

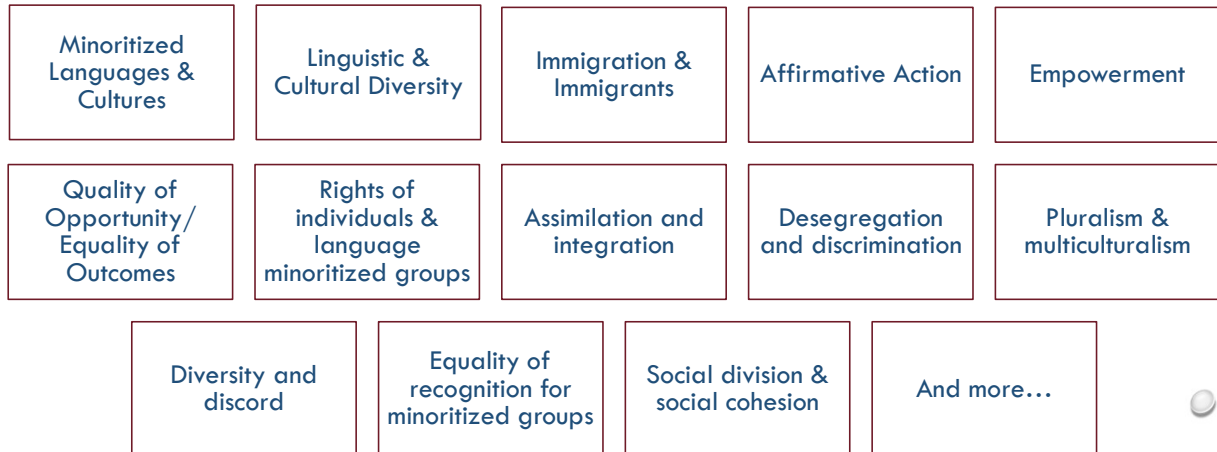
Understanding the Aims of Bilingual Education through Political and Ideological Frameworks

Assignment #2
ECDA 7005
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INTRODUCTION

Language ideologies = Basic beliefs about:



+ **POLITICAL AGENDAS**

Baker, 2025, p. 429

What does “Ideologies & Politics in Society” mean in relation to bilingual education?
Language ideologies are basic beliefs about the following (taken from Baker)
In addition, it is not just basic beliefs, but also political agendas related to all of the above + personal political agendas (e.g. being reelected)

History shows: all bilingual models were developed in the context of political agendas; academic reasons usually minor role (such as that bilingualism is good for the cognition)

INTRODUCTION CONT'D

- All bilingual educational models were developed **in the context of political agendas & ideologies**
- Academic/ linguistic reasons usually plays only a **minor role**

History shows: all bilingual models were developed in the context of political agendas; academic reasons usually minor role (such as that bilingualism is good for the cognition)

FRAMEWORKS/ THEORETICAL MODELS

Bourhis' framework of ideological orientations

Pluralist
Civic
Ethnist
Assimilationist

Ruiz' orientations to language planning

Language as A:
RIGHT
Problem
Resource

Wiley's language policy typology

Promotion-oriented
Tolerance-oriented
Restricted-oriented
Repression-oriented

I will demonstrate this by analyzing some select bilingual education models; reference will be made to Bourhis' *Bourhis' framework of Ideological Orientations towards immigrants and language policy*, Ruiz' orientation to language planning and Wiley's language policy typology

Ruiz and Wiley's framework

Example will be from monolingual, weak and strong forms of bilingual educational models

SEGREGATIONIST EDUCATION

- Minority language groups are **denied access** schooling attended by majority language speakers → **forced** to remain monolingual in the minority language
- Ruling elite want to maintain **subservience and segregation**, by not giving access to a “more powerful language”
- Goal is Apartheid
- Clear ethnist ideology
- Repression-oriented language policy
- Language is seen as a problem and resource

Historical examples: South Africa and African Americans in the U.S.

I will start the least common, but perhaps the most obvious example, where language and language policies are basically used as “political weapon”

HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

“ The realities of heritage language education **cannot be separated from political and ideological contexts** in which certain languages are *supported, demanded, removed, or replaced* through state-sanctioned mechanisms, particularly **language policies and schooling**. ”

Cushing-Leubner (2020; quoted in Baker, 2025, p. 248)

2) We will have a look at heritage language education.

Read the quote. This quote shows that heritage language education has a lot to do with language rights

HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION CONT'D

- Focus on language rights
 - Minoritized languages of immigrant communities & indigenous communities (e.g. Native American languages in N. America/ Aboriginal communities in Australia & New Zealand)
 - Often seen as “political gesture” to acknowledge ethnic diversity (Lewis, 2025)
 - Revitalization or maintenance in the context of language shift
- Aim: pluralism/ enrichment/ maintenance

‘Language as a **right**’ / **Promotion-oriented** language policies/ **Civic orientation**

- Heritage language education has a strong emphasis on language rights and protecting or cultivating minoritized languages
- Focus is on immigrant or indigenous communities
- Can involve revitalization efforts or maintenance in the contact of language loss

HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION CONT'D

- Strong & weak forms
- Often community based & informal settings
- Language goals may be secondary
- Evidence that minoritized language students that can maintain/ develop their home language have **enhanced self-esteem and sense of identity**.
- Contentious in Canada, especially with growing immigration; anxieties regarding “social tension and effects on integration and stability of Canadian society”

Baker, 2025, p. 290- 291

A few different comments and aspects of heritage language

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN N. AMERICA

(example)

**Language as a problem/
Repression-oriented**



**Language as a right/
promotion-oriented**

In the U.S.:

*"...the first step toward civilization
,... is to teach them the English
language..." (Atkins, 1887)*



Indian Education Act (1972), Native
American Language Preservation Act
(2006) and others, led to establishment
of many heritage language programs

In Canada:

Indian residential school system was
declared "cultural genocide" in 2015



Indigenous Languages Act (2019) as
part of reconciliation & revitalization
efforts

Baker, 2025, p. 253

Historically, attempts of forced assimilation and eradication of their native language

Went from repression-oriented to promotion-oriented/ language as a problem to
language as a right

MONOLINGUAL FORMS OF EDUCATION



Source: OpenAI, 2026

THE MELTING POT METAPHOR

- Based on an **assimilationist ideology**
- Language as a **problem**: other languages are a **threat to unity, integration**
- Tolerance/ restricted language policies
- In the name of **equal opportunities**
- Target groups: Immigrants & indigenous language groups

Next up, we will look at the different forms grouped under “Monolingual forms of Education” They are all together, because there is significant overlap and also research/ evidence is often not on one specific model, but more generally about the philosophy behind it.

MONOLINGUAL FORMS IN THE U.S. (HISTORICALLY)

Educational bills as “**stepchild of the Civil Rights Act**” (Garcia, 1991)

- **1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act & 1968 VII Title Bilingual Education Act**
 - Result of political strategies to funnel federal poverty funds to the southwest
 - not due to educational issues among immigrant groups
- **Bilingual Education Act** (re-authorized 1974):
 - transitional bilingual education stressed
 - dual language programs not allowed

To demonstrate/ exemplify the underlying philology and how it developed, a look into U.S. history is helpful:

Several Bills that were passed made the way for bilingual education in the U.S.

MONOLINGUAL FORMS IN THE U.S. (HISTORICALLY CONT'D)

- **Lau vs. Nichols: Issue equal opportunity**

- Violation of equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment & Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- Submersion programs outlaws & some growth of heritage language programs

- **No Child Left Behind (2001)**

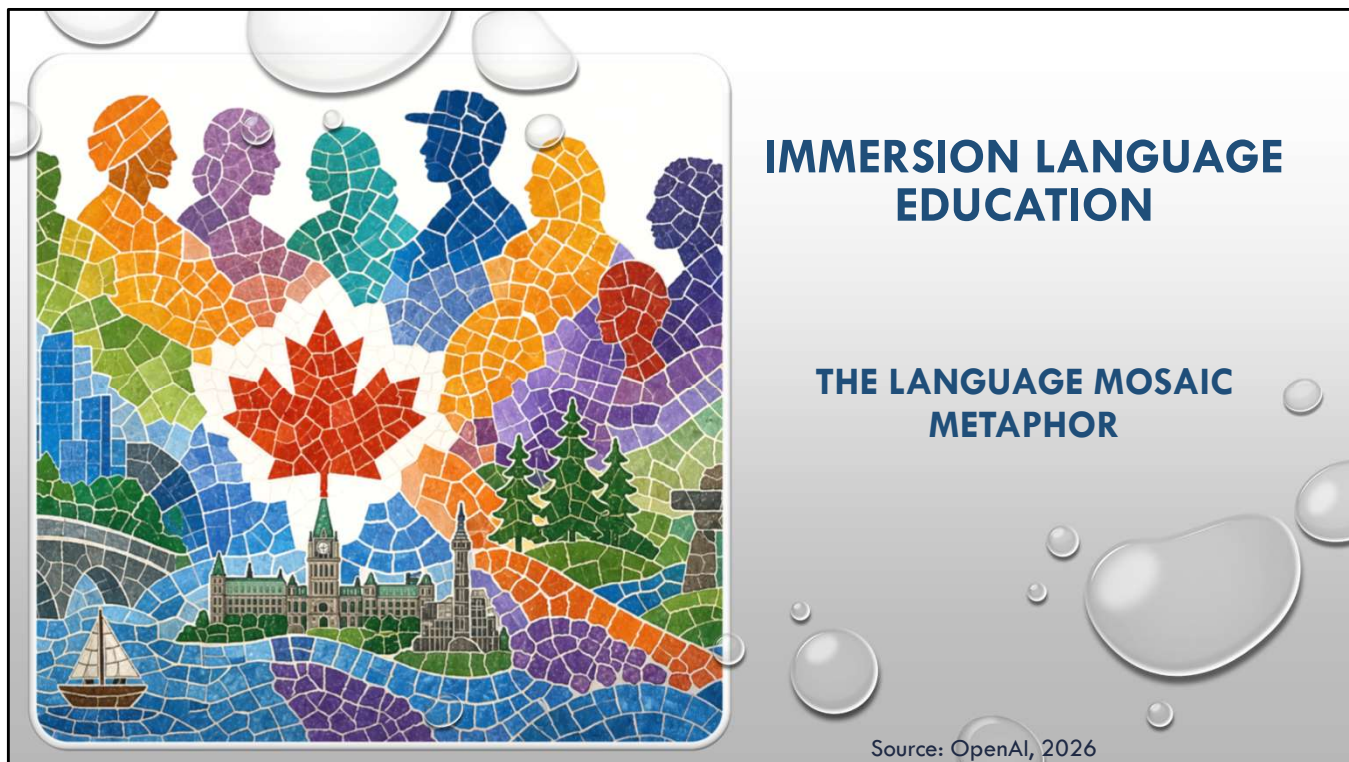
- Office of Bilingual Education and Language Minority Affairs → Office of English Language Acquisition
- The Bilingual Education Act → Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient & Immigrant Students
- Limited funding for bilingual programs; English-only programs favored

Conclusion: Language policies **strongly driven by language & civil rights**
Rarely based on research about language learning or benefits of bilingualism

To demonstrate/ exemplify the underlying philology and how it developed, a look into U.S. history is helpful:

Several Bills that were passed made the way for bilingual education in the U.S.

Conclusion: very strongly driven by a right orientation/ equal rights/ melting pot image – focus is on them becoming proficient in English, not on other languages



IMMERSION LANGUAGE EDUCATION

THE LANGUAGE MOSAIC METAPHOR

Source: OpenAI, 2026

Language Mosaic – each language is separate, but together creates a beautiful mosaic
The image of mosaic fits several models, but especially the immersion language education

IMMERSION EDUCATION (HISTORICAL)

- Developed from an educational experiment in St. Lambert, Canada, in the **context of societal bilingualism**
 - A community/ parent-initiative, but inspired by the Quiet Revolution
 - Goals:
 - bring about **societal change** & improve relationships between French & English communities
 - bilingualism only secondary goal
- Not only an educational, but **political experiment**

(Genesee, 1988)

Conclusion: could argue that this was mainly a parent/ community initiative, but the connection to the political situation is clear/ cannot be ignored

The fact that bilingualism is only secondary goal is clear when you look at how it was evaluated and deemed “effective/ successful”, e.g. evaluations of the experiment investigated change of attitudes & relationships

IMMERSION EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

In the U.S.:

- To revive/ preserve threatened indigenous languages (e.g. Navajo, Hawaiian)/
- Provision for middle-/ upper-class students to become bilingual in two majority languages

In Wales & Ireland:

- establishing a Celtic identity separate from England

Finland:

- Developed from politically active women's group to integrate Swedish & Finnish-speaking children

IMMERSION EDUCATION CONCLUSION

- Goal is not only to “*create bilinguals but also widen students’ cultural horizon and sensitize them to second language cultures and values*”

(Baker, 2025, p. 286)

- Pluralistic ideology
- Language as a right & resource
- Promotion-oriented language policy

Goal is to create that mosaic – sees language both as a right (but less in terms of human rights/ civil rights like in the U.S., but more as it is an official language) and a resource to create the beautiful mosaic



Now moving on to “Mainstream Education in majority languages” – also an umbrella term
Has again a very different underlying philosophy – often the image of language garden is used

THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS MOVEMENT

- Developed in the context of the European Union (historically: EEC)
- Started in Brussels; HQ of most EU institutions
- Promotion of European identity & maintenance of national identity/ language
- Social engineering & focus on language equality
 - “European hours”
 - a sophisticated time-table
 - → goal is to avoid stereotyping and the emergence of ghettos

Clear **pluralistic** ideology and **promotion-oriented** language policy

One example of mainstream education in majority languages is the European schools movement

The probably most explicit example of designing something to promote a certain ideology that is not naturally present (although Brussels etc. is very multilingual and many students & their families are, too)

DUAL-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

- Goals: maintenance, pluralism and enrichment
- Promotion-oriented
- Language as a resource
- Often intentionally used for the purpose of **peacebuilding**:
 - “Peaceful coexistence with peoples of other nations” as explicit goal
 - “genuine cross-cultural friendships may develop, and issues of stereotyping and discrimination may be diminished” (Arias &Markos, 2018)
 - “working for peace and humanity in the midst of conflict, racism and terror”

Another example of mainstream education in majority languages are dual language programs

- No single point of origin (in terms of specific historical or political situation), but situated (in the U.S.) in terms of civil rights movement, different Bilingual Education bills, and also innovation in pedagogy

DUAL-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS & PEACE



The Macedonian/Albanian DLE program

Demonstrated success in

- “Aiding community rebuilding after the war & growth of cross-ethnic friendships”
- Increasing students’ respect for different languages & cultures, and to help resolve ethnic conflict

(Tankersley, 2001, quoted in Baker, 2025, pp. 247-248)



The Arab-Hebrew/ Palestinian-Jewish bilingual program (Israel)

Aims:

- Breakdown barriers of mistrust and build peace
- “Be a showcase to reveal can Jews and Arabs can... seek to live together in peace, forgiveness and reconciliation”

(Aamara et al., 2009, quoted in Baker, 2025, p. 248)

CONCLUSION

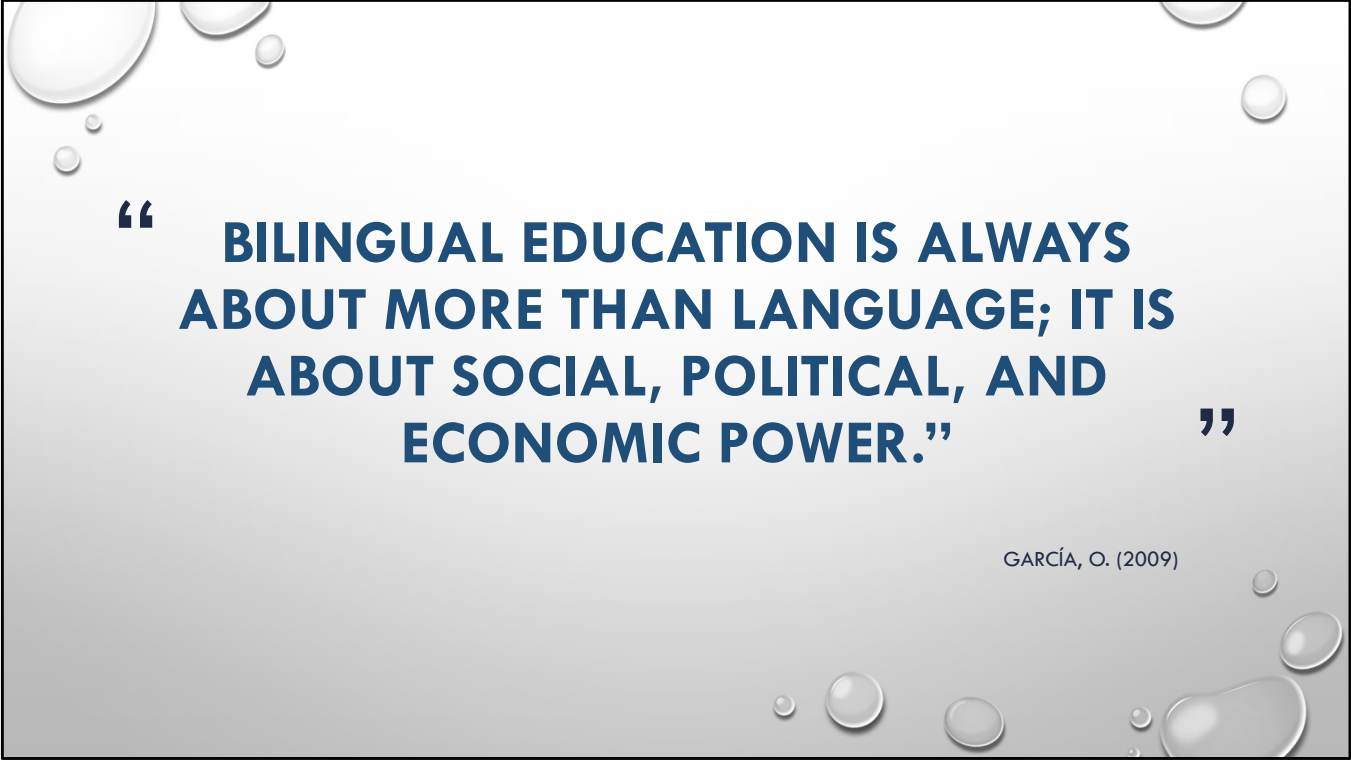
- The majority of bilingual education models were developed in a specific sociocultural context and/ or political situation
- Community/ parent initiative or involvement does not negate the political dimension
- Political/ societal goals often explicitly mentioned
- Language goals often secondary (explicitly or implicitly)

→ Specific forms of bilingual education cannot be applied to other contexts, without taking the sociocultural/ political context in which schooling takes place into account (Genessee, 1988)

(e.g. immersion education based on the Canadian model

BUT: none of this is really a surprise; does not make bilingual models ineffective or “bad”; evaluations need to look at original goals and context and not simply the linguistic side;

BUT research can and should inform those goals



**“ BILINGUAL EDUCATION IS ALWAYS
ABOUT MORE THAN LANGUAGE; IT IS
ABOUT SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND
ECONOMIC POWER.” ”**

GARCÍA, O. (2009)

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