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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the politics of English as the official language in the United States, focusing on the move to declare English the official language within the 104th Congress. Though the bill lapsed in the Senate, movement to declare English official at the federal level has continued. Several large national organizations work hard to see this effort through to completion. The paper describes a study of the official English movement which used the Q methodology, direct interviews with 45 people who were the main protagonists for the officialization of English in the 104th Congress and their main antagonists, and analysis of the discourse of advocacy literature, exemplar speeches, and radio debates on official English between these groups. Q methodology data involved 54 interviews examining the subjective positions and ideology of key players on both sides of the official English debate. Data analysis indicated that there are some relatively stable and recurring positions on the issue that frame the debate and can be directed toward defining different sets of problems as the objects of policy. People on both sides of the debate strongly agreed that the issue of English in U.S. public culture is a serious matter. (Contains 14 references.) (SM)

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? OFFICIAL ENGLISH IN THE USA

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Colloquium: Debating New Research Directions in
Language Planning, Policy and Politics

Convenor: Helen Moore

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Introduction

An important dimension of political debate, and of public policy making, is the constitution of problems. However, few studies of language policy seem sensitive to the constitution of problems and tend to take problems as given. Even fewer studies look at the politics of debate as a principal source of information. The purpose of the present paper is to examine the politics of official English in the United States with a view to seeing how this dispute exemplifies problem definition. The aim is to show that by subjecting political discourse to empirical examination some relatively stable and recurring positions can be identified. These can be seen to frame the official English debate and to be directed towards defining different sets of problems as the objects of policy.

Why Official English?

The dispute around Official English has been selected for examination *precisely because* it occurs in a dominantly English speaking nation, with settled institutions, and in which English has an undisputed, *ipse facto*, recognition and status. This context is one where the vocabulary of 'protection' of the national language would not normally apply. There is therefore an improbability to this case of language planning that promises to offer insights into why policies are adopted, who benefits and in what ways. In my view far too much language planning literature is naïve about the political processes and disputes that lead to the kinds of language planning that scholars examine.

Specifically the paper addresses the moves to declare English official within the legislative program of the 104th Congress, November 1994–November 1996. The 104th Congress proved to be an appropriate choice for a study of discourse and policy. It was the first Republican dominated Congress in 40 years. House Speaker Newt Gingrich made a specific aim of changing public discourse of

governance and as far as language policy was concerned there were seven separate proposals on language policy, two arguing for a multilingual view of America, the rest proposing different degrees and levels of officialisation of English.

Most importantly, the 104th was the first Congress in which floor action (actual debate, committee consideration and a vote) on these draft pieces of legislation occurred. The culmination was the adoption of an official English Act by 259 votes in favour and 169 votes against on 1 August 1996 in the House of Representatives. This piece of legislation is known as the Bill Emerson English Language Empowerment Act of 1996 (104723) and contains two chapters; Title I English Language Empowerment and Title II: Repeal of Bilingual Voting Requirements). Apart from its declarative function, ie making English *the* *jure* official language the specific provisions of the Act were few: bilingual voting provisions were to be repealed, all citizenship swearing in ceremonies were to be conducted only in English, federal 'government business' would take place only in English and citizens would be granted a 'private right of action' to sue if any government service were denied them because they spoke English.

The Bill lapsed in the Senate. However, the moves to declare English official at the Federal level have continued and there are now more than 22 successes at State level. There are several large national organisations very determined to see through this project. All in all these provide a fascinating case study of how we understand language policy and planning in general, official English in particular. In addition this case offers an opportunity to consider a language policy instance in which symbolic mobilisation is key to the public interpretation of the issue.

It is also interesting for the purposes of this analysis to study the processes of the making of policy; ie policy being made. Much language planning and language policy analysis is *post hoc* and tends to take at face value the claims that officials and policy texts offer about the purposes of particular policies on language. Examining a policy in the process of being made, as is the ongoing effort to declare English the official language of the United States, offers a 'live and moving' opportunity to scrutinise the process of policy making; a process full of dispute and contest. A central part of this process involves the definition of the problem that the policy will address. The means whereby this process is negotiated is political discourse. Hence these two elements, discourse and problem definition, are the major themes of the present analysis.

Q methodology

This paper reports a small part of the results from a wider study of the official English movement. This study utilises a methodology called Q. What is not reported here are two related data gathering exercises that support and extend the classifications and understandings produced by Q methodology, and those parts of the Q analysis that deal with issues other than problem definition. The other data sources are:

- 1 Direct interviews with 45 individuals who were the main protagonists for the officialisation of English in the 104th Congress and their main antagonists.
- 2 An analysis of the discourse of advocacy literature, exemplar speeches, and radio debates on official English between these two groups.

The data from Q methodology, described below, consists of 54 'interviews' examining the subjective positions and ideology of key players in the official English issue. The 'respondents' are individuals; mainly activists for and against legislation to declare English the official language of the United States (Appendix

III). They represent many nuanced positions about the role of languages in the US, but tended to adopt opposing positions on the legislation before Congress in the 104th Congress. There are also a number of 'interested, intelligent observers' ie individuals with views about the issues and knowledge about the field the issue addresses, but who are not necessarily paid up activists. I deliberately chose these people to explore in depth activists' understandings and representations of what they felt they were engaged in and the views of 'opinion makers' in general. The paper does not say anything about how representative these activists' views are of the wider population's views or attitudes. My intention is to examine the views of elites and to examine this as they themselves communicate their position. For this reason I was attracted to Q methodology since it promises to reduce researcher overwriting and framing of participants' own understandings.

Q-method was invented in the 1930s by the British psychologist William Stephenson (Stephenson 1953; Brown 1980; Brown 1986; Brown 1996). McKeown and Thomas (1988) describe Q methodology as a way of "objectively" studying subjectivity given that it is communicable and self-referring but that methods used to study subjectivity mustn't alter or destroy its self-referent character. Essentially this involves retaining as much of the respondents' own characterisation of the issue being examined as possible. Q does not address patterns across variables (how many red headed persons there are in Costa Rica) but rather with patterns within and across individuals (what a selected sample of these red headed Costa Ricans truly think and feel about red headedness in a dark haired culture).

Subjectivity is taken to mean "a person's communication of his or her point of view" (McKeown and Thomas 1986: 12) and Q methodology provides a

“systematic and rigorously quantitative means for examining human subjectivity” (McKeown and Thomas 1986: 7).

Q methodology was selected because it involves very detailed examinations of the subjective predispositions of participants in debates. I take this to mean more than ‘views’ ‘opinions’ or ‘attitudes’; these are accessible by more widely practiced opinion or attitude surveys. The present study aimed to work closely with a key activists on both sides of the debate to examine how they framed, named and characterised the issue in dispute, by presenting them with evidence of what they and others had said on the issue and asking them to arrange this evidence according to their own position.

Three categories of person were represented among the respondents: a small sub-sample of well informed individuals; and two large subsamples of ‘activists’ selected because they were prominent individuals who held opposing positions. These key activists are seen to be opinion leaders; a considerable number were invited by Congress standing committees to offer evidence to the official hearings held by the Congress to consider the draft legislation, were cited by various sponsors of the draft legislation in speeches made in Congress and were prominent in radio, TV and other debates on the issue of official English.

The Process

The respondents were asked to rank a list of 64 cards that reproduced commonly occurring statements on the official English-bilingual education-multilingualism conflict in response to the researcher’s request to: *Please rank these statements according to which most closely reflect your point of view.*

The ranking was a rating on a scale of -5 -4 -3- 2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 from least to most congruent with the respondent's view, with zero indicating statements about which the responder was either neutral, or indifferent.

The resulting data were subjected to two differing sets of analysis. The rankings given by the participants were scored and subjected to three mathematical operations: correlation, factor analysis and factor scores (McKeown and Thomas 1988:47). These processes produced two recurring factors, i.e. statistical loads on the statements that constitute the two main discourses. Only two are analysed in this paper, a further one is a weaker variant of one of these discourses and is still to be fully analysed. Second, a series of interpretive discussions followed with the participants so that the researcher could understand how the statements fit into a narrative structure.

The statements presented to the respondents were carefully selected. A large range of statements was collected with a view to representing the historical, philosophical, ideological and political dimensions of the status of English in the United States. The wide range of statements meant that they were anecdotal, rhetorical-political and scientific or evidentiary. The statements are therefore *naturally occurring texts*, several of which would be expected to be familiar to several, if not most, of the respondents.

Statements were located in material that was collected from key participants in the official English debates and especially from key organisations (see Appendix II) and represented things that had been said and were continuing to be said over a 10 year time frame. To reduce an initial sample of 250 statements to a manageable and meaningful number a procedure independent of the researchers' own interpretations was needed. It needs to be stressed that both the initial number of statements (250) and the eventual 64 that were put to

respondents for ranking (reproduced at Appendix I) constitute a wide range of possible positions. Statements are for, against and ambivalent in relation to the official English dispute, but all of them were statements that had been uttered by participants in the debate, and rebutted or supported by others, or positions to which some kind of reference was made in the debates. It also needs to be stressed that respondents' rankings allowed them an 11 point possibility, vastly more subtle than classical opinion surveys would permit. These were explained to involve favourable rankings from a maximum +5 through several degrees of positivity, to full neutrality or indifference (0) and from slight negativity within 1 and -2 to increasing levels of negativity and fullblown disagreement of -5.

Political Discourse

A process of selection was adopted in which each statement was analysed according to its fit within the cells of a matrix formed by the elements of political discourse. Political discourse is understood to be the kinds of elements and argument types that are contained in political debate. A matrix that frames political discourse was derived from analyses of language use within contested political frameworks (Dryzek 1990:159-169; Dryzek and Berejikian (1993).

This matrix divides political language into discourse elements *ontology, agency, motives* and *naturalised relationships* and argument claims: *defining, designating, evaluating* or *advocating*. Sixteen cells result from this process and 4 statements were selected for each cell; a final total of 64 statements.

The full matrix offers the following range; the statements that were eventually selected are numbered here and appear in Appendix I. The cell numbers in brackets.

	<i>Ontology</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Naturalness</i>
--	-----------------	---------------	-------------------	--------------------

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Defining	11 52	36 46	32 50	5 13
	22 27	56 58	54 57	9 17
Designating	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	8 45	4 6	2 3	23 24
	48 51	38 55	7 19	33 37
Evaluating	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	26 28	14 47	15 20	12 35
	43 44	61 62	25 49	41 42
Advocating	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
	10 1	53 59	30 29	34 21
	16 18	63 64	60 31	39 40

The matrix is important for understanding what constitutes a political discourse. Essentially four types of claim are made in relation to four elements of the key features of political discourse.

As an aid to understanding the 16 cells the cells 14 are described. Cell one is the intersection of Defining (an argument claim) with Ontology. Cell one therefore concerns arguments that define ontology, that is arguments that define which set of entities are recognised as existing (ethnicities, nationalities, languages, social classes, genetic inheritances, incompatible interests etc). Cell two is made up of arguments that define the degrees of agency (autonomous or constrained) that these entities are seen to have (Marxists might argue that social classes have agentive power; liberals might see that individuals do). Cell three comprises arguments which define the kinds of motives that these entities will have (such as material self-interest, or civic virtue). Cell four defines the relations among these entities (in pluralistic societies are different ethnic groups seen to inevitably in conflict; are different languages essentialised properties of cultures); and so on for the other 12 cells. The other cells therefore are the intersection

between the verb statement on the left hand (ie the rows, designating, evaluating and advocating) and the discourse features (ie the columns, ontology, agency, motivation and naturalness).

Another way to state these relationships is to say that there are four verb expressions for each statement of ontology, agency, motivation and assertions about naturalness: a definitional, designative, evaluative and advocative one. This categorisation promises to uncover dimensions to the discourses of official English that can be explored through empirical analysis such as the kinds of argumentative types that characterise the discourse positions in the field.

Results

At Appendix One the statements (in several cases these are abbreviations of what was presented to the respondents) are reproduced along with the rank votes that they were allocated. The numbers on the far right refer to the vote that each discourse allocates to each statement, ie its relative importance within that discourse. They are of course both negative and positive since all respondents allocated negative as well as positive (and indeed neutral) valuations.

Statement 1 "*One nation, one common language*" comes from Cell 13 in which the categories of entities that are seen as existing are: nations, languages, common languages and (silently) languages that are not common to all. These entities of nations and languages are advocatory in that this cell of statements advocates a position about the relations of nations and languages; in this case that united nations must have a common language.

Because this particular statement recurs in the literature of the main organisations moving to make English official, ie it is a slogan adopted by US English and English First, and commonly asserted by Congressional

Representatives in debates, virtually every respondent recognised the specificity of meaning (ie that English as the common language of the United States is needed for the country to remain united).

In post interview commentary several respondents who agreed with this statement commented that it exemplified their position, while those who disagreed found the statement to represent a fundamental challenge to their view of the political world. This particular statement was very powerful in dividing the two discourses; the discourse of official English giving this idea of single nations needing a single common language a plus 3 (out of five) while advocates of pluralism disagree very strongly allocating this idea a minus 4 (out of five).

Proceeding through all the statements reveals that although there is much variation there are also two main groupings, and these constitute the two discourses that the participants adopt. These discourses are constituted by the mathematical factor scores; ie those statements that predictably form a unity so that a single respondent who ranks one statement high will also rank a predictable set of other statements high, and vice versa.

Examining the surface level of the statements provides evidence of what the respondent thinks about the issue of official English multilingualism-bilingual education etc, while examining the underlying political discourse tells us about the kind of argumentation and framing that the individual and those with similar views engage in.

Pluribus: The discourse of language pluralism

The first of these discourses I have called the discourse of language pluralism. Linking the statements together we can form a sort of idealised narrative, the

story that the advocates of this position tell about official English issue. Chaining the statements together, using only the very high and very low scores, it runs as follows. The number in brackets refers to the statement. Only some respondents' scores equate exactly to the narrative, (that is why I call it an idealised narrative). These are respondents whose scores allocate +5 and -5 rankings with a perfect fit with the discourse scores. The majority of respondents are located along a continuum more or less closely allied with the two discourse ideals.

Bilingualism is an achievement of individuals, it should be valued and the individuals seen as national role models (26), the idea that English is not the main language of America is absurd, of course it is (46) but that is not the issue, the issue is whether children will be educated in a way that will advance their general intellectual growth while they acquire English (46), then as bilinguals they can contribute positively to the economic and cultural growth of America (10) and so we don't need to be lectured about the need for English (3), when there are huge waiting lists of immigrants wanting to learn English but insufficient funding for the teaching and services they require (3); that's what Congress should be doing, funding efforts to teach English as a second language (58); we don't like this talk of the lone superpower (12), or the assimilative melting pot (48); language maintenance is a right in a civilised state (42)

We are totally opposed to the idea that there is room for only one language in America (13) or that having more than one language makes one less American (16). The idea that having many languages is a threat to democracy is wrong (17); as is the notion of the melting pot in which we have to disregard our past to become American; this is unacceptable (48). However, we are strongly embarrassed by immigrant claims to refuse assimilation (39), but we are especially appalled that the official English advocates have described our professional work in bilingual education as child abuse in public advertisements (14) and that they characterise the issued of the bilingual education as a 'cash cow' (18) or that our motives are self-serving and about keeping well paid jobs (31).

Consistent with our view that this issue is really about making the most of the resource of bilingualism (10) within the American community we feel that the evidence is clear that two way bilingual education is the most successful education of minority children (45), and that is the real issue here, what is the best education for minority language children (46); we should aim to produce bilingualism which is beautiful (41), therefore if anything the Congress should be legislating funding for ESL (58), instead of pandering to fear of foreign speakers which is always heightened at times of war or economic difficulty (2), and this is the real menace, these created divisions where there really are none (43). We really should see bilingual Americans as role models rather than communicative lepers (26), and this kind of argument from the other side that promotes prejudice and inter-ethnic group tension (30) really should be exposed for what it is.

The issue is essentially an educational one. It is clear that our opponents see this as an issue of nationalism. We do not agree that one united nation requires that we only have one language (1), we might as well face up to the fact that the future of the nation is multilingual (22). As professional s that we are appalled that we are accused of deceiving parents and the wider community and really only looking after our own selfish interests (25)

Unum: The discourse of opposing multilingual excess and national disunity

The counter discourse construes the issue and the problem in radically different ways. This is distinctly not concerned with education, or professional service delivery, or with the evidence from research. It is concerned with constructions of nation, identity, unity and world role; what has made America prosperous and successful.

The idealised narrative runs thus:

America's success has come from the willingness of past immigrants to give up their traditions and to assimilate (4), now we have this menace to our unity which comes from divisions of immigrants wanting to stay separate from being American (43), this means that the keys to the unity of the country are under attack from within (19), of course people can speak what they like at home (this is a private freedom) but in public education there is a responsibility to teach English (44).

Assimilation into the America economic and political nation is the desire of individuals who have made the United States their home (4). This process is inevitable but an array of legislative extensions of Civil Rights thinking to language has interrupted this process so that minorities have become absorbed into a stultifying collectivism under the management of ethnicity-controlling institutions (6), among these bilingual education is an especially egregious exemplar (31). Hispanic activists have had to combat the desire of ordinary immigrants who want to assimilate (36) and become American, and who know that English is the language of opportunity (8).

Some extremists refuse to assimilate (39) and have joined a common cause with Blacks on becoming 'victims' (38) and erect an elaborate structure of institutional support to separate them from mainstream American and retain their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. In this they have had the support of self-serving professionals (18).

This alliance of ethnic bosses and elite self-serving intellectuals does not recognise America's true nature, its power in the world, and the central and unifying role of English (12); we will reap some strife from all this (5); the effects are to insult the American nation (37), to see oppression where really there is opportunity and achievement (19); the United States will not inevitably be multilingual (22) and the menace to our nation is all this emphasis on difference (43)

These groups have invented a vocabulary of 'rights claims' with which they make false accusations against the US (42); and make this an issue of racism and bigotry (47; 9);

there is more at stake in this issue than some technical question of the educational effectiveness of alternative pedagogies, or prejudice (30), or endangering public safety (21) what is at stake is the unity of the America (19).

What is the Problem?

The extended analysis of these data, supplemented by the interviews and discourse data seeks to answer this critical question: What is to be taken to be the core problem that policy on language will address?

According to the restrictionist discourse multilingual excess is the problem; multilingualism costs too much, divides the nation, stresses difference, keeps immigrants poor. Language is construed as a basically economic and commodified entity, and much of the discourse makes America into an economic entity, but there is also a strong national character too. This emerges in discussions of citizenship, for example the clauses of the Bill to make English official that require all citizenship swearing in ceremonies to be conducted only in English. America is claimed to have a stable set of underlying 'deep values' and these are only accessible in and through English.

According to the pluralist discourse the problem is the kinds of professional intervention that are appropriate in the reality of American demographic diversity. This gives rise to a discourse of evidence, research, globalisation and even a sociolinguistically oriented view of languages, rather than an essentialised view of languages which typifies many of the positions taken by restrictionists, ie the association of American with being an English speaker.

The data also reveal a kind of double standard (Zelasko 1991), this is especially strong in the interviews, but is also found in the Q analysis, that being bilingual via the retention of a minority language and the acquisition of English is less

admired than mastering a 'foreign' language from a prior base in English (Lo Bianco 2000a and 2000b)

The details of the underlying political discourse analysis are not reported here, but suffice to say that close analysis of individual respondents shows that the voices of recent immigrants in the restrictionist camp stress the economics dimension most strongly and comments that with other languages 'you can't go as far as with English'. 'Mainstream' Americans in the official English movement on the other hand more readily push the nation-language link. These people often present themselves as patriots who are "worried about America". Within the pluralist camp many participants present themselves, ie introduce the basis of their claims to express a view as coming from research, from professionalism, or from reflection on the state of things. These selflegitimations sustain the basic divisions between the discourses as an educator derived pluralist one contending a nation-affirming one that legitimates its claims on the basis of insightful knowledge and patriotism.

Fragile consensus

As an indicator of the sharply divided nature of the debate there is only one consensus item and a very large number of statements (ie 56) which distinguish factor A from B, being at least 1 vote apart. However there are several statements that produce a 'near consensus'; rather like a consensus of mutual and strong opposition. These are statements 39, 20 and 37 that are given congruently negative votes by both sides.

39.	16	<i>'We cannot assimilate--and we won't!'</i>	-5 -4
-----	----	--	-------

The unanimous deploring of this sentiment from pluralists and restrictionists alike indicates a space, slim in the overall context of the divisions, of common

ground. Essentially this statement vocalises the rejection of the assimilative pressure of wider society. It contains two elements. The first is a descriptive claim that assimilation is not possible, the second, contradicting the first, assumes that it is indeed possible but it is repudiated.

The most common word used by most respondents in discussing the Q sort was that the statement was 'aggressive'. This 'aggressive' stance, and the meaning of the statement as interpreted by most respondents, appears to tap into a common ground, a kind of shared disposition from all language strategists, activists against and those for official English. The statement appeared to embarrass the pluralists as much as it enraged the restrictionists. It also surfaces a common ground that the only legitimate activists in the politics of official English are those who somehow have 'bought into' Americaness as the platform from which the dispute is to be conducted.

Here there is a native/non-native divide that takes a primary belonging to the category 'American' as the *sine qua non* of participating in the argument.

Less strongly there is also convergent disagreement on the 'salsa remark' as it came to be called.

20. 11

-1 -2

'salsa has replaced Ketchup...it won't be too long before someone moves a bill to make Ketchup the official condiment of the nation.'

This statement was repudiated by both sides as frivolous and damaging to an underlying sense that the issue needs to be treated seriously. Pluralists commented that they considered engaging in ridicule of their opponents would elicit cries of *ad hominem* tactics from their opponents and that the statement

although supportive of their cause would render them frivolous in the judgment of 'ordinary people'.

Restrictionists described the statement as either silly or insulting. Those who considered it insulting described it as a kind of 'anti American jibe' and attributed it to 'some minority' (in fact it was a statement made by a Congressman). Those who considered it 'silly' commented that pluralists were 'cavalier' about the kind of 'damage' that was being done to the 'fabric of the nation'. The rankings are only -1 and -2 and so the 'mutuality' is not great.

There is also shared negative reaction to the Port of Entry statement.

37. 8

-2 -3

**'We should erect a sign at each port of entry into the US: Welcome to the US-
We cannot speak your language.'**

In post-response commentary this statement also was remarked upon. Although both restrictionists and pluralists considered the statement to be 'silly', 'trivial', and 'not real' several respondents, from both primary discourse positions, remarked that the statement was 'insulting to America', and one that the statement 'demeans America'.

Several questioned the source, which is in fact drawn from an influential book by a US Senator making a case for enhanced foreign language competence among Americans developed on the basis of strategic and economic American interests. The general feeling among most respondents was that 'Americans can disagree about this issue' but that this comment is an indignity to America, humbling the nation before others. The common ground here is interestingly reflective of the previous two statements, which seem to call for no overt aggression in the

debate, for its conduct being seen to be 'among Americans' and that it eschew invidious national comparisons or practices.

The sole consensus item is an interesting bolster to the above agreement. This is the 'What is the Menace?' statement, as it came to be called.

43. 9

+4 +5

'The menace to America today is the emphasis on what separates us rather than what brings us together.'

There is a high degree of shared affirmation of this statement. For the restrictionists this statement was taken to mean that pluralism and bilingual education emphasise and are based on social division. For language pluralists this statement was taken to mean that despite differences of language and culture America's citizens share national allegiance.

In a mirror image this unity, although it in fact is taken to mean different things, supports the only consensus that really can be noted in the analysis of the discourses, that a shared allegiance to the nation transcends difference, though who is transgressing this, and how such transgression is defined, differs radically.

The pluralist narrative is of shared commonness of rights, belonging and attachment to the nation (the American political nation, formalised as citizenship but separate from the 'cultural' nation) and the other that belonging to the nation involves a linguistic trade, first language for English.

Conclusion

Nations devise and circulate narratives that work to solidify citizens around shared stories of attachment, and interpretation of the past (Bhabha 1990). The narration, the nation's use of narratives as a way of gaining adherence to the interpretation of the past that bolsters the national identity is not a smooth process.

There are often conflicting narratives that vie for prominence. Dissenting narratives, or merely the repudiation of dominant narratives, constitutes one kind of conflict for the symbolic capital of a nation. In one of the American narratives the story of accommodating to diversity, of being founded on and in diversity, is constituted as a 'tradition'. In the other the American nation is not an aggregation of differences but a distinctive entity, founded on English political values, a political community, in which difference is set aside for unambiguous attachment to a common story. These wider narratives have a language ideological equivalent which here have been labelled the restrictionist and the pluralist discourses because they each have a political, or policymaking aim, to perform acts of language policy by 'discursive politics' (Yeatman 1990).

These narratives are utilised by the two prominent discourse positions to bolster their communication with the wider public. Each circulates stories that seek to make the kind of language policy being advocated, the problems it seeks to address, appear to flow within a kind of natural, traditional, way in which American values are taken forward. It is for this reason that both seek legitimation from the Constitution, from 'ordinary people' and from the 'founding fathers' (Nunberg 1992; Lo Bianco 2000a).

One problem raised by 'the problem' of official English is the problem of defining the kinds of parameters, or criteria, that define what constitutes

'American-ness'. The interesting language policy implication of this is to ask why is the nature of belonging to America a problem that claims policy making attention, and is promoted by conservatives who otherwise seek to restrict the reach of government? And why at this time in American history, at a time of its unchallenged international supremacy?

In an age of globalised economy in which all nation-states have had to cede control over some fields of the traditional jurisdictional claims of the state (population control, economic management, 'public culture') the official English debate in the US surfaces issues of national definition and identity. These are especially remarkable in the US which has classically defined itself as a political community, not a national state (statement 52 is the classic rendering of this ideology). The claim that the US is a state in which citizenship is not at all dependent on, defined or determined by, connections of ancestry, blood or other kinds of primordial ties, then claims to allocate such central importance to language (eg the strong emphasis on the exclusive role of English in citizenship swearing in ceremonies) become problematical.

The statements on which respondents actually agree, or disagree with together, indicates that both sides, indeed all sides, of the dispute consider the issue to be 'serious' that is that the role of English in American public culture is a serious matter. Given the silence of the Constitution on questions of language the attempts to remake such critical foundational thinking in the American state consciousness makes the historical significance of the move for official English of considerable importance. Constituting whether language (ie English competence) can be used as a defining quality of what it is to be an American is agreed by those who both support and dispute the idea to be a serious problem. The dissenting discourses come together in setting out what will be debated, and indeed who will be permitted to engage in the debate. The permitted

participants are those enfranchised by a verbal display that their participation in the debate will not involve denigration of the nation and those whose preparedness to engage in the debate foregrounds some kind of claim to the 'national interest'. As a corollary both discourses agree that only those who do not engage in denigrative national comparisons are legitimately able to dispute the status of English. This kind of enfranchisement to participate in the debate marks the boundaries of the discourses and brings them together where so much of the content of the dispute separates them.

From these arguments it emerges that the kind of problem of official English has much connection with ideas of national cultural belonging, and definition, as with practical matters of governance and administration. The interviews that accompany part of the study, and the other data sources collected, provide strong evidence of the discourses that are identified with Q analysis. They also enrich and extend the data used in this paper. Several of the main proponents of the legislation before the 104th Congress were very keen to identify America as the 'land of opportunity', English as the 'language of opportunity'. And America as a land where no other bonds, except attachment and loyalty, and English, defined belonging; not religion, not colour, not ethnicity. English and America go together. Some interviewees also go so far as to state that belonging to the American political community involves an attachment to a particular kind of political philosophy, individualism, explicit notions of rights, political liberalism, 'freedom' and these kinds of ideological precepts are an 'English inheritance' (see also Nunberg 1992).

This kind of cultural politics and 'deep values' discourse (see Ricento 1998) is not readily available to language planning scholarship that takes at 'face value' claims about why policies come into being.

This study aims to show that we can subject discourse to more rigorous analysis than is typically done and that such an approach can yield information and evidence of language policy 'in the making'. The main feature of policy in the making is the struggle to name the problem (s) that policy will address and to seek to understand how these come into being.

APPENDICES

1. Statements and Scores

No.	Cell	Statement	Discourses 1	2
1.	13	<i>"One nation, one common language"</i>	-4	+ 3
2.	7	<i>'Fear of foreign speakers is older than the nation, rising in times of war, economic stress and increased migration'</i>	+ 4	-1
3.	7	<i>'Language minorities don't need lectures about the importance of English, as shown by the numbers competing for scarce seats in ESL classes'</i>	+ 5	0
4.	6	<i>'America's success and prosperity have always turned on the determination of immigrants to assimilate into a common culture with common values and, yes, a common language.'</i>	-1	+ 5
5.	4	<i>'America is fast becoming a society divided by language, and with it we will inherit all the problems that stem from this development—ethnic strife, more discrimination and entrenched poverty..'</i>	-3	+3
6.	6	<i>'Bilingual government services all share a fundamental problem; they remove a strong incentive to learn English and be a productive citizen of our democracy.'</i>	-3	+4
7.	7	<i>'The formation of US English should be viewed within the wider context of the more general Reagan renaissance; that is the widespread mobilization of the right wing in the early 1980's ...'</i>	0	-1
8.	5	<i>'My children learn Spanish in school so they can grow up to be busboys and waiters. I teach them English at home so they can grow up to be doctors and lawyers.'</i>	-2	+4
9.	4		+2	-5

'As with other official English bills (this one) is chauvinistic, xenophobic divisive and discriminatory.'

10. 13 +5 +2
'It is to the economic and cultural advantage of the nation as a whole that its citizens be proficient in more than one language.'

11. 1 +1 0
'..many US citizens have native languages of other than English... and many members of our society have not had an equal opportunity to learn English.'

12. 12 -4 +1
'Our assumed common language, English, has helped make the United States the lone superpower in the world today.'

13. 4 0 +1
'The tie of language is perhaps the strongest and the most durable that can unite mankind.'

14. 10 -5 0
'Last year our government spent nearly \$8 billion abusing children...it's called bilingual education.'

15. 11 -3 0
'The aggressive movement on the part of Hispanics to reject assimilation and to seek to maintain—and give official status to—a foreign language within our borders is an unhealthy development.'

16. 13 -5 0
'We have room for but one language here and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns out people as American... no more hyphenated Americans.'

17. 4 'Democracy or Babel!' -4 0

18. 13 -4 +4
'The Bilingual Education Act is a cash-cow for a vast well-funded national bureaucracy.'

19. 7 -1 +5
'..keys to unity under attack...intellectual elites who seem embarrassed by America. What we see as opportunity they see as oppression.'

20. 11 -1 -2
'..salsa has replaced Ketchup...it won't be too long before someone moves a bill to make Ketchup the official condiment of the nation.'

21. 16 +2 -5
'An English language amendment is not just a symbolic bolster of the English language. It will disenfranchise voters. It will endanger public safety. It will put up barriers...'
22. 1 +3 -4
'..the United States might as well face the fact that the future of the country will be multilingual--whether it is English and Spanish in Florida or English and Japanese in California.'
23. 8 +1 -3
'Less initial instruction in English produces greater eventual proficiency in English. What is learned in the native language transfers to English.'
24. 8 -2 +3
'The Spanish language is totally different from English. If you concentrate on teaching a kid in just one language he can learn better. English...the sooner kids learn it well the better off they will be.'
25. 11 -4 +2
'I come before you to accuse advocates of native-language-based bilingual education of fraud... I tell you their primary purpose is to perpetuate a seriously flawed teaching method.'
26. 9 +5 -1
'It is time to see bilingual Americans as role models rather than communicative lepers.'
27. 1 -3 +1
'..all of us who..worry about the status of the English language, who worry lest the country be left once more without adequate defense..these are not separate worries..they add up to..Reagan's prayer..'
28. 9 -2 +1
'Some black and Chicano radicals also claim they are not part of America and demand multiculturalism and bilingualism.. Some..want to establish an empire, Azatlan, in the former Spanish Southwest.'
29. 15 +1 -3
'..I can only hypothesize that bilingualism and bilingual education have become another scapegoat, another casualty of truth in the growing anti-Hispanic, anti-immigrant climate we are experiencing.'
30. 15 +3 -4

'According to experts in education and psychology, the English-only movement uses arguments which promote interethnic group tension and prejudice.'

31. 15 -3 +3
'The other side gets most of its money from the government. The anti-English lobby gets millions of dollars from these programs..they've risen out of nothing; but its very well paying work.'

32. 3 0 -3
'..X blamed the bill on xenophobia, and 'blind conservatism' which, he says, are driving the nation's culture wars. There's a supremacist tinge to it.'

33. 8 'Languages are like mother's milk.' +1 0

34. 16 +3 -1
'The first day of school.. a little boy ..His world seemed dark and alone except when his teacher spoke to him in the language he understood. Then a smile came to his face...'

35. 12 -2 +1
'I have a problem with my kids....Trying to teach everything in two languages has slowed down their learning. Their minds are confused.'

36. 2 -1 +4
'In order to achieve political gains as a minority, Hispanic activists have had to fight the erosive forces of assimilation which endanger the size of their core constituency...'

37. 8 -2 -3
'We should erect a sign at each port of entry into the US: Welcome to the US-We cannot speak your language.'

38. 6 -1 +4
'(Hispanic) leaders seem more intent on vying with blacks for permanent victim status than on seeking recognition for genuine progress by Hispanics over the last three decades.'

39. 16 'We cannot assimilate--and we won't!' -5 -4

40. 16 -3 0
'A group speaking the same language is known as a nation and a nation ought to constitute a state.'

41. 12 'Bilingualism is beautiful.' +4 -1

42. 12 +3 -5

'In a civilized state, there should be no need to debate the right to maintain one's mother tongue...It is a self-evident, fundamental, human right. [the USA] is guilty of linguistic genocide..'

43. 9 +4 +5
'The menace to America today is the emphasis on what separates us rather than what brings us together.'

44. 9 +2 +5
'Let us not confuse the private freedom to use any language or keep any cultural traditions with the responsibilities of public education.'

45. 5 +4 -2
'For students in the U.S. ...the elementary school program with the most success .as measured by standardized tests across all subject areas, is two-way developmental bilingual education.'

46. 2 +5 -2
'Of course English is the language of the United States. Of course it is. The issue is whether children who come here, while they are learning English, should also be able to learn other things'

47. 10 +3 -5
'In the name of 'enhancing the role of English as the official language' we may again see a rebirth of hatred and bigotry towards limited English proficient persons.'

48. 5 -5 +1
'America is a melting pot. America is not a salad bowl. America is 'one people'. That's why English must be our official language.'

49. 11 +1 -2
'..the issue [of official English] is more a product of GOP presidential politics than good policy...an arbitrary debate that, frankly, has more to do with the agenda of the extreme right.'

50. 3 +2 -4
'So it's a manufactured problem and it's a manufactured issue designed to appeal to the prejudices and the resentments of a group of conservatives in this country.'

51. 5 +3 -3
'Furthermore, any legislation that mandates English-only instruction is in fact unconstitutional. It violates the 1923 Supreme Court decision, Meyer vs. Nebraska...'

52. 1 +1 +3

'Foreigners are always aliens in England. No one becomes English. It's a very tribal society...No one becomes Japanese. No one becomes Nigerian. But Nigerians, Japanese and English become Americans.'

53. 14 0 +2
'Our symbol is the statue of liberty torch, capturing the spirit of immigrants who learned English and became full members of the American society.'

54. 3 0 -2
'In the United States, official-English advocates firmly subscribe to the language-nation connection, though frequently on a rather superficial and occasionally pernicious level.'

55. 6 -2 +3
'It is these communities [...poor non-white recent immigrants] that have been most isolated, culturally and economically, by multilingualism and have the most to gain from a common language.'

56. 2 0 -4
'It's straight out racist because first there was affirmative action now there's English-only. So now you have African Americans and Hispanics scraping the bottom of the barrel for crumbs....'

57. 3 '.the problem is the self-appointed protectors of the minorities.' 0 +2

58. 2 +4 -1
'If anything, Congress should consider funding efforts to teach English as a second language, instead of punitive bills that would in effect bar non-English speakers from receiving services...'

59. 14 +1 -3
'Bilingual educators must continue to be advocates for those people who are not able to defend themselves.'

60. 15 +2 -1
'I remember one day trying to communicate to the teacher my need to use the restroom. She could not understand me. Tears rolled down my face...I will never forget these experiences...'

61. 10 0 +2
'The sight of striking Latino students brandishing the Mexican flag and calls by Latino leaders for 'Azatlan' (a return of California to Mexico) stir deep resentment.' 10/61

62. 10 -1 +1

'While there is no conclusive research that demonstrates the educational superiority of bilingual education over ESL advocates of bilingualism continue to make such claims.'

63. 14

+2 -2

'The President must hear from constituencies that bilingual education is important to them...'

64. 14

-1 +2

'Sadly, there are some ethnic leaders who prefer bilingualism because it keeps their voters and supporters isolated from the rest of America... more easily manipulated for political purposes...'

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² This statement has been amended very slightly from the original form in which it appeared which is precisely as follows: Mr. McCurry added that the issue was more a product of GOP presidential politics than good policy. He said Mr. Clinton wants to promote reforming education, “not being caught in arbitrary debates that, frankly, have more to do with the agenda of the extreme right.”

3: Profile of Respondents to the Q Study

The total number of respondents in the Q study was 54 with the following distribution of characteristics. It needs to be emphasised that the main selection criterion for these respondents was their active involvement in the issue of official English.

Sex

Male	Female
24	30

Age Distribution

Under 25	25>40	41>55	Over 55
2	22	19	11

Voting Preferences

Republican	Democrat	Other
19	29	6

State of Residence ³

CA	DC	M D	IL	OH	LA	VA	HI	NJ	PA	FL	TX
3	8	9	3	2	1	19	1	3	1	2	2

First Language

English	Spanish	Chinese	Child Bilingual	Other
43	4	2	2	3

Ethnic or 'Racial' Categorisation

White	Asian- Pacific Islander	African American	Latino- Hispanic	Native American
37	4	6	6	1

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