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## ***Speak English or Go Home: The Anti-Immigrant Discourse of the American 'English Only' Movement***

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the discursive construction of immigrants and immigration within the 'English Only' movement in the United States. In this critical discursive language policy study, emphasis is placed on the role of discourse in the reproduction of discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiment in the context of a debate related to language in the U.S. The aims of the English Only movement are to make English the official language of the United States, restrict linguistic access to political and civil rights, and dismantle or restrict bilingual education programs (Schmidt 2000). A variation of the discourse historical approach (DHA) (Wodak and Meyer 2009; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak 2006) is applied as a framework to analyze public texts that are produced by proponents of the English Only movement. The DHA's concept of context, the use of metaphor, and the macro-strategies of (mis)representation, (de)legitimization and coercion (Chilton 2004) are emphasized as analytical categories. Finally, the analysis exposes the movement's ideological aims by demonstrating how 'in groups' and 'out groups' are constructed in order to depict both the act of immigration and immigrants themselves in derogatory and thus discriminatory terms.*

**Keywords:** English Only movement, discourse-historical approach, discourse and discrimination, critical language policy, critical metaphor analysis

### **1. Introduction**

In this article, I examine the discursive construction of immigrants and immigration within the English Only movement in the United States, using a variation of the discourse historical approach (DHA) (Wodak and Meyer 2009; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak 2006) to critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the overall framework.<sup>1</sup> While CDA is both theory and methodology, it is not a single theory or methodology; rather, it can be seen as a pluralistic and interdisciplinary approach to discourse analysis in that it emphasizes certain concepts (e.g. power and ideology) and takes its concern with social life and the role of discourse within it as its most defining characteristic (Blackledge 2005). Thus, the methodological and theoretical frameworks employed in this study provide a critical discursive approach to the study of language policy. In the tradition of CDA, I begin by making my position transparent: I view the English Only movement as a social problem with a discursive dimension that merits close examination. Though its discourse

emphasizes language, its real aim may be to position immigrants as ‘the other’ within U.S. society. Nunberg (1997), for example, views the focus on Official English in the United States as an opportunistic and convenient way of underscoring the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Similarly, Draper and Jiménez (1996) see the English Only movement’s purpose as ostensibly establishing English as the official language of the United States, but posit that its connections to immigration restriction groups suggest a more far-reaching agenda. Therefore, the overarching goal of this paper is to make transparent the ideological aims of the English Only movement. This is achieved by applying the DHA to examine how the movement’s discourse relies on the positive presentation of ‘the self’ and the negative presentation of ‘the other’, how the nature of English Only arguments is interdiscursive, intersecting with arguments about immigration that may not directly relate to language, and how ideology forms the basis of this movement. The DHA also emphasizes the historical context of a problem and advocates the integration of available knowledge about the historical sources and backgrounds of the social and political fields in which discursive events are embedded (Wodak 2001); thus, language policy as it relates to immigration in the United States must also be contextualized historically. Methodologically, this study is conducted through the selection and analysis of texts from the public sphere that are produced by proponents of the English Only movement. The selected texts highlight key aspects of the movement, and the DHA’s concept of context, the use of metaphor, and the macro-strategies of (mis)representation, (de)legitimization and coercion (Chilton 2004) are emphasized.<sup>2</sup> The analysis is organized according to the three macro-strategies, which are discussed in detail in section 4.2.

Various aspects of the English Only movement have been examined from multiple perspectives and disciplines, including language attitudes (e.g. Herman 2003; Schildkraut 2003), language policy and language ideology (e.g. Wright 2004; Blommaert 1999; May 2001; Wiley 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002) and identity politics (e.g. Schmidt 1991, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2007). Studies relating more broadly to language policy in the United States, both in historical and contemporary contexts, have also employed CDA. For example, Ricento (2003) used CDA (the DHA in particular) to analyze the discursive construction of Americanism, which relates to issues of language, identity and immigration in the U.S. Johnson (2005) examined metaphor, ideology and the formation of language policy from a critical discursive perspective to analyze Proposition 203, a piece of anti-bilingual education legislation passed in Arizona in 2000. In addition, Schmidt (2000) employed CDA to analyze racialization and language policy in the context of the English Only movement. Within CDA, there have been numerous studies that are relevant to this one in that they analyzed discriminatory texts but whose foci have been European contexts. Such studies have examined issues related to social problems, for example, racism (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; van Dijk 1993a, 1993b, 2000a, 2000b) and national identity (de Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999). Lastly, Blackledge (2005) used the DHA to investigate discourse and power in multilingual contexts with an emphasis on Great Britain. While the English Only movement has been studied extensively and CDA has been used as an approach to interrogate various social problems, it does not appear that a comprehensive, critical discursive study of its discourse which emphasizes

immigrants and immigration has been undertaken. Therefore, this paper begins to contribute to a void in that particular area.

## **2. *The English Only Movement***

The discourse of the modern English Only movement, which has been in existence since the early 1980s, is typically dominated by three main issues: educational policy for language minority children (bilingual education), linguistic access to political and civil rights (e.g., multilingual services for non-English speakers) and legislation that would give English official status in the United States (Schmidt 2000). Though English is not and never has been the official language of the United States, proponents of the English Only movement have repeatedly attempted to give English official status, both at the federal and state levels. English Only legislation first appeared in 1981 in the form of an English Language Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, proposed by Republican California Senator S.I. Hayakawa. Such an amendment would have banned the use of languages other than English at the federal, state and local levels. Furthermore, proposed Official English legislation has sought to limit services available to immigrants in languages other than English, including the translation of driver's license exams, income tax forms and voting materials. Because the passage of a constitutional amendment giving English official status has not occurred, English Only proponents have concentrated their efforts at the state level; thirty-one states have already designated English as their Official Language. Though in many cases this has been largely symbolic, in others, there have been material consequences for immigrants.

Actors within the English Only movement include immigrants, politicians, ordinary people and, possibly most significant, the self-described citizens' action groups English First, Pro-English and U.S. English. Formed in the 1980s, these groups aim to gather and disseminate evidence to support their claim that most Americans want Official English, influence public opinion and lobby for official English legislation. English First describes itself as a national, non-profit grassroots lobbying organization with simple goals: to make English America's official language, to give every child the chance to learn English, and to eliminate costly and ineffective multilingual policies.<sup>3</sup> The organization describes its lobbying staff as 'aggressive and relied on by members of Congress for information and assistance'. It also uses mass mailings and the internet to recruit and mobilize opponents of 'bilingualism' across the country (Schmidt 2007: 200). ProEnglish, another such group, calls itself 'the English Language Advocates' and claims expertise in the field of language law (often providing pro-bono legal assistance for language-related matters). Pro-English describes itself as 'a member-supported, national, non-profit organization working to educate the public about the need to protect English as our common language and to make it the official language of the United States'.<sup>4</sup> Finally, U.S. English, the most prominent, most publicly supported and most well-organized of these organizations, is a powerful and well-funded right-wing lobby which orchestrated the English Only campaign in the 1980s at the national level.<sup>5</sup> The organization is self-described as '...the nation's oldest, largest citizens' action group dedicated to

preserving the unifying role of the English language in the United States...U.S. English now has 1.8 million members nationwide'. U.S. English has garnered significant financial support for its cause, generating millions of dollars annually from direct mail appeals (Crawford 1992). U.S. English and other pro-English Only organizations make the attempt to declare English the official language of the U.S. appear to be a 'noble, patriotic cause, legislation that grateful Americans (including immigrants) should support with their votes and dollars' (Zentella 1997). Thomas (1996) sees the assertions of U.S. English and other state-level affiliate groups as deserving of the serious attention of language scholars, and Silverstein (1996) rightly notes that the concerns of U.S. English are not framed by sociolinguistic expertise.

Politicians and ordinary people alike may be influenced by these citizens' action groups, and since English Only is a political movement, its discourse includes elite, official and formal contexts as well as informal, unofficial ones. Thus, the 'official' discourse of English Only may be reproduced or recontextualized in the opinions and attitudes of ordinary people, and henceforth propagated by them. Consequently, the real danger of the English Only movement may not be its ability to promote official English, but rather its ability to influence public opinion and propagate and reproduce discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiment through discourse, particularly as the Official English debate intersects with the debate on immigration.

### ***3. Language Policy, Ideology and Immigration in the U.S: An Historical Overview***

Schmid's (2001: 4) assertion that language has been the proxy for other conditions that have challenged the power relations of the dominant group(s) rather than the sole major source of conflict in American society is essential to understanding the debate over English in the United States. Furthermore, the language controversy has been exacerbated by demographic and cultural change in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus fueling the English Only movement into the new millennium (ibid.). The U.S. has a history of regulating immigration (Jernegan 2005), and language restriction and nativist movements have flourished during various periods throughout history; nativism was particularly heightened during periods when certain immigration restrictions were lifted, and the source of immigration changed from European to non-European countries. The rate of increase in the minority population due to immigration was nearly twice as fast in the 1980s as in the 1970s, which fostered the perception that newcomers were no longer learning English. Schmid (2001: 8) claims that such changes in immigration policy resulted in a challenge to the notion of the United States as a 'melting pot', which created the perception that the linguistic hegemony of English in the U.S. as at an end. This gave way to a sense of insecurity and an attempt to redefine the American identity, which has manifested itself in several ways, including a push for stricter immigration requirements and an increase in restrictive language policy movements. In addition, perceived threats to the linguistic and political unity of the U.S. may result in renewed hostility toward language minorities, as is evidenced in the English Only movement.

In accordance with the DHA, an understanding of the United States' historical context as it relates to the English Only movement and its relationship with immigration is necessary in order to critically analyze the discourse that this movement has engendered. While there is evidence that the dominant language and culture were imposed on immigrants throughout U.S. history, the U.S. has unarguably experienced a history of linguistic diversity in which languages thrived, to varying degrees, alongside English. Though the official status of English has been debated since the founding of the United States, Heath (1992) argues that the new nation's founders associated an official status for English with European monarchy and aristocracy and therefore avoided official recognition of English. Consequently, the official language issue was resolved by not declaring an official language even though the U.S. was not a monolingual country at the time of this decision (Judd 1987: 115). May (2003) notes that unlike today, English was not pre-eminent in the U.S. during the early colonial period when a number of languages competed with it in the public domain. As with most modern nation-states, the U.S.'s language history was much more diverse and contested than assertions of English dominance might suggest (ibid.). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, for example, Dutch, Swedish and German were widely spoken in the American colonies (Zentella 1997), and Spanish and French predominated outside of the thirteen colonies (May 2003). Bilingualism, biculturalism and linguistic diversity in general were viable options in the United States for some time, and this was reflected in the policies and practices of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Pavlenko 2002: 167).

Pavlenko sees the melting pot as an intrinsic part of U.S. national identity, yet she also points out that current scholarship 'debunks the traditional image of America as a monolingual 'melting pot' where immigrants willingly renounced their native languages and learned English in order to belong', as many of them were already multilingual and were joining a society that was multilingual (2002: 164, 166). Between 1880 and 1924, however, an ideological shift regarding language occurred due to the atmosphere of hatred toward German-Americans engendered by World War I and distrust and apprehension of the new Southern and Eastern European immigrants, who were seen as distinct from the mainstream Anglo population (Pavlenko 2002). Though restrictive language movements existed in earlier historical periods, the English Only movement, at least in its current form, had been lying dormant for nearly half a century when it resurfaced in the 1980s (Schmid 2001). In the early 1980s, a rise in nativism occurred in conjunction with an increase in the number of minority language speakers, particularly those from the Spanish-speaking world, despite the fact that demographic research indicates a rise in the rate of Anglicization along with the rise in minority language speakers (Crawford 2008: 118). Consequently, ballot initiatives to make English the official language and impose other restrictions in favor of English began to emerge, engendering the English Only movement.

#### ***4. Theoretical, Methodological and Analytical Frameworks***

Because I view the nature of English Only discourse as discriminatory and therefore problematic, I adopt the discourse-historical approach to CDA,

which is a multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach used to investigate a social problem (Wodak et al. 1999; Reisigl and Wodak 2001/2009; Wodak 2001, 2006). The DHA also provides a useful framework for the investigation of language policy contexts. Accordingly, Wodak's (2006) definition of language policy as 'every public influence on the communication of languages; both "top-down" and "bottom-up" political initiatives through which a language or languages are supported in their public validity, their functionality and their dissemination' is adopted. Given the critical nature of this research, Pennycook's (2001, cited in Tollefson 2006: 42) definition of critical language policy (CLP) research as part of a field of critical applied linguistics that includes CDA is also incorporated. CLP research eschews or critiques traditional, mainstream approaches to language policy research because of their emphases on apolitical analysis (Tollefson 2006: 42). Tollefson's (1991) understanding of critical language policy also involves both governmental and non-governmental activities that relate to language, which, in accordance with CDA, implies a dynamic relationship between social relations and language. The English Only debate encompasses governmental activities (language-related legislation and activities which support it) and non-governmental activities (support for and discussions about the aforementioned legislation and activities, which involve various organizations, including the citizens' actions groups, and ordinary people).

Language ideology is also essential to a discussion of language policy, for ideologies may be so deeply embedded in society that they appear to be common sense.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, ideologies that appear to discriminate against languages may actually discriminate against the speakers of those languages, and this necessitates a close analysis of the discourse in which those ideologies may be embedded. Blackledge (2005), for example, notes that multilingual societies which appear to tolerate or promote heterogeneity may in fact undervalue or appear to ignore the linguistic diversity of its people. Because questions of language are often questions of power, language ideology within the United States may contribute to the construction of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups'.

To create arguments that construct in-groups and out-groups, English Only proponents often contend that identity, unity and the English language itself are threatened by immigrants and are thus in need of protection. May (2001) assigns English Only arguments to four major categories, all of which he views as problematic and in need of closer examination:

1. English Only arguments are characterized by historical inaccuracy about the role of English and other languages in the United States;
2. English Only makes explicit links between a lack of English and education failure and a misrepresentation of bilingual education;
3. English Only rhetoric contains inherent nativism in order to use language to maintain racialized distinctions;
4. English Only assumes that speaking English is a unifying force and that multilingualism is destructive of national unity (205).

Following on May's points, Macias and Wiley (1998: viii) examine how English Only proponents achieve their objectives and gain supporters, and they claim that this involves the depiction of present-day language diversity as a departure from a mythic past in which immigrants hastily and happily strove to learn English and ceased to use their native languages. When viewed together, these arguments can be seen to facilitate the positive presentation of 'the self' and the negative presentation of 'the other', which construct immigrants and their languages as a threat to the United States.

#### 4.1 The Discourse Historical Approach

The Discourse Historical Approach provides a useful framework for a study of English Only discourse. First, it advocates the integration of various social theories and places an emphasis on multiple levels of context.<sup>7</sup> Context, which Wodak (2008: 11) sees as an inherent part of a discursive investigation of complex social problems, takes into account four different levels:

1. The immediate language or text-internal co-text;
2. The intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;<sup>8</sup>
3. The extra-linguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation';
4. The broader sociopolitical and historical contexts, in which discursive practices are embedded and to which they are related (Meyer 2001: 29).

The DHA also emphasizes different levels of analysis, moving from the most macro to micro levels (see figure 1 for a visual depiction of how the DHA is applied in this paper). Level 1 contains the discourse contents or topics, and it should be noted that in this paper, the greatest emphasis is placed on 'immigrants/immigration' in level 1. In addition, the DHA proposes the use of five discursive strategies as categories of analysis (presented as sub-strategies in level 3 in Figure 1 below):

1. **Nomination** or **reference** looks at how social actors, objects, phenomena and events are named and referred to linguistically;
2. **Predication** examines which characteristics and features are attributed to the actors, objects and phenomena;
3. **Argumentation** justifies claims of truth and often relies on topoi, which are part of argument schemes and can connect the premise of an argument to its conclusion;<sup>9</sup>
4. **Perspectivization** positions the point of view of the producer of a text;
5. **Intensification** or **mitigation** modifies the force and status of utterances

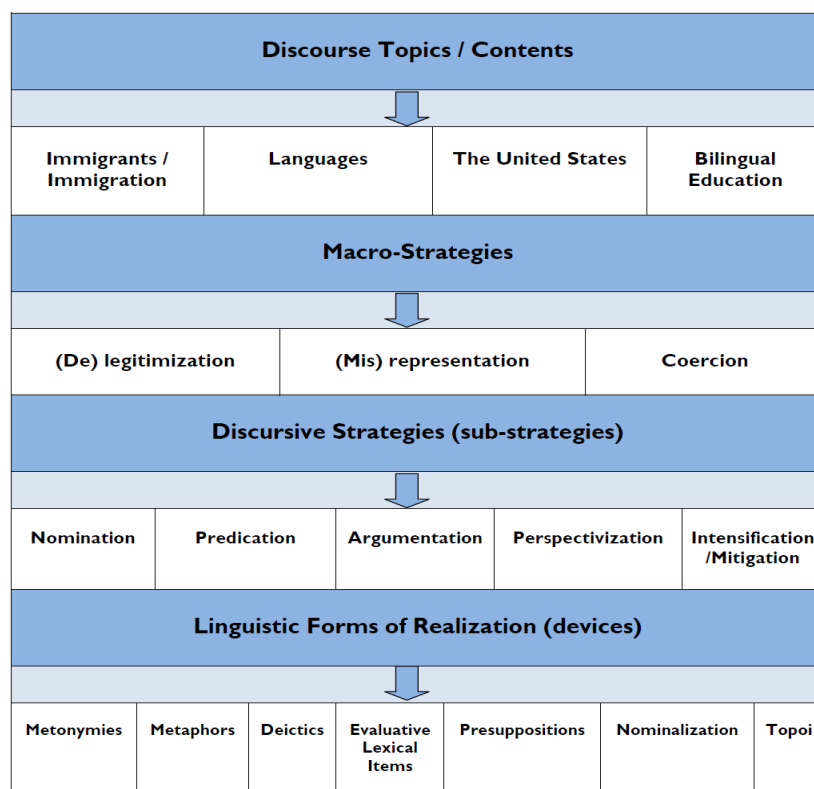
Finally, level 4 (labeled as 'linguistic forms of realization' in figure 1 below) demonstrates the most micro-aspects of the analysis through specific devices, which act to create linguistic realizations of the discursive strategies and the macro-strategies, described in the following section.

## 4.2 Categories of Strategic Function: Macro-strategies

In this paper, other strategies identified as appropriate for the analysis of 'us' and 'them' are also integrated into the DHA's framework (see level 2 in Figure 1 below). To achieve this, I draw on Chilton's (2004) categories of strategic function, or communication strategies used to analyze political discourse, which are *legitimization* or *delegitimization*, *representation* or *misrepresentation* and *coercion*. Within the DHA's framework, these strategies can be seen as macro-strategies that utterers use to manage their interests (Chilton 2004: 78). First, legitimization establishes the right to legitimacy, either by overt statements or implications, and often includes positive self-presentation (p. 46). Delegitimization, its counterpart, can be manifested in acts of negative-other presentation (ibid.). Next, representation and its counterpart misrepresentation prevent people from receiving information and may include lying, which involves omissions, verbal evasion and denial (ibid.). (Mis)representation also involves selecting the structure of the language in use, which includes grammatical constructions, metaphor, actors and events, argument and deixis (ibid.) Finally, coercion manipulates hearers conceptually or emotionally, often through concealment, and may depend on the utterer's resources and power (p. 45). To achieve coercion, political actors may select topics and position themselves and others in certain ways in order to set agendas (ibid.). Though the macro-strategies are analytically distinguishable from one another, they often occur simultaneously and are interwoven. Further, the macro-strategies can serve the purposes of manipulating and mystifying, which are essential for the construction of a positive-self and a negative-other.

Equal emphasis on each aspect of the four levels of analysis presented in figure 1 above is not possible due to space constraints in this paper. Therefore, the primary emphasis is placed on the macro-strategies (level 2), which are realized by the discursive strategies (level 3). Metaphor (level 4) also serves as a focal point in the analysis.





**Figure 1:** Levels of analysis in the Discourse Historical Approach

### 4.3 Critical Metaphor Analysis

Because metaphor has the potential to be evaluative and ideological, it is particularly relevant within a critical discursive approach. Therefore, in this study, metaphor is situated within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) rather than described solely as a linguistic device. This approach emphasizes cognition and holds that metaphor structures how we think and experience more abstract concepts, in that metaphor enables humans to project a well-known domain of knowledge onto a less well known one.<sup>10</sup> In other words, Conceptual Metaphor Theory stresses the understanding of metaphor as part of human conceptualization as opposed to a linguistic expression (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

The study of conceptual metaphor has been integrated into CDA through the work of Santa Ana (1999, 2002), Hart (2008, 2011), Johnson (2005), Charteris-Black (2004, 2005, 2006) and Goatly (2007), who apply a Critical Metaphor Analysis. Santa Ana's (2002: 9) study, which is grounded in CDA and based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work with metaphor theory, is particularly relevant since it examines how metaphor shapes public opinion regarding Latinos in the U.S. and concludes that metaphor as expressed in public discourse can be studied as the principal unit of hegemonic expression (2002: 9). Charteris-Black's (2006) examination of right-wing discourse and immigration in Britain is another related example of a study in this tradition.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory views metaphor as pervasive in everyday life, in thought and in action as well as in language, and holds that our conceptual system, in terms of how we think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3). Lakoff (2004) claims that one of the fundamental findings of cognitive science is that people think in terms of frames and metaphors, which are conceptual structures, and that often the facts do not fit the frames, but the frames are kept and the facts ignored. In other words, we can describe the essence of metaphor as understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5). Goatly (2007: 11) elaborates on this by defining metaphor as thinking of one thing (A) as if it were another thing (B), which results linguistically in an item of vocabulary or larger stretch of text being applied in an unusual or new way. A is the topic or target and B is the vehicle or source (*ibid.*). In other words, a conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains: the target domain and the source domain (*ibid.*). The source domain is a conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn to understand another conceptual domain, and the target domain is the conceptual domain that is understood this way (Kövecses 2002: 4).

The use of metaphor in such a way may lead to the danger of reductionism; e.g. of humans to animals, machines, and commodities since metaphor reduces by highlighting some features of experience at the expense of others (Goatly 2007: 402). Cameron (2003: 39), for example, claims that certain kinds of metaphor may have negative effects on thinking by providing a false sense of understanding and excluding alternative conceptualization, or may structure the Target domain in ways that are too simple or too partial. Because a metaphorical concept allows us to focus on one aspect of a concept, it can prevent us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 10). Further, because metaphor draws on two domains by relating abstract notions to our experience of concrete realities, it is an effective way of making an abstract ideology accessible (Kövecses 2002: 22). The potential of metaphor to be ideological is of particular importance in this study due to its ability to bring about a reconceptualization of experiences rather than provide explanations; it may also favor particular interpretations of situations and events over others (Deignan 2005; Goatly 1997).

Chilton (1996: 71-74) points out that the use of metaphor can serve a variety of purposes including persuasion, legitimization, group solidarity and the production of new conceptualizations for problematic situations, and it can also help individuals avoid reference to a tabooed or threatening subject. Metaphor can also be seen as an effective rhetorical strategy for combining an understanding of familiar experiences in everyday life with deep-rooted cultural values that evoke powerful emotional responses (Charteris-Black 2005: xi). It is systematically related to other linguistic strategies and is central to persuasive belief systems because it exploits the subliminal resources of language by arousing hidden associations that govern our systems of evaluation (p. 5).

Therefore, in this article a Critical Metaphor Analysis is also integrated into the DHA's framework. In this context, metaphor should be seen as essential to all of the analytical categories in that it ultimately serves the discursive

strategies and macro-strategies used to discriminate against immigrants through language.

### ***5. Anti-immigrant Discourse in Texts: Macro-strategies as Analytical Categories***

The texts included for analysis in this paper provide examples of the major focal points of English Only discourse: Official English legislation, bilingual education/policies and political and civil rights. Moreover, they represent both top-down and bottom-up approaches to language policy. The texts selected were produced by three of the main actors within the movement: politicians, citizens' actions groups and ordinary people. They were chosen because they provide examples of a text that is official and elite, a text that is produced by a citizen's action group, and a text that is produced by ordinary people. More specifically, they belong to the genres of the political speech, the survey and online discussion.<sup>11</sup>

I begin by providing an overview of the discourse topics or contents of the extracts included (level 1 in the DHA's multi-level approach). The arguments, which are constructed around certain topics, can be summarized as follows:

- Immigrants threaten national unity and identity due to the multilingual policies that they necessitate.
- The U.S. used to be a monolingual nation because immigrants assimilated and shifted to English; however, today's immigrants refuse to follow this pattern.
- The U.S. has always been a melting pot, but that status is now threatened because of today's immigrants (and their inability to assimilate as 'our' ancestors did), so measures must be taken to protect the melting pot, which is an essential symbol of U.S. national identity.

The remainder of the analysis examines levels 2, 3 and 4 (macro-strategies, discursive strategies and linguistic devices) of the DHA and is organized according to the three macro-strategies.

#### **5.1 Legitimization/Delegitimization**

The first macro-strategy to be examined is delegitimization, and the following textual extract belongs to the genre of the political speech. This extract was taken from a speech given by Republican representative Joseph Knollenberg in 1996, in support of HR 123, a proposed constitutional amendment entitled The English Language Empowerment Act, which would have made English the official language of the United States. This extract, which was taken from the U.S. English website, provides an example of the macro-strategy of delegitimization, which removes legitimacy from the other as part of the out-group.

When our ancestors came to America, they came to this country knowing they had to learn English to survive. Today, our melting pot has become a patchwork quilt of cultures, isolated because they cannot speak English. They aren't assimilating into our society like our ancestors did. Our current bilingual policies are shredding the common bond that has made our nation great. By making it easy for those who come to America, we have ripped the heart out of our national unity.

The analytical focus of this first example of (de)legitimization is metaphor, with an emphasis on the melting pot, a metaphor commonly used to describe U.S. society through an attempt to conceptualize the abstract, complex process of large-scale immigration as it relates to cultural and linguistic assimilation, often with a particular focus on immigration in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his speech, Knollenberg presupposes that the U.S. is a melting pot which is in danger because individuals represented by different cultures cannot speak English. Thus, the melting pot as an ideal which should be upheld is given legitimacy. However, legitimacy is removed from the patchwork quilt metaphor because it does not represent assimilation, which is seen as an obligatory task for all new immigrants in the United States. Conceptually, the melting pot can be seen as a spatial metaphor with a container schema. One's own country can be seen as a closed container that can be sealed or penetrated (Chilton 2004: 118), and texts can be configured around container based concepts such as 'inside-outside' or 'exclusion-inclusion'. This helps to construct an in-group (those who are inside the pot and are therefore given legitimacy) and an out-group (those who are outside of the pot and from whom legitimacy is removed). Furthermore, this serves to contrast present-day immigrants (those outside of the pot) with past immigrants (those inside the pot), which also is a form of delegitimization.

In this text, the English language, spoken by the in-group, is also given legitimacy, but the bilingual policies that today's immigrants necessitate are not. In addition, bilingual policies are personified, described as shredding the common bond that has made our nation great. Personification constitutes metaphor in the sense that it enables language users to conceptualize and reason about non-human phenomena (Chilton 1996: 50). Though the reference is to bilingual policies, immigrants necessitate such policies, and the human-like qualities ascribed to bilingual policies may encourage the hearer to focus more on immigrants than the actual policies. The metaphor of NATION AS PERSON is also present in this extract, which helps to delegitimize immigrants by portraying them as a danger to the health or life of the nation.<sup>12</sup> This, too, can be seen as a type of container metaphor: the nation as a body is a container that is being penetrated and violated by immigrants and their languages. Lakoff (2004: 69) describes the NATION AS PERSON metaphor as a pervasive and powerful one that comes with a notion of the national interest: as it is in the interest of a person to be healthy and strong, it is also in the interest of a nation-person to be healthy and strong. If a nation is conceptualized as a person, then the phrase *ripped the heart out of* creates a death image, which may lead the hearer to associate immigrants with death.

The next extract examined belongs to the genre of online discussion. Online discussions are produced by ordinary people who, in this context, can be seen as proponents of English Only due to the endorsement of the English Only ideology in their comments. The origin of these texts, which were produced by

anonymous posters, is an online discussion called “Unexplained Mysteries Online Discussion Forum.”<sup>13</sup> The discussion topic (categorized as an ‘unexplained mystery’) was titled ‘What’s next, Amerexico?’ and began in response to the recording and release of a Spanish-language version of the U.S. national anthem in 2005 called ‘Nuestro Himno’ (Our Anthem). The song, which was not a direct translation and can be best described as a hip-hop remix of the national anthem, received a great deal of airplay on Spanish language radio stations and caused significant debate amidst increasing controversy over immigration reform in the United States. It debuted in April of 2006, just prior to large nation-wide pro-immigration rallies held in response to proposed legislation that would increase penalties for ‘illegal’ immigrants residing and working in the U.S.

Enough is enough. If we keep on making it easy for people of another country to live here without even as much as learning our language then hell...we'll be over-run soon. In a good ten years from now the mexicans [sic] will be the majority and [we] will be the minority...

Delegitimization can manifest itself in acts of negative other-presentation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalizing, excluding attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other, with the extreme being the denial of the humanness of the other (Chilton 2004: 47). In this extract, immigrants are portrayed as an invading force that will take over the native population, a portrayal that helps to dehumanize them. For example, the use of the phrase *over-run* in the predicate helps construct the metaphor IMMIGRATION AS INVASION (Santa Ana 2002: 69), which comes from both the domains of WAR and CONTAINER. This creates in-groups and out-groups since legitimacy is given to those who are *here* but is removed from those who are entering (*they* are going to outnumber *us*).

Immigrants are also delegitimized through the expression of fear of minorities, which is achieved by a nomination strategy that is realized through deixis. Deixis prompts the interpreter to relate uttered indexical expressions to various situational features (Chilton 2004: 56). The first person plural *we*, for example, can be used to induce interpreters to conceptualize group identity as insiders or outsiders, and in the above extract, it is clear that the use of *we* is intended to create an insider group identify. Many immigrants with limited English proficiency are, in fact, U.S. citizens and ‘legal’ residents, yet in this context, it is clear that the use of *we* intends to exclude *them*. The poster may also be referring collectively to monolingual and perhaps even Anglo-Americans as *we* while bilingual Spanish-speaking Latinos are collectively referred to as *people of another country*. It is also possible that the posters generalize in order to delegitimize (and misrepresent) *the other* by referring to all Spanish-speaking ‘immigrants’, including bilingual American citizens who might be American-born as well as first and second generation immigrants, as *illegal* and *mexican* based solely on the criterion that they are not monolingual English-speaking Anglo-Americans. Deixis is also performed by terms that relate to physical location. The terms *here* and *somewhere else* in the extract demonstrates how the utterer (*we*) is positioned in relation to the U.S. (*here*) and presumably Mexico (*somewhere else*). Therefore,

perspectivization is realized by deixis, as it positions the utterer's point of view through the expression of proximity or distance.

Though the two texts in this section belong to different genres, they rely on similar strategies to delegitimize immigrants. Metaphor is used to achieve the discursive strategies that then realize the macro-strategy of delegitimization, which portrays immigrants as the other, and as a threat.

## 5.2 Representation/Misrepresentation

The strategy of misrepresentation, which conceptualizes a person, group, object, process, or event positively or negatively, and often stereotypically, is found both in content produced by U.S. English and in online discussions. The first textual extract comes from a public text, but like the previous text, it is not an 'official' top-down text. Rather, the genre to which this text belongs may best be described as semi-public, semi-private, as it is taken from the online commentary section of an article from the online version of the newspaper, *The Boston Globe*. The article, '*Boston students struggle with English-only rule: Many nonnatives quit the system*', discussed the results of language policy legislation that had mandated English-only instruction six years earlier, and numerous posters made comments.

WELCOME to America NOW speak English!! ENOUGH! My grandparents came here from Poland LEGALLLY in the early 1900's. They spoke Polish at home but spoke (guess what??) ENGLISH went they went out shopping. Oh yea there was NO free handout to help you get started. Find a job or go hungry! They WANTED to become American's with Polish roots. Not try and bring Poland here and change America. My ancestors had to learn English by immersion, and if they could do it, so could the kids today-- if fact, kids learn languages much more quickly and easily than adults. Speak English or GO HOME!

There is a common undercurrent in this posting: you are only welcome here if you learn English, and if you do not learn English, then you have no right to be here. The strategy of misrepresentation is applied in order to evaluate today's immigrants negatively while conceptualizing past immigrants, who supposedly assimilated and learned the English language, positively. The use of capitalization can be seen as an intensification strategy that gives more weight to certain lexical items. Further, the evaluative term *legally* can be seen as a predication strategy; it implies that today's immigrants are illegal while yesterday's immigrants were not, which oversimplifies the reality of immigration in the United States, both in the past and present.

What can be described as the *topos of legality* is used in the discursive strategy of argumentation, which misrepresents many present-day immigrants by characterizing them as 'illegal' in contrast with immigrants of the past. This topos can be described by the following conditional: if something is legal, it is acceptable and should be permitted, but if it is not, then actions should be taken to prevent it. These qualifications of immigrants rely somewhat on a mythical version of U.S. history with regard to language and immigration. Immigrants today are characterized as refusing to learn English, and in this extract they are told to learn English or leave the United States, presupposing that immigrants do not want to learn English, though

there is much evidence to suggest the contrary. Thus, today's immigrants are misrepresented through repeated references to posters' ancestors who are understood to have automatically assimilated and learned English, and in the process, a mythical past is created.

The strategy of misrepresentation is also found in a letter and Public Opinion Survey distributed by U.S. English in 2007. The survey is titled "Foreign Language Usage in Maryland." Recipients are asked to support U.S. English's Survey Campaign to make English the Official Language of the United States by making a financial contribution. The letter, written by Mauro Mujica, the chairperson of U.S. English, precedes the actual survey and contextualizes it.

Are you concerned that Americans are increasingly being made to adapt to the languages of foreign-language speakers who are immigrating here in greater numbers?

This interrogative sentence uses the second person, and may be designed to ask the hearer if the action contained in the subordinate clause (Americans being made to adapt to the languages of foreign language speakers) could have an effect on him/her personally. This can be seen as an intensification strategy, where the illocutionary force of the statement is intensified because the speaker intends for the hearer to perceive it in a certain way. In addition, the use of passivization (nominalization) foregrounds Americans; it is they who are made to adapt to the languages of foreign-language speakers. However, exactly *who* is forcing Americans to adapt, or *how* they are being forced to adapt, is unclear. Though the use of nominalization and the omission of the by-phrase renders the agent unknown, it may be that the hearer is intended to infer that the agent is foreign-language speakers who are immigrants. This misrepresents immigrants and the languages they speak since, in actuality, they themselves cannot force multilingual policies, for such policies must be passed into law.

### 5.3 Coercion

The last strategy used to construct immigrants in negative terms is coercion, which manipulates hearers conceptually or emotionally, often through concealment (Chilton 2004). The macro strategy of coercion is relied upon heavily by U.S. English in its letter and public opinion survey.

With some 33 million foreign-born now living in the U.S. and illegal immigration out of control, America is rapidly becoming multilingual—as evidenced by our government's provisions for non-English speakers...

First, the lengthy prepositional phrase 'With some 33 million foreign-born now living in the U.S. and illegal immigration out of control' is foregrounded, drawing attention to the 33 million foreign born in the U.S. and illegal immigration. There may be a perceived link between foreign born and illegal immigration, or immigration in general and illegal immigration, and the hearer may associate the two. Thus, this extract can be seen as coercive; some immigrants are illegal immigrants, but not all immigrants are illegal immigrants, yet the use of the metonymy ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT FOR IMMIGRANT

may manipulate hearers conceptually by representing *all* immigration as *outside of* the law.

The phrase *out of control* in this extract can also be seen as an instantiation of the metaphor HOME COUNTRY AS CONTAINER since controlling something can be said to be keeping it inside or outside of a container. In this case, the home country is the United States, conceptualized as a container outside of which illegal immigration should be kept. The phrase *illegal immigration out of control* is also a textual manifestation for the metaphor IMMIGRATION AS INVASION. This is a common metaphor used by proponents of English Only to characterize immigrants, and the features which structure the domain of invasion are a subset of the domain of WAR, as an invasion is an organized attack whose objective is to take over a region or a country (Santa Ana 1999: 70). In a war, a country is invaded as its borders, which create a container, are penetrated. In addition, an opponent in a war is often conceived of as an enemy. Thus, through the use of metaphor, the reader/hearer may be coerced into conceiving of 'illegal' immigrants in the U.S. as the enemy even though the immigrant experience has typically been marked by the search for employment and freedom by individuals who were unarmed and peaceful (ibid.).

In the extract above, there may also be an attempt to coerce the hearer into believing that illegal immigration is an epidemic, and that the U.S. is soon to be officially multilingual, thereby threatening the status of English and U.S. identity and portraying immigrants in discriminatory terms. Another example of coercion is found in the extract from the same survey, below:

Ours is a battle for our way of life in America. May I count on you to join us— and with your Survey, May I also please count on your support today? I thank you.

Again, U.S. English wages a battle for *our* way of life in America. Consequently, hearers may be coerced into believing that a certain way of life in America is under attack. In the U.S. English view, English alone is powerful enough to preserve that way of life. The deictic *our* is important to note, for it serves the discursive strategy of perspectivization by raising the question of *whose* way of life it includes, and *whose* it excludes, which is ultimately coercive.

## **6. Discussion and Conclusions**

The analysis demonstrates that anti-immigrant sentiment forms the basis of arguments about language in English Only discourse, across different texts and genres. All of the extracts above were derived from texts whose topics were language-related (Official English legislation, a survey on the use of foreign languages, and online discussions about the use of Spanish in the United States and English Only-related education policy). However, the content or specific topics of each text related to immigration. Thus, since the English Only movement would not exist without immigration, interdiscursivity should be seen as an important feature of its discourse. The macro- topics of English Only discourse may have multiple sub-topics that



relate to immigration, and because discourses are topic-related, 'illegal' immigration is found as a sub-topic of both the discourse of immigration and the discourse of English Only, which allow proponents of English Only, both in official and unofficial/public and semi-public contexts, to coerce listeners while also misrepresenting and delegitimizing immigrants. Furthermore, the analysis of these texts support Crawford's (2001) claim that English Only rhetoric may, when taken at face value, sound like linguistic nationalism, though its real motivation is discrimination and disenfranchisement.

The three macro-strategies interact with the five discursive strategies and other levels of the DHA, including context, in order to portray immigrants and the process of immigration derogatorily. In addition, the integration of a critical metaphor analysis also reveals that metaphor is relied upon extensively to delegitimize and coerce and thus portray immigrants in negative terms; metaphor is used in multiple texts to construct in-groups and out-groups. Further, the discourse of English Only proponents relies on the metaphor of the melting pot to construct an idealized, arguably mythical version of the past regarding immigration and assimilation in order to misrepresent and delegitimize present-day immigrants. This provides an example of May's (2001) point that English Only arguments are characterized by historical inaccuracy about the role of English, which reinforces the importance of the historical context in such a study. It should also be added that immigrants and the process of immigration play a significant role in arguments that rely upon historical inaccuracies. In addition, coercion is used to propagate the idea that many immigrants may be 'illegal' and that they are transforming American society at the expense of the English language and American identity.

Finally, the DHA aims to 'demystify' the hegemony of specific discourses by deciphering the ideologies that establish, perpetuate or fight dominance (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 88). The arguments in the included texts are ideological in nature, and ideology can be seen as a broad category that links all the texts. While language ideologies, including the monolingual ideology (see Silverstein 2006; Wiley 2000b), certainly underlie English Only arguments, it could also be argued that other ideologies are present. For example, the assimilationist ideology (Schmidt 2000) is seen through repeated references to the melting pot and the refusal of immigrants to assimilate. The nativist ideology is also present, given the interdiscursivity between English Only and Immigrant discourse.

To conclude, the macro-strategies of delegitimization, misrepresentation and coercion combined with the levels of analysis proposed by the Discourse Historical Approach to CDA and the integration of a Critical Metaphor Analysis can provide a fruitful framework for the analysis of English Only discourse. Though this paper contains only a small sample of extracts from texts produced by proponents of the English Only movement, it demonstrates that English Only discourse is ideological, discriminatory and anti-immigrant, and that it relies on the positive representation of the 'self' and the negative representation of the 'other' to achieve its aims.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The term 'English Only' was coined by supporters of a 1984 initiative opposing bilingual ballots in California (Nunberg 1997). Most proponents of 'English Only' reject this term and refer to their movement as 'Official English', claiming that they do not oppose the use of other languages in private, as academic subjects or in some aspects of society. However, I support Nunberg's (1997) assertion that English Only is a fair characterization of the movement as far as public life is concerned.
- <sup>2</sup> The term 'public sphere' is attributed to Habermas (1991), who argued that an idealized public sphere arose in the late eighteenth century, and served as a filter between private individuals and the state (Wright 2008: 28). Habermas's work on the public sphere has been the subject of much debate, and alternate interpretations / conceptualizations of this term are possible. In Wright's view, if one adopts a 'folk' conceptualization of the public sphere, it refers to a public space outside the house and has existed since the early days of humanity (ibid.). Furthermore, Fairclough (2003: 221) refers to the public sphere as the domain of social life in which people can engage as citizens in deliberating about and acting upon issues of social and political concern, aiming to influence policy formation. In this paper, the term 'public sphere' can be seen as a public space in which the actual formation of policy occurs, and attitudes and opinions about such policies and related issues are formed and propagated.
- <sup>3</sup> <http://englishfirst.org/englishfirst/>
- <sup>4</sup> <http://www.proenglish.org/main/gen-info.htm>
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.us-english.org/>
- <sup>6</sup> Ideology has been discussed extensively in the literature and merits an in-depth examination. However, for this paper, I define ideology as a 'shared framework of social beliefs that organize and coordinate the social interpretations and practices of groups and their members, and in particular also power and other relations between groups' (van Dijk 1998: 8).
- <sup>7</sup> Due to space restrictions, equal emphasis cannot be placed on each of the levels of context.
- <sup>8</sup> Interdiscursivity, which is discussed in section 6, signifies that discourses are linked to each other in various ways (Wodak and Reisigl 2009).
- <sup>9</sup> The DHA's approach to argumentation, which is used to justify and legitimize the inclusion of some but not others, places its primary focus on fallacies and topoi. Topoi can be defined, according to the DHA, as content-related warrants or 'conclusion rules' which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion (Wodak 2001: 74). However, it is necessary to situate topoi in their historical context, which is Aristotelian rhetoric, and an Aristotelian topos, which means a place or location, is an argumentation scheme which enables the construal of an argument for a given conclusion (Rapp 2010). I would argue that a discussion of topoi should be situated within rhetoric and argumentation theory, and though it is not possible for a lengthy discussion of either to occur in this paper, both disciplines deserve mention (cf. Rapp 2010; Rubinelli 2009; and Toulmin 2003).
- <sup>10</sup> It should be mentioned that a Critical Metaphor Analysis, which draws upon Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), is situated within the discipline of Cognitive Linguistics. Though space does not permit an extensive discussion of Cognitive Linguistics, which can be seen as a perspective on a range of linguistic phenomena, it is important to mention that Cognitive Linguistics may be seen as a useful framework for CDA 'because it can disclose the conceptual processes that play a fundamental part in the communication of ideology' (Hart 2011).
- <sup>11</sup> The concept of genre has been discussed extensively in Systemic Functional Linguistics (see Eggins 2004; Halliday 1994; Martin 1992) Discourse Studies, and Applied Linguistics (Wodak 2008). Swales's (1990: 58) definition of genre as a class of communicative events in which members share some set of communicative purposes is a useful starting point.

Similarly, Kress (1985/1989:19) refers both to participants and to ‘functions, purposes and meanings’, which relate to the notion of communicate purpose. Further, Chilton and Schäffner (2002: 19) define genres as global linguistic patterns that have developed historically in order to fulfill specific communicative tasks in specific situations. Their understanding of the notion of genre is crucial because discourse is neither homogeneous nor heterogeneous (19). In other words, a genre is a type and a structure of language used for particular purpose in a particular context (Blackledge 2005: 8). Genres relate to texts in the sense that texts can be assigned to genres (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 90). Texts may also constitute hybrid genres since a text may not be ‘in’ a single genre; rather, it may ‘mix’ genres (Fairclough 2003: 34). One such example in this paper is the texts that are defined as online discussion/commentary, which may best be described as semi-public, semi-private. Finally, the connection of genres to social situations or activities (Kress 1985/1989: 19; Wodak 2001: 66) is relevant for CDA since genre can be seen as bound to the situational context as well as to the broader historical and socio-political context (67).

<sup>12</sup> Note that capitalization is used to identify metaphors according to the conventions of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.unexplained-mysteries.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=68018>

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