CHAPTER 12

Language Diversity and Schooling

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Cuando eres un inmigrante, muchas puertas están cerradas. Pues, sí, algunas, algunas, están abiertas—pero están escondidas. Sin ayuda, no puedo encontrarlas.

When you are an immigrant, many doors are closed. Well, yes, some, some are open—but they are hidden. Without help, I can’t find them.

Edgar
(Stritikus, 2004, p. 1)

Edgar is a 15-year-old immigrant student from Mexico. He had been in the United States for five months when a researcher asked him to talk about what he hoped to accomplish by attending school in the United States (Stritikus, 2004). Rather than focus on his career goals or his educational plans after high school, Edgar highlighted the limited educational opportunities he believed characterized his new life in the United States. Although Edgar had been in the United States for only a limited time, he had already developed a keen sense of the social, cultural, and linguistic barriers to his success. Unfortunately, Edgar’s reality is shared by many immigrant students for whom the doors of educational opportunity remain obscured and closed.

In this chapter, we consider what schools and teachers can do to better assist linguistically diverse students like Edgar.

Recent immigration from Asia, Latin America, and Africa is dramatically altering the context of public schooling. Today, one in seven students speaks a language other than English at home (Meyer, Madden, & McGrath, 2004). Immigrants constitute the fastest growing group of students in U.S. schools, and many demographers predict that by 2025, approximately 20–25 percent of students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools will have limited proficiency in English (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). When considering linguistic
diversity, it is also important to consider cultural and linguistic groups who do not immediately come to mind; these include African Americans and indigenous populations. Many African Americans are “bidialectal”—that is, they speak Ebonics and Standard English, and issues of language diversity have shaped their school experience in important ways (Alim & Baugh, 2007; Smitherman, 2000). Indigenous groups, such as American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians, contribute significantly to linguistic diversity, representing speakers of about 175 indigenous languages and numerous varieties of English (Krauss, 1998).

To understand how schools can better meet the needs of linguistically diverse students, we begin this chapter by taking a closer look at the linguistically diverse population in the United States. Then, to understand the legal obligations of schools in meeting the needs of linguistically diverse students, we examine important events in the legal, policy, and judicial history of linguistically diverse students in the United States. Next, we consider various programmatic responses to linguistic diversity and their efficacy in meeting the needs of linguistically diverse students. We conclude the chapter with a discussion of how teachers might better respond to the needs of immigrant students. We now turn to an examination of one of the primary sources of linguistic diversity—immigration—and consider how increased immigration has influenced U.S. schools.

THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Immigration continues to be one of the primary sources of linguistic diversity in the United States. Foreign-born residents now make up a larger percentage of the U.S. population than at any other time since the great waves of immigration in the early 1900s (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Because of restrictive immigration laws, most immigrants who came to the United States between 1880 and 1930 were from Europe. Changes to immigration law during the 1960s resulted in a steady increase of immigrants from Latin America, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa. While immigration has a tremendous influence on all of American life, nowhere has this impact been more keenly felt than in U.S. public schools.

Historically, immigration to the United States has played a significant role in shaping current perceptions of today's immigrants and, consequently, their reception in schools. The opinions that Americans have about the current wave of immigrants are shaped in part by their views of the earlier waves of immigrants—perceptions influenced by both fact and fiction. Several key differences and similarities exist between the experiences of the immigrants who came at the turn of the 20th century and those who are coming today. Understanding these similarities and differences is an important way for teachers working with linguistically diverse students to fully understand the reality faced by immigrant populations.

Despite the common perception to the contrary, the immigrants who came at the turn of the last century did not experience universal success in school. In major cities such as Boston, Chicago, and New York, the graduation and school continuation rates of Southern Italian, Polish, and Russian Jewish children lagged far behind those of native-born White students (Olneck & Lazerston, 1974). The mainstream population does not easily accept newcomer immigrants to the United States. Many of the same negative discourses about today's immigrants took place when earlier groups of immigrants came to the United States. The Italian, Jewish, and Irish immigrants of the early 20th century faced significant social,
political, and cultural barriers (Jacobson, 1998). Despite these realities, today's immigration debates are often cast in terms of how the earlier immigrants were more easily absorbed and more beneficial to U.S. society than the Latin American, Asian, and African immigrants today. The concept of ethnic succession—which explains that new immigrants are rarely viewed as positively as the groups that came before them—can explain this pattern (Banks, 2005).

Despite the similarities between "earlier" and "new" immigrants, there are important differences as well. The current wave of immigration consists of people from several regions of the world who were not a major part of the last wave of immigration that occurred in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. In recent years, scholars from various disciplines have claimed that world economies and societies have become increasingly interconnected through advances in technology, media, and mass transit, all of which facilitate the movement of people, goods, services, and ideas. This new phenomena has been called globalization, borderless economies, and the transnational era (Castles, 2003). One of the characteristics of globalization is the increased flow of people across the planet. While some people voluntarily migrate in order to improve their lives, others are forced to migrate in order to survive (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). Social scientists have argued that the role of immigration in providing both cheap unskilled labor and highly technically skilled labor is a key component of the new transnational era that the world's societies have entered (Portes, 1996; Suárez-Orozco, 1997).

The back-and-forth movement of ideas and goods that characterizes the current transitional period also parallels the experience of many immigrant students, which has often been cast in terms of assimilation whereby immigrants eventually lose contact with their home communities and are slowly absorbed into their new locality. Departing from the traditional model of assimilation, scholars have argued that immigrants negotiate more complex patterns of social interaction in their new countries (Itzigsohn, Dore-Cabral, Hernandez-Medina, & Vazquez, 1999; Rose, 1997; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). In the current transnational era, some immigrant groups continue to have strong ties with their countries of origin once they reside in their receiving community. These ties influence immigrant children's socialization patterns and create social and cultural experiences that span transnational lines (Mahler, 1998; Portes, 1999; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

The mass movement of people and ideas has major consequences for education in the United States. The current back-and-forth movement of ideas and people replenishes social and cultural practices (Garcia, 1999). While previous generations of immigrants did have some contact with their home countries, it was limited by the difficulty of travel and the lack of efficient communication. For current immigrant communities, however, ethnic media, telecommunications, and ease of travel can significantly change the nature of the communities in which they settle. This is often very difficult for the native-born population to accept, but the impact of current immigration on host communities is undeniable (Garcia). Thus, immigration must be viewed as a dynamic social phenomenon. Immigrants are both significantly changing the social context of new communities while shaping the social realities in their home countries.

An important factor shaping the immigrant experience is related to the current nature of U.S. society. The immigrant family enters a country that is economically, socially, and culturally distinct from the one faced by early waves of immigrants. Previous waves of immigrants arrived on the eve of a great expansion of the industrial economy. The manufacturing jobs that were created during the transition to a fully industrialized economy provided a possible entree for immigrants to the middle class. However, not all immigrants had equal access to the economy.
and society. Gordon (1964) explains that earlier waves of immigrants who were members of racially diverse groups did not experience the same structural assimilation into U.S. society as did European immigrants.

Today's immigrants face many of the same issues related to structural assimilation as did older waves of immigrants. However, as Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2003) argue, today's economy—characterized by an hourglass shape—presents unique challenges for immigrant populations. At the top of the hourglass, highly skilled immigrants are moving into well-compensated, knowledge-based industries at an extremely high rate. At the bottom of the hourglass, immigrant workers accept the jobs that many U.S.-born workforce are unwilling to take. Immigrants are a large part of the low-skilled, low-paid workers in the service, labor, and agriculture sectors. Unlike the jobs that were available to previous waves of immigrants, these jobs offer limited prospects for upward mobility (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco).

Immigrants today are more diverse than ever, exhibiting a significant range in educational level, social class, and economic capital. Present immigrants are more likely than native-born populations to have family members who have graduated from college. At the same time, immigrant populations are more likely not to have graduated from high school than are native-born populations (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). This pattern of potential outcomes for immigrant students is further examined in Portes and Rumbaut’s (2001) discussion of segmented assimilation, which explains three possible outcomes for immigrant families: (1) economic success with integration into the middle class, (2) permanent poverty and integration into the underclass, and (3) economic advancement with the deliberate maintenance of community values and practices. Each outcome is an important factor in the immigrant community today. While a full discussion of the factors contributing to segmented assimilation is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important for teachers to know that immigrant groups are demonstrating each outcome. A further discussion of segmented assimilation and the second generation is found in Zhou (1997).

Socially, immigrants find themselves in a tenuous position. Opinion polls on immigration indicate that the native-born population believes that recent immigrants are weakening the fabric of U.S. society because they refuse to become Americanized like previous waves of immigrants. Many native-born Americans believe that immigrants take jobs away from them and are a drain on social services and schools (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2003). Many scholars of immigration argue that the most important difference between today’s immigrants and the earlier ones is that most of today’s immigrants are people of color (Garcia, 1999; Olsen, 1997; Portes, 1996; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco). Moreover, in the United States, an anti-immigrant ideology exists that affects the way immigrants and refugees are perceived (Behdad, 1997; Castles & Davidson, 2000). Today’s culturally and ethnically diverse immigrants enter a racialized society that has historically sorted, classified, and excluded people based on the color of their skin (Omi & Winant, 1994). It is not as easy to eventually blend into White America as it was for the mostly European immigrants of the early 1900s. Racial tensions and structural exclusion in the United States make assimilation a problematic process for linguistically and ethnically diverse immigrants.

The social, political, and economic difficulties faced by immigrants make relocation to a new country a very taxing experience. The culture and worldviews of individuals are often challenged or threatened when they come in contact with U.S. culture (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). The dislocation and upheaval caused by immigration can be especially challenging for
immigrant children. Lucas (1997) describes the experiences of immigrant students in U.S. schools as characterized by a number of critical transitions. She points out that all children experience important transitions in life: childhood to adolescence, home to school, middle to high school. However, as she correctly notes, immigrant students undergo these critical issues while adapting to a new language and culture.

The social context in which immigrant students begin their new lives must be considered to understand the experience of linguistically diverse students in schools. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2003) argue that the “ethos of reception”—the social and cultural climate students experience in schools—is strongly influenced by society’s views about immigration. Thus, the strongly negative attitudes toward immigrant students in U.S. society influence these students’ perceptions of U.S. schooling. Negative societal attitudes also significantly influence teacher and institutional expectations of immigrant students. Thus, the political, economic, and historical factors shaping immigration have a dramatic influence on the opportunities and experiences that immigrant students have in public schools.

**Dramatic Increase in Linguistic Diversity in Schools**

State educational statistics reveal the number of immigrants in the United States who are receiving special services to learn English and are classified as English language learners (ELL). There has been a dramatic increase in the students classified as ELL since the 1970s. In school districts throughout the United States, immigrants from most nations in the world can be found. Although linguistic diversity is a reality throughout the United States, the highest populations of ELL students are concentrated in a few states such as California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Arizona. These states are currently and historically the most common places for immigrants to settle. However, almost all states have been affected by immigration. Since 1990, the largest increase in percentages of ELL students has been in what have been considered unlikely destinations for immigrants: South Carolina, Minnesota, Michigan, and Arkansas (Singer, 2004). Although the exact number is difficult to calculate, in 2004 ELL students accounted for about 8 percent, or 4.5 million, of the total U.S. school population (Meyer et al., 2004).

**Additional Sources of Linguistic Diversity: Dialect Variation and Indigenous Languages**

Immigration is not the sole contributor to linguistic diversity. Along with multiple languages in the United States, dialect variation contributes to our diverse tapestry of language use. A dialect is a variation of a language characterized by distinct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Many linguists have pointed out that the distinction between a language and a dialect is often more political than linguistic. The famed MIT linguist Noam Chomsky (2000) has often repeated the saying by Max Weinreich that a language is a dialect with an army and a navy. A common but less than perfect way of distinguishing a language from a dialect is the standard of mutual intelligibility.

Speakers of different dialects are said to be able to understand each other while speakers of different languages are not. However, what are considered dialects of some languages
are so distinct that speakers cannot understand each other. Chinese has two major dialects, Cantonese and Mandarin, whose speakers have great difficulty in understanding each other. In contrast, speakers of the Scandinavian languages Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish are capable of understanding a great deal of each other’s languages. Thus, it is important to note that the distinction between dialect and language has more to do with political, social, and cultural factors than specific linguistic distinctions between the two.

Political and social factors surrounding dialect variation play out in language use in U.S. schools. Educational practices in the United States embrace the idea that Standard English should be the dominant variety of language used in all written and oral communication. Many linguists dispute the idea that a pure or standard form of a language exists in any form but writing. Thus, Standard English is often a term associated with the groups within a society that possess social or political power (Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1998). Because dialect variation tends to be associated with race, social class, and geographic region, the dialects of groups with less social power tend to be viewed as inferior or incorrect versions of Standard English. This is the case with Black English (BE)—also referred to as African American vernacular English—and Black Dialect. Most linguists and sociolinguists recognize that no matter how BE is defined, it is a rule-governed language system linked to the identity of a specific community (Alim & Baugh, 2007; Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 2000). As Perry and Delput (1998) write, “I can be neither for Ebonics nor against Ebonics any more than I can be for or against air. It exists” (p. 17). Speakers of BE are also most likely speakers of other varieties of English, including Standard English. Thus, speakers of BE, as are other speakers of dialects, are often bidialectal. The educational experiences of speakers of BE and the Oakland school district case are discussed later in this chapter.

Another major source of linguistic diversity in the United States is indigenous populations. Although a decreasing number of the 175 indigenous languages spoken by more than 550 tribes are spoken by children, the heritage language is still the primary language for a large number of indigenous students (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty, 2002). Indigenous students do not have another homeland from which to garner support for learning and maintaining their language. Krauss (1995) indicates that of 175 American Indian and Alaskan Native languages remaining, 155 are on their way to extinction. Therefore, bilingual/bicultural schooling is critical for indigenous language maintenance as it is for other linguistic and cultural groups. Most of the efforts in formal language maintenance for indigenous language groups have been directed at Hawaiian dialects and the languages of the Navajo and Pueblo nations in the U.S. Southwest. Attempts to use bilingual education to revitalize these languages have met with modest but important results (McCarty).

HISTORICAL AND LEGAL OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES

This section describes the legal and historical developments related to linguistic diversity and language education. Understanding the historical evolution of language policy in the United States as well as the legal milestones for language minority students will help us understand the legal protections for these students and the ambivalent stance that the United States historically has had toward language policy. Overall, language policy in the United States has leaned toward
supporting transition into English. However, there has also been support of other languages and the rights of those speakers. There have been periods in U.S. history that have been more supportive of multilingualism than others.

**Implementation of Federal Policy**

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA), Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965—signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson—was legislation whose goal was to provide compensatory education for students who were both economically and linguistically disadvantaged in schools. From 1968 until 2002, Title VII provided funds for different types of programs for ELLs throughout the United States, including transitional bilingual education programs and two-way immersion programs; it also provided funding for program evaluators and researchers investigating these different types of programs. There were 30 two-way immersion programs in 1987 and 261 in 1999; most were supported by Title VII monies (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

A large part of the BEA’s inability to move toward a well-defined language policy was that the law did not recommend a particular instructional approach; rather, it provided funding for development, training, and research of innovative approaches to the education of ELL students. While native language instruction was originally recommended, the BEA did not specify that it must be used (Wiese & García, 1998). Since its inception, the primary aim of the BEA has been “providing meaningful and equitable access for English-language learners to the curriculum, rather than serving as an instrument of language policy for the nation through the development of their native languages” (August & Hakuta, 1997, p. 16). Echoing this, Wiese and García argue that the BEA has aimed to address equal educational opportunity for language minority students and has not evolved as a language policy. Therefore, the BEA neither legislated for a particular language policy or instructional approach nor guaranteed the rights of ELL students based on language.

As a result, immigrant students and families have frequently turned to the courts for redress. The U.S. Supreme Court’s school desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Title VI), and the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) have been used as a base to protect these students’ rights. This protection has come through a safeguard of these students’ other civil rights and their right to equal educational opportunities (Del Valle, 2003). In the prominent case of *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), Kinney Kinmon Lau and 12 Chinese American students on behalf of about 1,800 Chinese-speaking students filed a class action suit against the San Francisco Unified School District stating that their children were not given equal educational opportunities because of the linguistic barriers they faced. In this landmark case, the San Francisco schools were found to be in violation of the rights of Chinese students under Title VI and EEOA. While lower courts disagreed with the parents, the Supreme Court supported the parents in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and found that “there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.”

*Lau’s legacy has created important but vague contributions to the improvement of programs for ELL students. Policy guidelines, which were followed by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR),
were put together in the *Lau* remedies in 1975 for school districts’ compliance with the Title VI requirements upheld in the *Lau* decision. These guidelines have required districts to have a program in place for ELL students and for these students to be identified and assessed. While *Lau* did not specify any particular programs or polices for ELL students, it created momentum for subsequent federal policies and court rulings to protect the specific rights of linguistically diverse students. Moreover, particulars were fully fleshed out in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981), a federal district court case that offers a “test” to determine whether the needs of ELL students are being met by policies and programs. This case required that districts adhere to the following three areas:

1. **Theory**: The school must pursue a program based on an educational theory recognized as sound or at least as a legitimate experimental strategy.
2. **Practice**: The school must actually implement the program with instructional practices, resources, and personnel necessary to transfer theory into reality.
3. **Results**: The school must not persist in a program that fails to produce results.

The Supreme Court ruled in * Plyer vs. Doe* (1982) that states cannot deny a free public education to immigrant children because of their immigrant status, whether documented or undocumented. While these requirements may not offer as strong an articulation of ELL students’ rights as some may have hoped, they do protect ELL students from negligence and mistreatment and help to ensure effective programs for them. The *Lau* remedies, the BEA, and Title VI have generally provided some protection for equal educational opportunities for linguistically diverse students at the federal level. They also provided federal funding that made possible the inception and growth of a number of bilingual programs in the United States (Hornberger, 2005; Ruiz, 2004; Wiley & Wright, 2004).

Similar to the *Lau* court case, the “Black English case” (1979) (as cited in Smitherman, 1981) mandated measures to teach Standard English to children speaking Black English. This 1979 case, *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children v. Ann Arbor School District*, “was as much about educating Black children as about Black English” (Smitherman, 1998, p. 163). The parents of a group of African American children alleged that the school was not enabling their children to succeed in a variety of ways, including preventing them from learning Standard English. The judge ruled that the school had not helped its teachers and personnel to respond to the linguistic needs of its African American children. As a result of the ruling, school districts have been required to respond to the needs of African American children by providing professional development to its staff and the recognizing that Black English is a “systematic, rule-governed language system” in its own right (Perry & Delpit, 1998, p. 169). Black English has also been given legal standing in some districts, such as in Oakland, California.

**Language Policy in Recent History**

The mandates of bilingual and bidialectal education have been controversial. Critics have adopted different arguments from the historically prevalent charge that such education promotes social divisiveness to the more recent concerns that students will not learn English if they use their native language or dialect at school. Other critics have argued that bilingual education
simply does not work (Porter, 1990). For example, when President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, he made his views on bilingual education very clear, stating that he understood why teachers who spoke children’s native languages were needed but also argued that “it is absolutely wrong and against American concepts to have a bilingual education program” (cited in Baker, 2001, p.194).

The proponents of English-only argue that to preserve the unity of the United States, English should become the official language (Crawford, 1992). There have been periods in the nation’s history when administrations have leaned more toward a “language-as-a-resource” orientation, maintaining and supporting the teaching of languages other than English, such as Clinton’s 1994 reauthorization of the BEA. The support or lack of support for a language-as-a-resource orientation at the federal level has depended on the particular administration in office (Wiley & Wright, 2004).

As in the preceding 200 years, in the 2000s, the press, politics, and people in the U.S. have been grappling with the ambivalent rapport for language. In recent years, the debate has escalated to a new level with English-only initiatives, such as the state-level Unz Initiative in California, Proposition 227, spearheaded by the millionaire businessman Ron Unz and passed by California voters in June 1998, outlawing bilingual education in the state of California. Proposition 227 brought all of the debates on bilingual education under a magnifying lens. The English-only faction stressed that bilingual programs were not working and students were being ghettoized (although most ELLs were not in bilingual programs). Strong proponents of bilingual education such as Crawford (1999) have argued that the lack of large-scale political support has undermined its potential effectiveness. In bridging these two factions, Cummins (1999) states, “the challenge for opponents and advocates is to create an ideological space to collaborate in planning quality programs for bilingual students” (p. 223). After Proposition 227 was passed in California, similar laws were enacted in Arizona and Massachusetts. In 2008, 26 states had active official English laws.

Many linguists and educators regard the Ebonics debate in the same purview as bilingual education. The Oakland school board decision in 1996 to pass the Ebonics resolution, which recognized the legitimacy of Ebonics, was also a way for the school district to receive federal monies reserved for bilingual education and to use them for a Standard English program. The board resolution stated that the district’s purpose should be to facilitate the acquisition and mastery of English language skills while respecting and embracing the legitimacy and richness of different language patterns. The rationale for the decision was that students could benefit from instruction that used their cultural and linguistic resources. In the same way as the Ann Arbor case brought two decades earlier (Smitherman, 1981), a large number of African American parents and students protested their children’s poor academic performance, disproportionate placement in special education, and frequent suspensions.

Like Proposition 227, the Oakland school board decision resulted in gross misrepresentations and biases by the media, the public, educators, and academics. One of the most frequently stated misconceptions was that the Oakland school district proposed to replace the teaching of English with Ebonics (Bing & Woodward, 1998).

During the George W. Bush administration in 2002, Title III replaced Title VII (BEA) as part of a larger school reform measure in the United States known as the No Child Left Behind Act. Title III carried with it a new name, “Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students.” The word “bilingual” had been deleted from all government offices
and legislation, signaling a shift to the assimilationist, English-first orientation of the 2000–2008 Bush administration. Even though this new law is more supportive of programs that focus on learning English, it does not require English-only programs. Many scholars have argued that there is still space in the new law for the creation of bilingual programs (Freeman, 2004; Hornberger, 2005). It is important for teachers to have a grasp of the legal and political trends and policies that influence the environments of their linguistically diverse students. Teachers who are aware of such political and social movements can establish historically relevant relationships with their students and influence programmatic decisions at the school and district levels.

PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSES TO LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

In this section, we summarize different programmatic options for schools. Central to these decisions is the role that English and the home language of students will play in instruction. Should students learn to read in their first language (L1) and then learn to read in their second language (L2)? Should recent immigrants be instructed in content area classes in their L1 so they do not fall behind in the critical areas of math, science, and social studies? Or will culturally and linguistically diverse students benefit from instruction provided solely in English? Across the United States, schools and districts struggle with these questions. As we explore the different programmatic options available to districts, we also delve more deeply into the debate over bilingual education.

Instructional Programs

Various instructional programs have been devised and implemented over the last several decades to meet the educational needs of linguistically diverse students. We describe the five major program types that districts and schools have designed and implemented that were identified by August and Hakuta’s (1997) comprehensive review of the research on linguistic minority students:

- **Submersion**: Students are placed in regular English-only classrooms and are given no special instructional support. This approach is illegal in the United States as a result of the Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols*. However, many ELL students find themselves in submersion-like settings.

- **English as a Second Language (ESL)**: No instruction is given in a student’s primary language. ESL is either taught through pullout programs or integrated with academic content throughout the day.

- **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)**: Students receive some degree of instruction in their primary language for a period of time. However, the goal of the program is to transition to English-only instruction as rapidly as possible, generally within 1–3 years.

- **Maintenance Bilingual Education (MBE)**: Students receive instruction in their primary language and in English throughout the elementary school years (K–6) with the goal of developing academic proficiency in both languages.
• Dual Language Programs: Language majority and language minority students are instructed together in the same program with the goal of each group achieving bilingualism and biliteracy.

This list of five programs is not exhaustive. However, these programs do not exist in pure forms, and districts mix and blend aspects of various programs. Various large- and small-scale studies have examined the effectiveness of these programs. The authors of the studies have willingly and unwillingly become a part of the great debate about the effectiveness of bilingual education. It is difficult to determine the exact number of ELL students in each of these programs because of the lack of comprehensive national data. However, most ELL students are instructed through ESL approaches that use little to no native language instruction (Kindler, 2002).

The Bilingual Debate and the Research Context

As bilingual education continued to evolve throughout the 1960s and 1970s, a major split in public opinion regarding the program occurred. Baker (2001) explains that some citizens viewed bilingual education as failing to foster social integration and as a waste of public funds. Many opponents of bilingual education portrayed Latinos and supporters of bilingual education as using it for their own political gain (Baker). Critics of bilingual education have drawn from two major reviews of bilingual research (Baker & de Kanter, 1981; Rossel & Baker, 1996) to try to convince schools and districts to move away from bilingual education. Rossel and Baker reviewed 72 scientifically methodologically acceptable studies. They concluded that bilingual education was not superior to ESL instruction, particularly in reading achievement. This study is widely cited by critics of bilingual education. Several researchers have noted, however, that the review is plagued by many methodological issues. The Rossel and Baker review applied arbitrary and inconsistent criteria to establish methodologically acceptable studies and inaccurate and arbitrary labeling of programs (Cummins, 1999; Stritikus & Manyak, 2000). Baker points out that the study had

a narrow range of expected outcomes for bilingual education in the [research] questions. Only English language and non-language subject areas were considered as the desirable outcome of schooling. Other outcomes such as self-esteem, employment, preservation of minority languages, and the value of different cultures were not considered.
(p. 246)

Critics of bilingual education have drawn heavily from the work of Rossel and Baker (1996) and Baker and de Kanter (1981) to influence educational policy. Advocates of bilingual education have drawn from a body of research that has reached opposite conclusions and supports the use of students’ native language in instruction. Willig (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of 23 of the 28 studies reviewed by Baker and de Kanter. *Meta-analysis* is a collection of systematic techniques for resolving apparent contradictions in research findings by translating results from different studies to a common metric and statistically explores relationships between study characteristics and findings. Employing this technique, Greene (1998) found that an
unbiased reading of the scholarly literature indicates that limited-English-proficient students taught using bilingual approaches perform significantly better than do students taught using English-only approaches. In a review of methodologically acceptable research studies, Slavin and Chueng (2003) found that bilingual approaches—particularly those that include reading instruction in the native language—are more effective than English-only approaches.

**Program Types That Contribute to Successful Educational Practice**

Research examining the success or failure of various program types has not completely addressed the central question of how best to educate culturally and linguistically diverse students. A body of research has reported detailed studies of what has worked in actual classrooms. Rather than focus on program models, this research has concentrated on the characteristics of schools and classrooms that contribute to successful educational practice for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

August and Hakuta (1997) provide a comprehensive review of optimal learning conditions that serve linguistically and culturally diverse student populations and that lead to high academic performance. Their review of 33 studies indicates there is a set of generally agreed upon practices that foster academic success. These practices can exist across program types. August and Hakuta found that the following school and classroom characteristics were likely to lead to academic success:

A supportive school-wide climate, school leadership, a customized learning environment, articulation and coordination within and between schools, use of native language and culture in instruction, a balanced curriculum that includes both basic and higher-order skills, explicit skill instruction, opportunities for student-directed instruction, use of instructional strategies that enhance understanding, opportunities for practice, systematic student assessment, staff development, and home and parent involvement. (p. 171)

These findings have been confirmed in other more recent studies, such as those by Corallo and McDonald (2002) and Marzano (2003). Thus, culturally and linguistically diverse students can benefit greatly from cognitively challenging and student-centered instruction that employs students' cultural and linguistic resources.

**The Lived Reality of Today's Linguistically Diverse Students**

Several studies of students' everyday experience provide a powerful but painful picture of how schools meet—or do not meet—the challenge of linguistic diversity. These studies are not meant as simple critique; they provide an understanding of how much further educators need to go in meeting the challenge. Valdés (2001) conducted an important study analyzing the manner in which recent immigrant students are served by schools. Focusing on the way that four Latino students' initial experience with U.S. schooling shaped their future possibilities, Valdés found that school curriculum for these students focused on English-language instruction at the
expense of access to engaging grade-level curriculum in key subject areas such as science, social studies, and math. Valdés describes a significant relationship between the social position of cultural and linguistically diverse students and families in the broader society and the quality of education they receive. The students in Valdés's research found themselves in "ESL ghettos," which afforded little possibility for academic advancement.

In a study similar to the Valdés (2001) research, Olsen (1997) studied the experiences of Latino and Asian immigrant students at Madison High School as they attempted to become "American." The teachers at Madison High believed that through hard work and perseverance, all students—regardless of their linguistic and cultural background—could succeed. The teachers accepted without question the idea of the U.S. meritocracy. Through careful interviews and observations, Olsen revealed the tensions and contradictions of this view. First, linguistically diverse students were segregated in the overall school context. They found themselves in low academic tracks with the most inexperienced teachers. Second, immigrant students felt extreme pressure to forgo defining elements of their own identities—their culture, language, dress, and values. School for recent immigrant students was not a wondrous opportunity but a process in which they found their place on the U.S. racial hierarchy.

Other researchers such as Toohey (2000) and Valenzuela (1999) have documented how racism, xenophobia, and pro-English attitudes are powerful factors that prevent educators from seeing linguistic diversity as an educational resource. To be sure, there are students who rise above these challenges, but school practices and policies unfortunately make this difficult. The next section of this chapter provides a synopsis of classroom-level issues. It examines what types of knowledge and skills will help teachers who have English language learners in their classrooms. The purpose of that section is to synthesize some of the important dimensions of second language acquisition for content area and second language (ESL and bilingual) teachers as well as to describe strategies to use in the classroom.

**VIEWS ON LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

This section summarizes what teachers of second language learners need to know about language, language learners, and language learning and teaching. Becoming proficient in a language or dialect can take on different meanings in various social, academic, and personal settings. In attempting to make students learning a second language or dialect successful in schools, scholars have observed that a distinction needs to be made between learning a language socially and academically (Cummins, 1981; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000–2001). Therefore, an important goal for teachers should be to enable students to successfully use academic English (Bartolomé, 1998; Gibbons, 2002; Valdés, 2004). In discussing language learning and teaching, we focus most of our discussion on teaching academic English and the language needed for content area subjects.

**Language**

Wong Fillmore and Snow (2000) describe the most salient aspects of language that will be helpful for teachers of second language/dialects to know. Language is a complex system of communication that includes the following major subsystems: pragmatics (sociolinguistic rules governing language use; e.g., apologizing in a specific language and culture); syntax (rules of
word order in a sentence); semantics (meanings of words and sentences); morphology (rules of word formation); and phonology (the sound system of a language). When people are using language, they must manipulate and coordinate all of these subsystems together, as the following example illustrates. A child in a classroom who asks *What is photosynthesis?* would need to know the social convention of when and how to ask this question. The student would also need to know how to form a wh-question and to pronounce the words in a way that is intelligible to the person(s) being asked.

**Language Learners**

A number of learner characteristics can affect second language learning and success in an English-speaking school setting. Here, we focus on some of the most salient ones, such as age, the learner’s first language, and motivation. Examples of others that can be considered are learning styles and aptitude. Although these tend to be described by researchers as individual learner characteristics, it is important to note that such characteristics are shaped by cultural and social contexts.

**Age**

There has been a push in the United States and in several other countries to start early schooling for children in a second/foreign language because younger learners are thought to be better language learners. Research indicates that younger children show advantages in terms of pronunciation and accent. Several researchers (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2001; Johnson & Newport, 1989; Patowski, 1980) also believe that there is a “critical period,” a time when the brain is more predisposed to learn all linguistic features of a language, not just phonological ones. This belief has been challenged by others who did not find an advantage to being younger (Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978). Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle found that adolescents and adults learn at a faster rate, especially in the early stages of language development. Even among scholars who have found the data on the critical period convincing (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson), the recommendation has been that programmatic decisions should not be based on the age of learners. Rather, the research indicates that more attention should be paid to the quality of the programs and the quantity and quality of exposure to the second/foreign language than to the age of students.

**First Language**

Research indicates that all second language learners, regardless of their first language, seem to progress through similar developmental stages of language learning in some areas. For example, researchers have found that there is a developmental sequence for learners of English as a second language in question formation, negation, and past tense formation (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Learners go through preverbal negation (e.g., *I no play*) and are then able to insert the negative term with auxiliary verbs, although not necessarily correctly (e.g., “I can’t play,” “He don’t play”), and are finally able to produce negative sentences correctly (e.g., “She doesn’t play”). Additionally, there are specific errors that we can now attribute to a learner’s first language. For example, Spanish-speaking learners will stay in the preverbal negation stage (*I no like*)
longer because of this structure's similarity to the Spanish language (*No quiero*). This example demonstrates that the popular belief that it is easier to learn a second language the more similar it is to the first language is not necessarily true. Actually, there can be a tendency to revert to the rules of the first language if they share many similarities. Thus, it is useful for teachers to learn about cross-linguistic similarities and differences in terms of different aspects of language, such as phonemes, spelling, writing systems, and sociolinguistic rules (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

Overall, whatever the learner's first language, students who are literate and have had prior formal schooling in their first language have been found to outperform students who have not had this experience (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984).

**LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

**Theories of Second Language Learning**

While many theories have been advanced to explain second language learning, three main theories have had the most influence on second language students in schools. The three major theories are:

- Input hypothesis
- Interactionist theory
- Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)

We describe these theories in detail.

**Input Hypothesis**

The most influential set of hypotheses or single theory that has influenced teachers has been that of Stephen Krashen (1985), the *input hypothesis*. He, with others, has advanced the following hypotheses: (1) Acquisition is the unconscious process of acquiring a language through interaction while learning is the formal process of memorizing rules and structures of a language. He contends that language learning is most successful when built on the principle of acquisition through activities that are mostly communicative in nature. (2) Language learning consists of particular sequences and stages, an example of which was given earlier in the way negation develops for language learners. (3) For language acquisition to occur, learners must be offered comprehensible input, language that is just beyond the learner's current level.

This last part of Krashen's theory has been the most influential on classroom teaching. The recommendation for teachers is that input in the classroom can be made comprehensible through strategies such as creating visual cues and establishing background knowledge. Overall, Krashen's proposals suggest that language teaching be conducted in the most natural, communicative situations in which learners are relaxed and teachers are not focusing on error correction.

**Interactionist Theory**

The second theory discussed in this section is the *interactionist theory* (Lightbown & Spada, 1999), which has widely influenced and been influenced by research and teaching on immersion
programs in Canada. The basic tenet of this theory is that both input and output are crucial for language learning. Teachers who draw on this theory create tasks for which conversational interactions between speakers are central to the process of language learning. This process has been described as the negotiation of meaning, which in many ways is similar to the process between caretakers and children in first-language acquisition.

**BICS and CALP**

The third theory that has most influenced the teaching of English in schools is one that focuses explicitly on language and content learning and pertains to the distinction made between learning a language socially and academically. Learning another language academically is known to be a lengthy process that can take from seven to ten years (Cummins, 1984), as compared to conversational proficiency in a language, which can take from one to five years. Cummins distinguished these language learning processes with the terms basic interpersonal conversational skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Academic language offers few clues for learners and is therefore much more difficult to learn, while BICS occurs "when there are contextual supports and props for language delivery" (Baker, 2006, p. 174). If we think of it, many of us might know how to converse with a speaker in our second or third language but might have difficulty listening to an academic lecture in that language or writing a technical report. This is especially true for students who start this process in the later grades (Collier, 1987; Cummins & Swain, 1986), for students who are not literate or academically skilled in their first language, and for many students who come from war-torn countries.

We should also bear in mind the limitations of the BICS and CALP typologies (Wiley, 1996a). First, the strict dichotomy between the two is viewed by some scholars as overly simplistic (Edelsky et al., 1983; Wiley, 1996b). In some cases, as with individuals who can read but not converse in a second language, CALP can be developed before BICS. There is also danger in viewing BICS as inferior to CALP. We know that oral conversation can be equally demanding in certain settings. Second, the notion of academic language is somewhat abstract. In a more recent reworking of this distinction, Cummins (2000) has attempted to define academic proficiency in more concrete terms, such as "the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling" (p. 67). Other attempts to make this concept more useful for teachers can be found in the national ESL standards (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL], 1997). Nonetheless, there is still considerable debate about how academic language should be defined (Valdés, 2004).

**Instructional Methods and Approaches**

The input hypothesis and the interactionist theories have provided a significant set of guidelines for creating optimal language learning environments. These theories have influenced teachers and methods in several ways, including (1) making teachers think through how to make verbal input comprehensible at a level that is slightly beyond the learner’s level (e.g., using visuals, paraphrasing), (2) creating conversation-based activities (e.g., problem-solving activities) that are of a low-anxiety level, and (3) setting up tasks so that learners are forced to talk and listen to each other (e.g., through jigsaw activities). Krashen’s work has been associated most closely
with the *natural approach*, a method he and Terrell (1983) developed that integrates a number of these strategies.

The interactionist theory, as indicated, has been cited mostly in conjunction with immersion programs in Canada. In these programs, researchers have found that the most effective language learning situation is one that is content based or communicatively oriented (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Therefore, as Cummins's work suggests, instruction offered to language minority students in schools should be where language and content are jointly taught. The research and scholarship subsequent to that of Cummins has focused on the importance of learning academic language and content (Bartolomé, 1998; Gibbons, 2002; Valdés, 2004). Much of this research has shown how instruction for these students learning a second language must concentrate on acquiring academic language and subject-specific knowledge in several ways.

Students can attain subject-specific knowledge by using their primary language or with richer and more sustained collaborations between content area teachers and English language specialists. When these strategies are used, ESL pullout classes do not focus exclusively on decontextualized skills and language. In many cases, content area teachers will need training in making language and content more accessible to ELL students. Content-based instruction (CBI), in which language is taught in conjunction with the academic subject matter, can be used (Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989). One example of CBI is specifically designed academic instruction (SDAI) in English, which has often been referred to as *sheltered instruction*.

A comprehensive program of sheltered instruction that has gained wide recognition is the *sheltered instruction observation protocol* (SIOP) (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). Another is the *cognitive academic language learning approach*, which focuses on developing language, content, and learning strategies (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). A more recent method that is becoming widely adopted is *guided language acquisition design* (Brechtle, 2001). Many of these methods are used in a large number of school districts across the United States. The resource list at the end of this chapter provides more information for mainstream teachers, including additional references for these methods.

**Instructional Strategies and Contexts for Learning**

The methods just described that recommend an integration of language and content indicate that teachers should use strategies similar to those described in the effective programs reported by August and Hakuta (1997), Corrallo and McDonald (2002), and Marzano (2003). These strategies incorporate a student-centered, meaning-based, context-rich classroom and a cognitively demanding curriculum. Schleppegrell, Ačhuget, and Oceica (2004) summarize these strategies:

Typical recommendations for a CBI approach include:

- a focus on disciplinary vocabulary and use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies, especially visual aids and graphic organizers to make meanings clear...
- Teachers are encouraged to help students comprehend and use the language structures and discourse features found in different subjects and to facilitate students' practice with academic tasks such as listening to explanations, reading for information, participating in academic discussions, and writing reports. (p. 69)
A successful class for English language learners is one in which the following features often are present: a high level of noise; students working in groups with hands-on materials; word walls, graphic organizers, displays of student work; teachers modeling strategies; assessment being used to drive instruction; and high expectations for all students. One example of teacher modeling is to provide students with explicit instruction in different learning strategies for gaining academic competence, such as writing a summary (Chamot & O’Malley, 1994). Teachers cannot assume that students will know how to write a summary and must either model for them the necessary steps or collaborate with an English language specialist to accomplish the task. Setting up cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986) or complex instruction groups (Cohen & Lotan, 1997) in which students are given different roles in completing a project are examples of effective group work. In addition, teachers need to learn tools for authentic assessment (O’Malley & Valdez Peirce, 1996) in order to evaluate students in different ways that facilitate learning.

Although many of the strategies and methods that we have described can be very helpful, we should realize that a number of scholars have challenged the assumption that they are sufficient to help second language students succeed, especially students in the higher grades and in gaining language skills equal to their native English-speaking peers. Bartolomé (1998), Gibbons (2002), and Valdés (2004) stress the need to create events in which students have to “address real or imaginary distant audiences with whom they can assume little shared knowledge” (Valdés, p. 122) in order to make them “elaborate linguistic messages explicitly and precisely to minimize audience misinterpretation” (Bartolomé, 1998, p. 66). Schleppegrell et al. (2004) discuss the need to delve deeply into disciplinary-specific linguistic challenges, such as those found in social studies textbooks.

Teachers should always remember that the education of linguistically diverse students is situated in larger issues about immigration, distribution of wealth and power, and the empowerment of students (Cahnmann & Varghese, 2006; Varghese & Stritikus, 2005). Thus, effective classroom strategies and climate must be situated in a supportive school and societal context. Along with the academic focus, teachers should work toward making the classroom a welcoming place for students and their families. The cultural and linguistic resources that students bring to school, especially with the involvement of parents and community partners, should also be integrated and celebrated in the classroom.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter stresses the social, political, and historical realities that influence schooling for linguistically diverse students. It first examines linguistically diverse populations in the United States and considers how recent trends in immigration have influenced linguistic diversity in the United States. To understand the experiences of immigrant students in schools, the political and economic realities that drive and shape immigration must be examined. Immigration has changed the look and feel of schools in every state in the United States. The manner in which schools receive linguistically diverse students is directly related to the ways in which they are perceived and treated by society. In the early 21st century, immigrants provide a source of cheap labor as well as highly developed skills and abilities that fuel the U.S. economy. Immigrant communities find themselves pinched by social and economic pressures. Thus, it is important for teachers to consider how immigrant populations are viewed by their host countries.