FROM LAU TO NOW: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY EDUCATORS WITH MONOLINGUAL DRIVEN LANGUAGE LAWS

by

Brooke E. Boutwell

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a middle school in the Oceana School District. The theory guiding this study was Richard Ruiz's Orientations in Language Planning as it pertains to ideology behind language policy. The transcendental phenomenological study was conducted in the Oceana School district at Waves Middle School. Participants included seven middle school content teachers, a school administrator, and two English as a second language specialists. All participants were chosen based on the criteria of having worked in the Oceana School district and had at least three years of experience working with or overseeing instruction for English language learners. The participants varied in age, gender, and content areas taught. Data was collected in three different ways to ensure triangulation; document analysis, individual interviews, and classroom observations. Data was analyzed based on Clark Moustakas's principles to identify themes among various sources of data. Four major themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) vague understanding, (b) instructional changes, (c) successful practices, and (d) policy changes. A detailed description of the findings, implications, limitations, and delimitations of the study, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords: English language learner, English as a second language, language policy, monolingual language, middle school teachers

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my students—past, present, and future—who have given me a purpose.

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I would like to thank my committee members for their time, dedication, and expertise throughout this process. A special thank you to Dr. Deck, my committee chair, for her countless hours of reflecting, reading, encouraging, and most of all patience while I completed my research. The constant check-ins, feedback, and optimism were an essential part of me being able to complete this journey. Thank you, Dr. Smith, for serving as my committee member and lending me your knowledge. I am so fortunate to have you both as advisors.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

United States (U.S.)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

English language learner (ELL)

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The United States (U.S.) has traditionally been a nation founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all. Throughout history, many have made the journey to the U.S. to seek out these founding values for themselves and their families. Among these include immigrants, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. As the population of diverse people who have come to the U.S. increases, challenges have arisen in public education systems on quality and equity in educating newly arrived students. The various linguistic needs of students coming from other countries and students who were born in the country, but their parents were born elsewhere, have proved difficult for the public school systems as well as the laws intended to provide protection and equity (Johnson et al., 2016). The purpose of this chapter is to provide background knowledge and context for the phenomenon surrounding the monolingual language found in federal language laws and the implications these legal precedents have on those working with English language learners (ELLs) in federally funded K-12 schools. Following the background, the problem statement, purpose, and significance of the study are elaborated on and explained in detail. The research questions are stated with supporting rationale. Finally, all relevant terms are listed and defined.

Background

In the United States, English language learners are the fastest-growing subgroup in the nation's schools (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). In 2020, the enrollment of this subgroup in K-12 public programs increased by over one million students, resulting in a rise from 8.1% to 9.6% of the K-12 population (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). The continued increase over the past few decades has created an urgent demand for equitable education for these vulnerable

learners (Johnson et al., 2018). As a result, new policies and laws have come out of court cases to combat schools' reactions to the growth in linguistically diverse students. However, many of these decisions and legal precedents have been politically biased and inadequate in supporting English learners in K-12 classrooms (Coady et al., 2022). This problem is best understood through a historical, social, and theoretical context.

Historical Context

Historically, the United States has been an epicenter of diversity. Since the building of the nation, the citizens of this country and those in positions of power and government have prided themselves in the inclusion of those who have been customarily oppressed. Commonly referred to as a "melting pot" and more modernly as a "mosaic," the increased number of immigrants and asylum seekers in the country has continued the evolution of culture, values, customs, and language of the nation (Smith, 2012). However, immigration and persons seeking refuge in the United States have also historically been intertangled with the political climate of each time period (Haines, 2015). As a result of varying immigration policies in the nation, language policies have also evolved in response to the influx of speakers of other languages in public schools (Coady et al., 2022).

Subsequently, politics and policy go hand in hand. In the late 1970s, Jimmy Carter was elected president of the U.S. In 1980, he signed a Refugee Act which created a federal program to help Southeast Asian refugees who came to the U.S. after the conclusion of the Vietnam War. This program increased the number of refugees accepted into the country from 17,400 to 50,000 (Watts, 2021). Additionally, during Carter's presidency, the U.S. admitted roughly 125,000 Cuban citizens during the Mariel Boatlift (Watts, 2021). The Boatlift and mass exodus of Cuban people from their country was caused by terrible economic issues coupled with Fidel Castro's

decision to allow Cubans to leave freely (Garr, 2021). Correspondingly, some of the most groundbreaking language laws came out of this time period. In order to accommodate the influx of non-native English speakers now sitting in U.S. classrooms, the government was forced to create policies to ensure equitable education.

Social Context

Since Carter's presidency in the 1980s, several presidents have taken office and enacted policies that have both opened and restricted borders. However, even with recent presidential acts limiting immigration, the number of English language learners continues to increase (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). For example, between 2007 and 2014, the number of undocumented immigrants coming from Mexico fell from 7 million to 6 million due to presidential policies (Martin, 2017). Yet, between 2009 and 2014, the percentage of English learners increased in more than half of the country, and in five states, the population increased by over 40%(U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

While language policymakers have made efforts to provide guidelines for schools to implement adequate programs for this growing population of English language learners, the current policy falls flat. The lack of effective language policy is evident in graduation rates. Graduation rates have been used as one of the key metrics to evaluate schools under federal law because the rate at which students graduate demonstrates the quality of education students receive (Huck, 2021; Sugarman, 2019; Messacar & Oreopolous, 2012). Due to the time ELLs need to develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to pass grade-level coursework and state exams, statistically, ELLs take longer to graduate, and in some cases, not graduate at all (Lorenzo et al., 2019). According to the federal Office of English Language Acquisition (2020), the graduation rate for all students in the U.S. in 2018 was 85%. In the same

year, the percentage of students identified as English learners was only 68%. In addition to lower numbers in graduation from high school, the improvement from prior years did not increase. Compared to school years in the past, the percentage each year increased; however, that increase halted in 2018. This data shows that current language policy has negative implications for ELLs and their success after high school.

These challenges do not only impact those identified as ELLs in high schools. Across all K-12 grade levels, test scores for the ESL population are statistically lower than their native English-speaking peers. Since its introduction in 2003, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is given to students in fourth and eighth grade nationwide at least every two years. The assessment measures the progress of students in reading and math. Statistically, students identified as English language learners have a higher chance of scoring below proficiency than their native English-speaking peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Furthermore, challenges for the mainstream teachers of English learners have arisen as well. While models of ESL instruction vary from state to state, and district to district, most ELLs are placed in classrooms with their native English-speaking peers to receive content-area instruction (Wang et al, 2008). Including ELLS in mainstream, instruction is a common practice in U.S. schools, and general education teachers typically do not have adequate formal training on best practice instruction for this linguistically diverse population (Harklau, 1994).

Theoretical Context

Several theories support the importance of adequate instruction for English language learners. One widely accepted theory in the field of second language learning was proposed by Jim Cummins (1979). Cummins identified two different types of language development. The first is Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). According to Cummins, BICS is the

language first acquired by non-native speakers and is the everyday language students use to communicate. BICS is linguistically less demanding and is used in informal and social settings (Cummins, 2009). After ELLs have mastered BICS, they begin to develop their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). CALP is the language students need to understand content area instruction. While BICS typically only takes between 6 months to 2 years to develop, CALP is much more demanding and can take up to 7 years to develop into proficiency (Bylund, 2011). These timeframes are guidelines, and some researchers believe both BICS and CALP can take longer to develop (Khatib & Taie, 2016). Federal policy is written and passed by the United States Congress and not by ESL teachers, or by anyone in the field of language acquisition. As a result, many educational policies do not consider that ELLs need at least 7 years to become proficient enough to understand the same content as their native-speaking classmates.

Problem Statement

The problem is federal language policy is written with monolingual language creating inequity for English language learners in K-12 public schools. Educators and administrators are left to interpret and implement monolingual-based laws that do not benefit the vulnerable population (Coady et al, 2022). The ELL population is the fastest growing subpopulation in U.S. schools (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). On average, one in every 10 public school students is classified as a learner of English, having first learned a language other than English (Heineke & Davin, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Several “groundbreaking” court cases including, *Lau v Nichols* (1974) and *Casteñeda v Pickard* (1984), have spearheaded the fight for equitable education for ELLs;

however, these laws are both written and implemented in ways that are ineffective for classroom instruction (Coady et al., 2022).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a middle school in the Oceana School District. At this stage in the research, federal language policies will be generally defined as a body of rules, regulations, and practices created by federal courts that are projected to provide language change in societies or groups (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). English language learners are defined by federal law as students between the ages of 3 and 21, preparing to enroll in a K-12 program, who was not born in the U.S. or whose native language is not English, who come from an environment where English is not significantly dominant, and whose difficulty in English speaking, listening, reading, and writing cause challenges meeting State standards and participating fully in society (Education Commission of the States, 2014).

Significance of the Study

This phenomenological study is significant because the focus is to understand not only the issues in current federal language policy but also the implications laws have when they are put into practice for educators in the field of English language learning and second language acquisition. This study has the potential to drive future studies on this problem and can possibly result in positive legislative change for ELLs in K-12 programs. By discussing the challenges schools are facing with understanding and implementing these policies for ELLs, this study will offer theoretical, empirical, and practical significance.

Theoretical Significance

The development of second language acquisition has been theorized by many in the field. The most accepted theory was developed by Jim Cummins (1979). Cummins proposed that there are two types of language development: BICS and CALP. BICS is the language English language learners first acquire and is often referred to as survival or playground language (Cummins, 2009). Without this language, students cannot acquire CALP, which is the vocabulary needed to be successful in content classes. One major issue in policies like *Castañeda* (1984) and *Lau* (1974), is that the two distinct types of language learning are not mentioned. One reason for a lack of consideration of BICS and CALP in the Lau holding is the Supreme Court ruled on the case before Cummins originally published his findings in 1979. Due to the lack of research at the time of the Lau case, the Lau federal policy, which is still used to guide English language programs currently, fails to consider crucial language theories on how second languages are acquired. This study provides the essential link from theory to practice because Cummins's (2009) language learning theory can assist researchers and practitioners in understanding how essential it is to include the most current language learning research in federal policies.

Empirical Significance

The achievement of English language learners in K-12 programs in comparison to native English speakers has been extensively researched. Researchers have proven that ELLs graduate at lower rates (Huck, 2021; Sugarman, 2019; Messacar & Oreopolous, 2012), perform lower on nationwide exams (Giambo, 2017), and overall struggle more in academics than their native English-speaking peers (Jiménez-Castellanos & García, 2017). Typically, to identify why ELLs have a more difficult time achieving academically, researchers have focused on major areas like classroom instruction (Hernandez, 2021; Stairs-Davenport, 2021) or social-emotional factors

(Banse et al, 2019). However, little has been researched on the implications of the federal language policies and the role they play in the achievement of English learners. This study is empirically significant because it will not only add to the literature that exists on the sources of English language learner achievement but also bridges the gap between the sources that already exist and what is happening in practice.

Practical Significance

This study has the potential to change teaching practices in districts across the country. Statistics show that all over the nation, English language learners score lower than their native English-speaking peers on high-stakes exams (Giambo, 2017). Oftentimes when students do not perform well on tests, low performance usually has to do with the way the content knowledge is taught (Samson & Collins, 2012). Due to inadequate federal language policies, schools are left to interpret and define what an effective program for linguistically diverse students looks like. As a result, English language learners are receiving insufficient instruction in their classes (Coady et al., 2022). This study opens the door to analyzing federal regulations and creating important changes to language instructional practices. While the actual legal structure of the U.S. itself cannot be changed, and education will still very much remain a right of each individual state, crucial conversations can begin on identifying practices that hinder the overall academic achievement of ELLs. Understanding what the court decisions mean and understanding the lived experiences of the participants in this study will act as a catalyst to promote effective policy, reform language instructional practices, and facilitate practical and pragmatic changes in the delivery of K-12 programs.

Research Questions

In a phenomenological study, research questions are created to drive the focus of the investigated phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). For this study, document analysis, interviews, and observations were used to understand both the underlying monolingual language in federal language policy, as well as the implications these policies have in classrooms and on educators who work with ELLs.

Central Research Question

What monolingual language is found in federal language policy that creates inequity for English language learners?

In federal language policies like *Lau v Nichols* (1974) and *Castañeda v Pickard* (1984), the Supreme Court heard cases regarding the treatment of English language learners in federally funded school systems. In both landmark cases, the Supreme Court held in favor of the ELLs and their families. Additionally, the schools were found to be inadequately and inequitably educating students who speak a language other than English as their first language. While these cases were considered wins for ELLs and took steps in the right direction to make progress in equitable access to education for students involved in the suit, the policies implemented as a result of the ruling come up short (Coady et al., 2022; Johnson et al., 2016). These two federal policies have resulted in vague statutes that are left up to individual states and school districts to interpret and implement. By examining the intertextuality of the policies and identifying the underlying monolingual language in the laws, researchers and policymakers can make progress toward pushing through policies that more effectively support ELLs in public schools.

Sub-Question One

What are the experiences of K-12 teachers and administrators and their understanding of federal language policy for English learners?

Mainstream classroom teachers and administrators are often not prepared to academically support and teach ELLs when they are enrolled in schools (Wang et al, 2008; Harklau, 1994). English language learners are placed in general education classes, sometimes with the opportunity to consult with a trained English as a second language teacher, but most of the time, teachers are left to their own knowledge on how to best instruct linguistically diverse learners. A lack of understanding of the basic principles of teaching English language learners, such as BICS and CALP, hinders the academic success of these students (Cummins, 2009). Examining the experiences of secondary teachers and their preconceived notions on best classroom instruction for ELLs can provide opportunities to identify where policy can support those at the school level.

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of K-12 teachers and administrators working with English learners in K-12 public schools?

There is no shortage of research that points out specific areas in academics where ELLs are outperformed by their native English-speaking classmates (Huck, 2021; Sugarman, 2019; Giambo; 2017; Messacar & Oreopolous, 2012). While these studies focus on test scores, graduation rates, classroom instruction, and teacher preparedness, which are all essential components of understanding the big picture of English language learners' academic success, these studies do not address policy as a reason for the achievement gap between native English-speaking students and linguistically diverse students. Investigating policy as a factor and how policy can lead to other areas where improvement is needed can provide a rationale for changing current language policy.

Sub-Question Three

What changes can be made to current legislation that would improve equitable access to education for English learners?

While research has focused on interventions and classroom strategies to help support English language learners (Ruecker, 2021), an overall lack of research on how policy change can directly impact the experiences of teachers who work with linguistically diverse students is still a problem. Overall academic achievement is lower for ELLs than their native-speaking peers, (Giambo, 2017), and addressing classroom practices is not enough. Researchers must dig deeper to find the source of the problem, which stems from policy. Exploring the relationship between the policies and classroom instruction can be used to foster change to increase academic improvement for English language learners.

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout all chapters of this study.

1. *BICS* – Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills. Also known as "playground language," it is the language skill necessary for day-to-day communication including, social conversations with friends and informal interactions (Cummins, 1979).
2. *CALP* – Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. The language knowledge necessary to understand, discuss, and synthesize content in the classroom (Cummins, 1979).
3. *ELL*- English Language Learner. English language learners are defined by federal law as students between the ages of 3 and 21, preparing to enroll in a K-12 program, who was not born in the U.S. or whose native language is not English, who come from an environment where English is not significantly dominant, and who's difficult in English

speaking, listening, reading, and writing cause challenges meeting State standards and participating fully in society (Education Commission of the States, 2014).

4. *ESL*- English as a Second Language- This term refers to the actual program used in public schools to have students learning English develop English language proficiency (Peercy, Martin-Beltran, Silverman, & Nunn, 2015).
5. *Language Policy*- A body of rules, regulations, and practices created by federal courts that are projected to provide language change in societies or groups (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997).
6. *Newcomer*- Any foreign-born students and their families that have newly arrived in the United States. Additionally, students who have received less than 2 years of education in U.S. schools (Hos, 2020).

Summary

English language learners face many challenges in obtaining equitable access to education in the United States (Rolstad et al., 2005). In this chapter, the problem and purpose of examining the phenomenon in the study were discussed. The problem includes not only the challenges that ELLs face in the classroom but also the issues with federal language policies that create implications for lower academic achievement for English language learners. Federal language policies often have underlying language that historically has supported the political climate in the country, but not the best interest of language learners and their quality of education. The purpose of this study was to describe the lived experience of those working with ELLs in public schools where language regulations and decisions affect their day-to-day experiences. Additionally, the purpose included examining how these federal laws are interpreted at the district level, and the impact these interpretations have in the classroom. The

chapter concludes with essential terms and definitions relevant to understanding the problem and purpose of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to explore language policy in the United States and its influence on the English learner population. This chapter presents a review of the current literature related to the topic of study. In the first section, the theory relevant to language orientations is presented, followed by a synthesis of recent literature regarding the changing demographics of K-12 education and current legislation that was written to support the influx of English language learners in K-12 public education. In the following section, challenges that arise from current legislation and issues that federally funded schools are facing are reviewed. Lastly, the literature surrounding the implications these policies and challenges have for both ELLs in the classroom as well as implications for classroom instruction are addressed. In the end, I will discuss the gap in the research on the influence of educators' understanding of second language federal policy and how educators and administrators implement federal policy, presenting a viable need for the current study.

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative study is grounded in the orientations in language planning framework proposed by Richard Ruiz (1984). This framework assists in examining the phenomenon of federal language policy and its implications for English language learners in K-12 public schools.

Orientations in Language Planning

First introduced by Ruiz (1984), language orientations were defined as a unique disposition towards language and the role language plays in society. While Ruiz does not specifically mention the role of language in federal policy, many of the federal legal decisions

regarding language rights for ELLs occurred before and during Ruiz's creation of the orientations in language planning framework (del Valle, 2003; Wright, 2019).

Ruiz's (1984) framework on orientations in language planning points out the views that society has on language and multilingualism. He proposed that policy be analyzed for the underlying intentions to avoid issues of inequity for those who speak languages other than English. The orientations in language planning framework presents language in three different orientations: language as a right, language as a problem, and language as a resource (Harrison, 2007; Ruiz, 1984). Ruiz recognized that these three different orientations were not isolated constructs. Instead, he viewed the three orientations as social orientations that could correspond and be concurrently present in various legal decisions and policies at a multitude of levels (Coady et al., 2022).

The use of native language is not an enumerated right in the United States. Therefore, the language as a right orientation refers to the legal protections in place for speakers of various languages in society (Ruiz, 1984). Because language is interwoven into societal beliefs, educational practices, and community, so are the legal rights to language (Coady et al., 2022). As a result, language as a right refers to both rules of societal life as well as legal and judiciary actions.

Language as a problem considers multilingualism a deficit. Those who do not speak English as their dominant language must overcome the shortfall of not being a native speaker if they hope to become economically and politically prosperous and fully integrated socially into society (de Jong, 2016; Ruiz, 1984). Viewing linguistic diversity as a problem is evident in language policies in education in the United States. For example, English-only instruction and English as a Second Language programs that support the development of the dominant language

use students' home language only as a bridge to learning English (Fredricks & Warriner, 2016). When policy is written from the point of view of language as a problem, policy writers fail to recognize multilingualism as a critical asset for linguistically diverse students. For instance, the United States Bilingual Education Act of 1968, which provided federal monies to fund both educational programs for Spanish speakers as well as teacher preparation, was arguably a policy that was written with the mindset of language as a problem because the federal policy was intended to remediate programs in schools that had a large population of English language learners (Coady et al., 2022).

With a lack of awareness and acknowledgment of the benefits of multilingualism, English language learners underachieve academically (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Cummins, 2000). Despite the connection between low academic success for English learners and educational policy stemming from language as a problem ideology, monolingual-driven policies still heavily dominate educational practices hindering linguistically diverse students (de Jong, 2013).

Lastly, language is oriented as a resource. Ruiz (1984) developed this orientation in reaction to the limitations of the first two orientations (de Jong, 2016). Language as a resource presents language as an asset that is beneficial to English language learners because language minority communities are viewed as banks of knowledge and expertise that should be drawn from. Specifically, with this last orientation, Ruiz focused on language as having extrinsic values such as national security, business, public relations, and diplomacy. Language also has intrinsic values such as cultural reproduction, identity, self-esteem, and civic participation. The language as a resource orientation acts in defiance of the domineering stances of language as a problem and language as a right. The resource orientation supports the use of home language as a valuable tool for learning and supports learning through bilingual education programs (Dorner &

Cervantes-Soon, 2020; Heineke & Davin, 2020). The more policymakers and educators understand how to use language as a resource and approach language policy from a resources-oriented approach, the greater opportunity to redefine attitudes about language learning and speakers of other languages (Coady et al., 2022; Ruiz, 1984).

Language policy is essential to the education of English language learners in K-12 programs in the United States. Societal and social beliefs about language and how language is valued, or rather not valued, impacts policies written for ELLs (Coady et al., 2022; Ruiz, 1984). Ruiz's framework on orientations in language planning shows the influence culture and hidden ideologies have on language policy. First, many policymakers view language as a problem and not a resource (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Laws are written that enforce dominant English-only beliefs because the law is portraying the narratives intended by the policy writers. For example, Arizona is an English-only state, and most of the state regulations ban the use of any other language in academic instruction in public schools (Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005). Additionally, many of the people in charge of writing legislation do not understand the essential value of language as a resource (Hult & Hornberger, 2016). The individual beliefs of policy writers and lawmakers impact federal language legislation and as a result, language is used in policy that negatively impacts English language learners enrolled in public schools.

Related Literature

K-12 Changing Demographics

In the United States, the population of English language learners continues to grow rapidly. As that number continues to grow, one in every 10 public school students is now classified as a learner of English, having learned a language other than English first (Heineke & Davin, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The population of ELLs represents over five

million students in the public school system. As a result of this changing demographic, the profile of the standard K-12 public school student and the standard public school classroom profile needs to evolve to meet the demands of the cultural and linguistic diversity that comes with the increase of English Language Learners in the public school system (Rolstad et al., 2005). For educational programs to meet the needs of this population, language policies that promote unbiased and research-based guidelines and strategies are critical to the academic success of ELLs in K-12 programs.

Language Policy

Historically, language policy in the United States has been controversial and politicized, as it is fundamentally assimilationist (Baker & Wright, 2017; Schmidt, 2000). English has continuously been majorly supported by policymakers and society as the accepted language in the U.S. and central to the unity of the nation's people (Kaveh, 2022; Flores, 2014). Although English has never been established as the official national language of the country, the English language is blatantly the dominant means of communication apparent through printed language, media, and most importantly, public education (Kaveh, 2022; Wiley & García, 2016). As a result, English governs the operation of society and often promotes a monolingual mentality and mindset (Krogstad et al, 2015). Because English is the only language needed to be successful in society, it is viewed as the only one that is imperative to learn and speak. Therefore, the education of students in the United States is predominately conducted in English only.

There are many types of language policies. Some of these include languages accepted by communities, individual family homes, and languages used in educational settings. For the purposes of this study, language policy will refer to federal laws that impact education. Language policy is defined as the full body of laws and regulations that are intended to achieve the

dominant language change in societies or groups (Hernandez et al, 2022; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). In the United States, the planned and dominant language is English. Focusing on legal decisions and policies written at the federal level, these policies are aimed at addressing the unique needs of English Language learners in mainstream general education classrooms and their development of English language proficiency. The law is intended to intervene and give merit to the rights of these diverse students. However, laws do not always protect minority students. Many regulations and policies written for language development are detrimental to both multilingual students and their teachers in United States public schools because they do not provide enough support for the students or the teachers (Chávez-Moreno, 2020).

One major language policy that promotes monolingualism in schools is English-only language laws. In the United States, the majority of students who speak a language other than English as their first, receive their education solely in English because of federal language education policies that have historically restricted bilingual education (Garcia & Sung, 2018; Baker & Wright, 2017; Menken, 2013; Garcia, 2009). The restriction of bilingual education, programs that encourage students to use their home language as a skill to learn English as well as develop multiliteracy, comes despite sufficient research that proves English language learners enrolled in bilingual programs outperform students attending English as a Second language programs (Collier & Thomas, 2017). In fact, bilingual education has been banned in Arizona, California, and Massachusetts within the past 20 years.

The English-only movement gained momentum in the early 1980s at the state level. A Republican Senator in California proposed an English language Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which called to make English the official language of the country (Flowers, 2021). Later in the 1990s, additional legislation was proposed in opposition to bilingual education

programs. Proposition 227, also known as the English for the Children initiative, asserted that Spanish-speaking students enrolled in bilingual education programs were performing poorly academically because they were learning in Spanish and English. Supporters of the proposition argued that placement of these students in an English-only program would produce superior academic outcomes. In 1998, the legislation passed and as a result, English-only instruction became the default program in the state.

Following the legal victory of the English-only movement, a similar initiative was passed in 2000 in Arizona, and then in Massachusetts in 2002 (Goldenberg & Rueda, 2011). When policies in language education are driven by monolingual ideologies, English language learners often suffer the consequences. (Subtirelu, 2013). Despite promising academic improvement for students enrolled in English-only programs, that was not the actual outcome. The achievement gap between English language learners and their native English-speaking peers did not close in any of the three states (Stritikus & Garcia, 2011; Stritikus 2003). However, there were two substantial negative outcomes of passing monolingual legislation. In Massachusetts, the drop-out rates for multilingual students rose and in Arizona, the percentage of multilingual learners placed in special education grew (Goldenberg & Rueda, 2011).

Arizona continues to be one of the few remaining states that adopted an English-only policy. The state is a distinct outlier in terms of how English language learners are treated and educated (Jiménez-Castellano & Garciá, 2017). For example, those in state power in education refuse to join a 41-state consortium known as World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), which works to collaborate on addressing the unique education of language learners. Additionally, Arizona legislators fail to acknowledge the extensive research on best practice instruction for multilingual students and instead pass laws with anti-Latino and anti-immigrant

ideologies (Jiménez-Castellano & Garciá, 2017; Arias & Faltis, 2012). Arizona reflects the failure of federal language policy for English learners. State legislators are actively disregarding the requirements of both Lau (1974) and Casteñeda (1984).

English-only policies transcend past federal regulations into school districts. While the laws come from a top-down approach, what happens in each individual classroom varies and the implementation of language policy is a dynamic one that is shaped by teachers' beliefs on language learning (Sánchez et al, 2022; Menken & Garcia, 2010). Educators have the agency to decide how and if they want to apply language policies to their instruction. Factors such as leadership identity, prior knowledge of second language acquisition, views on bilingualism and best teaching practices, and access to professional development all impact how teachers facilitate language education policies (Sánchez et al, 2022). For instance, a teacher who has extensive training in bilingualism is less likely to implement an English-only policy in the classroom because that teacher is knowledgeable about the benefits of home language support. Likewise, a teacher that has experience teaching linguistically diverse students is more likely to embrace students using their home language as a tool in the classroom than a teacher who has never taught multilingual learners.

Furthermore, English-only policies are also interpreted by school administrators. Similarly, from the teachers' perspective, school administrators are influenced by their prior knowledge of second language acquisition and professional development when deciding how to enact federal language policies (Sánchez et al, 2022). School principals that received formal training in bilingualism and multilingual education tend to sustain bilingual education programs when pressured to succumb to English-only and monolingual-driven instruction (Menken & Solorza, 2015). Language policies not only refer to the specific laws coming from governmental

powers. Once the policies have been finalized at the government level, it is up to individual school leaders and teachers to decide how to interpret and implement the policies for English language learners.

While the federal government attempts to provide a generic macro-level framework for schools to utilize, these policies are often under-researched and ineffective (Vanbuel & Van den Branden, 2020; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Mainstream teachers are still underprepared to teach English language learners and ELLs are still underperforming compared to their native English-speaking peers. Furthermore, not only are language policies under-researched, but policymakers themselves often lack the essential knowledge required to make beneficial decisions about language practice and regulations (Coady et al, 2019). In fact, when the federal government intervenes in the field of second language education, the intentions behind their intervention are typically nonlinguistic agendas (Coady et al, 2019; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). As a result, language policies are influenced by the cultures and backgrounds of the lawmakers as well as the political agendas they are trying to push forward at the time of their incumbency (Ruiz, 1984). The combination of misinformed decision-making and political biases has negative impacts on the overall academic achievement of English learners (Coady et al, 2022).

Lau v Nichols

In 1971, schools in California began to desegregate and as a result, a school district in San Francisco, the San Francisco Unified School District, enrolled about 3,000 students who spoke Chinese at home and had limited English proficiency. The school district did not have appropriate supports in place for English as a second language (ESL) instruction, and all content classes were taught only in English. The students of Chinese descent brought forth a class action

suit against the school district. They claimed that the school failed to provide support for the English language learners (ELLs) and the failure to do so violated the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Fredricks & Warriner, 2016). The Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of the plaintiffs. They stated that the school was, in fact, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the ELLs were denied the opportunity to participate in their education **(**Johnson et al., 2018; Zehr, 2010). While the *Lau* case is a landmark victory for ELLs across the country and is a building block case used in teacher preparation programs to demonstrate the rights of English learners, the ambiguity and lack of defined guidelines for school districts to implement left most of the decision-making up to individual states and school districts.

As a result of the Lau (1974) ruling, the federal government passed most of the burden of effective ESL programs onto individual states (Johnson et al., 2018; Hornberger, 2005). While intended to help English language learners, and while the federal courts did take a step in the right direction towards equity for ELLs by ruling in their favor, the ambiguity of the language in the holding left much to be assumed by stakeholders tasked with enforcing the policy (Gandara et al., 2004). With some political overturn with the presidency, the federal government eventually decided that schools were left to choose how they could meet the needs of their English language learner populations in any way the school deemed adequate (Hakuta, 2011).

While researchers and educators in the field of second language acquisition will argue that the initial holding in Lau (1974), that language minority students in K-12 programs are entitled to academic language support and differentiated instruction, the argument lies in the overall effectiveness of the policy and in the implementation of the ruling. Language policy in general, swings in various directions depending on the political climate of the time period and

ideologies toward language education are also heavily political in nature (Hornberger, 2005). As a result, critical cases that should ensure equity, like Lau, fall on unknowledgeable classroom teachers and school administrators. The accountability and responsibility of educating linguistically diverse students were removed from the federal government's hands as a result of the ruling in Lau.

Castañeda v Pickard

Following the Lau case (1974), came the federal ruling in *Castañeda v Pickard* (1984). This Supreme Court case was filed against Raymondville Independent School District in Texas. The high-poverty school district, located near the Mexican border, recorded that three-quarters of their student body received federally funded free lunch at the time this case was being reviewed (Coady et al, 2022). The demographics of the town the school district was located in and the students attending the school were not lost on the Court or the judge.

Several Mexican American families filed a suit claiming that the district was discriminating against the students because of their ethnicity. The argument made by the plaintiffs stated that the school district was segregating classrooms both racially and ethnically which are discriminatory practices that denied the students their rights as granted by the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, Title VI, and the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) of 1974 (Coady et al, 2022). While the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI guarantee the students' rights to equal treatment under the law, regardless of race, color, or national origin, the EEOA, became the statute in this case because the Act states that discrimination occurs when schools neglect to take appropriate action in assisting students with language barriers (The Equal Educational Opportunities Act, 1974). Additionally, according to the previous *Lau Nichols* (1974) federal ruling, the school district was required to provide bilingual education programs

for these students, and the school failed to deliver instruction in the student's home language. Furthermore, the school district had no criteria to evaluate the English as a second language program that was provided to the students.

At first, the judge of the court ruled in favor of the defendant, but later the ruling was overturned by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. As a result of this case, three criteria for English as a Second Language programs were established. These measures were put in place to determine whether ESL programs in school districts are meeting the needs of ELLs academically. The three criteria are the following: the program must be based on a sound educational theory, implemented effectively with adequate resources and personnel, and evaluated as effective in overcoming language handicaps (Krebs et al., 2008).

The Castañeda case was an attempt by the federal government to create a policy that outlined appropriate action for minority speakers whose lack of English proficiency was deemed a problem by the school district (Coady et al., 2021). One can infer that this federal policy, in reaction to viewing the students' languages as problematic, fell under the language as a problem orientation (Ruiz, 1984). Viewing language as a problem regarding federal policies presents a unique situation because even the Supreme Court cases that rule in favor of English language learners, are considered a legal victory for the ELLs involved in the case and have set a historical precedent for second language education, still have underlying monolingual language that does not provide sufficient language rights for multilingual students (Coady et al, 2022).

In terms of the effectiveness of these two federal language policies, a clear divide exists in the field of language education. On one hand, these two cases set a momentous precedent when the courts ruled in favor of the English language learners. In some cases, researchers have compared the Lau ruling to the *Brown V. Board* ruling for Black students (Callahan et al., 2019).

However, others in the field argue that in the short 10 years between the Lau decision and the Castañeda decision, language policy and education have taken steps backward (Coady et al., 2021). The regression lies in the freedom the federal government gives to states to decide what each state deems successful language instruction. When policies and language laws are implemented in the actual classroom, English Language Learners are experiencing the consequences of the federal policies (Lo Bianco, 2021). As a result, states and school districts find ways around the requirements of the federal holdings and ELLs bear the repercussions of policymakers and leaders in the states (Coady et al., 2021).

Challenges

While language policy like *Lau v Nichols and Castañeda v Pickard* is often written with policymaker's influence, and the policy itself poses challenges for ELLs in federally funded schools, additional challenges exist that impact many schools' ability to implement effective policy **(**Chávez-Moreno, 2020; Jimenez-Castellanos & Topper, 2012; Hakuta, 2011). Even policies that are well-written and intended to support multilingual learners in classrooms are not always implemented with fidelity in individual school districts (Jimenez-Castellanos & Topper, 2012). Execution and implementation of laws and regulations come down to how well the administration and teachers can or are willing to incorporate the laws into their budgets and their own visions of their schools and classrooms. Factors such as overall inequity in education, federal funding, school demographics, and educator preparedness present barriers to the adequate implementation of effective language policy for linguistically diverse students. Subsequently, these challenges are the source of inequitable access to education for English language learners in public schools.

Inequitable Access to Education

In both holdings, *Lau v Nichols and Castañeda v Pickard,* the judge ruled that blatant inequities in accessing education were apparent for multilingual learners. However, inequities for English language learners originated well before Lau in 1974 and continued after Casteñeda in 1984. Unfortunately, as a vulnerable population of students, language learners tend to experience higher rates of poverty, are more likely to attend underfunded and unsafe schools, and are more likely to be segregated than their native English-speaking peers (Jiménez-Castellanos & Garciá, 2017; Kim & Garcia, 2014). Due to the higher risks ELLs face in public education, researchers and policymakers have studied inequities extensively. More recently, federal holdings, like Lau and Casteñeda, have attempted to acknowledge and remedy the specific needs of language learners by incorporating stricter guidelines for educational programs along with funding, updated standards, assessments, and increased accountability (Castellanos & Garciá, 2017). Despite recent efforts, federal language policies came directly out of the Civil Rights time period, and it is essential to examine the history of inequity for English learners in federal policies developed for language instruction, content, and standards.

A major challenge schools face in creating equitable programs for ELLs is the funding required to support English language programs, whether that be English as a Second Language programs or bilingual education programs. Under both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1975, any school receiving federal funding is required by law to provide academic and fiscal resources to help ELLs achieve English language proficiency (Jimenez-Castellanos & Topper, 2012). Funding policies propose two challenges to school districts. Not only are schools required to provide appropriate academic resources for multilingual learners, but they also must have enough money in their budget to adequately

accomplish academic equity. Schools often do not receive enough funding to allocate appropriate funds in their yearly budget to provide quality support for all students (Zehr, 2010).

The bulk of school funding for ESL programs comes from Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which provides monies to school districts to support the academic and socioemotional needs of ELLs **(**Education Law Center, 2017). While each state configures the allocation of these funds with its own algorithms, most of the money they do receive for ESL programs is provided by the federal government. The significant increase in the English language learner population in K-12 schools has created new budgetary obstacles which are directly affected by policy making and decisions. For example, both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974 requires schools to legally provide both sufficient fiscal and academic resources to help ELLs succeed in the classroom. These policies are mandated by the federal government and schools must be compliant. However, these programs are insufficiently funded (Jimenez-Castellanos & Topper, 2012; Zehr, 2010). As a result, ELLs are denied equal access to education and under Lau (1974) and Castañeda (1984), schools are in violation of providing civil rights to multilingual students.

Both Lau (1974) and Castañeda (1984) require schools to not only offer resources to students who speak a minority language (Lau), but they also require these programs to be effective, based on sound research, and successful for students (Castañeda). A glaring discrepancy lies in the message being sent from the federal government in language policy and the funding schools receive to uphold the policies (Jimenez-Castellanos & Topper, 2012; Zehr, 2010). For example, federal funding from Title III for ESL programs and English language learners has remained the same since 2002 (U.S. Department of Education Budget). The lack of an updated budget demonstrates the deteriorating dedication to English language learners by the

federal government because while the funding has not changed, the population of English language learners has increased exponentially (Heineke & Davin, 2020; Williams, 2020). Additionally, inflation is a key factor in budgets, and with the lack of increase in the federal ESL budget, the amount of money provided remains inadequate (Williams, 2020). The lack of funding for these programs could be explained by stakeholders in the federal government's ideologies of language as a problem (Ruiz, 1984).

With a lack of funds being provided to schools to implement effective ESL programs, ELLs in K-12 programs are suffering the consequences of government decisions. Federal funding can be used for a variety of resources that would assist in the equitable education of linguistically diverse students. One of the components of the Castañeda (1984) ruling is qualified teachers. The need for bilingual and ESL teachers to support the growing population of English learners continues to increase significantly (Rosado et al., 2020). The impact of having a quality certified ESL teacher for students who speak other native languages is immeasurable. These certified experts in the field of language acquisition provide students the ability to understand and decode academic language, increase student participation and attendance, and graduation rates (Rosado et al., 2020; Restuccia, 2013). Without the appropriate funding to recruit, train, and retain these teachers, school districts are unable to uphold the qualified teacher component of Castañeda (1984).

School Demographics and Leadership

Another important challenge facing ESL programs and the implementation of federal policy in public schools is the wide variety of school demographics and contexts. The varied demographics include the population of English language learners in individual school districts. For example, some schools have large numbers of ELLs, while other schools may only have a

handful. Also, schools vary in the diversity of home languages. For example, in U.S. public schools, more than 400 different home languages spoken by students have been documented by school registration (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Out of these 400 languages, a school district might have students who speak three or 300 different languages. The diversity in language demographics poses challenges for school programs. For instance, if a school district has predominantly native Spanish speakers, the school is more likely to offer bilingual classes than schools that have students that speak a wide variety of languages at home. In this case, under the Lau ruling (1974), the school district with a large Spanish-speaking population would be required to provide a dual language program. Meaning, the contextual characteristics of each individual school district affect the design and implementation of governmental policies in schools (Chávez-Moreno, 2020). Some policies may be more achievable or address a need that is more urgent for one school than for the other (Braun et al. 2011; Menken and García 2010). Therefore, federal policy often leaves ELL services up to the schools and lets the schools develop their own instructional programs that meet the specific demands of their multilingual students (Baker & de Kanter, 2013).

The reliance of federal policymakers on school-level administrators to interpret federal laws also presents a challenge to the overall success of ELLs in public schools. Local stakeholders, such as principals, school boards, and teachers, interpret federal language law based on their own personal beliefs and prior experiences (Menken & García 2010; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer 2002). While some level of autonomy is essential to meet the specificity of each school demographic and linguistic profile, it also creates inequity in ESL programs and access to education for ELLs. Various efforts in K-12 schools have been made in an attempt to maintain English-only policies and ideologies (Lee & Wright, 2017; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass,

2005). These negative beliefs and pushback on language policy implementation come from stakeholders who view language as a problem and not a resource (Ruiz, 1984). When school leadership retains cultural ideologies that oppress linguistic freedoms in instruction, ELLs' rights are violated, and their access to equitable education is denied.

Subsequently, the administrators and leaders with the mentality of language as a problem contrast drastically with many of the ESL teachers in classrooms with ELLs (Ruiz, 1984). Teachers and others in the field of education work to do what they can to find ways around deficit-based thinking from higher policymakers and those enforcing the policies (Coady et al., 2022). In many cases, educators have gone around legal barriers by using different federal grant money to recruit and train bilingual teachers, hold discussions and forums to discuss best teaching practices for ELLs, and find creative ways to use students' home language as an asset in instruction (Coady et al., 2022; Coady et al., 2019). These efforts help ensure that Lau (1974) and Castañeda (1974) are upheld to some extent.

However, it is not only the monolingual mentality of administrators and teachers that is impacting multilingual learners in the classroom negatively. Qualified staffing remains an ever-growing issue for schools with English learners. If schools are going to follow through with the guidelines provided by Castañeda (1974), they must have adequate resources and personnel. A vast majority of linguistically diverse learners in K-12 classrooms are receiving their instruction in English from a general education teacher, yet there has been fairly little attention paid to the training, knowledge, and essential skills general education teachers ought to have in order to provide adequate instruction to the English language learners in their classrooms (Samson & Collins, 2012). With this significance of the development of language in order to achieve academic success and to abide by federal language policies, all educators working with ELLs

must be knowledgeable of the principles and standards to support the unique needs of these vulnerable students.

The question then is how school districts recruit and retain classroom teachers with extensive training in equitably educating English language learners. One major obstacle for school districts is the lack of these types of certified educators to hire (Gandara et al., 2004). Preservice teacher preparation programs are insufficient in preparing teacher candidates in best practice instruction for language learners (Tigert & Leider, 2022). For example, a teacher candidate studying to be a certified elementary school teacher will take numerous courses in content area teaching, behavior management, and assessment, but not a course in pedagogy of English language acquisition (Samson & Collins, 2012). With the growth of English learners in K-12 schools, it is very likely this teacher will have at least one English learner to teach at some point in their career (Heineke & Davin, 2020). Without a suitable understanding and comprehension of strategies that work best in linguistically diverse classrooms, general education teachers will remain unsuccessful in providing equitable access to education for English language learners.

There are several steps one must master in the journey to becoming a certified teacher. These steps include education coursework, state certification training and exams, student teaching, and teaching evaluations once hired. However, with all these checkpoints in place before entering a classroom, not one of the steps ensures teachers are prepared to educate English language learners (Samson & Collins, 2012). There is ample opportunity for teacher preparation programs to address their lack of acknowledgment of the diverse population of students teacher candidates will encounter in their careers.

While it is crucial for educators to be able to provide research-based teaching strategies in their instruction of English learners, such as cognitive academic language development opportunities, cultural diversity and inclusivity, and oral language development (Samson & Collins, 2012), another concern in teacher preparation arises. Both administrators and teachers should have knowledge of language policy as there is an undeniable connection between equitable education and language instruction that policy provides (Throop, 2007). While preservice teacher programs for those seeking certification in English as a Second Language touch on cases like Lau (1974), general education teachers are not required to take courses that discuss policy for English learners (Coady et al, 2022; Samson & Collins, 2012).

As a byproduct of missing policy coursework from the teacher certification programs, the role the classroom teacher plays in the language planning process is often overlooked or dismissed altogether. While education in language policy is widely accepted, there has been little recognition that teachers are not passive vessels of language policy (Throop, 2007; Fishman, 2006; Hornberger & Ricento, 1996). Rather, teachers are a significant instrument in the carryout of policy. Teachers as active agents of language policy are evident in legislation like Proposition 227 in California. As Stritikus (2003) discovered in a case study on the teachers impacted by the monolingually minded Proposition, many teachers embraced the English-only policy with optimism. Classroom teachers were found to have accommodated the policy quickly by modifying their previous bilingual practices to reflect the new language law.

Moreover, the lack of knowledge about monolingual language policies impacts teachers' abilities to effectively implement the legislation in classroom instruction (Wang, 2008). Teachers are commonly labeled as resistant to change or oppositional when new curricular innovations are introduced, however, studies reveal that that is not always the case (Smit, 2005). Teachers are at

a deficit of skills, comprehension, and resources that are necessary to work in a way that is consistent with language policies (Wang, 2008). For example, in the *Lau* (1974) holding, teachers are required to effectively differentiate classroom instruction to ensure access to equitable education for all students regardless of their linguistic abilities. When those working with English learners lack the background knowledge of the federal Lau policy, their lesson planning often does not include academic language scaffolding to foster linguistic equity in their instruction. Teacher preparation programs do not prepare teachers to be active agents in language planning when the programs fail to educate teachers on the foundational federal language legislation for English language learners.

Student and Teacher Perspectives

Issues in federal language policy trickle down into the classroom and directly affect the overall academic achievement of the ELL population. To show that the policies currently impacting instruction for multilingual learners are ineffective, one can look at the graduation rates for ELLs in comparison to their native English-speaking peers. In 2017, the graduation rate nationwide was 84% (Education Law Center, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The graduation rate for ELLs in the same year was only 62%. This decrease in graduation rates nationwide is evidence that a breakdown exists in the pipeline between language policy being written for linguistically diverse learners and what is occurring in school districts and individual classrooms. Additionally, English language learners have historically performed lower on national assessments (Giambo, 2017), identifying an issue in classroom instruction that is guided by the precedents set in federal laws. This breakdown in policy stems both from the rationale behind the wording in the language policy as well as the way policy is implemented (Allard et al., 2019; Hult &Hornberger, 2016; Ruiz, 1984).

Furthermore, there is an urgent need to address the outcomes of the 16% of English language learners nationwide that fail to graduate. Recent data demonstrates an increasing dropout rate for ELLs which has become a grave national concern (Rodriguez et al, 2022). The problem becomes even more severe when the statistics are broken down by state. When looking at Arizona by itself, a state with strict English-only policies, the dropout rate for linguistically diverse students is 68%. For many ELLs, a high school diploma seems like an impossible dream (Rodriguez et al., 2022).

Understanding why English learners drop out of high school is a tremendous undertaking and there is no simple answer (Callahan, 2013). An extensive body of research explains that students from minority backgrounds, particularly black and Hispanic males, and students who speak a language other than English as their native tongue have a significantly higher risk of leaving high school before earning a diploma (Rodriguez et al., 2022). However, there are a unique set of factors that are specific to language learners that promote the rapid increase of dropout rates for the vulnerable population. Some of these factors include family history, socioeconomics, and prior schooling, but most notably, academic and instructional roadblocks and the services provided to English learners at individual schools. Appropriate and equitable academics and instruction are key components in the Casteñeda (1984) holding. The rising dropout rates among English learners demonstrate a disconnect between federal language legislation and classroom implementation.

The demands of English learners are numerous and can at times feel impossible to accomplish. Regarding academics, ELLs are required to develop academic language and literacy, learn content knowledge and language simultaneously, master complex educational concepts, and pass State exams in English as a step to graduate (Rodriguez et al., 2022). By the time ELLs

build enough English language proficiency to understand content topics, they have missed a significant amount of instruction and cannot catch up (Dondero & Muller, 2012; Cole, 2008). The constant feeling of being behind leads to frustration and students dropping out. Though the dropout problem initiates well before high school. By the time English language learners reach high school, those who enrolled in middle school or elementary, it is frequently too late for them to become academically successful. Keiffer and Parker (2017) found that there is usually a fallout in late elementary and middle school, where teachers have neglected to recognize the crucial needs of linguistically diverse students. Therefore, high schools are left to create programs that rectify years of disregard for their language abilities that have led to failure in the classroom (Rodriguez et al., 2022). In the 3-pronged approach laid out by Casteñeda (1984), school districts are obligated to provide English language learners with programs that are based on research and that are deemed effective. The dropout rates among language learners establish the policy is ineffectively executed across the country.

As daunting of a challenge as it may be for English learners to succeed academically, it is also overwhelming for classroom teachers. ELLs must learn the English language and content in order to be successful, but the success of linguistically diverse students also falls into the hands of classroom teachers. Teachers' own perceptions of linguistically diverse students play a crucial part in the academic accomplishment of English learners (Rizzuto, 2017; McSwain, 2001). Unfortunately, general education teachers tend to hold deficit points of view about linguistically diverse students (Garcia, 2015). Additionally, there is an area of concern that teachers have doubts about ELLs overall ability to learn, and a common belief is language learners would learn English more quickly if they tried harder (Pappamihiel, 2007). By placing the blame for the achievement gap on the students, teachers are able to take responsibility off of themselves.

Teachers' opinions about English language learners and the way they learn to stretch beyond their experiences with the multilingual students they instruct in their classrooms. Teachers' perceptions are underlying and deep-seated, and their personal thoughts result in a lack of support for ELLs in general education classrooms (Sandvik et al, 2013). The failure to support language learners is a result of personal beliefs becoming intertwined with instruction. For instance, if a teacher does not think an English language learner can sustain the rigorous curriculum, the teacher might not take the time to provide linguistic scaffolds for the student (Nieto, 2013). It is easier to use linguistic abilities as an excuse for poor school performance than to differentiate instruction appropriately.

Moreover, how teacher view their students have dire consequences for the students in their classrooms. Nelson and Guerra (2014) conducted a study where they discovered a connection between deficit-oriented beliefs toward minority students and low educational expectations for the students. Essentially, when teachers do not think that students are capable of the demanding work of the content class, they do not hold students to high enough standards. The result of low expectations for students is often academic failure. Further studies have identified two common misconceptions about English language acquisition. General education teachers with scarce professional development in language learning believe that ELLs should acquire English within 1 or 2 years of arriving in the United States (Oh & Mancilla-Martinez, 2021; Reeves 2006). While teachers rely on this preconceived notion to teach their students, research has proven that it in fact takes between 4-7 years to reach a level of English proficiency to participate in grade-level coursework (Hakuta et al., 2000). Another common misconception among general education teachers is the idea that speaking a language other than English interferes with second language development (Pettit, 2011). Again, research demonstrates that

students' first language proficiency facilitates the development of second language learning (Kelley et al., 2017).

Teachers' perceptions of English language learners and language policy have an impact on classroom instruction in the allowance of the use of their home language as well. Researchers concluded that bilingual education and ESL programs that utilize home language, are effective in promoting academic achievement for English language learners (Peace-Hugues et al., 2022; Bialystok, 2011). As a result, researchers suggested that sound policy for English language learners should not only permit but encourage the use of both languages in classroom content instruction (Dorner & Cervantes-Soon, 2020; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018; García, & Leiva, 2014; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005). Unfortunately, many school leaders and classroom teachers still devalue the use of home language (Hill et al., 2009). Research studies have found that general education teachers that are monolingual themselves tend to view home languages as barriers and obstacles to English language acquisition (Svalberg, 2016; Pomphrey & Burley, 2009). On the other hand, bilingual or multilingual teachers are more motivated to adopt an asset-based mindset when addressing their students' multilingualism (Rizzuto, 2017; Peercy, 2016; Risager, 2010). Regrettably, the majority of general education teachers in the United States are monolingual (Barros et al, 2021; Park et al., 2018). Monolingual educators overlook the valid research and studies that support and promote bilingualism and biliteracy, and instead implement English-only policies that have negative consequences for the students (Cummins, 2000; Zelasko & Antunez, 2000).

English-only policies have created controversy in federal policies in the past decade. The issue of English-only instruction influences how students perform academically, but these monolingually minded policies also extend beyond academic success for ELLs (Willig, 1985).

Linguistically diverse students receiving their education only in English feel devalued when their teachers foster an environment in which any language other than English is viewed as inferior and prohibited (Fredricks & Warriner, 2016; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). Devaluing a student's identity is damaging to the academic achievement of English learners. Language learning is fostered by social interaction among peers and in a social context (Lantolf, 1994; Newman, 2018). ELLs need modeling and demonstrations from their teachers and peers before they can be expected to internalize knowledge. English-only policies, whether a teacher's classroom policy, a school or state policy, or misinterpreted from federal rulings, directly oppose the social reality of learning a language and language proficiency. These laws that prohibit the use of students' home languages in the classroom have harmful implications for the academic and social achievement of English language learners.

On the contrary, not all general education teachers view multilingualism as a deficit that students must overcome. Yet even teachers with a positive linguistic mindset face challenges with implementing the requirements of federal language legislation. Many general education teachers new to having multilingual students in their classroom understand that their goal is to provide a language-rich environment where content and language are taught simultaneously, teachers recognize they are underprepared to provide appropriate instruction (de jong, 2013; Lee Webster & Valeo, 2011). For example, teachers who are sympathetic to language learners might negatively impact their learning unintentionally by limiting opportunities to teach language skills due to a lack of understanding of appropriate strategies (Rizzuto, 2017; Pettit, 2011).

Subsequently, Lau (1974) and Casteñeda (1984) jointly call for adequate classroom instruction and differentiation in classroom teaching for English language learners. Even though research reveals that classroom teachers are unprepared, (de jong, 2013; Lee Webster & Valeo,

2011), the teachers are still required by federal law to implement best practice strategies for ELLs. For a lesson to be deemed effective, instruction must be scaffolded, contain a rigorous curriculum, and provide ample opportunities for listening, reading, speaking, and writing (Johnson, 2019). Further research studies reinforced the need for academic content and academic language are both required for full lesson participation (Lachance et al., 2019; Kibler et al., 2015). Academic language is the language that is written or orally communicated and is essential for school success. Academic language is the communication skills students need to comprehend content area information or communication in a school setting (Lachance et al., 2019).

Therefore, for ELLs to become academically literate, teachers must teach concepts such as text structure and organization, synonyms and homophones, language patterns, as well as content-specific vocabulary (Valdés et al., 2014). Many classroom teachers find teaching academic vocabulary to be the most demanding (Lachance et al., 2019). Moreover, not only is academic vocabulary challenging for English language learners to participate in classroom instruction, but the vocabulary is linked explicitly to state and district standards of learning. A lack of comprehension of content-specific vocabulary such as “photosynthesis” in science, or “democracy” in social studies results in multilingual students failing to meet grade-level standards (Lachance et al., 2019). Without the proper classroom differentiation to accommodate students with various levels of academic vocabulary knowledge, teachers are delivering inequitable lessons to students with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Even though vocabulary is one of the most crucial aspects of all language acquisition, it is often overlooked in classroom instruction (Haniff Mohd Tahir, 2020). The neglect of explicit vocabulary teaching is a result of teachers making assumptions that students already know essential vocabulary skills (Haniff Mohd Tahir, 2020). For example, an English teacher may not

think it is necessary to teach students in tenth grade what the term “motif” means because it is presumed students learned it in prior grades. And according to state standards for English Language Arts, mastery of the term is required in earlier grade levels. However, a student who just arrived from a non-English speaking country would not have had that prior exposure to the term in English. Furthermore, teachers do not include overt vocabulary instruction is a deficiency in effective vocabulary instruction. Sufficient research exists on effective vocabulary strategies for multilingual learners (Sovakandan et al., 2017; Viera, 2017). Some successful strategies include teaching vocabulary thematically, identifying root words and affixes, cognates across languages, Frayer Models, and providing consistent exposure to new words (Colorín Colorado, 2021). However, without the adequate use of these strategies in the content classrooms, English language learners are denied access to the communication necessary to academically succeed.

Although best practice strategies are useful tools to improve the learning experience of English language learners, there is no one strategy that solves the inequity problem. The instructional strategy’s effectiveness is dependent upon the context where it is being used (Almekhlafi, 2019).

Explicit vocabulary instruction alone will not permit ELLs to make gains in academic language and content. There are several other best practice strategies that lead the engagement, participation, and overall achievement of ELLs in the classroom. The term itself, instructional strategy is a teaching technique that is generalized to learning and can be applied in all content areas (Marzano 2014; 2009). Project EXCELL, Exceptional Collaboration for English Language Learning, created a resource of “Go To” strategies for teachers to use when teaching content and language simultaneously (Levine et al, 2013). The list includes an exuberant number of activities that teachers can implement in their class to boost English learner comprehension and

participation. There are strategies for community building, interaction, teaching, student learning, vocabulary teaching, reading, and writing skills (Levine et al, 2013). Any content area teacher can use this list as a resource when developing lesson plans for ELLs. For instance, Project EXCELL includes an activity called Think-Write-Pair-Share (Levine et al, 2013). When teachers use this method in their lessons, it provides multilingual students with the appropriate wait time they need to process information in two languages, improves writing and peer collaboration.

Federal language policy calls for effective classroom teaching that meets the needs of multilingual learners. Classroom instruction must be equitable for all students regardless of languages spoken at home. Yet, federal language policy is being ignored and English learners are denied equitable access to education because mainstream classroom teachers are not prepared to provide linguistic supports necessary for ELLs to succeed (de jong, 2013; Lee Webster & Valeo, 2011). While there are many resources that exist to assist classroom teachers with new strategies that build and promote the development of academic language (Levine et al., 2013; Marzano, 2009; Marzano, 2014) the strategies are not being appropriately understood nor utilized by classroom teachers.

Summary

The demographics of K-12 public schools in the United States are continuing to evolve and diversify both culturally and linguistically. Every year, the number of English learners continues to increase (Heineke & Davin, 2020). Various legislative bodies in and around the country have attempted to address and solve this problem, but despite victories in federal courts and federal language policy, ELLs remain an underserved population in public schools, receiving inequitable access to education (Marichal et al., 2021; Murray, 2020). Researchers have

attempted to explore the phenomenon of language policy and the intentions behind federal policy written (Coady et al, 2022; Hult & Hornberger, 2016; Ricento & Hornberger 1996). The three orientations of language planning, language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource, are affecting useful policy from being produced (Ruiz, 1984). Too many lawmakers view language diversity as a problem because many policymakers lack understanding and expertise on multilingualism, which often results in English-only policies. Furthermore, the lack of experience working with the ELL population leaves policymakers with insufficient knowledge to implement policies that effectively use language as a resource. When policy is being written and enforced, the people doing those jobs are affected by the culture of their society. The culture of political environments influences policy being written and English learners are suffering the consequences.

Every ESL program is unique from the language spoken by students to the number of ELLs enrolled in the program. These variations propose challenges in how language policies are enforced and executed in different school districts. Little research has been conducted on the relationship between language policy and the challenges the policies created at the school level. One challenge that is constantly plaguing schools is funding. Schools receive federal funding based on the number of ELLs in their program, as outlined in Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Therefore, some schools do not have adequate funds to effectively follow language policy guidelines. While school districts might be required by law to provide home language instruction to their ELLs, funding, or rather the lack thereof, limits schools' abilities to hire certified teachers and purchase materials in languages other than English. Lastly, school leadership and the intentions behind administrators and teachers play a large role in the

implementation of policy and the application of policy in classroom instruction.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the lived experiences of teachers and administrators working with English language learners in K-12 federal programs and how federal language policy influences students in the classroom. As the population of ELLs continues to rise, an investigation into this phenomenon is essential as more classroom teachers see linguistically diverse students on their rosters. A transcendental phenomenological approach was chosen for this research study because the study design focuses on the perspectives and viewpoints of the participants involved, rather than the biases of the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative data will be collected through document analysis, individual interviews, and observations. Chapter Three provides a descriptive outline of the research design, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations for the phenomenological study.

Research Design

Qualitative methods are most appropriate for this research study for several reasons. The first reason is that qualitative studies provide voices to a group or population, identify variables that cannot be easily measured, and gives a voice to vulnerable populations that are typically silenced (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The purpose of this study is to understand all three of these components. ELLs are a group of vulnerable learners in K-12 education that have historically been ignored and silenced (Johnson et al., 2018). While the variables of monolingual language in and implementation of federal language policy and the effects of policy on ESL programs are not easily measured, listening to the concerns of those most affected in the field, provides insight into the problem.

The phenomenological approach to this study was chosen because phenomenological

researchers look beyond the individual and describe the common meaning of groups and their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenon being studied is monolingual language in federal policy for ELLs. This design is appropriate because the researcher seeks out the experiences of not just one ESL teacher, but rather a group of educators who are experiencing and coping with inadequate federal policies. Additionally, the number of participants for a phenomenological study range is 10 to 15. This study accurately follows this size characteristic as 15 participants are included.

Furthermore, this study takes on the specific research design of a transcendental phenomenological study. As proposed by Moustakas (1994), transcendental phenomenology focused on the participants rather than the interpretations of the researcher. The researcher must put themselves and their biases aside and ensure the focus is on investigating the phenomenon. Essentially, the researcher is "bracketing" out their own opinions and isolating the views and thoughts of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing is an essential part of the transcendental phenomenological study and is appropriate for this study because the stories and experiences of the educators who are confined by federal policy and have first-hand experience working with language learners are more important than the beliefs of the researcher.

Also, transcendental phenomenological studies have a unique data analysis process. After interviews with a group of participants who have witnessed the same phenomenon, the researcher analyzes the data by reducing the information collected into significant themes (Van Kaam, 1966; Colaizzi, 1978). The overarching goal of this study is the same, in that the researcher identifies common themes among educators in the field of English language education and the commonalities between the language of policy and classroom practices.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What monolingual language is found in federal language policy that creates inequity for English language learners?

Sub-Question One

What are the experiences of K-12 teachers and administrators and their understanding of federal language policy for English learners?

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of K-12 teachers and administrators working with English learners in K-12 public schools?

Sub-Question Three

What changes can be made to current legislation that would improve equitable access to education for English learners?

Setting and Participants

The setting for this study will be primarily conducted at Waves Middle School, which is part of the Oceana School District. Oceana School district is a large mixed urban/suburban school district serving over 65,000 students. Out of those 65,000 students, 9,000 are identified as current ESL students receiving services from the ESL program and a certified English as a second language teacher. The English Learner program is overseen by a Title III Specialist and an Instructional Specialist. These two leadership positions are the only central office personnel responsible for the success and compliance of the English Learner program and the education of the 9,000 ESL students. Within the schools themselves, a certified ESL teacher works at every school where an English learner is enrolled; however, most ESL-certified teachers are itinerant

and required to manage their time and services within multiple schools in the district. For this study, in particular, Waves Middle School will be the site where data will be collected. Waves Middle School serves 1,200 students between grades 6 and 8. The ESL teacher at the school has 35 active ELLs on her caseload whom she provides direct instruction for and 15 ELLs who have tested out of the program but are entitled to two years of monitoring by the ESL teacher.

Waves Middle School was chosen because of the diversity of ELLs that attend the school. The 35 active ELLs speak over 12 different languages, range in English level proficiency and home language proficiency, and have various immigration and socioeconomic statuses. The diversity among the students creates challenges for creating an equitable and effective program in which federal laws are supposed to provide guidance.

Participants

Participants in this study include seven content teachers from various disciplines, the school's ESL administrator, and two of the district ESL instructional specialists. All participants have over five years of experience teaching or supervising ESL students and teachers. The age and gender of the group of participants vary. Their backgrounds in education are different; however, they all have experience with English learners. In order to choose the participants for the study, purposeful sampling was used. Purposeful sampling is used to intentionally inform a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and central research problem (Creswell, 2013). Participants were interviewed and observed in their own classrooms.

Researcher Positionality

I chose this study for a very particular reason. I have been working in the field of second language acquisition for over seven years. Every day, I work with students from around the world, students who represent more than 14 different languages, have come to the U.S. for

various reasons, and have a wide variety of the previous schooling in their home countries. Every day I watch these students try their hardest to earn the same level of education that their native English-speaking peers receive. English learners work tirelessly and receive less than equitable education due to their linguistic diversity. This experience is what drives my passion and desire for this study. This section describes the interpretive framework and three philosophical assumptions that I, as the researcher, bring into this study. By understanding the lens through which I view this study, the clearer the study becomes.

Interpretive Framework

This study will be conducted through a social constructivist framework. This interpretive framework is concerned with the social nature of how people learn and develop. The framework focuses on the various ways in which cultural practices are learned in context. As a result, shared understanding is established by participants in order to achieve a goal or shared learning. Likewise, as people are provided insight into new cultures and communities, they construct new identities by incorporating their existing identity with the new culture (Pressick-Killborn et al., 2005; Wells, 1999). While Moustakas (1994) insists that researchers must practice epoché, or the ability to separate their own beliefs and biases from the research, through social and cultural interaction, I will look to understand the research from the viewpoints of the participants, yet my identity as a researcher and ESL teacher can change. Identities are constructed through new interactions (Pressick-Killborn et al., 2005), and new construction of ideas is what occurs in research.

Philosophical Assumptions

While researchers attempt to maintain objectivity and neutrality in studies, this achievement is challenging because human beings bring in their own beliefs and lived

experiences into everything they do. The following section addresses my own philosophical assumptions and positionality as a researcher. My ontological, epistemological, and axiological beliefs center on the values I hold as a person and how I view educational research.

Ontological Assumption

As a researcher, I believe there are multiple realities that exist and as a result, multiple truths in the world. Human beings are imperfect, and reality is subjective. Ontology refers to the type of world that is being investigated, and what can be known about the nature of reality (Crotty, 2003; Guba & Lincolin, 1989). The current world is full of humans who have their own thoughts, meanings, and interpretations. In this phenomenological study, each participant comes to the study with their own experiences, viewpoints, and biases toward the phenomenon. Some participants enjoy having English language learners on their roster, while other participants may have opposing thoughts on the population. Throughout this study, I plan to acknowledge that every participant has their own version of reality and their own version of the truth when it comes to their experience with the phenomenon.

Epistemological Assumption

In a phenomenological study, the results and findings of the study are subjective and rely heavily on the subjective experiences of the variety of participants chosen to be a part of the study and not those who are experts in the field (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For example, except for the ESL teacher in the school building, no other participant in this study has been certified in the field of education law or English as a second language acquisition. Therefore, the data collection is coming from the understanding of those who work with English language learners but have no formal education or training in the policies that govern what they do, nor best practice instruction for academic language. As far as epistemological studies go, epistemology

refers to understanding and explaining how we know the knowledge we do know (Crotty, 2003). By getting close to my research participants and gaining insight into how they experience the phenomenon of federal language policies in schools, I can make sense of how the participants understand the phenomenon and the way they construct knowledge about the education of English language learners.

Axiological Assumption

Axiological assumptions in research describe the ethical issues that must be considered when conducting a study (Finnis, 1980). In qualitative research, it is essential for the researcher to convey established values, positionality, and biases toward the subject. While researchers must do their best to bracket themselves from the data collection and analysis (Moustakas, 1994), researchers must also acknowledge any previous biases initially to best understand the truth of the phenomenon. I am a multilingual learner, and I am an ESL teacher. I personally have been on both sides of the phenomenon being investigated in this study. My own education has been impacted by federal laws, and I am a classroom teacher struggling with the inadequacy of these policies. My own experiences in this field lead me to believe that English language learners are resilient and do not receive the quality of education that they deserve. Being multilingual has many cognitive and practical benefits and the U.S. mentality as a nation does not value multilingualism as an asset. My own biases towards this subject exist; however, I will be sure to bracket myself from the study and focus on the experiences of the participants rather than my own.

Researcher's Role

In a qualitative research study, the researcher is the human instrument of the study (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). The researcher must engage in disciplined efforts to be

able to set aside all biases, prejudgments, and preconceived notions regarding the phenomenon being studied. As a result, the researcher is required to be receptive and open to listening to research participants when they discuss and describe their own perceptions of the phenomenon of the study (Moustakas, 1994).

I am an employee of Oceana School District and have worked in the field of multilingual education for over seven years. Further, I am an ESL teacher experiencing the same problems as the participants in the study. The participants are my colleagues and superiors; however, I do not hold any authority over anyone who took part in the study. My well-established relationship with the participants of the study is beneficial because the more comfortable they are with me, the more open and honest they will be in the interviews and observations (Angrosino, 2007). In order to collect the appropriate amount of data needed to analyze the phenomenon, participants will need to disclose their stories and experiences. This requires teachers and administrators to be vulnerable and willing to share their weaknesses as educators, and this previously established relationship will help me create a safe environment where they know they are supported and able to share their experiences in truth.

Procedures

The first step in this study is to choose and access the federal documents required for the data analysis portion of data collection. This study will focus on federal court documents and decisions specifically; therefore, the documentation is open to the public for viewing. The court cases *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), and *Castañeda. Pickard* (1978) will be the focus of this study. Court transcripts and literature related to these cases will be collected for analysis.

After the document analysis has been completed, the researcher will work with the dissertation committee to revise and edit the interview questions to ensure the research questions,

the document analysis, and the interviews all align to address the same phenomenon. Using this feedback, the researcher will be ready to begin the interview process. The next step is to receive permission from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon approval from Liberty's IRB, I will begin the approval process from Oceana School District and Waves Middle School to conduct both the interviews and later observations at the school site. I will obtain and complete an Oceana School District research request form to gain permission from the school district to interview staff and observe classrooms. Once that request has been accepted, I will begin identifying specific administrators and teachers to participate in the study. The approval letter from the IRB is in the Appendix.

Upon IRB approval from both institutions, I will begin interviewing the selected participants in the study. Using my revised interview questions, I will begin to interview teachers and administrators facing the impacts of federal policies on the ELLs they work with daily. Participants will be identified and sent a recruitment letter detailing the expectations of the interviews. The recruitment letter can be found in the Appendix. Once the teachers and administrators agree to participate, their confidential information will be protected, and they will be provided pseudonyms for the remainder of the study (Yin, 2014). The interviews will be conducted in person and digitally recorded for future analysis.

After the interviews have been completed and the data have been analyzed, I will use the results from the interviews to drive my focus for observations. Out of the 10 content teachers that were interviewed, 3 will be chosen to complete unannounced classroom observations. I will observe each participant 2 times for 40 minutes each time. In the observations, I will be looking for evidence of effective instruction for linguistically diverse learners as outlined by the federal language policies. Additionally, I will be looking for areas of instruction that do not meet the

requirements of the Lau (1974) and Casteneda (1984) cases.

At the end of all the data collection, I will begin to analyze the data by using Moustakas's (1994) methods of data analysis to identify common themes between the participant's experiences relating to the phenomenon being studied.

Permissions

This study includes both in-person interviews and classroom observations at a middle school in the state of Virginia. To conduct this study, a school district and individual schools needed to be willing to give their permission. In addition to the consent of the district, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University is needed. Once IRB approval is granted from Liberty University, a signed letter to approve the study will be sent to the school. Also, after a permission form from the school district and school is completed, the signed form will be in Appendices. After all appropriate consents and permissions are granted, I will begin my data collection process.

Recruitment Plan

Participants in this study include 10 content teachers from various disciplines and four administrators overseeing some components of the English Learner program. All participants have over five years of experience teaching or supervising ESL students. The age and gender of the group of participants vary. There are five men and nine women in the study and the ages range from 27 to 55 years old. Their backgrounds in education are different; however, they all have experience with English learners. The sampling will be chosen by convenience, due to the complexity of teachers' schedules. All participants will be given information on their commitment to the study and detailed guidance on their expectations throughout the study. By providing encompassing resources, the participants will agree with informed consent.

Data Collection Plan

A critical aspect of qualitative inquiry is the rigorous application of the variety of data collection strategies or approaches available to the researcher. The three data sources that will be collected in this study are documents, interviews, and observations. The three sources were chosen in that sequence for a specific purpose. To elaborate, document analysis will be completed first due to the interview questions focus on federal language policy. Before one can understand how federal policy written by monolingual policymakers affects classrooms, the actual policies themselves must be explored. Document analysis will precede interviews with select individuals. These individuals are administrators and teachers who directly support ELLs in Ocean School District and at Waves Middle School. Once the researcher understands the origins of the federal policy and has feedback on the phenomenon from interviewees, the last step is to validate the precedent set by the laws and the information from the interviewees by witnessing first-hand what the actual learning environment for multilingual learners looks like at Waves Middle School. After all data sources are collected and analyzed, the researcher will have enough triangulated information to make informed recommendations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Document Analysis Data Analysis Plan

The first step that must be taken when analyzing qualitative data is to begin by excluding personal experiences and preconceived notions associated with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). This process also known as epoché (Moustakas, 1994), helps to bracket out personal biases, and produce trustworthy results. When analyzing the two legal court cases I chose for this study, I will ensure that I am analyzing the documents from an unbiased standpoint, and only focus on the intertextuality of the court case proceedings and holdings.

The documents chosen for this study will be thoroughly read and annotated to look for common themes in the language used in each document (Saldana, 2011). The themes will produce patterns that will be later used to triangulate the data collected from all three data collection sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Individual Interviews

An interview is defined as a social interaction via conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Warren & Xavia Karner, 2015). While the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee, knowledge is constructed throughout the interaction (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). After the researcher has identified a sample of participants who can effectively answer the predetermined interview questions, both the researcher and the participants will have conversations about the phenomenon to gain information and knowledge on the topic. Interviews with selected individuals are an appropriate data source for this study because; a phenomenological study focuses on the shared experiences of multiple individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By discussing federal language policy and the implications of the policies on multilingual learners with people who all share this common experience, the researcher can accurately construct knowledge of the phenomenon.

Individual interviews will be conducted with several participants, all of whom work for Ocean School District. These participants include 10 content teachers and four administrators. Interviews will be conducted in person either before or after contracted hours. All interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed after the conclusion of the interview. While the interview questions for this data source prompt answers to all three research questions, interviewees will spend most of the conversation discussing research question two, how does the federal language policy impact language learners in the school?

Individual Interview Questions

As a key component of phenomenological research, all individuals chosen for interviews will be those who have experienced the phenomenon identified in this study (van Manen, 2014).

1. Please describe your educational background and career through your current position, specifically pertaining to your experience with English Language Learners. CRQ
2. Describe your prior knowledge of federal language policy for multilingual learners (ELLs). RQ2
3. Describe your knowledge of *Lau v Nichols* (1974). RQ1
4. Describe your knowledge of *Castañeda v Pickard* (1978). RQ1
5. Describe your challenges when working with ELLs in your classes. RQ2
6. Describe successful practices you use when working with ELL students in your classes. RQ2
7. What professional development experiences have you had that prepared you to work with ELL students as a teacher/administrator? RQ2
8. What changes can be made to current legislation that would improve equitable access to education for ELLs? RQ3
9. What else would you like to add to our discussion of your experiences with ELL students? RQ2

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

After all individual interviews have been conducted and completed, I will transcribe the recordings from the sessions. The participants will then be asked to review the transcripts for clarity and accuracy. This process is called member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Once participants have confirmed the transcripts of their interviews, I will review the transcripts again as suggested by Agar (1980), so that I will have more exposure and a deeper understanding of the transcripts.

I will then follow the data analysis as defined by Moustakas (1994). The first step of this method is to code the transcripts to look for significant themes. As the codes are identified, I will begin to cluster the categories together to identify patterns among the interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I will be specifically looking for invivo coding, which uses the exact terminology that the participants use in their interviews to identify my categories (Saldana, 2011). After codes are categorized, I will collapse categories into themes. Therefore, each theme identified will be directly from the interviewed participants.

Once I have identified several themes, and I have saturated the coding process, (Saldana, 2011), I will go back to my participants and share the themes I identified from their interviews with them. Using member checking again, I want to ensure that I am understanding the phenomenon from the viewpoint of my participants, and make sure my biases remain separate from the data analysis from the interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). With the approval to move forward from my participants, I will use these themes at the end of the data analysis process to triangulate the findings with my other two data collection methods.

Observations

Observation is one of the most important tools for collecting data in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As defined by Angrosino (2007), observation is the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting with the use of the five senses by the researcher. The researcher observes and takes notes for scientific purposes. Notes and recordings will relate to the research questions. Observations for this study will be unscheduled. The researcher must see how teachers

plan for language learners daily, not when they know a researcher is coming in to observe. By conducting unscheduled observations, the researcher will have an authentic look into the daily experiences of a multilingual learner in a middle school content classroom.

While writing everything down can be challenging for the observer, observations in this study will focus on identifying the experiences of ELLs in the classroom and potential changes that could be made to improve their experiences. The observer with be a complete participant and will fully engage with the teachers during the observation times. As a result, the teachers may become more comfortable with the observer being in the room (Angrosino, 2007). The observer will complete two observations on three teachers, a total of six observations. The observer will be in each classroom for a total of 40 minutes each session.

Observations Data Analysis Plan

One of my main goals in this study and throughout the data analysis is to stay true to the words and experiences of my participants. I want to make sure that the data I am collecting and analyzing share their stories and their voices so others can learn from their experiences of the phenomenon (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I will begin my analyzing the observation data the same way I analyzed the data from the interviews. I will look at the transcriptions and notes I will take during my classroom observations. However, I will not specifically be looking for invivo coding. The themes that I identify will not necessarily be the direct words of the teacher of the class.

Once I have those themes identified from the observations, I will use Moustakas's (1994) version of the Stevick-Colaizzi method to write descriptions of “what” the participants experienced, or a textural description (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I will then repeat the process, but this time focus on the “how” and “why” the experiences happened, or the structural description (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This composition of both the textural and the structural descriptions

will describe the overall essence of the experience of the phenomenon as seen by the participants of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Synthesis

All three methods of data collection are used to triangulate the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After analyzing each method individually, I will use the themes identified in all three data collection sources to find commonalities among the document analysis, interviews, and observations. By relying on the use of Moustakas's (1994) framework for analyzing qualitative data in a phenomenological study, the data analysis process will be free of researcher bias and produce trustworthy results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), foundational concepts exist that establish trustworthiness in a study. These concepts include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This section describes the steps taken to ensure a trustworthy study as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Credibility

Researchers must ensure credibility in their study. Credibility is the extent to which the findings of the study truthfully depict reality from the perspective of the participants involved and their views of the phenomenon being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I will achieve credibility in this study through triangulation in data collection, peer debriefing, and member-checking. Triangulation throughout data collection was obtained through document analysis, individual interviews, and observations of educators in the field of multilingual education. Another credibility technique that I will implement in this study will be peer debriefing, which will provide me with the opportunity to discuss the findings of the study with colleagues as new

information arises throughout the duration of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). Conducting peer debriefing will allow me to adjust interview questions and the focus of observations as needed. Lastly, I will utilize member checking to optimize credibility. As an employee of the school district analyzed in the study and as a teacher of multilingual learners, I have experienced the same phenomenon being studied and have a connection with the participants of the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). Therefore, my connections might lead me to believe that I automatically understand the perspectives of the participants immediately and would potentially prevent me from viewing the phenomenon through their lens. By utilizing member checking, I can use my previous knowledge and inside advantage to better understand my participants' stories, but also confirm that I am understanding it from their specific point of view (Rossman & Rallis, 2016). Additionally, after I complete individual interviews, I will provide transcriptions to the participants to check for clarity and accuracy.

Transferability

Transferability is showing that the findings may have applicability in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which is largely achieved using thick, rich descriptions when describing research findings. By using rich and detailed descriptions of the teachers' and administrators' experiences with federal policies for ELLs at a middle school, the descriptions shine a light on the potential experiences of educators across all grade levels, content areas, and student populations across the country. While this study will only be conducted in one school which limits the transferability of the findings, the study is an important first step in analyzing how monolingual policies impact ELLs in the United States.

Dependability

Dependability is showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which can be demonstrated through an effective description of the procedures undertaken for the study. Dependability is accomplished through an inquiry audit, which at Liberty University occurs with a thorough review of the process and the products of the research by the dissertation committee and the Qualitative Research Director.

Confirmability

Another component of trustworthiness is the confirmability of a study. Confirmability is the ability to confirm or corroborate the results of the study by others (Davenport, 2014). If two independent researchers were to conduct the same study, the data would be relevant and accurate. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe multiple ways of ensuring confirmability, audit trails, triangulation, and reflexivity. I will create a detailed audit trail which will include the procedures taken, data, analyzed data, and the final findings. If it was necessary to track any of the information from the study, the audit trail allows for transparency. Additionally, the data were triangulated as described in the previous section, and I was reflexive in every portion of the study. Reflexivity refers to the ability to understand and pay attention to the context of knowledge construction throughout the entire research study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). To make sure I was reflexive in my research practices, I will memo as I conduct research. By memoing and reviewing my notes, I will be able to help draw out my own biases and perspectives related to the phenomenon.

Ethical Considerations

In a qualitative study, the accuracy of the research is dependent on anonymity, informed consent to participate, and confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Anonymity relates to keeping the identities of all participants confidential and secure from the possibility of being

identified as a participant. Throughout this study, every step was taken to ensure the identities of those involved remained secret. The school district, the school's name, and all teachers were given pseudonyms to help this protection. Confidentiality is imperative, so no identifying information was included in this study to protect everyone involved.

Furthermore, all those involved in data collection were notified and gave informed consent. Informed consent aided in ethical consideration throughout the duration of the study. All participants were aware and informed about how the research would be conducted and data would be collected during both interviews and classroom observations. All participants were notified that they were volunteering to take part in the study and were able to withdraw at any time. By providing this information at the beginning of the study, everyone involved was able to make an informed decision about the role they will play in this specific research.

Confidentiality was also essential in maintaining ethical standards throughout the research. I safeguarded all identifying information that would lead to the identities of the school's name or participants of the study. I did not share any information about the data collected with anyone outside my dissertation committee. All notes and memos were kept in a locked and secure location, with one lock on the door to the room and the other lock on the filing cabinet the data is stored in. With locks, two forms limit the risk of any others viewing it. After three years, if the data is not pertinent to any future study, it will be destroyed per the University's IRB guidelines.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter Three was to discuss the methods for data collection and data analysis. A transcendental phenomenological research design is used to discuss the lived experiences of those in the field of multilingual education and how hidden monolingual agendas

influence students in the classroom from the viewpoint of teachers and administrators. Included in this chapter is the rationale for the qualitative design and setting and participant choices to provide background knowledge to support the phenomenon being studied. Data will be collected through document analysis of federal court decisions, individual interviews with those working in the field of multilingual education, and observations of content teachers and their work with ELLs in the content areas. Additionally, my position as the researcher and the preconceived biases I brought into this study were divulged to promote transparency in the data analysis. Data were analyzed and the process was outlined to the furthest extent. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability of this qualitative phenomenological study. Ethical considerations were also discussed to guarantee that all data in the study was kept confidential for the participants and the data from the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a middle school in the Oceana School District. Participants included seven middle school content area teachers, one administrator, an ESL specialist, and a Title III coordinator who all have experience working with English language learners. Chapter Four starts with a description of each participant and is followed by the results of the data analysis. Data were collected first through document analysis of federal language policies for English language learners, and then from participants using individual interviews and classroom observations. The results section provides explanations of the data analysis and the major themes and subthemes that were identified from the data collected.

Participants

This section provides a table with an overview of each participant's experiences in English learner education. The profile of each participant includes their year of teaching ELLs, the grade levels they currently serve, the content area they teach ELLs, and their education certifications. Each participant met the study criteria and were chosen from one middle school within the same school district. All participants had at least three years of teaching or overseeing multilingual instruction. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the confidentiality of the participants and the school district.

Table 1
Educator Participants

Participant Name*	Years of Experience with ELLs	Grade Level	Content Area	Certifications
Sean	22	6th	Science	PK-6 Elementary Education
Debra	5	6th	English	6-12 English Education, PK-12 Theater Education
Erica	6	6th	Social Studies	PK-6 Elementary Education, PK-12 Administration
Evan	25	7th	Social Studies	Special Education K-12, History Education 6-12
Rebecca	5	7th	English	PK-6 Elementary Education, 6-12 English Education
Melanie	5	7th	Math	PK-6 Elementary Education
Hannah	8	8th	Math	PK-6 Elementary Education, 6-12 Mathematics
Richard	6	6th ,7th, 8th	Administration	Special Education K-12, English Education K-12, School Leadership
Patricia	5	6th ,7th, 8th	ESL Specialist	K-12 ESL Education, Special Education K-12
James	18	6th ,7th, 8th	ESL Specialist	K-12 ESL Education, English Education 6-12

**Note.* *Pseudonyms

Sean

Sean is a veteran teacher with over 28 years of experience in the classroom. Certified in Prekindergarten through sixth grade all subject areas, he has taught middle school English, social studies, and science. Sean says teaching science is his favorite, “I ended up in science, where I love and I'm staying there.” In his 28 years of classroom teaching, Sean has had English learners almost every year but noted inconstancies in their scheduling, “Sometimes I might have had five, seven in different classes. Sometimes they put them all in one class, and sometimes they spread them all out. So, it's different every year.” He wishes there was more consistency in their placement and volunteered to always be the designated science teacher for the sixth-grade English language learners especially because science can be a safety concern when working with ELLs. It is different than other content areas, “You're in English and they're just sitting there listening to the English, but we're doing English and science and we're doing labs and safety stuff. They're messing with hot plates. I have to really make sure that I'm with them when they're doing that. I can't be looking at 30 other kids and seeing who's in danger of doing something wrong.” Overall, Sean has a wealth of knowledge and expertise when it comes to teaching content to English learners.

Debra

A fun, compassionate, and flexible sixth grade ELA teacher, Debra considers herself a teacher that is always open to suggestions and expanding her professional knowledge. She is a career switcher, having only begun her teaching journey five years ago. Debra transitioned into teaching by earning a bachelor’s degree in theater performance and a master’s degree in education. She has been teaching sixth grade English for five years and has worked with English

learners each year. She considers herself to have a "growth mindset" and "likes learning from the students as much as learning from adult peers in education." She acknowledges that working with English learners is challenging and getting passed the language barrier to teach content is a daunting task, however, "just watching them grow and be able to overcome those difficulties of the language barrier is fun to watch." Debra would like to continue working on her professional knowledge and expand her practices to better meet the needs of her ELL students her classroom.

Erica

Erica is an organized, empathetic teacher and a lifelong learner. With eight years of classroom experience in both elementary and middle school, she prides herself in the relationships she builds with her students and her strong classroom instruction. Her favorite part about teaching is, "so many things. Building relationships and working with children and watching them grow. It is exciting to see them enjoy learning social studies and the history of the world." While she had some experience teaching English learners in elementary school, much of her experience has been in teaching middle school ESL students. She relies heavily on the English as a second language teacher for support, as it is not a subgroup of students she has had much experience with in the past. With her current population of linguistically diverse students rising, "the support of the ESL teacher has been instrumental in learning how to best assist ELLs in being successful learning history and overall successful in the classroom." Erica feels like her college education and early career mentoring did not adequately prepare her for teaching language and content together. She makes note that, "this is something that needs to change."

Evan

Evan is a middle school social studies teacher who is kind, patient, and enthusiastic about teaching students social studies. In his 25 years of teaching, he has "loved sharing his knowledge

of the world we live in with students and really see them bloom into inquisitive scholars. That is the best part about teaching. Seeing kids become curious." Throughout his years of teaching social studies, he has had English learners in his classroom on and off. He has had a variety of different levels of English learners as well, "I've had students in extreme cases where they come with absolutely no English exposure and sometimes do not even have literacy in their own language. And then there have been times where I did not even know some of the students were ELLs because they sound so fluent." Regardless of their English proficiency levels, Evan feels like social studies adds another layer of difficulty for students from other countries because, "I'm teaching American history, which a lot of my students have some knowledge coming into the class. English learners do not learn American history, so I have to remember to build background for them." Evan welcomes English language learners into his classroom always because, "They impress me. They work so hard and even when the content is difficult for them to understand or the class activity is hard, they keep going and want to learn."

Rebecca

Rebecca is an ambitious, energetic, and passionate educator. Her six and a half years of teaching have given her a wealth of experience as she has taught both elementary and middle school English learners. Rebecca became a teacher because, "she wanted to work in a field where she could truly make a difference in the lives of children" and she loves working with English language learners because she, "enjoys being a part of their multilingual journey. Many of them start off shy when they arrive, and it is rewarding to see them get more comfortable speaking English and interact with their peers." Rebecca has had both positive experiences and challenging times when working with ESL teachers to best support the English learners in her classroom. She does her best, "to collaborate with other adults with language expertise because

they are the ones who have the knowledge on what is best to teach language and content." Rebecca hopes to continue to have ELLs in her classroom throughout her career.

Melanie

Melanie is a optimistic, understanding, and committed math teacher. She decided to become a teacher because she, "enjoyed working with young people and can help them as they explored their budding sense of identity." Her experience teaching middle school have, "opened my eyes to the many challenges that multilingual learners, students of color, and students from other marginalized groups face in the classroom. I became very passionate about driving equity through education and making learning accessible to all students, both in an academic and social emotional context." In addition to her passion to ensure equity and accessible education in her teaching, Melanie has also taken on leadership positions to help teachers improve their instruction. She is a Professional Learning Community Lead for the school's math department. Melanie uses her leadership position to help shift teachers' mindsets about all students, but especially for ELL students. Melanie believes, "Because English is the language used to advance in America, every student in federally funded schools should have equitable access to instruction that occurs in English. However, the use of English should be supplemented with materials and assessments in whatever language the student uses most confidently, especially if that student has limited proficiency in English.

Hannah

Hannah is a veteran math teacher with an overwhelming love and dedication to making sure all students succeed. Having taught middle school math for 14 years, she teaches, "for the cliché aha moment. Most teachers say that look on a student's face when they finally grasp a concept that they have been struggling with is why they teach, and it is true. When students find

confidence in their learning, it makes everything worth it." Hannah has always welcomed English learners in her classroom. She notes, "math is typically, but not always, a subject where ESL students can excel as language is not a barrier as much as in other content areas. Often, ELLs outperform their peers in math too." She feels fortunate to be able to work with them and watch their confidence grow throughout the school year. Hannah feels like, "we do our best to accommodate and differentiate to meet their needs, but our best isn't good enough." Hannah recognizes the unique challenges that face ESL students in their classrooms and hopes schools can continue to improve their practices and policies to provide educational opportunities for ELLs.

Richard

Richard is a dedicated educator with 26 years of educational experience under his belt. Richard's passion for making a difference in teaching is evident in the various roles he has taken on throughout his career. He started off as a teacher of students with emotional disabilities and has since taught several types of special education English classes at the secondary level. After serving as a school improvement specialist for seven years, he was promoted to assistant principal. Richard is currently the assistant principal that oversees the school's ESL program. He has overseen the program for the past three academic school years. Richard believes that English learners are a dynamic asset to the school community, however there are many barriers to their feelings of belonging in the school. Richard's concerns are, "there is lack of genuine sense of belonging. Teachers try their best to incorporate English learners into the classroom environment, but they just do not know how." His wish is to incorporate more professional development opportunities into the school for all teachers to support English learner success because, "we have got to do a better job for our kids. They deserve better."

Patricia

Having taught English learners for the past five years, Patricia is enthusiastically devoted to helping linguistically and culturally diverse students be the best possible versions of themselves. Patricia became a teacher because she felt she was, “naturally good with children.” She began teaching a kindergarten transition class for students who were struggling academically. Teaching kindergarten is when she first discovered her passion for helping students who struggle in school and are often overlooked. In order to pursue this passion, she earned a master’s degree in Special Education. She began teaching special education and did so for sixteen years. She had the opportunity to teach classes with students who were dually identified as English language learners and with a learning disability. As a result, Patricia decided to earn an endorsement in teaching English to speakers of other languages. Since then, she has taught secondary ESL as a specialist in second language acquisition. Her goal as an ESL specialist is to make sure her students, “are able to express their feelings and understanding of content in a safe environment.” She works directly with general education teachers to help support them in creating this type of welcoming environment. However, her job comes with many challenges. When working with content area teachers, “not all teachers are open to accommodating English learners.” Additionally, her job requires her to take vital time away from working with her students to hole meetings and complete paperwork. She is concerned, “schools are not providing the best education that ESL students deserve. There is so much that needs to change, and I do not even know where to begin.”

James

James has always been interested in language and culture. His first experience in the world of ESL began when he was in middle school. James volunteered as an ESL peer tutor and

still remembers, “reading The Red Badge of Courage and Silas Marner with some of the Vietnamese refugee students who attended the school.” After college, James continued to pursue his love for language. He moved to Japan to teach English as a foreign language in a middle school and as a private tutor for students of all ages, from preschoolers to senior citizens. After returning to the United States five years later, he taught adult learners of English in the ESL program at a local school district for eight years. James currently serves as an English learner specialist at the secondary level and has been in this role for the past five years. James has an overwhelming amount of experience teaching ELLs between the ages of two to eighty-seven from over 40 different countries in public and private schools, in corporate businesses and in private sessions. He has taught classes at every level of proficiency, including beginning literacy, adult literacy, advanced grammar, and conversation courses. James shared, “while this job can be very rewarding, there are a lot of things going on working against us as teachers and trickle down to the students. There aren’t enough people trained in second language learning to make a big enough impact on our kids. All teachers need ESL training.”

Results

The results of the data analysis are listed and described in this section. Data were collected through document analysis, individual interviews in person, and classroom observations. The findings of the data analysis are presented in this section and are supported with in vivo quotations pulled directly from two court documents, 10 interview transcriptions with educators, and observation notes from 8 various classroom observation sessions. All quotations in this section including any dialect and grammatical errors in speech are provided verbatim to maintain the accuracy of their lived experiences as educators. The central research question driving this study asked, “What monolingual language is found in federal language

policy that creates inequity for English language learners?" The preceding sub questions sought to examine the understanding of teachers and the implications of language policy on secondary English learner instruction. The data was collected and then analyzed by using codes that were developed into themes.

Theme Development

The subsequent section discusses the theme development derived from data analysis and the research questions responses. The themes drawn from data analysis are organized into Table 2. After the theme development table, a description and thorough discussion of each theme and subtheme is provided using direct quotations from the study's participants.

Table 2

Theme Development

Major Theme	Subthemes
Vague Understanding	Limited Knowledge Unclear Expectations Inequity
Instructional Challenges	Language Barriers Lack of Support
Successful Practices	Peer Interaction Visual Learning
Policy Changes	Define Terms Home Language Use Professional Development Preservice Teacher Training

Vague Understanding

When discussing federal language policies for English learners, an overwhelming majority of the study's participants had a vague understanding of what I meant when I asked about federal language policies that govern classroom instruction for linguistically diverse students. This theme was derived from the responses of the eight content teachers and administrators that were interviewed. When asked about their background knowledge on federal policies, most participants listed several state and district level policies. For example, when discussing this question with Richard, he stated, "I am aware of what was given to me during my training. We have a checklist and what they're entitled to and under state testing and what that means in terms of levels and performance and what they qualify for." Richard was able to discuss what ESL students in the state received as state testing accommodations but did not have the background knowledge about any federal policy that affected instruction. Debra answered this question similarly when she mentioned, "I know we have the testing to try and see what level they're at, which also affects their state testing accommodations…I cannot for the life of me remember any of the other stuff." Both content teachers and the ESL administrator in the school building had an ambiguous understanding of what ESL students are entitled to as per federal law mandates.

A vague understanding of federal policy was also evident in the classroom observations. When observing Sean's science classroom, there was little evidence of differentiation in the lesson to accommodate for the beginning level ELLs, which is a direct outcome of both federal court cases that are the focus of this study. A native Spanish speaking student, who just arrived from Peru, was not able to participate in the memory game they were playing because the

academic language required to participate was above his proficiency level. However, a lack of evidence of understanding federal policy was not only evident in the science classroom observation. During her English instruction, Rebecca's instruction also lacked accommodation for the varying levels of English proficiency. When assigning the students independent work, Rebecca explained four assignments verbally with no written instructions and said, "if you need help, just let me know." Several ELLs went up to ask for help because the directions were unclear. This major theme is explained further in detail through three subthemes: (a) limited knowledge, (b) unclear expectations, and (c) inequity.

Limited Knowledge

Limited knowledge about the federal policies was the first subtheme to come about during data analysis and was reported by all ten of the participants. The teachers, administrators and specialist also mentioned at some point, that they had either never heard of the federal court cases, or they have heard of each one, but would need to do more research to recall exactly what each holding stated. Hannah mentioned, "I have been teaching for over 20 years, and I have had English language learners in my class for the better part of 10 years, and I didn't even know that we had policies that high that we have to follow." She went on to discuss how policy is rarely talked about or "made visible" to teachers, but "we're just expected to do it without the proper knowledge." The English as a second language specialists even discussed their limited knowledge with the policies themselves. Patricia shared, "I first read about these policies during my teacher preparation program. These policies are just briefly referenced during our district-wide professional development each year." Even though she had heard of them she went on to explain, "Unfortunately, I lack a deeper understanding of federal language policy and what it

means for our students." Overall, the participants in this study expressed a desire to learn more due to their limited background knowledge.

Unclear Expectations

The second subtheme to develop throughout data analysis was unclear expectations. This subtheme was also recognized by all 10 participants. Each content teacher, administrator, and ESL specialist noted how unclear the expectations were in each court case. The Castañeda (1984) case requires ESL programs receiving federal funding be, "based on sound educational theory." When Debra responded to this her first response was, "Can you define what that is supposed to be? I feel like there is a new theory every year. There is a new buzzword theory every year." She also mentioned that there was no training to help teachers understand what sound educational theory looks like for English language learners. Evan also expressed similar attitudes towards the idea of "sound educational theory." He exclaimed, "I treat ESL students the same as all students in my classroom. So whatever theory works for me teaching my students is what the ESL students get too." Evan's description of treating all his students the same was highlighted in his classroom observation as well. All students were completing the same assignment regardless of their proficiency level in English.

Participants continued to identify the rest of the language in the Castañeda (1984) case to be unclear as well. The second prong in the holding discusses that ESL programs must be "implemented effectively" and with "adequate resources." All participants had an issue with the wording, especially in regard to what is deemed effective. Education is a state right in the United States, and it gives school districts the autonomy to decide what is and is not effective, but as stated by several participants directly, that leaves unclear expectations of what is effective instruction for English learners. Rebecca highlighted the unclear wording by going on to say,

"What does effectively mean? These policies are super vague, and I need clarification. I was not prepared in college to teach ELLs, so I need input for how to do all this." James, being an ESL specialist who did have college preparation courses agreed with Rebecca when he said, "I think it is important that the law tries to define exactly what was meant by implemented effectively. It is too vague. Further clarification is needed on exactly what an effective English language program looks like in a public-school setting."

Erica's reaction to "adequate resources" was telling. She mentioned, "the district does not seem to have adequate resources or personnel to support the general education teachers in the content classrooms. But that is just what I think is adequate. Who determines what is adequate?" Melanie shared the same sentiment when she said, "it's unclear what adequate resources and personnel should look like." The same notion of unclear expectations in the federal policy extended into the last prong of the Castañeda (1984) case. The holding states that, "the program must be evaluated as effective in overcoming language handicaps." Debra discussed the language of the case when she called out the term "handicap." She went on to say, "multilingualism isn't a handicap. If they want to evaluate programs, the federal court should first look at their mindset about ELLs." Melanie also noted this deficit language explaining, "It also, unfortunately, views a student's limited proficiency in English as a 'handicap,' which implicitly prevents education professionals from recognizing the cultural and linguistic value that multilingual learners bring to their communities."

The content teachers continued to struggle with the undefined expectations laid out in the Castañeda case. Hannah pointed out, "the only way school districts evaluate programs is on test scores, and we know that is punitive and unreliable." The participants were all unclear and confused by the wording of the laws and who's responsibility it is to define these terms.

Inequity

Inequity emerged as a third subtheme in the court cases and overall responses of the participants. Both the Lau v. Nichols (1974) and the Castañeda v. Pickard (1984) case discuss the idea of inequity. The Lau case itself was brought about by, "non-English speaking Chinese students against officials… seeks relief against the unequal educational opportunities." The courts ruled 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." When observing classroom teachers, there was clear evidence of the holding that providing ESL students with the same instruction and resources as their native English-speaking peers forecloses ELLs "from any meaningful instruction." For example, when observing Evan's social studies lesson, he used a video to explain the causes of the Vietnam War. The video required an ample amount of background knowledge about United States history that he assumed all students in the class had. However, not all students in the classroom have exposure to years of American history lessons. At one point in the lesson Evan even stated, "you probably all learned about this in fourth grade." In this case, the students in the room who did not attend elementary school in the United States were not receiving equitable access to the content because of the teacher's assumptions. The ESL students were left out of "meaningful instruction."

The issue of inequity was brought up in the Castañeda v. Pickard federal case. One of the main arguments of the plaintiffs in the case was the school district failed, "to implement adequate bilingual education to overcome linguistic barriers impeding plaintiff's equal participation in the educational program of the district." The court decided that there was inequitable access for the native Spanish speakers to participate in learning in the federally

funded school program. While this case of inequity was brought to the Supreme Court, the participants in this study identified the inequities of the ESL program in the Oceana School District. James made a point to say, “I seriously question the equity of the education we provide our ESL students here. We provide the minimum services to meet the expectations of the law, but do not provide services that truly meet the needs of our students.” Erica also pointed out flaws in the school system’s model in regard to equitable education. She mentioned:

> I don't think that they do receive an equal education because we're trying to force them into a mold, and you're not going to fit into a mold. Especially the ones coming that have never spoken English a day in their life. And they're automatically thrust into a general education class and expected to know and understand English, science, social studies in a country that they have never been in.”

Instructional Challenges

All participants in this study expressed their determination to help the English language learners in their classrooms and school succeed, however every participant expressed challenges in classroom instruction. Instructional challenges is the second major theme identified in the study. From the administrator’s point of view, Richard discussed in detail the problem of belonging ELLs in the school feel. He mentioned that teachers cannot begin effective instruction for ELLs until the students feel like they are a part of the greater school community. Richard described the challenge as, “…heartbreaking to watch. I don’t think it is a lack of caring or trying. I think teachers need the support to make English learners feel more comfortable, safe, and secure and a part of the community before they can solve the issues in instruction.” Richard feels we must address the child as whole before the school addresses instructional challenges.

This major theme is explained further in detail through two subthemes: (a) language barriers and (b) lack of support.

Language Barriers

Coming from the teacher perspective, the content teachers highlighted several instructional challenges that exist no matter what content area they are teaching. The first instructional challenge that was corroborated by seven of the participants, and what is a subtheme of instructional challenges, is language barriers. The issues of language barriers as an obstacle in educating ELLs ares evident in both the Lau and Castañeda case. Both cases were brough to the supreme court because the school districts viewed the home languages of the students as a problem and a barrier to their access to education. While observing ELLs in their classroom environments, the language barrier as an instructional challenge came up several times. When observing Hannah's math classroom, students struggled to understand the academic vocabulary necessary to participate in the lesson. The students were learning about translations, and when Hannah used the word slide, an ELL thought she was talking about equipment on a playground.

Several teachers pointed out language barriers specifically as a challenge in teaching content. Rebecca disclosed, "The language barrier is probably the biggest challenge I face when teaching brand-new ESL students. English is a lot of complex reading and writing. It is difficult to get them to read grade-level novels when they do not have any English knowledge." Debra expressed the same issues in teaching English classes reluctantly admitting, "there were times when my ELLs were left behind due to a language barrier, specifically as it pertained to writing."

Sean corroborated the challenges with language barriers by sharing, “I like to help them in their home language as much as possible, but it is hard when I do not speak their language and they don’t speak English.”

Lack of Support

Lack of support emerged as a second subtheme of instructional challenges for all 10 of the participants. Rebecca vividly described the relationship between ELLs and ESL teachers as a “lifeline.” She explained a situation where she had a brand-new student in her classroom from the Philippines and, “the connection between the teacher and student was tangible. It was like the student was on a crowded highway struggling to keep up and the ESL teacher was able to come in and provide that student with an open road ahead. But the sad reality is our ESL teachers aren’t always available.” The availability of the ESL specialist or teacher was a continued trend in the interviews with the participant. Melanie confirmed, “I learned the most from the ESL specialist in the building. She would pull them out for individual support and then bring them back in to integrate them with the rest of the class and provide me with feedback to continue supporting each student based in their needs.” Melanie raved about what the ESL teacher was able to do but, “that being said, she had an insane case load and was split between two schools, so I could only get this kind of necessary support from her once or twice a week if I was lucky.” While all 10 of the educators discussed the need for more ESL certified teachers in the building, Evan pleaded, “This isn’t a situation where we're going to see less ESL students. If anything, we're going to see more ESL students. As that population grows, you're going to go from having one kid in a class or two kids in a class to having five, six kids in a class. The more we can do to help them transition by having the proper staff, I think the better.”

While the content teachers viewed the ESL specialist as an expert who was able to tremendous support when they were available, Patricia asserted that as an ESL specialist she is overworked and understaffed, therefore she feels she cannot provide the basic support all the content area teachers need. She offered, “ESL specialists are faced with huge caseloads, paperwork, and data entries. The additional duties have really pulled the focus away from instruction and support of the ELL students.”

Successful Practices

There are many challenges the participants noted in their interviews, but there are several successful practices happening in the classrooms that the participants were proud to mention in their interviews and demonstrated during classroom observations. Successful practices for teaching ESL students are the third major theme to transpire from the data. Sean boasted, “ELLs love science though. It's real, and it's real to them. And it’s so hands-on. They love it. They look at it like elective. And they don't realize how much time they've been in there because we do so many things that's awesome.” Rebecca happily shared, “There are some successes. I really enjoy hearing them come in and speak their home languages and become more comfortable speaking English. I really enjoy being a part of their multilingual language journey.” This major theme is explained further in detail through two subthemes: (a) peer interaction and (b) visual learning.

Peer Interaction

When asked about their specific instructional success with ESL students in their classrooms, eight educators mentioned peer interaction as an effective strategy resulting in peer interaction as a subtheme of successful practices. Hannah shared, “Some of the biggest successes have been when the students pair up themselves. Sometimes we're able to match a set of students and they truly help each other along the way. It's not just the English-speaking student helping

the non-English speaking student. They really mesh and they blend, and those are fun to watch relationships blossom and then both grow as students." During an observation of Hannah's classroom, the collaboration was clearly confirmed. Hannah said, "okay now I want you to try number three with a partner." The students, even those at beginning level of proficiency quickly found a classmate to work with and complete the dilation problem together. Evan also conversed this practice of peer collaboration as a successful practice. He mentioned, "using other students. Even though some students have no proficiency in English, the kids somehow found ways to talk to each other and act like translators. There was a sense of community and making students feel like a family."

Visual Learning

The second subtheme of successful teaching practices for ELLs was visual learning. Nine out of the 10 participants mentioned how helpful visuals are in their instruction for students of all English proficiency levels. In Evan's social studies class, he had images projected on the board as he was talking about them to help support comprehension. Each vocabulary term he talked about had a picture to show what it meant. For example, when discussing the domino theory, he had a picture of dominos falling on the board and constantly referenced it when discussing the meaning of the term. The visual was beneficial for the English learners who never have had exposure to dominos. The same types of visuals were helpful in the science classroom while Sean was teaching. Not only did Sean use his body to demonstrate what the term *orbit* meant, but he also had a picture of the Earth with corresponding arrows to visually explain the academic term.

Teachers shared additional success stories throughout their individual interviews as well. Melanie shared, "While visual supports are useful to most students, I saw significant

improvement in comprehension with new multilinguals when visuals were paired with directions and/or text." Erica offered the use of visuals as a way for students to express more than just academic language and content knowledge. She used visuals to help her newly arrived students communicate their basic needs. For example, she mentioned, "Things like picture books to build background for content, and even how to ask to go to the bathroom, visuals are powerful. So, when a new student needed to go to the nurse, he could just point to the nurse image until he felt comfortable enough to ask in English.

Policy Changes

The fourth major theme to come out of data analysis is policy changes. Among all 10 participants, there was a unanimous consensus that the current legislation for English language learners needs to change to better support the unique needs of the vulnerable population. As Hannah so clearly put it, "There has to be something better. We have to do better for these kids. We can't let policymakers who haven't been in a classroom ever in their lives or policymakers who have never learned another language make crucial decisions for ESL students." This major theme is explained further in detail through four subthemes: (a) define terms, (b) home language use, (c) professional development, and (d) preservice teacher training.

Define Terms

The first subtheme under policy changes is defining terms. All 10 participants had comments to make about the vague language used in the court cases and how definitions and examples are needed. The terms all ten participants highlighted as problematic were, "equity," "effective," "sound educational theory," "adequate," and "handicap." All educators in this study referred to these terms as problematic and believe the court holdings need to be more specific. Richard insisted:

> We need to define our terms. The laws have got to be more specific in terms of what they mean with those three criteria. That is so generic. It needs to be so much more specific because literally you could say that you're hanging a kite and it somehow is effective practice. The way that's written that's not specific enough that we need to define our terms in terms of legal language." James agreed in his interview adding, "Further clarification is needed on exactly what an effective English language program looks like in a public-school setting. There needs to be a clear definition of what the law is asking of schools."

Home Language Use

The ability to use a student's home language to help support their learning of academic content was also mentioned by all 10 participants and is a subtheme of changing policy. The policies discussed in this study do not provide specific federal guidelines for using home language in the classroom, and the participants felt that legislation needs to be more specific with allowing English learners to use their home language in the classroom. James suggested, "I think allowing ELLs to use an embedded, electronic bilingual or English dictionary when taking state objective assessments and providing the option of taking these exams in their home language would improve equitable access to education. The benefit of home language is particularly true for high school ELLs who cannot receive a diploma without passing numerous state objective exams in English, often with just an inadequate and outdated word-to-word dictionary." The use of home language to demonstrate content knowledge was also addressed by Melanie. Similarly, to James's suggestion, she offered the potential addition to legislation, "Allowing students access to their first language would be greatly beneficial. Giving students the opportunity to learn and test in their first language would help them display the knowledge they have and provide greater

clarity on the role that limited English proficiency plays in a student's learning. Students often have the skills that standards are looking to assess, but a language barrier can prevent them from effectively demonstrating that expertise."

Professional Development

Except for the English as a second language specialists, the eight other educators did not have any formal professional development opportunities for teaching English learners, even though they have all taught ELLs for at least five years of their teaching careers. Melanie admitted, "I have not been offered school-sponsored professional development focused on English language learning." The lack of professional development was clear in her classroom observations. When teaching, she struggled to engage all her learners with the grade level content. Sean, a veteran teacher, shared a similar sentiment, "I'm sure I've gone to professional development classes at some point for that, but there are not a lot of them. And that's another problem because if I did, I did it a long time ago and I probably couldn't tell you. So, they're just thrown into our class. And then we figure it out. And some teachers are not... They don't deal with it well, especially new ones."

Out of the 10 participants, all the educators called for mandatory professional development of some kind for content teachers and school administrators on teaching English language learners. Rebecca proposed, "Teachers should have to take courses on ESL to maintain their state licenses. If they are not willing to support classroom environments where all students feel safe and comfortable to speak their languages and be a part of the classroom environment, then they should have to be required to address their biases with trainings." Pam recommended, "Supporting these students is challenging and fulfilling all at the same time. These students bring so much to the school environment. It is so important for classroom teachers to allow these

students to share their culture and experiences with others, and they should be required to go to trainings to learn how to support them."

Preservice Teacher Training

Like professional development opportunities, most of the educators in this study had limited exposure to coursework in their preservice teacher training programs to prepare them to work with English language learners. Rebecca shared:

> I only had one class in my degree program. The class title was Multilingual Students in Education. We learned about inherent biases, on a personal level, how to adjust your mindset when you have different language speakers in your classroom. It was all theory and mindset. I didn't walk away with something instructionally I could apply to my teaching, but it helped me build better relationships with my students." Erica also had little training in her degree program, "I think I took a course on how to support ELL students, but beyond that, my education on ELL has been nonexistent. I have learned the most from my current ELL teacher on how best to support my students."

The educators felt that there are opportunities in college preservice teacher training programs to better prepare teachers to serve the English learner community. Sean, a new teacher mentor, shared experiences he has observed from working with new teachers:

> They go to college, and they don't know that they're going to be thrown in first year with all these scenarios. And they're just as frightened as the ESL kids. I don't think teacher preparation programs prepare any teacher to do the job, regardless of what you do. They're not preparing teachers at all. I learned theory, I learned research, I learned what should happen, but not to do with actual students."

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a middle school in the Oceana School District. The study was guided by a central research question and three preceding sub-questions. The central research question asked, "What monolingual language is found in federal language policy that creates inequity for English language learners?" The following section details the major themes and subthemes that developed during data collection from the educator participants.

Central Research Question

What monolingual language is found in federal language policy that creates inequity for English language learners?

There was a consensus among the educator participants that there is unclear and vague language in federal language policies that foster a monolingual ideology that has negative implications for English language learners in the classroom. Four major themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) vague understanding, (b) instructional challenges, (c) successful practices, and (d) policy changes. For Melanie, she described her experience as rewarding and:

> I loved my experiences working with ELLs and learned a lot about my own implicit biases and beliefs. Debunking the idea that multilingual learners come to the classroom with a deficit has allowed me to see the myriad of ways that these students add value, depth, and diverse perspectives to our schools and communities. I hope that all educators learn to see the beauty of multilingualism and can equitably and effectively meet the needs of students within this group.

Kelsey also shared her experiences with English learners stating, “For the most part, my ELL students have been the hardest working students in my classes, which says a lot about their work ethic and drive to succeed. It is time that legislation and policies catch-up to meet the needs of these determined students so we can all work together to support them the best way possible.”

Sub-Question One

What are the experiences of K-12 teachers and administrators and their understanding of federal language policy for English learners?

The educators had very little understanding or knowledge of federal language policies that govern the rights of English language learners in federally funded school programs. The participants were aware of several state and district level policies; however, they lacked the federal level knowledge. As a result, three subthemes emerged, (a) limited knowledge, (b) unclear expectations, and (c) inequity. Patricia, an ESL specialist, confessed that she has better understanding of special education policies than ESL policies because they are referred to more in education. She stated:

> I took a class on federal policy, so I know a lot about how they work, but I mainly know special education policies. ESL laws and legislation don’t get talked about enough. It is probably because the population of English learners is much smaller, but that doesn’t make our ELLs any less important. People in charge need to make sure everyone working in a school building are up to date on current policy and know what ELLs are entitled to, but that is just not happening. I would be surprised if any content teacher knew about these policies, because even us specialists aren’t trained in it by the school division.

Once provided an overview of the holdings of each court case, the teacher participants gave their opinions and understandings of each federal policy. The agreement among all the teachers was

that the language lacked clarity. It was unclear whose responsibility teaching language is, what is considered equitable and effective, and the definitions of the terms left much to be desired. Rebecca, an English teacher, took major issues with these policies. Her initial reactions were:

> I so often find myself feeling like I am not doing enough to support equity, but now after reading this, I do not even know what equitable education for ESL students is. These policies are super vague, and I need clarification. I was not prepared in college to teach ELLS, so I need input for how to do all this. What exactly are you evaluating, I would want to know? There isn't enough information. At no point have I ever been told this is my responsibility. How can I ensure I am teaching my ELLs equitability if I don't know how?

Sub-Question Two

What are the experiences of K-12 teachers and administrators working with English learners in K-12 public schools?

The educators' experiences working with English language learners proved both challenging and successful. The dichotomy is evident in the two subthemes that emerged from the research question, (a) language barriers and (b) lack of support. Teachers experienced several instructional challenges when trying their best to educate students who speak languages other than English as their first. The first challenge that was mentioned by the participants is the language barrier. Evan shared during his interview:

> When I have a student who speaks Spanish, it is pretty easy to find someone in the building who speaks Spanish to help me communicate. Even other students in the class. This is a pretty diverse school population, and there are more bilingual students in our classes than we probably know. So, I pair my Spanish speakers up and they help each

> other or I find an adult. Well, I have a new student from the Philippines. He is a beginner in English and I do not have any students in the class that speak Tagalog as their home language. I know we have some in the school, but none in my classes. I learned we have a custodian who speak Tagalog as her first language, so I always invite her in my class or ask to call home when I need to. But I can't have the custodian in my classroom teaching social studies content to my students every day. But it is challenging to get around that barrier for sure.

Teachers also struggle with lack of support. Most of them had positive experiences with their English as a second language specialist. The specialist is able to provide them background information on the students' proficiency levels in English, accommodation plans, and various classroom strategies. However, the ESL specialist is not in the building fulltime. She is itinerant between two schools and has an overwhelmingly large caseload. Therefore, the support the teachers do get is minimal. Richard explained the problem:

> I feel like as educators and administrators we do enough to make it easy on ourselves. And I think that we need to do a whole lot more to raise English Language Learners to the point where they are a part of a community and they do not feel separate. And that takes a village that's not just a couple of people here and there. It's a mindset. And the way we look at it has to change completely. I think the division needs to do a better job of requiring certain trainings for all general education teachers who are slated to work with English Language Learners. It would benefit everyone, but especially those who have them for core classes English, Science, social studies and math. They need to have more instruction on the strategies and the things that they can do when an ESL specialist is not present as a push in specialist so they can better support, because since the

> specialist is not here every day, it can't just be up to one person. And we've got to do a better job preparing all of our teachers to support those students because it's not the job of one person who is here a couple of days a week. That's unfair for the students and the staff.

Several success stories were shared throughout the interviews and positive interactions were observed in the content classrooms. Successful practices for English learners emerged as a major theme during data analysis. When looking to understand the lived experiences of the educators with teaching English learners, the educators were eager to share what is working in their classrooms. The two subthemes of successful practices are (a) peer interaction and (b) visual learning.

When discussing the benefits of peer interaction, James shared:

> One of my favorite ways to differentiate for English learners is through group rotations rather than whole group instruction. It helps me as the teacher differentiate for a variety of student English proficiency levels and needs within one classroom. By giving them group work, the beginning level students can work together and use their home language as a support. Or I might pair a completely bilingual student with the beginners to help support with the classwork. There are a lot of ways I end up grouping students, but by having them work together, they are collaborating to build their English language skills.

The utilization of peer interaction and collaboration to support learning for ELLs was also evident in classroom observations. When observing Debra's English class, the students were working on adding sensory language into their writing. While the teacher was using an exemplar of a poem using sensory language to describe summer, a beginning level student was confused

about the language in the poem. A native English speaker drew a picture of a sun and a popsicle to help the ESL student understand the content of the poem.

The second subtheme to emerge from the successful practice theme was visual learning. The teachers shared that in their experience with working with English learners, using visuals has helped them communicate with the students best. The teachers stressed that visuals were not only successful when using images and pictures but using body movements as visuals as well. While observing Hannah's math class, the students were learning about translations, reflections, and dilations on a coordinate plane. When discussing the academic math terms, Hannah used her hands to show translations as a slide, reflections as a flip, and dilations as a change of size. She then instructed the students:

> Okay, everyone put your hands up and do these movements with me. I'll wait until everyone puts their hands up like this. Good. Okay. A translation is a slide. Everyone say slide and move your hands like a slide. Excellent. One more time. Slide. Now let's do reflection. Reflection is a flip. Let's all flip our hands and say flip. Flip. Now back to translation. Slide. Reflection. Flip. Great and lastly, dilations. Make your hands get bigger, not make them smaller. Dilation changes size. Big. Small. Bigger. Smaller. Move your hands like this. Awesome job everyone.

Sub-Question Three

What changes can be made to current legislation that would improve equitable access to education for English learners?

The teacher educator's perspectives expressed that the current legislation governing the instruction and education for English language learners is unclear and vague, and they offered several suggestions for potential policy changes. The subthemes the major theme of policy

changes convey those proposed modifications. The subthemes are (a) define terms, (b) home language use, (c) professional development, and (d) preservice teacher training.

The first change to policy proposed by the participants was to define the terms in the legislation. Both Lau and Castañeda use generic terms in their holdings that created an unclear expectation for the educators. Participants explained that by defining each term in the policies, all teachers and school administrators would have a greater understanding and sense of responsibility for ensuring equitable education for ELLs. Debra conveyed her feelings by saying, "There needs to be a lot more that needs to be defined. And if that's the case, then I can understand why we have so many that are failing or at least not doing right by our students. I don't feel like we're effective. Honestly, we are not. But if lawmakers can tell me what exactly effective instruction is, then I think we would start to see real change in the way we educate of English learners."

The second proposed change was the use of the students' home language in the classroom. Current policy does not allow or mandate the use of the students' first language to help support effective instruction. The educators in this study all felt that using a student's home language was essential in building relationships and help supporting students learn content. Melanie added:

> It is a common misconception that multilingual learners will learn faster if taught solely in the language of the dominant majority. Because they have not been educated about the assets of utilizing a student's first language, some teachers refuse to allow students to speak, write, read, or listen in a language other than English. Unfortunately, this harms students who undoubtedly possess language skills in their native language that can be translated to English. Allowing students access to their first language would greatly

> benefit multilingual learners. Giving students the opportunity to learn and test in their home language would help them display the knowledge they have and provide greater clarity on the role that limited English proficiency plays in a student's learning.

All educators in this study also demanded more professional development for content area teachers on how to best teach English language learners. While different levels of professional development were suggested, state, district, and school level, all participants demanded there be federal mandates as well. Erica stated, "If the federal government wants us to use sound educational theory and best practice instruction, then policymakers need to be the ones helping us understand what those are. If we are going to be held accountable, then we content teachers need the appropriate professional development to do what they are asking us to do."

Lastly, the teacher educators called for more training at the preservice teacher training level. When asked about their college courses that helped prepare them for working with English learners, the some of the educators had taken a class or two, however the overwhelming consensus was that the coursework was with ineffective or nonexistent. The educators are calling for change to the way preservice teachers are educated. Rebecca exclaimed:

> Every year we get more and more students. In my first year teaching I had one ESL student in my class and this year I had six. The population is just going to continue to grow, and we cannot be complacent in how we prepare teachers who are coming into the profession. We already have so much on our plates, you know? We have lesson planning, grading, students' emotions, parents, meetings, and all of the above. We deal with so much that they don't even tell us about when we are in college. If they start being more realistic in our college classes, then we can enter the field with the mindset that there is a lot we deal with, but at least we will have better strategies and information on how to

actually handle it all. I wish I had more classes in my college career on English learners because I think it would have made me a better teacher in the end.

Summary

This chapter included the individual descriptions of the educator participants that took part in this study and a detailed explanation of the data analysis. Data were collected from the educators using document analysis, individual interviews, and classroom observations. Four major themes and 11 subthemes were identified in the data analysis process. The four major themes included (a) vague understanding, (b) instructional challenges, (c) successful practices, and (d) policy changes. Each theme and subtheme were explained in detail in order to speak to the central research question and the three sub-questions. The theme of vague understanding of the federal language policies by the teacher educators responded to the central research question and the first sub-question. Instructional challenges and successful practices depicted how the federal policies impact the way teachers teach English language learners, both the struggles and the successes teacher experience in response to sub-question two. Lasty, the theme of policy changes answers sub-question three, the changes that can be made to current legislation to improve equitable access to education for English learners. In vivo coding was used throughout the entirety of the chapter to provide an accurate depiction of the experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a middle school in the Oceana School District. Chapter five provides a discussion of the study's findings as a result of the four developed major themes. This chapter consists of six different subsections including (a) summary of findings, (b) interpretation of findings, (c) implications of policy and practice, (d) theoretical and empirical implications, (e) limitations and delimitations, and (f) recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study.

Discussion

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of 10 secondary educators who are required by federal law to uphold policies that have implications for the English language learners. Major themes and subthemes emerged from data collected through document analysis, individual interviews, and classroom observations of content learning. Ruiz's (1984) Orientations in Language Planning grounded the theoretical framework of the study. In the following sections, a summary and interpretations of the findings are discussed, followed by a discussion regarding the connection between the theoretical and empirical literature previously discussed in Chapter Two. Then, implications for policy and practice are presented. The limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research are presented and discussed.

Interpretation of Findings

Summary of Thematic Findings

The findings of the study indicated that there are four areas of improvement in federal language policy that can support secondary educators working with English language learners. Throughout my document analysis of the two federal policies, Lau (1974) and Castañeda (1984), there were several terms used in the cases that fostered a monolingual mindset. These same terms created confusion and misunderstanding for the participants when asked to discuss them in individual interviews. The vagueness of the terms was triangulated with classroom observations, where I documented specific examples of teacher's failing to uphold the policies due to limited knowledge and understanding. I found that in order to have a serious impact on the equitable education of English language learners in secondary classrooms federal policy must (a) expose all educators to the policies that exist for ELLs, (b) define legal terminology to promote equity, (c) address the use of students' home language in instruction, and (d) require professional development for content teachers on effective instruction. These findings and interpretations are based on the results of document analysis of two federal court cases for English learner instruction, interviewing ten secondary educators who work directly with ELLs, and observing four of those educators in their content classrooms as they delivered instruction.

Expose All Educators to the Policies that Exist for ELLs

After I completed the document analysis on the two federal court cases that provide instructional rights to English language learners, I found that when I asked content teachers, the ESL administrator, and two ESL specialists about their experiences and prior background knowledge on the policies, they all displayed limited knowledge of the policies that are in place. As I interpreted the data from the individual interviews and classroom observations, it was evident that the participants had minute exposure, if any, to federal policies that oversee the ESL

programs in the school. The participants pointed out that they have never had to opportunity to learn about these policies, as they were not discussed in their teacher training courses, licensure exams, or professional development provided by the state or school division. While the participants had limited knowledge of the policies, they expressed interest in learning more about the legislation that governs ESL instruction. They felt if they had been exposed to the laws prior to working with English learners, they would be able to provide a more equitable learning environment and instruction for their multilingual students. In addition, the educators noted that it is unjust for policymakers to hold teachers accountable for equitable instruction if they have never been given explicit education or training on the policies that are in effect.

Define Legal Terminology to Promote Equity

Throughout data analysis and interpretation of the findings, I concluded that the federal policies must define the legal terminology used to promote equity for ELLs in public schools. The wording of the policies themselves leaves too much open to interpretation to state level implementation and even district and school level interpretation of the polices. In a previous study by Jimenez-Castellanos and Topper (2012), the way federal policies have been written provide unjust outcomes for ELLs. Acknowledging that education is a state right in the United States, there must be more clarity coming from language policy in order to promote equity. The participants shared their confusion and lack of understanding of the terminology in the laws during their individual interviews. After reading the holdings, all the educators asked for definitions of the terminology and noted that there is much left to individual interpretation of the terms. Furthermore, when I conducted classroom observations, many content teachers failed to provide equitable instruction to the ELLs in their classroom, and it came as no surprise as these educators expressed their unclear understanding as to what is best for ELLs as determined by

policymakers. Educators call for concise and informative definitions they can refer to when planning their instruction to support equal access to education for their ESL students.

Address the Use of Students' Home Language in Instruction

As I interpreted the data, the topic of home language use during instruction continued to come up in all three data collection sources. Previous research studies have addressed the benefits of using home language in the classroom (Dorner & Cervantes-Soon, 2020; Heineke & Davin, 2020). As I analyzed the findings, I concluded that home language use is an essential practice that supports English learners' success in a school community and, therefore, must be addressed in the federal language policy. As it stands, the court documents themselves share testimony about students' home languages, yet the holdings do not offer any indication that home language is allowed to be used in the classroom as an effective instructional strategy. The educators shared that one of their biggest challenges when teaching English learners is the language barrier. For teachers to connect with their students to build relationships and attempt to teach content, they use translation apps and translated materials to communicate with their students, which are best practice strategies (Dorner & Cervantes-Soon, 2020). They also noted that, especially for secondary English learners, they understand the content, but are not able to demonstrate understanding in English. Therefore, the content exams are not actually assessing content knowledge, but rather content knowledge in English. The participants in this study demand home language use in instruction be addressed in federal legislation to ensure equity for ELLs.

Require Professional Development for Content Teachers on Effective Instruction

During individual interviews and while observing classrooms, it was blatantly apparent that the teacher participants required professional development on effective instruction for

English learners. Both federal policies in this study mandate effective instruction for ELLs, however the policy does not outline what that means, and the lack of clarity is evident after talking to teachers and seeing how their instruction varies from classroom to classroom. The educators in this study were candid and willing to express their areas in need of improvement in their instruction. The educators expressed their desire to best serve their linguistically diverse population; in fact, they all mentioned at some point their love of teaching this population and their wishful need to see them succeed, they simply felt they did not have the toolkit to carry out their desire. Furthermore, several other studies have pointed out the problem that general education teachers are not prepared to linguistically diverse students (de jong, 2013; Lee Webster & Valeo, 2011). Drawing on the foundation of these educators' experiences, and lack of professional development opportunities, policies for state licensures must change to require content teachers to take a certain amount of professional development hours, led by highly trained and credentialed ESL educators, to support content area instruction with a language learning lens. Policymakers and stakeholders should be held accountable and inspired to make changes to the quality of teacher training to better serve the changing demographics of the United States classroom.

Implications for Policy or Practice

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a public school. Previous studies have emphasized the demand for equitable instruction for English language learners (Jimenez-Castellanos & Topper, 2012; Zehr, 2010). The findings and interpretations of this study add to the existing literature detailed in Chapter Two. Several of these previous studies sought to address the need for equitable instruction for

English learners and the policies which enforce such equity, however, these studies did not address the specific language used in federal policies for ESL instruction, and how the vague monolingual ideologies behind the wording in the policies impacts teacher instruction for English language learners. This study brought to light the educators' specific lived experiences regarding their knowledge and understanding of language legislation and how that understanding affects their classroom practices and their call to update the existing policies in place.

Implications for Policy

As discussed in the interpretations of this study, the educator participants identified several areas where policy needs to change for English learners. The first area of change identified was examining the language and terminology used in the court holdings and providing clear cut definitions of what is expected from all stakeholders ranging from district officials to classroom teachers. If policymakers were able to listen to the teachers' perspectives and see how the ambiguity in the legislation trickles down and creates confusion in instruction and use these experiences to implement strategic change to the legislation, there is potential for a real impact on the quality of instruction English learners receive. While the intentions behind both the Lau and Castañeda cases had good intentions for ELLs, the obscurity of the holdings leaves too much decision making to the state and local level stakeholders and fosters inequity (Coady et al., 2022). What a principal in one school, who has been out of the classroom for 20 years, deems effective instruction for English learners is going to be different than a coordinator who speaks two languages and grew up in an ESL program. The discrepancies in allowing various stakeholders to determine their definition of the holdings creates confusion for teachers and impacts their quality of instruction. The failure of policymakers to provide well established and

defined expectations in the polices is a leading contributor to the low success rate of English language learners in K-12 programs.

Going further into the federal policies, both Lau and Castañeda indicate home language as a reason for bringing the cases to the supreme court in the first place. However, one major problem concerning language in the United States is that legally, language is not an enumerated right (Coady et al., 2022). Legal action or arguments for any type of language right are without legal merit. Therefore, when Castañeda calls for "sound educational programs" and "effective instruction," the challenge is the federal policies do not protect language rights and the legislation does not protect the students' ability to use home language. It is the responsibility of legislators creating language policy to incorporate home language into the policies. There are studies that prove using home language in instruction is "sound educational theory" and "effective instruction" (Almekhlafi, 2019; García & Leiva, 2014). Therefore, if the federal policies are going to continue to use that terminology, the court then needs to address the rights of students' and teachers to use the students' languages in classroom instruction and assessments.

Policy needs to address the way school personnel are trained. Professional development must be focused on at all levels of education; federal, state, and district level. Starting at the top, the government education agencies and federal and state law makers need to review and revise the teacher licensure process. With the changing demographics of the nation's schools, all teachers will experience having English learners in their classrooms at some point in their careers (Heineke & Davin, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The current system does not adequately prepare general education teachers to teach multilingual students (Samson & Collins, 2012). By requiring all teachers to maintain professional development hours and receive high

quality training by credentialed staff, the nation's teachers will be better prepared to assist the diverse students they will have in their classes.

Implications for Practice

The implications of this study may be applicable to any school with English language learners, as federal policy governs all K-12 public schools. While this study specifically calls for policy change, there are potential implications for practices for educators. Any general education teacher or school administrators can investigate the language laws and rights that English learners are supposed to be guaranteed in schools. As discussed in this study, there are several areas of weakness in the current policies that could be improved; however, English learners do have educational rights under the language laws, and those educators serving the ELL population can educate themselves on what is currently required and presented.

As far as classroom instruction, teachers should attempt to continue to do their best to support the English learners in their classrooms. Teachers can reach out to the district's ESL program staff or ESL specialist in their buildings to get more information on how to better teach their students. There are also online resources and professional development opportunities educators can seek out to learn more about how to teach linguistically diverse students.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of secondary educators with monolingual driven language laws and the impact of the laws in the classroom for English language learners. This section presents the theoretical and empirical implications of this study.

Theoretical Implications

This study was grounded in the theoretical framework of Orientations in Language Planning, as described by Richard Ruiz (1984). Ruiz proposed that language planning is written with three ideologies: language as a right, resources, and problem. This study adds to the Orientations in Language Planning because it speaks to all three ideologies as presented by Ruiz. The study lends itself to furthering the language as a right orientation. In the United States, language rights are not guaranteed. The experiences of the educators in the study demonstrate that this orientation proposes a problem in educating English language learners. According to the participants of the study, using all languages in a student's repertoire is a best practice strategy for teaching ELLs; however, the language as a right orientation poses a problem for policymakers, as policy cannot require the use of languages other than English.

This study also lends itself further into the language as a problem orientation. As demonstrated by this study, the language as a right orientation actually views language as a problem. Teachers in the study mentioned that they used home language as an effective strategy because the language barrier was one of the most significant challenges they faced when teaching English learners. Further inquiry on educator's experience with using home language highlighted the interconnectedness of Ruiz's language orientations (1984). While educators in the study demanded home language be viewed as a right for the students, it was a result of their view of their home language as a problem and a resource. The interpretations of the data continued to bring to light the interconnectedness of Ruiz's language planning orientations. The three orientations cannot be thought of as separate entities, as the orientations are complex and intertwine to create language policy. However, policymakers cannot continue to make legislation solely with the language as a problem orientation.

Empirical Implications

This study demonstrated empirical evidence that the language and intentions behind policy has implications on the way teachers understand instruction and how they teach students. Previous studies have indicated the need to revise federal policies to better meet the needs of linguistically diverse students (Coady et al., 2022). The educators who participated in this study, corroborated this information by sharing their experiences and willingly admitting to their own lack of understanding and knowledge of policy and how to teach English language learners. The gap in previous research studies exist in looking at the actual language of the policies themselves, and how the vague wording fosters an environment of confusion and ambiguity among teachers of English language learners. Empirically, this study filled the gap in the literature by presenting the viewpoints of content area teachers, ESL specialists, and the administrator who oversees the ESL program and how each participant interpreted the federal cases used in this study.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was a transcendental phenomenological study and as a result, demonstrated several limitations by research design. The study consisted of a small sample size of participants. Only 10 educators were asked to participate, including seven content teachers, two ESL specialists, and an ESL administrator. While the teachers teach a variety of content classes across all three middle school grade levels, the sample size of participants limits the reach of the overall study. Additionally, the diversity among the participants was lacking. All the participants interviewed were white, monolingual teachers, and the majority of the teachers were female. Ten of the educators were interviewed; however only four were observed in the classroom. While each observation covered all four content areas, the teachers were only observed twice.

Observing teachers two times did not provide a complete picture of the teachers' ability to teach English language learners.

Furthermore, researcher bias is always a possible limitation when conducting qualitative research. I as the qualitative researcher was responsible for both data collection and data analysis. In attempt to limit my own personal bias as an ESL specialist and multilingual learner myself, I used in vivo coding and relied on verbatim language directly from the participants. I also attempted to keep my comments and remarks during the interviews and observations to myself; however, because I have personal relationships with the participants as the school's ESL specialist, there were times it was difficult to remain objective.

Another limitation in the study was in the court cases chosen to be analyzed and discussed. While Lau and Castañeda were chosen as they are landmark cases in the field of ESL education, there have since been other Supreme Court cases that also impact instruction for English learners. This study is limited to the holdings of the two cases discussed.

Several steps were taken in the study to implement delimitations in the research. The participants chosen had at least five years of experience working with English language learners. The five-year requirement ensured the participants had enough experience working with the population in order to gain insightful observations and understandings of the phenomenon. Additionally, teachers from all content areas in secondary education were chosen to participate from math, English, science, and social studies. The variety was essential to understand the phenomenon in all areas of academics, not just the traditionally language heavy classes like math and social studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study highlights a need for future research on the policies that govern public education, particularly for the vulnerable population of English language learners in the nation's schools. While there is sufficient research on effective strategies and instruction for English learner students, there is little research on the policies themselves and the trickle-down effect to educators in the field, and the correlation between policies written and classroom instruction. Further research to explore the intentions behind language policies and the wording chosen in the holdings has the potential to make an impactful change to benefit multilingual students.

Future studies have the potential to examine the other court cases that have made an impact on English learner education. As a part of this study, I analyzed Lau and Castañeda; however, there have since been several federal cases and policies that have come into legislation and their impact also needs to be researched. Furthermore, this study focused on federal court rulings. In the United States, education is a right of the individual states. A study focusing on specific state legislation could be telling in how policy impacts teachers and students directly.

Additionally, this study was conducted through a qualitative lens. Data were collected and triangulated through document analysis, individual interviews, and classroom observations. Since this study lends itself to understanding how policies influence academic achievement for English learners, it would be beneficial to conduct this research in a quantitative study. It would be impactful to analyze student attendance, test scores, and graduation rates to see the numerical influence of language policy on English language learners.

Conclusion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences and the iinfluence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a middle school in the Oceana School District. The

study was grounded in Richard Ruiz's (1984) Orientations in Language Planning. Data were collected from document analysis of two federal court cases, individual interviews of 10 educators, and classroom observations of four of the content area teachers. A central research question and three sub-questions were explored that led to the development of four major themes and 11 sub-themes, adding to the existing literature on federal language policy and the impact on teachers and English language learners. The four major themes that emerged from the data analysis included the following: (a) vague understanding, (b) instructional challenges, (c) successful practices, and (d) policy changes. The findings indicated educators had very little knowledge of the policies that exist to support the equitable education of English learners in the secondary classroom. Once introduced to the policies, educators took issue with the vague and ambiguous language of the policies. They described their challenges and successes of teaching ELLs and offered solutions to policy improvement including: (a) defining terms, (b) home language use, (c) professional development, and (d) preservice teacher training.

The experiences of the educators with federal language policy for English learners offered suggestions for policy improvement. The findings of the study revealed a need to expose all educators to the policies that exist for English language learners. Without knowledge of what is currently governing the legislation, teachers begin to understand their role as a teacher of language. Federal law also must address the role of using a student's home language as an instructional support. There is no clear guidance on what role home language plays in instruction, and teachers want clarification. Teachers also requested a change in professional development and preservice teacher training. They are willing and excited about learning more to better instruct their linguistically diverse students; however, they need experts to help them learn what is effective. The results of this study provide implications for policy and practice to foster

and facilitate legislative change to encourage the next steps in providing an equitable educational and academic experience for English language learners in K-12 public schools.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 25, 2023

Brooke Boutwell
Janet Deck

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-1038 From Lau to Now: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Secondary Educators with Monolingual Language Laws

Dear Brooke Boutwell, Janet Deck,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [redacted]

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Site Approval Letter

May 3, 2023

Brooke Boutwell
[redacted]

Dear Applicant:

This letter serves as the Office of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability's approval for your research study entitled "From LAU to Now: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Secondary Educators With Monolingual Driven Language Laws." Your request to interview principals and teachers as well as observing two classrooms to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators has been approved. Your research was approved with the understanding that all participation is voluntary, and all participants have been informed that there is no penalty for not participating or withdrawing. Additionally, your research was approved with the understanding that you will not identify the names of the participants, schools, or the school division in any potential reports. As always, the final decision to participate rests with the schools' principals, and you are expected to discuss your study with the principals prior to starting your research activities.

Our approval for your study will expire one year from the date of this letter. If there are any changes to your study, you must submit the changes to our office for review prior to proceeding. It is our expectation that you will submit an electronic copy of the final report upon its completion to the [redacted] Please send the report to [redacted] If you have any questions, please contact me at [redacted]

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]
Research Specialist

Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: From Lau to Now: A Phenomenological Study of the Experiences of Secondary Educators with Monolingual Language Laws
Principal Investigator: Brooke Boutwell, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Education Law Department, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be an educator in the [redacted] with at least 3 years of experience working with English language learners. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of monolingually biased federal language policies on English language learners and secondary educators in a middle school in the [redacted] School District.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. The first task includes participating in an in-person, audio-recorded interview. The interview consists of 9 questions that will be provided to the participant 1 week before the interview takes place. The interview will take no more than an hour to conduct.
2. The second task will take place a week after the interview is completed. The participant will receive a copy of their interview transcripts and be allowed up to a week to review their transcript to check for accuracy of their experiences.
3. The third task will only take place if the participant requests changes to the interview transcription. If this occurs, the participant will have 3 days to submit a change request and step 2 will be repeated if necessary.
4. After the interview, 4 participants will be asked to be observed in their normal classroom settings. Participants are asked not to alter their lesson plans, objectives, accommodations, or teaching styles while being observed. Participants will be observed a total of 2 times for 40 minutes each observation session. Participants will be given a copy of the observation notes 1 week after the observation session for their own records and learning purposes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include bringing awareness to a population of linguistically diverse students in K-12 schools. By participating in this study, participants have the opportunity to voice their experiences working with English language learners and help act as a catalyst for potential policy change in the future.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Hard copy data will be stored in a locked drawer in a filing cabinet and digital data will be kept on a password-locked computer. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for until participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts and then erased. The researcher and members of her doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the [redacted] If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Brooke Boutwell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [redacted] or [redacted] You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [redacted]

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix D: Classroom Observation Walkthrough Tools

Observation Walkthrough Tool

Observation Information
Teacher, date, time, location, observation number, etc.
Classroom Demographics
Grade, content area, number of ELLs, proficiency levels, home languages, etc.
Instruction
The teacher is purposeful and intentional in the use of **academic language** while engaging students in tasks such as speaking or writing. Comments: ●
The teacher integrates **content and language objectives** while incorporating reading, writing, listening, and speaking opportunities into lessons. Comments: ●
The teacher models with **exemplars** throughout instruction. Comments: ●
The teacher poses questions with appropriate **wait time** for student responses based on student proficiency levels. Comments: ●
The teacher frequently uses **nonlinguistic** representations (pictures, graphic organizers, physical and kinesthetic representations, mental images). Comments: ●
The teacher offers ways for all students to **demonstrate understanding** (reading, writing, speaking, listening) throughout lesson Comments: ●