sharing a video clip. As an ethnographer, I did not prepare a concrete structure for the interview; instead, I followed the flow of the conversation. However, there were several questions I was determined to ask all the participants. The questions covered:

- Responses to the video clip
- Teachers' backgrounds
- Their language skills
- Educational beliefs
- General opinion about bilingualism
- History at Head Start
- The changes they have experienced
- The knowledge or familiarity of the language policy of 2007
- How they responded to the policy

Comparative Sites

To select comparative sites, I had these criteria:

1. The town had experienced an increase in Latin@ population.
2. The Latin@ residents in the town were mainly from the Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico.
3. The town used to be dominated by Whites.

Comparative Site Visits & Interview

Table 3

Comparative Sites and Teachers.

Name (Pseudonym)	Site Name	Position	Languages
Luna	Pocono	Center Manager	English
Moana	Pocono	Lead Teacher	English=Spanish
Cher	Pocono	Assistant Teacher	English=Spanish

Name (Pseudonym)	Site Name	Position	Languages
Margy	Pocono	Trainee	Spanish>English
Jasmine	Clanton	Center Manager	English
Christmas	Clanton	Lead Teacher	English
Twelve	Clanton	Assistant Teacher	English
Daisy	Springstown	Assistant Director	English
Mulan	Springstown	Center Manager	English
Alice	Springstown	Lead Teacher	English
A	Springstown	Assistant Teacher	English=Spanish

In each site, classrooms were assigned by the headquarters of the county's Head Start. I visited the classroom all day (or, if the center allowed me, more than one day), conducted participatory observation, and interviewed educators after the visits. The procedure for the interviews was basically the same as the ones at the lead site, and all interviews took 45 minutes to one hour.

Findings

Transversal Comparison: Shifts in Children and Teachers' Language Practices

It was lunchtime, and children were sitting at three tables, eating chicken with tomato sauce, which was tender and surprisingly delicious. It had been a cloudy/rainy day, but at that moment, the sun came out and shone in the classroom. Ms. Ariel looked up and said, "Wow, the sun is coming out, so nice." With that remark, Roddy looked up from her plastic plate and smiled, then she said, "The sun is coming out; it is dunny now!!" excitedly. Roddy was a bilingual girl who could understand both languages well, but Spanish was her comfortable language, and she usually used it for communication. She repeated the same phrase over and over as if she were confirming the meaning and practicing it. "It's dunny, it's dunny," then Ryan, who was sitting next to Roddy, said, "It's not 'dunny,' it's 'sunny.'" Roddy replied, "Yes, it's 'dunny,' not 'dunny.'" I assumed she didn't recognize the differences between the 'd' sound she made and the 's' sound that Ryan mentioned.

I observed the following scene after four weeks. It was another cloudy day, but when it was time for them to go home, the sun was coming out. Then I heard Roddy say in a natural English pronunciation, "It's sunny now, it's sunny!!" jumping up and down. It was the middle of November, and Roddy's English skills had apparently improved, even though she still primarily used Spanish.

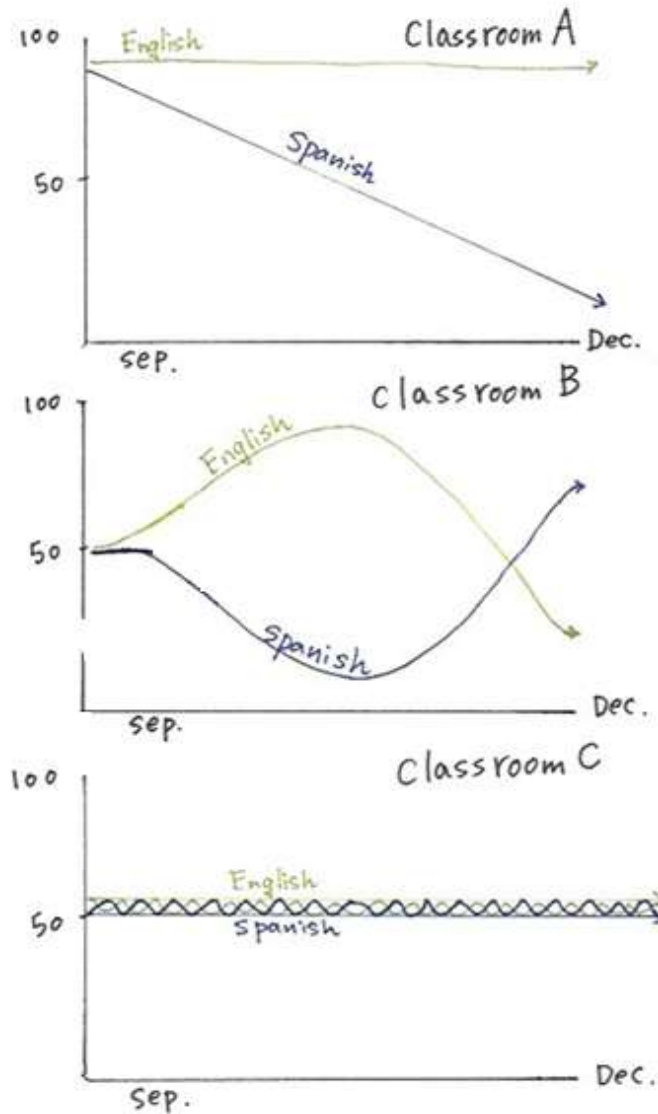
"By the time of Christmas break, their English skills are remarkable, and they mainly use only English in the classroom." This is a statement I have heard multiple times during the interviews with the educators. The first thing that came to my mind when I heard that was, "What a shame," and I expected the sad faces of the interviewees. The next moment, I understood that I was totally wrong; the interviewees' faces were full of pride. I realized that many educators do not yet see the value of bilingualism, no matter how much they praise bilingualism verbally. They are proud of their students' English skills and do not care about preserving their bilingualism. I also learned from four months of observations and interviews that teachers' language ideologies are powerful and hard to change, unless they intend to change it. One teacher stated that since she was born and grew up in an

area where everybody spoke English, "Using English is such a natural thing, and learning Spanish is too hard. But I wish I could speak my children's language (Spanish), and I am trying." This "naturalness" is a core of language ideologies, which is influenced largely by the environment they grow up. Roddy's example was one of a few exceptions as someone who kept her Spanish skills while developing English skills.

I visited three classrooms periodically. One classroom (A) was run by an English-speaking lead teacher with a bilingual assistant teacher, the second classroom (B) was run by bilingual lead and assistant teachers, and the third one (C) was considered a bilingual classroom and run by bilingual lead and assistant teachers. During my visits, I kept a record of the amount of English and Spanish used in the official instructional time. The changes in the amount of English and Spanish from the beginning of the school year to December (2022) are demonstrated in Chart 1:

Chart 1

Shift of Language Practices



* Classroom A has an English-speaking teacher and a Spanish-speaking assistant teacher.

A is a more typical classroom among all other classrooms I observed. They started with more use of Spanish because they had Spanish-only children, and the assistant teachers used Spanish constantly. However, English always stood as the primary language, and Spanish words were merely "translated."

Classrooms B and C have different stories. B had a lead teacher who was bilingual herself, and she aimed to keep children being 50/50 bilingual, and C was an official bilingual classroom whose purpose was to support children's bilingualism. The educators of those classrooms accommodated their language use depending on the children's language practices. For example, Moana, a lead teacher of classroom C, told me that he switched between English and Spanish according to which language the child used with him at that moment. If he felt that the child tended to use more English, he encouraged the child to use Spanish by responding to them in Spanish. Moana was doing this modification all day and every day. Ariel was a lead teacher of classroom B, and she aimed for the same goal as Moana, but she didn't seem to have a specific strategy. Roddy belonged to Classroom B.

Comparing the three types of classrooms illustrates how children's language changed over a certain period of time, responding to teachers' language ideologies and language policies, as well as their particular job expectations, beliefs and ideologies, and language backgrounds and capabilities.

Vertical Comparison

The Office of Head Start (OHS) is the starting point of the policy journey, and it usually reaches educational directors of Head Start grantee organizations when the policy is related to classroom practices. "We usually receive an email if there are any changes" (Mary, a regional educational director from Heinzburgh). In the case of the language policy of 2007, it reached both educational and family support directors since it needed to be reflected in both aspects of Head Start programs. It is the directors' responsibility to understand the policy in the way OHS expects, and for that, they sometimes have outside guides (e.g., TA for Lugano County). After the directors, the way policies travel varies depending on the organization; some organizations communicate the changes to center managers, and it is the managers' duty to make sure all teachers are informed of the policy. Additionally, when OHS announces changes, how to respond to those new policies is also discussed among parents, which takes place in the form of parent councils.

The vertical comparison revealed that the understanding of the language policy of 2007 varied among the levels of the educators due to the differences in their duties. Directors dealt with the policy statement itself with the regional aids, then sometimes directly, and other times, through center managers, they communicated what each center needed to change. I assume in this communication, directors' language ideologies were reflected, and in most cases, the focus was on concrete changes (parent forms in both English and Spanish), not training teachers to prepare for multilingual students, which is one of the main reasons for the varieties among teachers' policy-making, which is discussed in the next section.

Horizontal Comparison

For the horizontal comparison, the main data were from classroom observation and teachers' interviews. Table 4 indicates the demographic and language practices in each site.

Table 4

Comparison Among Sites

Town	Percentage of Multilingual Children	Classroom Language	Variables / History as New Immigrant Settlement
Springstown	99%	Mostly English	Most established settlements
Heinzburgh	98%	50/50 or 70 (S)/30(E)	Experienced a rapid change in last 15 years
Pocono Valley	95%	50/50	Currently experiencing rapid changes
Clanton	25%	100% English	At the beginning of the changes

It was work time for Ms. Alice's classroom. This classroom was located in Springstown. Ms. Alice had a system of limiting the number of children for stations in the classroom. Each station had a board with Velcro strips where children were told to put their "ticket" (a name tag with a photo) on them. The number of Velcro strips indicated how many children could stay at the station. Almost all children in the classroom were Afro-Caribbean, but all students except for one girl spoke in English.

Two children were playing at a light table. When they turned on the switch, the table was lit, and they put various objects on the table. They started to build a structure, which looked like a house to me, with transparent blocks on the table, which was aesthetically beautiful. The house-like structure was shining from the inside. Another girl approached them with a doll in her hand, told them something in Spanish, and put the doll on the table. It looked like the girl wanted to give them a person to live in the house they built. However, the two children were not happy with what the girl did and said, "Don't do that," "You can't join us because it was for two people," and "You can't mix things." Their tones were quite harsh, and they also used gestures to show rejection. The Spanish-speaking girl apparently didn't understand the English words her peers said, and, confused, she brought back toy foods to them, which irritated the two children even more, and they ignored her completely.

The girl finally gave up and walked away. She wandered among her peers but could not get anyone to play with her. She didn't seem to be discouraged. As proof, she didn't stop talking to peers and teachers. Other children just didn't seem to understand her Spanish and didn't know how to interact with her. Finally, she sat down by herself and started to draw on a piece of paper.

This observation raised numerous questions and wonders for me. I am aware that my understanding of the situation reflected my own bias and personal experiences, and can be too subjective. However, I could not help but imagine the pain the Spanish-speaking girl might have felt that day and, most likely, every day, and remembering the classroom in Heinzburgh, where most children use Spanish and English to communicate comfortably with each other.

Teachers' Language Ideologies and Policy-making

When Tiana in Heinzburgh recommended I visit Springstown because there were many immigrants from the Dominican Republic, she said, "But they are more American," with a mixture of pride/sympathy/jealous facial expression. Now I understood her statement and her facial expression. Latin@ in Springstown, at least in the Head Start classroom,

had adapted to US society and culture and seemingly thrived in the town by sacrificing their original language, culture, and identities.

I was intrigued by this difference between the two most established new immigrant settlements. The two groups' ethnic backgrounds were similar: Dominicans and Puerto Ricans. The percentages of Latin@ children in the classrooms were almost the same. The lead teacher population was similar: English-speaking in Springstown and English-speaking and bilingual in Heinzburgh. The differences I noticed were 1) Springstown's Latin@ population had a two-decades-long history and 2) the proportion of Latin@ in the administrative and lead educator population.

The following comparison between English-speaking lead teachers in Springstown (Alice) and Heinzburgh (Margarita) illustrates how the difference appeared to them.

(I asked about Spanish skills.) Alice: No, I don't understand anything Spanish-speaking kids say to me. I have Abby (bilingual assistant teacher), she is bilingual, and she can translate everything for me. I wish I could speak Spanish since we have so many Spanish-speaking kids. But it hasn't happened, and kids can get English much faster than I (gaining Spanish skills).

A monolingual Spanish girl approached us and spoke to Ms. Alice. Ms. Alice nodded and said, "Yeah, okay," using lots of non-verbal communication tools.

Kiyomi: What did she want to say to you?

Alice: I have no idea.

Margarita: I have some background in Spanish, but I never thought I would use it until I started to work here. I'm trying to remember as much as possible, but I also ask for help from my bilingual assistant teacher.

I observed Ms. Margarita speaking in Spanish with a child, and when she could not understand her student's Spanish, she apologetically asked her assistant teacher what the child wanted to say. Then she told the child in both languages, "I'm sorry, I could not understand you, but now I know."

My perspective naturally agreed with Margarita's practices, but I was not criticizing Alice's practices. I merely observed how people and environment dialogically influenced lead teachers' language ideologies, and I sincerely respected both teachers' everyday attempts to offer the best of themselves despite numerous obstacles and difficulties that happened in their classrooms. However, I would criticize the current organizational situation of Head Start in both areas. Except for a few examples, such as Belle and Ariel, the organization was run by White people, though White populations occupied less than 35% in both areas. It is true that in many organizations, not only Head Start, non-White populations have more obstacles to accessing more important and influential positions. On the other hand, non-White populations and individuals, including myself, need to be more assertive instead of giving up as minorities.

Community and Teachers' Language Ideology

Head Start is generally strongly related to surrounding communities, which happens through parents' participation and community activities, and naturally, the communities and families have influence over teachers' practices. Tiana stated that immigrant parents' desires about children's language vary; some of them wanted educators to focus on maintaining Spanish, some wanted children to be English speakers, and some wanted them to maintain both languages. It depended on the parents' backgrounds, life experiences, if they still had families in their home countries or not, their own language

skills, and the communities they lived in. The last factor, the community, was stronger than I anticipated, and it was shown in the difference between Springstown, Heinzburgh, and Clanton. In Springstown, the Latin@ community was more "Americanized" (Tiana), and I also observed more English-speaking Latin@ while visiting the town compared to Heinzburgh. Springstown started its history as NIS before the new migration trend was recognized. In 1996, a big writing implements factory opened right outside of Springstown, and following that, several companies opened their factories, such as a meat-packing factory, in the area surrounding the town. The opening of factories created plenty of job opportunities, and most jobs were occupied by Latin@ immigrants. On the other hand, Heinzburgh started to gain Latin@ population mostly between 2010 and 2020. The original immigrants were mainly from New York City, and the population grew mainly as a result of the chain migration.

In Clanton, where the number of Latin@ was relatively still small, both parents and children were forced to accommodate English-only practices. Because of the policy, the center in Clanton did prepare translated documents and interpretation services for multilingual parents, but those parents still needed to communicate with their children's teachers in English, and they were far away from the positions that could influence teachers' language policy making.

By using the Comparative Case Study's three axes, I understood the flow of Head Start policies, how long-term and short-term changes had occurred and impacted the programs, and how teachers' language ideologies were formed and shifted.

Discussion and Suggestions

The Variety of Understanding of the Policy and its Implementation

Following the flow of the policy, it was revealed that there were numerous gaps in its implementation. The most problematic gap in how the policy was implemented was caused by understanding the policy text itself. Except for the Lugano County Head Start, the language policy of 2007 was understood as hardware changes, such as creating translated versions of parents' forms and putting classroom labels in children's home languages, while the core of the policy was on teachers' language practices. This gap was initially created at the director and manager levels, which indicated the importance of diverse personnel in organizations, especially at the administrative level. Under the Latin@ manager, Belle, speaking both English and Spanish appeared to be normal in the center located in Lugano County. Her management was assumed to be one of the primary reasons that the center conducted more Dual Language Education in the classrooms.

Head Start policies are filtered and modified by directors in administration first, and how they understand them impacts how other educators will be informed about the policy. In the case of the language policy, the understanding of it must vary between people who had experience as a bilingual immigrant and those who had no first-hand experience of living in a society where their language was not spoken.

Pressures of "School Readiness" on Bilingual Education

School readiness has been a goal of Head Start and a standard for assessment. How to define readiness is arguable (e.g., Pianta et al., 2007), but it has put pressure on classroom teachers. They were notified by coaches what their students were expected to be able to do by the time they moved on to Kindergarten.

School readiness created a gap between idealized readiness and the practical realities of children, and these urgent difficulties made educators feel that other matters, such as bilingual education, were less urgent, which was stated during the interviews and observed in the classrooms. However, if children were not comfortable with being in a

classroom or unable to understand what teachers were telling them, it was impossible to support their development—or “readiness.”

School Readiness in English

Head Start educators need to prepare children to be ready for the public school system, which is dominated by English, and that was the reality for teachers in NIS in Pennsylvania. The teachers understood that their main job was to educate their students to be “ready for Kindergarten” in various ways. The ability to join English-only classrooms was one of the major concerns. While most educators admitted the benefits of bilingual education, the benefits seemed not big enough to compete with the pressure of school readiness. This was quite an unfortunate situation. In the micro view of individual children, their families, and teachers, gaining English skills to survive school and, ultimately, survive in US society appeared quite urgent. However, in the macro view, if we look at the goal of diversity respect for diverse funds of knowledge, including language and, the United States is losing precious human resources of bilingual populations by not changing their traditional education system, which was established mainly for White and middle-class children.

Contribution and Conclusion

This study is a unique comparative project that anthropologically investigated the Head Start programs through a policy and teachers' language ideology lens while focusing on New Immigrant Settlements in Pennsylvania, and it adds to the literature of several fields: 1) anthropology of education policy, 2) Head Start, 3) bilingual education at the ECE level and beyond, 4) New Immigrant Settlements in Pennsylvania, and 5) Head Start workforce developments.

Moana and Margarita agreed that maintaining bilingualism required lots of conscious effort. Bilingual children attending Head Start classrooms were still too young to understand what they were doing in every interaction with their peers and teachers. Therefore, they believed it was the educators' job to help maintain their bilingual skills. As previous literature states (e.g., Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Garcia et al., 2018), it is not merely a matter of language skills, but maintaining their background cultures, including languages, will support them in establishing strong and positive self-identities as multilingual/multicultural individuals, as well as maintain cultural/linguistic ties with family and community. It is quite important and beneficial (in various ways) for the US society to have immigrants with positive attitudes. In that sense, appropriate bilingual education at the ECE level plays a significant role, and the Head Start language policy of 2007 is crucial.

However, as stated, the mere existence of policies is not sufficient. Policies need to be understood correctly and intentionally implemented by involving stakeholders. In the case of Head Start's 2007 language policy, it was interpreted primarily as guidance for hardware modifications, while the more critical aspect of the policy pertains to teachers' practices. In addition to the importance of the match between the demographics of educators and the children they serve, this reflects an unfortunate side effect of federal policies, which are often tied to authority derived from economic power. Practitioners tend to focus on meeting new criteria rather than pursuing long-term changes, such as equitable bilingual practices, that take time to achieve. While it is inevitable that federal policies carry authority, there should still be a preserved bottom-up pathway originating from classrooms because educators are policy-makers as well.

Another point this study reveals is how school readiness is a powerful reality for most Head Start educators. In that sense, school readiness is an invisible authority. However, Head Start programs are not created only for preparation purposes; they have their own

agenda to educate and support children. Similar to the policy, educators have the power to modify or demonstrate new perspectives on this matter. As Ms. Ariel shows in her classroom, it is possible for children to be ready for kindergarten while preserving their bilingualism. Early childhood educators, not only Head Start educators, voice what they are doing more loudly and proudly, and researchers need to continue reporting them publicly.

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