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LANGUAGE POLICY IMPLEMENTERS: FACULTY PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE
POLICY AT A SOUTHEASTERN U.S. UNIVERSITY

A Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts

in the Department of Modern Languages

The University of Mississippi

by

JORDAN NICHOLAS TROISI

August 2015

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ABSTRACT

Faculty members, as language policy implementers, retain significant control of the enactment of policy in local contexts. In order to better understand the relationship between de jure language policies at multiple levels of the policy hierarchy, in addition to faculty members' acceptance or rejection of these policies, this study investigated faculty perspectives on language policy, specifically at a southeastern university in the United States.

This study employed multiple methods of research including a policy examination and a survey. These methods were selected in order to inspect de jure language policies at the national, state, governing board, and institutional level as well as examine de facto language policies within higher education classrooms and investigate faculty members' beliefs regarding the role of language as it related primarily to non-native English speaking students.

This study found that most faculty members believe their classrooms are sites of de facto English-only language policies and are therefore unwittingly recreating de jure state language policies within their classrooms. The study also found that a vast majority of faculty members believe that language plays a large role in students' success, that non-native English speaking (NNS) students face more challenges in the classroom than native English speakers, and that institutions should provide additional support to NNS students. Additionally, faculty members held mixed beliefs regarding the equality of classrooms when comparing English native speakers and NNS students. Finally, this research found that there appears to be a direct connection between the exposure that faculty members have to both foreign languages and NNS and their

feelings of preparedness to teach these students as well as their beliefs that this significant student population warrants additional support.

DEDICATION

To my grandfather, Emilio Troisi;

*who showed me the importance of hard work, perseverance, and the virtues of community,
language, and education.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ELP	Educational Language Policies
ESL	English as a Second Language
GII	Global, International, and Intercultural
IEP	Intensive English Program
L2	Second Language
MSU	Mississippi State University
NNS	Non-native speaker(s)/Non-native speaking
OIP	Office of International Programs
UM	The University of Mississippi
USM	University of Southern Mississippi

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I feel like it would take a thesis length manuscript to thank everyone who has assisted me on this journey, so I am going to try to stick with those who have aided me most on this particular endeavor. I'm sorry in advance for forgetting anyone.

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Secondly, a massive thank you to Tiffany Gregory Ward, for your seemingly magical assistance with data. I'm honestly not sure if I could have done this without a data wizard as adept as you!

And, finally, to my parents, Eric and Kimberlee Troisi – I won't ever be able to thank you enough. You've encouraged and supported me even when we haven't seen eye to eye, you've let me make my own mistakes but taught me how to learn from them, and you've shown me in innumerable ways that life isn't truly about ourselves, it is about others. I hope to keep making you proud.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recently, national efforts throughout colleges and universities have focused on “internationalizing” American higher education. This trend is not unique to the United States as worldwide changes such as increased globalization and rapid developments in technology are putting the world at students’ fingertips. However, American higher education is often seen as a global leader of academic research and thus American colleges and universities remain prestigious locales for students from all parts of the globe to attain an education. This importance is reflected in the steadily growing number of students who study in the United States. The Institute of International Education cites international student enrollment in the United States as climbing from 564,766 in 2005-2006 to 764,495 in 2011-2012, a change of 26% in six years (International Students in the United States: 2011-2012).

The students who come to study in the U.S. bring with them a wealth of diverse academic and life experience as well as foreign language skills that, if utilized, could significantly internationalize the landscape of American higher education. Though sending students abroad has been the main method of students gaining Global, International, and Intercultural (GII) competencies and proficiency in a foreign language, these students’ backgrounds and language skills make them prominent resources for domestic students who might not have the opportunity to study abroad but would benefit from a more global perspective. Despite their increasing

numbers and the potential impact these students could have in terms of the internationalization of American higher education, the amount of support targeting these students differs significantly from support available to other groups. (Kim, 2012) Simple examinations of offices that traditionally serve these students, such as Offices of International Programs (OIP) or Intensive English Programs (IEPs), demonstrate one level of this mismatched support. Another area that has the ability to elucidate aspects of support available for international students or non-native speakers (NNS) of English is through language policy.

Language policy, a field of study stemming from language planning, has been described by David Cassels Johnson in his 2013 work, *Language Policy*, as a “policy mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language...” Johnson identifies multiple dichotomies within the field of language policy including genesis, means and goals, documentation, and in law and in practice. Though closely intertwined, the aspects of documentation, and in law and in practice differ slightly. Documentation relates to the explicitness of the policy. Explicit policies or those, “officially documented in written or spoken policy texts” differ significantly from implicit policies, or those, “occurring without or in spite of official policy texts”. The dichotomy between in law (de jure) or in practice (de facto), exists in terms of outcome – de jure connotes policy that exists based upon laws and de facto is indicative of policy as it actually occurs in reality or “everyday life”. This differentiation is integral to understanding the lived experience of individuals whose lives are impacted by language policy.

Most Americans are not directly impacted by either de jure or de facto language policy in that most citizens are English native speakers or have a firm grasp on the language. The United States Census Bureau, in their most recent report, *Language Use in the United States*, approximated that 80% of Americans describe themselves as solely speaking English within the

home and approximately 90% report that they speak English “very well” or “well”. (*Language Use in the United States: 2011*) However, there are numerous members of various communities who live within the United States, either permanently or temporarily, that are not accounted for in this majority. These include undocumented immigrants, long-term residential foreign nationals, and, as aforementioned, three-quarters of a million international students. While the United States does not have an “official” (de jure) national language policy, there is a significant, and covert, “unofficial” (de facto) policy of English as the national language. Though this covert policy places pressure on individuals nation-wide to speak English, the most significant impact of language policies in the United States is at the institutional level, where language policy is less regulated and has the capacity to be much more specific. An example of this is at the collegiate or university level. Being bureaucratic and multi-layered, there are multiple locales at colleges and universities for language policy to directly impact the lives of international administrators, faculty, and students.

Language policy, as defined by Bruen and many others, contains some elucidation of changing behavior or beliefs regarding language. However, language is rarely a standalone mechanism of communication. The impact of language on individuals has been well documented. (Björkman, 2014; Briguglio, C., & Watson, 2014; Sundberg, G., 2013) Consequently, with an increasing number of international students studying in the United States and the role that English plays in their experience, it is important for policy makers and educators to consider how language policies and their uptake influence the individuals affected by these policies. Thus, utilizing a mid-sized state supported institution in the southeastern United States as a forum, I seek to investigate what, if any, de jure and de facto language policies exist at the institutional level and how these policies are implemented, whether that be covertly

or overtly. I also desire to ascertain, through limited quantitative research, the impact that these policies may have on student populations, specifically through the perspective of faculty members at this institution.

The research questions that will guide the study are as follows:

- 1) What are the de jure and de facto language policies in place and impacting students at a mid-sized state institution in the southeastern United States?
- 2) How are these policies implemented in the classroom, either overtly or covertly, and what are the faculty members' perspectives on students' uptake of these policies?

1. Theoretical orientation

Though the study of language policy is relatively new, conceptual frameworks to view and understand the field abound. Additionally, several significant works have recently been published encapsulating current research around language policy. Arguably the most prolific has been David Cassels Johnson's recent work, *Language Policy*. In this book, Johnson combines five popular definitions of language policy into an amalgamation that nearly gives rise to the question, "What isn't language policy?" As Johnson notes, language policy is a complex term that proves difficult to define. To better understand his synthesis, prior examinations of language policy can be examined.

Historically, most definitions of language policy have been closely associated with language planning; that is, the official, "top-down" enactment of policy, often focusing specifically on the development of nations. (Warhol, 2012) More recently, however, researchers within the field have begun to expand their examinations to prominently include smaller actors

within the language policy communities involved in more localized enactments of de facto policy.

Though official policies are often more prominent and thus more visible, smaller institutional practices regarding policy, as well as communities' continuing ideologies, can significantly shape language policies in both law and practice. (Wiley 2004) The increase in the use of a socio-cultural perspective in examinations of language policy has led to increased weight being given to local actors and their interpretation of official policies on the national, state, local, and institutional levels. This meshes well with Ricento and Hornberger's (1996) development of the "layered onion" metaphor in which the layers of an onion represent the multiple layers of language policy. Various actors within these layers, including policy-makers, administrators, teachers, and students traverse, interpret, and act – thereby exercising agency while playing a role in the enactment of policy through their interpretation of these policies. By a variety of actors at each "layer" having the opportunity to interpret and act on policy the control of policies is spread, thereby changing previous perspectives on language policy as simply top-down mechanisms of social control.

Johnson, through his synthesis, identifies four basic principles that seem to reside in most definitions of language policy: official regulations, unofficial mechanisms (covert, de facto, implicit, etc.), processes, and multi-layer texts and discourses. (Johnson, 2013) With further elucidation, these factors all seem necessary in order to define a field as complex and multi-layered as language policy. Within these partitions of his definition reside a significant number of nuanced issues that all impact language policy. Several dichotomies occur across different areas within the field. These have to do with the development of the policies (top down vs.

bottom up), the transparency of the policy (overt vs. covert), how the policy is stated (explicit vs. implicit) and how the policy plays out (de jure vs. de facto).

Though these measures exist on more of a sliding scale than as absolute dichotomies, policies tend to lean one way or the other. For example, language policies tend to either develop through top-down methods, where overarching bodies of centralized power develop policy and require anyone falling under their umbrella to follow the policy, or they can stem from bottom-up methods; for example, grassroots efforts that result in a policy change either through official, de jure methods or simply remaining de facto, while being used within the community. Overt policies are essentially self-explanatory; they are those that are blatantly stated in official regulations and policy texts. Covert policies are more difficult to describe. Johnson, citing Shohamy (2006) and Schiffman (2010), describes them as policies with “hidden agendas,” intentionally concealed at either the macro-level, collusive, or at the micro-level, subversive. The significant difference between implicit and explicit policies and the overt and covert differentiation has to do with intent. Johnson notes, “the notion of ‘covert’ carries with it strong connotations of something that is intentionally concealed and, therefore, a covert policy is one which is intentionally hidden or veiled (following Shohamy), not openly shown, for either collusive or subversive reasons (following Schiffman).” (Johnson, 2013) The explicit/implicit dichotomy relates to the documentation of the policy. The policy is explicit if it is officially written into policy text and it is implicit if it occurs outside of policy texts in opposition to policy. Finally, policies differ “in law and in practice” as has been described at the beginning of this paper.

In addition to various definitions of language policy as well as important distinctions regarding the types of language policies in place, Johnson’s work contains a plethora of other

information regarding language policy. The book is divided into themed sections. The first part of the work covers the “groundwork” and includes topics that I have touched on thus far including definitions, theories, and concepts. The second part of the work focuses on findings of various studies in language policy and includes such subtopics as, “language policies as instruments of power” and “the multiple layers of policy text, discourse, and practice”. The third part of the work is titled “Researching Language Policy” and includes approaches and methods, educational language policy engagement and action research, the creation of language policies, and research directions and model projects. The final part of the work focuses on other resources available covering language policy. Johnson’s work will be implemented heavily throughout my research as one of the most recent and comprehensive works in the field. While *Language Policy* provides a strong overview, other studies have gone into more detail regarding specific areas of language policy, and thus, when combined, lay the ground for the current study.

Richard Ruiz, in his groundbreaking article, *Orientations in Language Planning* (1984) suggested three orientations with which to view how language and its role in society impacts language planning efforts. According to Ruiz, language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource are the ways in which language planning and subsequently, language policy, is viewed. In his work, he argues that the first two orientations, language-as-problem and language-as-right, have driven the field, though the third, language-as-resource, “is seen as important for the integration of bilingual education into a responsible language policy for the United States.” (Ruiz, 1984) Ruiz defines an orientation as, “a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society.” (Ruiz, 1984) The dispositions referenced are likely unconscious and pre-rational as they deal with the most basic level of language, yet they are integral to understanding language planning. Orientations are

involved in everything from demarcating the boundaries of language, defining the most basic questions researchers ask and the conclusions they draw, and constituting the framework for language attitudes. Ultimately, according to Ruiz, “orientations determine what is thinkable about language in society.”

Educational institutions are specific areas in which language policy plays a significant role, especially in instances where there are non-native speakers of English involved. Not only are policies implemented in educational institutions but they are created and interpreted as well. Johnson writes, “Increasingly, schools are studied as sites of language policy creation, interpretation, appropriation, and instantiation and... have had both a theoretical impact as well as a practical impact, especially since much of this work actively supports and promotes multilingualism as a resource in schools.” (Johnson, 2013) Both the theoretical and practical impact that language policies can have allows for the empowerment of specific communities but can also aid in their marginalization. Tollefson’s 2013 work *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues*, touches upon this, “Critical scholarship has shown that educational institutions can facilitate the marginalization of minority languages and their users through implementation of hegemonic language policy.” (Tollefson, 2013) Teachers, it has been argued, play a very active role in implementing language policy, especially English-only policy within the classroom. (Valdez, 2001; Stritikus, 2002) Thus, researching faculty members’ perspectives on language policy within the greater context of national, state, and institutional policies, might elucidate part of the role that teachers play in the enactment of policy and their engagement as policy interpreters and implementers.

Overall, though it is still a “young” field, research on language policy continues to grow. Examinations of policies in specific contexts demonstrate the ways that other areas affect

language policy and the role that language policy plays in affecting international faculty, staff, and students continues to be explored. Ultimately, this paper seeks to add to that growing knowledge through an in-depth examination of de jure language policies affecting a mid-sized public institution of higher education in the southeastern United States and a quantitative analysis of faculty members' perspectives on how language policy affects them and the non-native English speakers in their classrooms. To my knowledge, there have not been any investigations of language policy at an institution such as this, nor has a policy examination from the perspective of the faculty members been researched. Discovering the ways that policy is written and how that policy plays out (or fails to play out) in classroom speech communities may provide a better understanding of ways to involve and welcome speakers of all languages.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. English as a global language

Language, as the most significant means by which humans communicate, is the vessel that informs nearly all other aspects of human interaction. Though a multiplicity of languages exist throughout the world, different languages, mostly due to the spread of various empires worldwide, have dominated regions of the globe at various times throughout history. The rise of English as a dominant language mirrors the growth and spread of the British Empire, which, at its peak, was the largest empire the world had ever seen. As with all other empires throughout history however, the sun set on the British Empire – though English’s legacy continued through a former British colony. With the American Revolution and the growth of the United States as a world superpower, English not only retained its importance throughout the former British colonies, it increased in scope and reach. Moreover, globalization, as well as the rapid proliferation of ways to communicate through technology have expedited the spread of English and made it arguably, the first “global language”.

Paralleling the global spread of English, English language education continues to grow. This is noted by Briguglio and Watson, who cite the rise of English use in academic programs worldwide, “even, for example, in European countries where it is not the national language, and

where it has become the de facto language for many Master level programs.” They continue, “This serves to accentuate the role of English as a global language, particularly in international education.” (Briguglio & Watson, 2014) English language learning, however, is not simply academic in nature. According to Robles (2012), communicative ability is the second most important soft skill desired in employees, second only to integrity. The ability to communicate in English is an important skill in global business and understanding the nuances of the accompanying culture is an extremely important part of language education. However, despite the importance of English language skills for students around the globe, significant disparities exist between the levels of English language skills that students are equipped with. This disparity exists despite English language testing requirements for students planning to study higher education in the United States and can have a significant impact on their academic performance, intercultural adjustment, and personal development.

The language requirements to get into American colleges and universities exist solely as entrance requirements. They do not necessarily indicate the level that students need to be at in order to achieve academic success, they are simply the standard required to “get in the door”. In fact, in light of Bretag (2007) and Murray (2010), it is apparent that many international students do not have the English language skills to successfully complete their studies at the university level. This information is further supported by Dunworth, (2010) and Dunworth & Briguglio, (2011) as covered in Briguglio & Watson (2014), who state “There is also a growing awareness that while international students may satisfy English language entry requirements in a number of ways, this in no way diminishes the fact that they may require ongoing English language and academic literacy development in order to complete their studies successfully.” Thus, while students may be admitted into programs of study that utilize English as the language of

instruction, they are not always retained. In order to impact international student success and retention, we must understand all of the factors that play a part in the international student experience. Language skills are simply part of a larger picture.

2. Internationalization of higher education

Higher education has been well documented as not only a means to gain an education but also as a useful period of transition where students go from being considered, in many ways still children, to functioning adults - a process deemed “student development”. Evans, Nancy, Forney, Deanna, Guido, & Florence, in their seminal work, *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2009) utilize Rodgers (1990c) definition of student development which identifies the subject as, “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education.” The study of student development has led to the creation of student development theories, which Evans, *et. al* cover thoroughly. These theories will ideally inform both practice and policy development, as stated by the authors, “Student development theory provides the basis for the practice of student development. Knowledge of student development theory enables student affairs professionals to identify and address student needs, design programs, develop policies, and create healthy college environments that encourage positive growth.” (Evans, *et. al*, 2009)

Though there are many factors that influence college student development, as can be expected, language learning and GII experience are some of the factors that can significantly alter the perspective of students. Jones and McEwen (2000), in their work, “A Conceptual Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity,” in the *Journal of College Student Development*,

found that many international students studying in the United States examine, or significantly reexamine their own identity after moving to the country. This is often done as a means of adaptation to a new set of cultural surroundings that heavily involves language acquisition. Though language learning occurs throughout life, intensive English language education is one of the most significant reasons why students study abroad in the United States. Even if students are not enrolled in ESL/EFL classes, significant language development occurs in the classroom as students are learning new vocabulary and constructions, often in specialized fields. However, Dunworth and Briguglio (2011) found that faculty see their role as imparting discipline knowledge and not language skills, despite, “a sort of hovering anxiety about [language skills], which often remain unexpressed.” Faculty members then, while uncomfortable with the situation, may not confront students’ incorrect language use and may simply overlook any language based mistakes made by students. Additionally, in terms of language policy, teachers may not have any specific language policies in class, though this heavily depends on the individual faculty member.

Thus, the global spread of English, its role of continuing importance throughout higher education worldwide, and the impact of language learning on students’ personal development, demonstrates the importance of English language education for many NNS of the language. This importance, when combined with the established difficulty that some non-native English speakers continue to have with the language, both in terms of academic literacy and English as the language of instruction, even after they have been admitted into American higher education, it becomes apparent that additional barriers to these students’ success should be mitigated.

3. Language policy and higher education

Many colleges and universities, as large, often bureaucratic entities, have the power to enact large scale administrative and policy changes that assist NNS students in their transition and encourage their development and assimilation into American higher education, while also bringing greater diversity and enriching the experience for all. A document examination is the first step in identifying policies that may negatively impact specific student populations. If official or unofficial policies exist at an institution which result in additional barriers to success for English language learners, institutions have a responsibility to develop counter-policies or work with the policies in place to alter them in ways that provide equal opportunity for all students to be successful. It is important to note, however, that the environment in which language users find themselves can never be separated from language use. Bruen (2013) notes, “All language planning activities, and indeed discussions around language policy, cannot be realistically divorced from the linguistic and socio-economic settings in which countries find themselves.” The linguistic and socio-economic settings that Bruen speaks of are some of the most significant aspects in the development of de facto language policies, especially if de jure language policies do not exist. Ironically enough, the absence of language policy can be viewed as a policy in and of itself.

The absence of official language policy does not mean that language use is equal. “Thus, language policy, whether explicit or implicit (including the lack of any policy), always impacts language use and education.” (Farr and Song, 2011) As aforementioned, language policy need not be overt and official. Covert policies often create more difficult social situations for language learners and unofficial policies may place significant pressure on students to conform. The mistaken assumption by many English L2 learners is that they must earn “native’

competence in English to be successful; however, this is not the case. Communicative competence should be the goal of these students, though the burden should not lie solely on the student. As institutions striving to participate in a global marketplace of ideas, universities should be developing policies that are concretely inclusive and the education of the faculty and the staff members should reflect these policies. This is even true in countries such as the United States, where the risk is not constrained to only language learning, but rather, impacts aspects of students' entire education and even their developing identity, "Even in English-dominant countries, such as the United States, it is important to understand the role of educational language policies (ELPs) in promoting educational access through the dominant language, and its impact on educational equity, achievement, and students' sense of identity." (Wiley, et. al, 2014) This understanding is integral to developing future populations with GIIs to excel in an increasingly competitive and globalized world.

Internationalization is not simply sending students abroad and bringing students to the United States; it is the acquisition of the linguistic and cultural skills that will enable them to participate as guests and residents in a foreign country or to interact with international populations domestically. Thus, as educators and policy makers move forward, the impact of both de facto and de jure language policies must be examined. The first step in that examination, however, is the identification of both the overt and the covert policies in place and how these policies play out. Once these policies have been identified on the institutional level, only then can we move forward in making those policies equitable and uplifting – not only with the goals of where students should be but valuing what they bring to the educational process and assisting them along the way.

Though “top-down” prescriptive policy is, by definition, much more visible through official documentation, the multiplicity of ways that language policy plays out often involve local practices and ideologies within language communities. This is extremely evident in institutions of higher education within the classroom, the foundation of the education system and few have more control over this than the heads of these classrooms – faculty members.

Faculty members represent what Johnson terms language implementers, rather than language arbitrators. Policies come into the classroom through a top-down methodology (in this case through official state policy and unofficial university policy) via arbitrators, such as politicians and administrators within the university, but are being interpreted by professors as the heads of their individual classrooms. In this vein, Johnson pulls a great quote from Mohanty *et al.* 2010, “Teachers are not uncritical bystanders passively acquiescent of the state practice; in their own ways they resist and contest the state policy... It is quite clear that the agency of the teachers in the classroom makes them the final arbiter of the language education policy and its implementation.” (Johnson, 2013) Thus, it becomes important to gain the perspective of these “language policy implementers” and to examine if their classrooms exhibit inherent language policies that explicitly follow the policies above them or implicitly and covertly differ from them in some way. Of particular interest is how international faculty members, or faculty members whose native language is not English, have responded inside their own classrooms where they are free to interpret policy and implement it as they see fit. This research will most specifically investigate faculty member’s perspectives as they relate to their students.

In order to make progress on institutional goals tied to internationalization, administrators must understand the linguistic hurdles that non-native English speakers face as well as the institutional support available for these students. As Ricento and Hornberger (1996) make clear,

local actors play an integral role in the “layered onion” language policy metaphor and faculty members are arguably the most local of these, interpreting policy everyday within the classroom. Thus, the perspective of faculty members in terms of understanding policy and their role in implementing that policy (or not) is necessary to comprehend.

Therefore, the research questions that will guide the study are as follows:

- 1) What are the de jure and de facto language policies in place and impacting students at a mid-sized state institution in the southeastern United States?
- 2) How are these policies implemented in the classroom, either overtly or covertly, and what are the faculty members’ perspectives on students’ uptake of these policies?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

An attempt to answer these research questions was conducted via a mixed methods study comprised of a policy examination in conjunction with a survey. The policy examination examined relevant policies (those having to do with language) at the national, state, regulatory board, and institutional level. The survey was designed to elucidate faculty members' knowledge about state and university language policies, their attitudes about language, and the de facto policies in place within classrooms at the university.

This methodology was selected due in part to a limited timeframe and the minimal amount of research conducted in this area so far. However, this methodology also allows for a comprehensive view on de jure and de facto policies as they manifest themselves and thereby influence students at the institution. This methodology also develops a foundation for additional and more in-depth research in this area.

The documents analyzed were primarily overt, de jure policies at the national, state, institutional governing board, and institutional level. These included any policy found that related to language or language use. The documents analyzed at the national level included federal policies on language, including the lack of a national language policy as well as the Native American Languages Act of 1990. The statewide language policies of Mississippi

represent a significant portion of the examination as do the policies of the three major institutions of higher education within the state. The policies of the governing board of higher education institutions, known as the Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning (IHL), were also included. Overall, the document examination encompassed roughly fifteen policies or sections of policy – one at the national level, four at the state level, two at the governing board level, and eight instances at the institutional level.

These documents were selected specifically as codified examples of language policies at their respective levels of governance. No other de jure policies related to language impact faculty members at these institutions in the manner that these policies do. Designed to filter down through the entities under their umbrella, these policies were intended to play out even on the most local level. From a policymaker perspective, the overt style demands accountability and allows for easier policy enforcement while also improving the likelihood that policies are fulfilling their intended goals. However, this holds true only if the policies were well designed and their implications are tracked. This becomes much more complex if policies simply exist “on the books” with little to no repercussions for those who deviate from them.

A content analysis was deemed the most appropriate methodology by which to expound on the policies. This approach was selected due to the restrictive structure of the policies that does not necessitate or even allow for significant interpretive freedom. Additionally, an understanding of the content within the policies is necessary to ascertain faculty knowledge of policy as it is written. Without a concrete understanding of the hierarchy of policy positioned above the faculty members’ classrooms, the information gleaned from the survey is of little use. A document examination alone, however, would also be insufficient in that it would only constitute a collection of policies as they relate to language in a very specific context, (i.e.: major

institutions of higher education within the state of Mississippi). In order to understand faculty members' knowledge of language policies placed hierarchically above their sphere of influence and the role that language policy plays within their classrooms, a twenty-five question survey was developed and disseminated to faculty members at The University of Mississippi. Thus, the strength of this research stems from the nature of the research in which document examination and the quantitative analysis come together as a multidimensional study rather than remaining separate, where their results would lack depth and context.

1. Setting

The University of Mississippi (UM) is a mid-sized public institution of higher education located in Oxford, Mississippi, a town in the northeastern part of the state. The total enrollment at all UM campuses statewide, including the medical center which is located in Jackson, Mississippi, was 23,096 during the 2014-2015 academic year.¹ Though this count includes the medical center, a majority (20,112) of the students are on the main campus in Oxford or at one of the several satellite campuses. Undergraduate students make up a majority of the university, comprising 17,360 of the students. According to the Office of International Programs (OIP) at UM, there were 911 international students enrolled at the university in 2014-2015, accounting for 3.94% of the total enrollment at the institution (911, n=23,096) and 4.53% of enrollment if the medical center is not included (911, n=20,112). Additionally, there were a total of 1021 faculty members listed at the institution, a number which does not incorporate the medical center

¹ <http://irep.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/98/2015/04/Mini-Fact-Book-2014-15-FINAL.pdf>

faculty. In terms of international employees and researchers at the university, the OIP reported a total of 338 international faculty, staff, and scholars for 2014-2015.²

Despite being in the minority at the institution, international students represent one of the largest groups on campus if “international” was classified as a distinct race. According to The University of Mississippi Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning, the total enrollment of international students on the Oxford and satellite campuses surpasses the number of self-identified Asians (760), Hispanics (653), and Multi-Racial (384) students enrolled at the institution in 2014 – 2015³. If counted as a race, international students would actually rank third by enrollment, only trailing the African American (2,880) and White (15,334) populations. Understandably, international students, and the distinct sub-group of non-native English speakers, play an integral role on the campus of the University of Mississippi and their experience, as a group, warrants further study.

2. Participants

Faculty members were selected for the survey based on the classification of teaching at least one course during the fall 2014 semester. The questionnaire was initially sent to 840 faculty members via a secure email link. Of those, 67 were returned automatically as undeliverable, resulting in the survey successfully reaching 773 potential respondents. Of those, 191 filled out some portion of the survey. A number of responses were incomplete and thus were excluded from the final count. In total, 178 faculty members successfully completed the survey, representing a response rate of 23.03%.

²<http://international.olemiss.edu/>

³<http://irep.olemiss.edu/institutional-research/quick-facts/fall-2014-2015-enrollment/>

Before delving into the main body of the survey, preliminary information regarding the faculty members was requested. This included information about the department that the faculty member represented as well as the amount of time they have been working at the university. The respondents' native language as well as the other languages they speak was also requested. This preliminary data allows for the breakdown of differences along departmental lines, length of service, or language capabilities.

A total of 36 departments were represented in the survey by at least one complete application. Not surprisingly, based on the topic of the study and the researcher's enrollment in this department, the Department of Modern Languages had the largest number of responses with 13, representing 7.3% of overall faculty members surveyed. The Department of Education and the Department of History both had 12 responses, each representing 6.74% of the vote. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of all responses by department.

The respondent's had, on average, 10.25 years of service at the university. Responses ranged from 1-39 years. Length of service did not end up playing a significant role in this study but represents an opportunity for further study in light of changes in perspective over time or through increased exposure to non-native speakers.

Of the faculty members surveyed, 158 listed English as their native language and 20 listed a language other than English. Moreover, 86 respondents labeled themselves as monolingual English speakers, while 65 listed themselves as bilingual, and 27 listed themselves as multilingual (speaking three or more languages). There was no section for faculty members to list their level of competency in each language, which could have been helpful for further statistical breakdown.

Department	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Respondants
Accountancy	1	0.56%
Art & Art History	4	2.25%
Biology	4	2.25%
Biomolecular Sciences	6	3.37%
Business	6	3.37%
Center for Intelligence & Security Studies	1	0.56%
Chemistry	2	1.12%
Chemistry & Biochemistry	3	1.69%
Classics	1	0.56%
Counselor Education	1	0.56%
Developmental Studies	1	0.56%
Economics	1	0.56%
Education	12	6.74%
Engineering	9	5.06%
English	7	3.93%
Health, Exercise Science, & Recreation Management	7	3.93%
History	12	6.74%
Journalism	4	2.25%
Law	8	4.49%
Leadership & Counselor Education	6	3.37%
Legal Studies	2	1.12%
Marketing	1	0.56%
Mathematics	4	2.25%
Modern Languages	13	7.30%
Music	4	2.25%
Nutrition and Hospitality Management	4	2.25%
Pharmacy	11	6.18%
Philosophy & Religion	4	2.25%
Physics & Astronomy	1	0.56%
Political Science	6	3.37%
Psychology	4	2.25%
Public Policy Leadership	3	1.69%
Social Work	5	2.81%
Sociology & Anthropology	8	4.49%
Theatre Arts	1	0.56%
Writing & Rhetoric	11	6.18%
	n=178	99.99%

Figure 1. Departmental Breakdown

3. Survey Design & Questions

The survey was designed to gather general data about faculty members’ knowledge of institutional and state-wide policies, to discover how, if at all, policies in upper levels of the “policy hierarchy” are implemented in the classroom, and to delve into faculty perspectives on language policy and the role that language plays in student success. The survey went through several iterations before being developed into the final format of five preliminary questions focusing on the demographics of the subject and 25 questions in the general survey. The final iteration of the survey that was disseminated to the participating subjects is included in the Appendices.

4. Data Collection Methods

The survey was administered and submitted electronically through the Qualtrics “Online Survey Software & Insight Platform”. After receiving IRB approval, the survey was emailed to participants who were invited to complete the survey via a secure link. The email also informed potential respondents that all questions were optional and therefore they could skip any questions that they did not wish to answer. This resulted in uneven numbers of answers for each question and this discrepancy was factored into the analysis.

5. Data Analysis

After closing the survey, data was collected and analyzed through descriptive statistics and coding of the short answer questions to identify emerging themes. The two different types of answers (yes/no and short answer) were examined via independent means. The distributions for all yes/no questions were calculated as percentages and generally informed on knowledge of statewide and institutional language policy as well as the de facto or de jure policies within classrooms. Short answer questions were coded for emerging themes to further elucidate faculty knowledge of language policy, perspectives on language policy, and beliefs on institutional support for NNS students. In seeking to answer the first research question, descriptive statistics were used while the second research question tended to utilize the short, open-ended responses, though this was not exclusively the case. While the coding of the short answer questions illuminated some overarching themes, generally, each question or group of questions had a theme intrinsic to that question.

After the coding and percentage calculations, the quantitative questions were then put into Pivot tables within Excel. This was designed to allow for the extraction of specific pieces of data based on answers to specific questions or based upon demographic data such as department, native language, or amount of time at the university. This data was then utilized specifically to answer the research questions asked at the beginning of this project as well as provide additional information for directions of future research.

CHAPTER IV

POLICY EXAMINATION

Due to the hierarchical nature of policy, to best understand and analyze language policy at an institution, the policies of the political entities above the institution must also be analyzed and understood. To observe, analyze, and research language policy at The University of Mississippi, national language policy, state language policy, the policies of the Institutes of Higher Education Board of Trustees, and policies at comparably sized universities within the state must be examined.

1. National language policies

Globally, the United States is rather unique regarding language policy in that there is no de jure or official language at the national level. According to “The World Factbook”⁴ published by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, almost every major country in the world has at least one officially designated language. In total 178 countries have official language policies with the notable outliers being Australia, Japan, Mexico, and the United States. Additionally, it is interesting that English is the most common official language worldwide, but it is not officially the language of the country with the largest number of English speakers. Though the United States does not have an official language, there are official policies in place protecting

⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2098.html>

certain languages.

On October 30th, 1990, Congress passed the Native American Language Act, commonly called NALA. Essentially, executive order PUBLIC LAW 101-477 renounced previous attempts by the United States government to eliminate Indian languages and promised to “protect and promote the rights and freedoms of Native Americans to use practice and develop Native American Language.” It also gave Native Americans self-autonomy in language as well as official recognition. These shifts aligned Native American language policy with much of the other legislation that gives Native Americans autonomy, though this has not guaranteed equality.

While English is not officially the national language, there has been much debate around the development of an overt, de jure policy prescribing English as the official language, though this has never materialized on the federal level. However, English is the most prominent language within the United States and many states have adopted policies positing English as the official language within their jurisdiction. English is currently the official language of 31 states while several states have bilingual or multilingual policies. For example, Hawaii is officially bilingual in both English and Hawaiian (the only de jure bilingual state), while Alaska is multilingual, with English and a significant number of Native Alaskan languages holding official status. States such as California and New Mexico, while not bilingual on a de jure level, operate at a nearly bilingual de facto level in that many state services are offered in both Spanish and English. This accommodation also occurs at a national level with, for example, the Department of Motor Vehicles publishing their guidebook in nine languages and the United States census being printed in multiple languages as well.

As aforementioned, no English language policies exist at a national level, thus many states have opted to develop their own language policies. These policies range in breadth and

scope, often depending on the state and its political climate, but a substantial majority of them posit English at the top of the language hierarchy as the sole official language. The passing of language policies and the amount of control these policies attempt to exert play a direct role in the policies of the institutions within the state. Clearly, language policy in a country as large and diverse as the United States is complex.

2. State policies of Mississippi

Language policy in the state of Mississippi needs to be understood in the greater context of language policy in the Deep South region of the United States. All of the states within the Deep South (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina) have concrete de jure language policies giving English official language status. Most of these states developed their policies in the late 1980's and early 1990's, with Mississippi and South Carolina laws going into effect in 1987 and Georgia's laws going into effect in 1990. Louisiana is the exception with English being declared the official language in 1807, as this was a nationally mandated prerequisite for statehood. Most of the states in the Deep South then, reflect the pro-English movement of the mid-to-late 1980's, which saw 13 states adopt official English language policies at this time – Mississippi included.

Current language policies at the state level in Mississippi clearly favor native English speakers. English was made the official language of the state of Mississippi through the Mississippi Code of 1972 in Section 3-3-31 (1987). The code states, quite simply:

Section 3-3-31. State Language (1987)

The English language is the official language of the state of Mississippi.

Several amendments have been made to the code with all of them further cementing the dominance of English and the second-class status of all other languages. The first of those was House Bill 500, presented by Senator Moore during the 2010 regular session, which amended Section 3-3-31 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 to require that all documents, both public and private, that are produced by governmental entities of the state or state agencies be published solely in English. The Bill stated:

House Bill 500 (2010)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 3-3-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THAT ALL PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS PRODUCED BY STATE AGENCIES OR GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES OF THE STATE BE PUBLISHED IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ONLY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 3-3-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

- (1) The English language is the official language of the State of Mississippi.
- (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all documents produced by state agencies or governmental entities of the state shall be in the English language only.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Additional changes came in 2010 with the subsequent Bill 939 which further consolidated the reign of de jure “English-only” rule within the state. Mandating that all “state agencies and political subdivisions” must offer all services and materials in an English-only format, it subsequently reads:

House Bill 939 (2010)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 3-3-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THAT ALL STATE AGENCIES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OFFER ALL SERVICES OR OTHER MATERIALS IN AN ENGLISH-ONLY FORMAT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 3-3-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

- (1) The English language is the official language of the State of Mississippi.
- (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all state agencies and political subdivisions of the state shall offer all services, publications, printed, audio and video materials and tests in an English-only format unless otherwise required by federal law or regulations.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2010.

House Bill 881, which was enacted in 2014, is the most recent amendment having to do with de jure state language policy. The beginning of the Bill was amended to read:

House Bill 881 (2014)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 3-3-31, 89-5-1 AND 89-5-24, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT ALL DOCUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS OF RECORD SHALL BE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 3-3-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

3-3-31. The English language is the official language of the State of Mississippi. All documents, instruments of record and any record regarding any legal proceeding shall be in the English language.

Subsequent sections of the amendment go as far as stating specific instances in which English must be used, including the recording of land lodged with the clerk of the chancery court in which the land is situated. Under Section 2, 89-5-1, the policy states, “a conveyance of land shall not be good against a purchaser for a valuable consideration without notice, or any creditor,

unless it be lodged with the clerk of the chancery court of the county in which the lands are situated to be recorded and it be in the English language...” The alterations continue, in Section 3, 89-5-24, which begins, “(1) Except as otherwise provided in subsections (3) and (4), any document or instrument presented to the clerk of the chancery court for recording shall meet the following requirements:” of which, subsection (g) was altered to add, “Each document shall be in the English language.” These amendments to Sections 3-3-31, 89-5-1 and 89-5-24 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 do nothing but specify exact instances in which English must be used. Though nothing specific could be located, it is easy to imagine how this change stemmed from some sort of dispute focusing on language. As the amendment seems to suggest, the English native speaker prevailed and the Bill was changed.

Though these are the only policies addressed by the state of Mississippi, it is clear that the de jure language policies of the state are very restrictive and are utilized within the state of Mississippi to restrict language outside the use of English in all official capacities. The amendments to the initial bill have demonstrated the growing restrictions constituting official language use, going so far as to limit specific instances in which English must be used. These policies clearly give preference to English native speakers.

The idea of a one-language state or nation is not a new concept. It has been historically argued for by proponents of collective identity and a common language that, in their view, binds all citizens together. However, these types of policies suggest that multilingual and multicultural citizens are not part of the collective goals of the society. Individuals not belonging to the dictated societal norms are seen, quite simply, as a problem to be fixed, not as multicultural and multilingual assets, and thus they are marginalized by these political perspectives.

Simply being inclusive, however, is not necessarily equal either. It must be noted that a 1974 Supreme Court case, *Lau v. Nichols*, determined that the same instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) as English native speakers is unequal due to a lacking of English proficiency denied these students access to the classroom content and thus an equal educational opportunity. The case specifically found that a lack in educational accommodations for the group of Chinese students who were plaintiffs in the case, was a violation of their civil rights. Johnson, when discussing the case notes, “*Lau v. Nichols* has greatly impacted language policy throughout the U.S. yet, while it tends to be recognized in state-level language policy, it is sometimes ignored at the local level. (Johnson, 2013) Though Johnson identifies that most state-level language policy acknowledges the ruling in *Lau v. Nichols*, it appears that Mississippi continues to develop policy in the opposite direction. The state policies clearly utilize Ruiz’s language-as-a-problem framework in reference to all languages outside of English. While the state’s language policies are restrictive, the policies of lower-level institutions, most notably the Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning (IHL) also speak to widespread ideas about language in the American South.

3. Policies of the higher education board (IHL)

Within the state of Mississippi, the Board of Trustees for the Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning, also called the IHL, is the regulatory board that oversees the eight public institutions of higher learning within the state. The IHL Board is made up of 12 members, four from each of the three Mississippi Supreme Court districts. Board members serve nine year appointments and work with the Mississippi Commissioner of Higher Education to administer the policies and bylaws of the board. According to their website, the board, “oversees degree-

credit courses, research and public service activities and programs at the eight public universities, including The University of Mississippi Medical Center, The Mississippi State University Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, ten off-campus centers, and various other locations throughout the state.” Their responsibilities include financial and policy oversight as well as the appointment of the heads of these institutions. As the policies of the IHL Board affect any institutions under its oversight, it is integral then to examine these policies to understand any influence that plays a role in shaping any policies in organizations under the board’s umbrella.

IHL Policy appears to be very overt and top-down oriented. Their policies are available online in a 192 page document which breaks down the policies into sections for organization.⁵

Subheadings on the policies include:

- Section 100 – Authorization
- Section 200 – General Powers and Duties
- Section 300 – Bylaws
- Section 400 – Faculty and Staff
- Section 500 – Academic Affairs
- Section 600 – Student Affairs and Admissions’
- Section 700 – Finance and Business
- Section 800 – Personnel Policies
- Section 900 – Real Estate and Facilities
- Section 1000 – Information and Publications
- Section 1100 – Legal Matters
- Section 1200 – Ethics Policy

While the IHL Board of Trustees Policies and Bylaws cover a variety of topics within public higher education in the state of Mississippi, there are no policies within the document directly related to language. The policies that one might argue are tangentially related to language or NNS of English might be the diversity statement and the admissions standards.

⁵ <http://www.mississippi.edu/board/downloads/policiesandbylaws.pdf>

The diversity statement of the IHL, located at 102.06 within the IHL Policies and Bylaws states that, “One of the strengths of Mississippi is the diversity of its people. This diversity enriches higher education and contributes to the capacity that our students develop for living in a multicultural and interdependent world.” While the IHL acknowledges that diversity and differences enrich education, language is not one of the factors outlined in the IHL’s policy. The statement continues, “Embracing diversity of thought, cultural background, experience, and identity helps foster inclusiveness and intellectually enriched campus communities that maximize opportunities for success among all students and employees.” By denying that language is one of the factors that contribute to diversity in the state and, especially to education, the IHL policies skip over an integral part of individuals’ concepts of identity.

Ultimately, the board claims to make diversity a “high priority” and adopts these goals in regards to higher education within the state of Mississippi:

- 1) To increase the enrollment and graduation rate of underrepresented students at our institutions;
- 2) To increase the employment of underrepresented individuals in administrative, faculty and staff positions;
- 3) To enhance the overall educational experience through infusion of curricular content and co-curricular programming that enhances multicultural awareness and understanding; and
- 4) To increase the use of underrepresented professionals, contractors, and other vendors.

Claiming to recognize the importance of college campus environments promoting diversity and affirming a commitment to “access and success, with particular attention to heightening participation and achievement of underrepresented individuals...” the IHL board misses a significant opportunity to posit language as an aspect of diversity and thereby omits a chance to address some of the potential challenges that non-native English speakers might face inside and outside of the classroom. This must be taken in context of the state language policy,

however, which as aforementioned, posits English as the official language of the state and increasingly places restrictions on the language of official state documents.

In addition to the diversity statement, section 601 of the IHL Board of Trustees Policies and Bylaws gives the board the authority to “establish minimum standards of achievement as a prerequisite for entrance into any of the institutions under its jurisdiction...” Additionally, the IHL board holds that “standards need not be uniform between the various institutions and which may be based upon such criteria as the Board may establish.”

Sections 602 through 609 establish admissions criteria to gain admittance to one of the eight institutions that the board oversees. There are several ways for students to gain “Full Admission” to a university but most require a certain GPA or class rank, as well as a requisite ACT or equivalent SAT score. Even if students do not meet these minimums, and thus are not eligible for “Full Admissions” due to “Academic Deficiencies” defined as, “adequate readiness in English or Reading or Mathematics,” they may still gain access through additional programs designed to prepare students for the rigors of higher education.

However, all of the Admission requirements outlined by the Board are only for Mississippi residents. Section 602F outlines “Nonresident Admissions” and holds that nonresidents of the state will be qualified for admission to one of the institutions that the Board oversees based on “equivalent preparation as determined by the admitting institution.” Thus, Mississippi residents who are prospective students of any of the IHL institution of higher learning must meet the established admissions standards in place with the IHL, and it appears that language is not a factor in admissions. Regardless of students’ first language, the standardized ACT/SAT tests, which are administered completely in English, as Menken (2008) and Shohamy (2006) discussed, are likely mechanisms for the continuation of current de facto

policies. Moreover, any classes within Mississippi public education, with the exception of foreign language courses, are, at least in terms of de jure policy, to be conducted completely in English.

As aforementioned, the IHL Board of Trustees in the State of Mississippi does not address language in the context of prescriptive de jure policy. That does not mean that non-native speakers of English are not affected by their policies, rather, that the policies themselves and consequently their effects are covert. As individual institutions still have control over admitting students from outside the state, to further delve into how these policies might affect NNSs, the policies of individual institutions will be examined.

4. Policies of Mississippi State University and the University of Southern Mississippi

Though the IHL Board of Trustees oversees eight institutions within Mississippi, three of the institutions are significantly larger than the others. These three institutions, Mississippi State University (MSU), The University of Mississippi (UM), and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) are all medium-sized state institutions ranging from 13,104 students on the main campus of USM to 19,635 students at MSU, according to the IHL “Fastfacts”.⁶

While each of these institutions are under the jurisdiction of the IHL, they structure their policies not covered by the IHL in a variety of different ways. A better understanding of the policies at similarly sized institutions in the state is needed in order to fully understand the language policies in place at The University of Mississippi.

⁶ http://www.mississippi.edu/research/downloads/fast_facts_1415.pdf

Examination of policies in place at both Mississippi State University and The University of Southern Mississippi reveal similar policy structures as they relate to language, likely with similar outcomes. While MSU had several main administrative policies directed at international students including policies on health insurance (91.175), administrative fees (91.176), and extended orientation (91.177), no general administrative policies addressing language were found at either institution.

At USM, any policy not listed in the official Institutional Policies⁷, as per section 1.2 of the, “PRES-IR-001: POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES” are left to the discretion of the various departments. The policy adds, “*However, these local policies should be clearly written and well communicated.*” Thus, at USM, language policy development is at the discretion of the departments.

It follows then that at both MSU and USM, de facto language policy can be found within the primary office designated to serve international students, within admissions, or, for graduate students, within the graduate school. These areas list minimum English language requirements for students who enter, though these depend specifically on the student’s status.

Language proficiency information for undergraduate students at Mississippi State University can be found on the international student portion of the admissions website.⁸ The listed requirements state:

⁷ <http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies>

⁸ <http://admissions.msstate.edu/international/apply/proficiency.php>

International undergraduate students admitted to Mississippi State University must demonstrate English language proficiency to register for academic courses offered through the colleges. Any of the following scores are acceptable to demonstrate English language proficiency:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS):
 - Overall band score of 6.0 or higher
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):
 - paper based : 525 or higher
 - computer based : 197 or higher
 - internet based : 71 or higher
- English portion of the ACT: 19 or higher
- Critical reading portion of the SAT: 480 or higher

The information also states that students may meet this general language requirement but not necessarily meet standards for their department, *“Although applicants may meet general language requirements to the university, some departments have established higher English language proficiency requirements. Please view Departmental English proficiency requirements for additional requirements.”* Departments, then, have significant freedom in the development of their own policy. While the departments do have some flexibility, some international students are exempt from the English language requirement by citizenship. This de jure exception is overtly stated on the same page:

Exemption from English Language Proficiency Requirement

Completion of intensive English training or English composition courses at a U.S. college does not waive the IELTS/TOEFL requirement. Only students who are citizens of Australia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Cayman Islands, Dominica, England, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and Wales are automatically exempt from this requirement. Citizens of Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, and Swaziland are only exempt if English is listed as the first language on the Senior Certificate.

The English proficiency requirements at the University of Southern Mississippi, found at online in the USM Institutional Policy page⁹ are very similar to those at MSU. The main policy states:

Standardized tests are required for most applicants to any academic program at the graduate and undergraduate level. All applicants who are from countries other than the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, and certain Caribbean Islands, must submit scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or The International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

A minimum TOEFL score of 71 (IBT), 525 (PBT), or minimum IELTS score of 6.0 is required for undergraduate admission.

Though this policy combines the exemption and the policy itself, unlike Mississippi State University, the scores are very similar and most of the countries listed by USM are also listed within the policies of MSU.

As listed in the policy, graduate students at USM are required to also submit TOEFL or IELTS scores. These tests are designed to set a baseline for established language proficiency, presumably so that NNS students' language will not inhibit them and to increase their chances of success in the classroom. While the reported scores somewhat elucidate on students' language skills, standardized tests can never fully represent aptitude. This is why most schools require multiple documents for admissions, even for domestic students. Information in the form of transcripts, letters of recommendation, statements of purpose, and even other tests help enlighten admissions officers on students' aptitudes and chances for success. In that vein, The University of Southern Mississippi also requires applicants to submit scores on the standardized GRE, GMAT, or MAT, depending on their degree program.

⁹ <http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies>

Moreover, undergraduate international students at USM are also “recommended” to submit an official SAT score. Though this is only a recommendation, the potential exists for this to be interpreted as a requirement by many students whose background consists of involvement in an educational community that is hierarchical and places strong emphasis on adherence to policies. This is likely to discourage some students from applying – believing they don’t have a chance at admissions without taking the SAT and having little access to or preparation for the standardized test.

Though discrimination based on race and ethnicity is prohibited and the IHL has a statement in place touting the importance of diversity in education, additional roadblocks to admission in the form of standardized testing exist for students from countries other than those listed in the policies. Giving clear preference to native English speakers, these policies posit additional barriers to admissions for prospective foreign students, even if they have been learning English nearly as long as their primary language.

Though these entrance requirements standardize a “baseline” for admittance, under the guise of ensuring that international students have the skills to allow them to succeed in the classroom, unless students are enrolled in USM’s English Language Institute (their version of an IEP) or MSU’s Intensive English Program (IEP) located in their English as a Second Language Center, students do not receive any additional directed English language assistance. Students can enroll at these institutions even with a “deficiency” in English, though they are required to enroll in ESL courses. MSU’s policy on international “Admission with English Language Deficiency” is outlined below:

Admission with English Language Deficiency

International students who fail to demonstrate English language proficiency using one of the approved methods may be admitted, but will be required to enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. Students who successfully complete the English as a Second Language program will be considered to have demonstrated English language proficiency and allowed to register in academic courses offered through the colleges.

Though the use of the word deficiency gives rise to its own set of concerns as it implies that NNS students are incomplete, also of concern is the fact that policy makers at MSU appear certain as to the superiority of their IEP program. As the policy is written, students are not allowed exemption from the language proficiency or IELTS/TOEFL requirement after completing English training or English composition courses at a different U.S. college but will be allowed to matriculate after completing the IEP program at MSU. Though Mississippi State University offers several options for students to meet the proficiency requirement, the same concept persists; students demonstrate their English language abilities, as designated by a standardized test to gain entrance into the university and, upon gaining entry, are left to fend for themselves.

Even though both of these institutions are theoretically required to follow IHL policy as well as state policy, an explicit policy at the University of Southern Mississippi clearly lists the policy hierarchy as it relates to any conflicts of authority. The policy, as found in section 8.1 of policy, "PRES-IR-001: POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES" states, "*Should there occur at any time a conflict between a University policy and a document of higher authority (e.g., federal law, state law, policies/bylaws of the Board of Trustees), the document of higher authority will prevail.*" Thus, it is clearly established

within internal policy documents that the university is required to follow the language policies of the state of Mississippi. Though it is not explicitly outlined in policy documents at Mississippi State University, the outcome is the same – MSU must follow all federal laws, state laws, and the policies/bylaws of the Board of Trustees.

While the policies in place at Mississippi State University and The University of Southern Mississippi are similar, policy structure at The University of Mississippi differs slightly. While a comparison is important for providing a statewide baseline, it is important to look at institutional policy as the most local language policy umbrella influencing the development of departmental and classroom language policies. Thus, an investigation of language policies as they are addressed by The University of Mississippi represents the logical next step in this examination.

5. Policies of The University of Mississippi

The University of Mississippi (UM) differs from MSU and USM in that administrative level policy at the university addresses some of the issues that have been delegated to the individual departments by the other institutions. This includes several policies relating to language requirements, including English language standards for international student admissions. A separate policy for international graduate instructors also exists.

A standard search using the word “English” within the Policy Directory¹⁰ of UM reveals three policies including: Admission of International Students – Policy number: 10000842, TOEFL Admissions Appeal – Policy number: 10000841, and SPEAK Test Requirement – Policy

¹⁰ <https://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/>

number 10000392. A search utilizing the term “Language” yields the first and second policies but does not bring up the third policy involving the SPEAK Test Requirement for graduate instructors. Both the policy related to international student admissions and the TOEFL admissions appeal have effective dates of 2013 and both can also be found by keyword search of “International Student”. The SPEAK test requirement policy is slightly older, dated 2005, and can be found by searches of “International” and “SPEAK”. Manually searching through the policy database did not produce additional policies related to language.

The policy on international student admissions opens with, “The University of Mississippi welcomes the enrollment of qualified international students.” And immediately defines “international” as a student not holding U.S. citizenship, regardless of where the student resides. Though the ACT/SAT is not required of international applicants, requirements of English proficiency test scores are mandatory for those students graduating from a secondary school or transferring to UM from a college or university outside the country. Policy 10000842 explicitly states that a hard-copy submission of the following must be provided:

English proficiency test score. A score for one of the following that meets the indicated minimum must be submitted by the testing agency to the Office of Admissions.

- Minimum total score of 79 on the TOEFL-IBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language-Internet Based Test – www.ets.org), OR
- Minimum overall band score: 6.00 on the IELTS test (Intensive English Language Testing System - <http://www.ielts.org>), OR
- Minimum total score of 53 on the PTE-A (Pearson Test of English-Academic - <http://pearsonpte.com>), OR
- Minimum score of 80% on the EC English Language Centres' Upper Intermediate Level Test, OR
- Minimum grade of B on the ELS Educational Services, Inc.'s ELS 112 course (English for Academic Purposes) - Please see below the conditions for exemption from the English language proficiency test requirement and for options for those not meeting the above-mentioned standards.
- Exceptions to the above may apply. Please contact the Office of International Programs (OIP) for further information. <http://www.international.olemiss.edu/internationaladmissions.html>

Not only do these requirements exist for prospective International Freshmen and Transfer students coming from outside the country, they also exist for students classified as “international” despite “graduating from a secondary school or transferring from a college or university in the U.S., whether in Mississippi or elsewhere”. However, in the subsequent section of the policy, titled, “English Language Proficiency Requirements for Admission to the University,” justification for the policy is given and exemptions are outlined. The justification for the strict language policy requirements is listed as follows:

The ability to communicate effectively in the English language is critically important to student’s academic and personal success as well as to safety in laboratories and other academic research environments.

Interestingly, this policy represents the only time where safety is explicitly listed as a justification for a policy at any of the three universities investigated in this research. While the policy continues and reiterates the requirements for application to the university, this specific section of the policy elaborates on the exemptions to the submission of proficiency scores:

The following applicants are exempt from submitting one of the above English language proficiency scores.

- International applicants who show evidence of having completed the Advanced Plus Course at the University of Mississippi’s Intensive English Program with a grade of B or higher (see <http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/iep> for further information).
- International applicants who apply for admission as degree-seeking freshmen and who have completed all four years of high school education at, and graduated from, an accredited high school in the U.S. Such applicants must, however, comply with the admission standards for domestic (i.e., U.S.) applicants as stated in the undergraduate catalog.
- International applicants who apply for admission as degree-seeking transfer students and who have completed at least 30 credits, including two English Writing/Composition courses, at an accredited institution of higher education in the U.S., and who have earned a cumulative grade-point average of 2.00 or higher on a 4.00 scale, and a grade of 2.00 or higher on a 4.00 scale on each of the English writing/composition courses.
- International applicants who have earned a higher education degree (including the equivalent of an associate or bachelor’s degree) in, or who are citizens of, one of a group of countries listed on the English Language Test Requirement exemption list (see <http://www.international.olemiss.edu/internationaladmissions.html>)

Although these are the posted exemptions from the minimum English proficiency requirement, other exemptions do exist for international students who fall just shy of these requirements. These exemptions are similar to the policies of MSU and USM which allow for international students to gain “Admission with English Language Deficiency”. The policy states:

Applicants with English proficiency scores that are lower than the above minima may be admitted as follows:

- Applicants with scores of 69-78 TOEFL IBT; 5.50 IELTS; or 47-52 PTE-A may be admitted but are required to enroll in IE 090 English for International Students and IE 091 Academic Writing Lab for International Students during their first term of enrollment at the university and, if necessary, in subsequent terms until they complete the courses successfully.
- Students who lack an acceptable English proficiency score and who wish to be considered for an exemption from the IE 090/IE 091 requirement may choose to take the English Placement Test upon arrival at the university. The English Placement Test is offered by the university’s ETS Computer-Based Testing (CBT) Center. The IE 090/IE 091 requirement is waived for international students who score at least 80 on the English Placement Test. The cost of the English Placement Test is the responsibility of the test taker.
- Conditional admission may be granted to applicants with English proficiency scores below 69 TOEFL IBT; 5:50 IELTS; 47 PTE-A who meet all other requirements for undergraduate admission, provided that they submit a written request to the Office of International Programs and ask for “Conditional Admission status.” Students granted conditional admission will be permitted to enroll in undergraduate academic courses only after demonstrating satisfactory English language proficiency as required for unconditional admission (see above).

The University of Mississippi also differs from MSU and USM in that there is a policy that allows for an appeal process for international students who meet all of the admission requirements except the English Language Proficiency standard. Though convoluted, the policy states:

English Language Proficiency Appeal Process

The following process is set forth to allow departments/units to request admission consideration for undergraduate degree seeking international students who have met **all admission requirements except the English Language Proficiency**.

- Currently undergraduate **full admission** is granted to a student submitting a TOEFL-IBT score of 79 or higher (or an IELTS overall band score of 6.00 or higher; or PTE-A score of 53 or higher); **full admission with Intensive English (IE) 090/091 required** for scores between 69 and 78 (TOEFL-IBT), 5.50 (IELTS) or 47-52 (PTE-A); and **Intensive English Program (IEP) only** for scores below 69 (TOEFL-IBT), 5.50 (IELTS) or 47 (PTE-A).
- A department or unit may request a formal review of an **IEP only** admission status for scores of 53 – 68 on the TOEFL-IBT, 4.50 or higher on IELTS, and 41 or higher on PTE-A by submitting a written request to the Office of International Programs.
- Through the appeal process, an **IEP only** admit may be elevated to **full admission with IE 090/091 required**. There is no appeal process to achieve full admission without IE 090 and IE 091.
- The department/unit requesting the appeal must submit a letter of appeal clearly defining the reason(s) for requesting the appeal and a plan of academic support demonstrating the commitment of the department to the academic success of the student. Without this plan, an appeal will not be considered.
- Upon approval of the written appeal, the student will be contacted and arrangements will be made for the student to take the SPEAK test. This test will be administered in compliance with the testing protocol and a grade of 40 or higher is required for a successful appeal.
- If the appeal is successful, the admission status of the student will be changed from **IEP only to full admission with IE 090/091 required**.
- An appeal on behalf of an individual student will be considered only once at the University of Mississippi. If the appeal is not granted, the student's admission will be to **IEP only**.

The caveat with this policy is that a department or academic unit must be the party submitting the request and, as outlined in the policy, the request can only be for IEP admission. This requires that students take the Intensive English course series 090/091 which is mandatory for full admission.

Though this policy was likely designed to “safeguard” international students from enrolling in courses that policy-makers believe they might not understand, in reality, it not only creates an additional obstacle for students, it creates an additional burden for advocates of international students who must navigate this process as well. The advocate must not only be willing to undergo the appeals process, which includes a letter of appeal and a plan of academic

support, but will likely remain that student's primary contact through enrollment. This places additional strain on departments that support the university's international initiatives, departments which are already without adequate support at many universities. Furthermore, even if the appeals process succeeds with the letter of appeal and the plan of student support, the policy still requires students to complete the SPEAK test with a score of 40 or higher.

Lastly, undergraduate international students are not the only students affected by English-language related policies at The University of Mississippi. Though less convoluted, the SPEAK Score Requirement policy outlines the standards for international graduate students who seek qualification as graduate instructors; important positions often tied to financial aid for graduate students. The policy states:

SPEAK Score Requirement

The University of Mississippi requires international students to present acceptable results on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) or the institutional version, SPEAK, prior to qualifying for positions of graduate instructor (Form #7 appointments). This requirement applies to all international students whose native language is not English.

The University of Mississippi SPEAK test is now administered by the Intensive English program. New students who wish to be considered for graduate instructorships should arrange for testing prior to the beginning of class sessions.

The following SPEAK score requirements were approved:

Unconditional Approval: 250 and above. Students achieving scores in this range are considered to have sufficient command of spoken English to serve as classroom teachers.

Conditional Approval: 225-249. Students achieving scores in this range may serve as classroom teachers, subject to periodic observation in the department.

Limited Approval: 200-224. Students achieving scores in this range are restricted to service as laboratory assistants and only in the company of another assistant has acceptable spoken English.

Prohibited: 199 and below

Financial barriers represent some of the most significant hurdles foreign students have when attempting to study in the United States. Many international students have the opportunity to attend college or university free in their home country; however, due to the prestige placed on

American higher education, and advanced degrees in particular, these students believe that education in the United States sets them apart from their peers and therefore bodes well for their future career. Moreover, as previously discussed, institutions of higher education in the United States have recently placed heavy emphasis on internationalization efforts including increased international student recruitment. While the opportunity to study in the United States is a dream for many, they must first find a way to afford the massive costs American higher education frequently entails. For many graduate students, assistantships and graduate instructor positions seem like a godsend; however, at institutions like The University of Mississippi, they must first pass the SPEAK test – another standardized barrier posited by proponents as protecting these students while existing seemingly at odds with the institutional goals of increased internationalization and providing support for all students.

Similar to MSU and USM, the policies at The University of Mississippi create additional barriers to admission for students seeking to enroll at The University of Mississippi. While there are no limitations in place specifically requiring the use of English once enrolled, the university, as a state sponsored institution, supposedly falls under the policy jurisdiction of the Mississippi IHL and the state and federal hierarchies above it. Thus, as Mississippi is one of the states with a fairly restrictive English language policy, this theoretically requires the institution to use English in nearly all facets of operation. Moreover, and perhaps most alarming, once a non-native English speaking student has been admitted to the university, there are no policy protections in place for any additional support these students might need. This is the reality of the situation, despite a standardized baseline not ensuring success with English in an academic environment or even the necessary skills to independently navigate the American educational experience.

While the previous policy examination represents a significant aspect of this paper, the de jure policies in place at these institutions are only effective if they match with the de facto policies of the classrooms. This is where additional research on language and language policy in the classroom should occur. The true effect of current policies cannot be fully understood by an examination of policies alone. The knowledge of faculty members and their support or opposition to these policies must be examined in order to break the surface of the language barriers that non-native English speakers face as they seek to attain an international education here in America.

CHAPTER V

SURVEY RESULTS

1. Language policy in the classroom

While the first part of this thesis addresses the existence of language policies at the macro level, faculty members, as implementers of language policy, have significant control over the influence of policy on the ground. In order to delve into this relationship, a survey was administered to faculty members at The University of Mississippi. In pursuit of answering questions regarding language policy in the classroom, understand what percentage of faculty members utilize de facto or de jure language policies within their classrooms is imperative.

Of the faculty members surveyed, only 16.3% of faculty members (29, n=178) indicated that they have “any specific language requirement, such as only speak/write/etc. in English” in their classrooms. A majority (20.7%) of these understandably came from the field of Modern Languages which includes intensive English classes as well as other language courses where a de jure policy might be the norm (i.e.: only speak French in a French language course). This policy was addressed by Spanish instructor when asked about language policy at the university. They noted, “My language area has policies about use of English in the classroom (forbidden to only lightly used, depending on level of instruction).” Writing and Rhetoric followed as a close second behind Modern Languages, making up an additional 13.8% of the classrooms with some

sort of explicit policy. Together these two departments made up over one-third of the classrooms with any sort of de jure language policy. Nevertheless, a significant majority (83.7%) of faculty members surveyed did not indicate any explicit language policy in their classrooms.

While the rate of faculty members instituting de jure language policy within their classrooms proved to be rather low, a significant majority of faculty members believe that a de facto policy of English exists within their classrooms. Asking whether faculty members felt that there was an “understood or unspoken expectation of English in your courses” yielded a positive response of 95.3% (161, n=169). Of the eight dissenting opinions, four of them were from faculty in Modern Languages whose classrooms are frequent sites of multilingualism.

2. Preparation to teach non-native English speakers

Of the faculty members surveyed, 78.7% (137, n=174) indicated that they had at least one student in the last academic year who was a non-native English speaker and all but three of these faculty members answered the question about feeling prepared to teach such students. Of those faculty members, 20.1% (27, n=134) of them indicated feeling unprepared to teach these students. Predictably, those who felt most unprepared to teach English NNS students were monolingual English native speakers, at a rate of nearly 28% (16, n=58); still leaving a majority feeling prepared to teach non-native English speakers at a rate of 72% (42, n=58). Contrasting with this, over 93% (14, n=15) of non-native English speaking faculty felt prepared to teach non-native English speakers, even if the student did not speak their native language. Falling in the middle were native English speakers who also spoke at least one other language at a rate of nearly 84% (51, n=61). The themes that emerged most prominently in this area of research were

that faculty members who felt unprepared to teach NNS did not have any training or speak another language themselves.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the most prominent reason listed by faculty members for feeling prepared to teach NNS was that they believe that students are required to “know English” to be admitted to the university. This train of thought posits faculty members as prepared for all students, regardless of their level of English, simply if the student has gained access to the university. It leaves little room for students anywhere along the spectrum of English language skills. In their qualitative responses, faculty members noted this discrepancy.

Many of the faculty members wrote that the answer to this question depends heavily on the level of proficiency of the student. One faculty member in the Department of History indicated that they did not feel prepared to teach NNS overall indicated that they felt prepared only for those students who are “entirely proficient” in English, “Of course I feel perfectly prepared to teach students who are entirely proficient in English, but when I have had students who are not completely proficient in English, I have struggled with how to grade their written work.” This clearly reflects Dunworth and Briguglio (2011) who write about the “hovering anxiety” faculty members encounter when faced with students’ “language skills”. Another faculty member indicated that they feel prepared to teach non-native English speakers though this also depends on their level of English, “The answer really depends on how strong their English is. Since my field is English, papers are a major part of my assessment, and a student with rudimentary English language skills will have trouble in my classes.” They continue, outlining the lack of preparation and resources for undertaking additional support, “I’m not equipped to teach a student English – I’m neither trained nor do I have the time in my schedule to do independent language tutoring.”

This perspective of inadequate training was a recurring theme, both among faculty who felt prepared and unprepared to teach non-native speakers. Many of those who indicated that they were prepared felt that they did not have adequate training or other institutional support but had developed skills to work with non-native English speakers through extensive experience incrementally piecemealed together over time. One faculty member in Counselor Education lamented that it seemed only the students were required to make any accommodations, “I have worked with many students whose native language is not English. While I try to be as understanding as I can be, I often feel as though the student must make all the accommodations due to my lack of training in this area.”

Other instructors focused on their own personal experience learning other languages or traveling abroad as their only relevant knowledge to prepare them to work with these students.

I am sympathetic to language barriers as I spend my summer months abroad in an international language course. However, I have not been trained on how to teach students whose native language is not English and I think that's something that we, as University faculty, could greatly benefit from. The instructional materials, textbooks, and Blackboard website assume, to a large degree, a shared culture and language. Even the structure of a class, especially if it's discussion based, can be more difficult for students whose native language is a language other than English. I typically encourage discussion in my classes and would like to learn some strategies for including students from a variety of backgrounds and countries. Most teaching discussion seminars never address this issue. – UM Professor of Sociology & Anthropology

Drawing largely on developed empathy for these students, this perspective partially supports the quantitative data in this research that found when faculty members spoke another language they were more likely to feel prepared to teach NNS than monolingual English-speaking faculty members.

3. Language policy knowledge

While answers regarding policy knowledge were mixed, they remained quite limited overall at both the state and institutional levels.

While faculty members reported being more knowledgeable about institutional language policies than state policies, their knowledge of state policies is rather scant. Only 14 (7.9%, n=178) faculty members indicated knowledge of any language/language education policies within the state of Mississippi. Of those that indicated policy knowledge, when asked to elaborate upon that policy, three of the respondents did not answer. The remaining 11 faculty members most frequently wrote about foreign language requirements for undergraduates or universities requiring some level of English proficiency.

One faculty member ventured a guess at a statewide policy "... I would guess that there might be a policy that instruction in the public schools must be in English. I do not know that for sure however." This was the closest that a faculty member came to demonstrating effective knowledge of any of the statewide language policies, most notably, Bill 939 which effectively requires that all "state agencies and political subdivisions" must offer all services and materials in English-only.

Several other faculty members wrote about K-12 educational programs that assist non-native English speaking children to learn English. However, these events do not represent outright policies on their own, but rather programs specifically for K-12 education. While those areas are outside the scope of this current study, they represent another avenue for further research regarding language policy in K-12 education.

Though the number of respondents indicating that they knew of language policies at the university was higher than those indicating knowledge of language policies within the state, a general lack of knowledge regarding language policy remained widespread.

Despite the fact that 32 of the faculty members surveyed (18%, n=178) indicated knowledge of language policy at the institutional level, 82%, (146, n=178) or the vast majority of faculty members, indicated no institutional language policy knowledge at the university. In delving slightly deeper into this question, the themes emerging from the short answer quantitative questions tend to illuminate the common misunderstandings around language policy at the institution.

The most prominent misunderstanding regarding with language/language education policy focused on the existence of “foreign language requirements” for students, especially in the College of Liberal Arts. Many faculty members had answers similar to this Psychology faculty member: “In Liberal Arts, a second language is required for a BA.” While there is in fact a foreign language requirement in the college, this was not the intended direction of this question as while foreign language requirements do represent a form of language policy, foreign language education in the United States is a tangentially related but different area.

While this question was criticized as being vague, the intent of the researcher was to leave the question open for the respondent to discuss what, if anything, they know regarding language policy at the university. The vague nature of the question as well as another instance of the foreign language requirement in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) was brought up by a faculty member in the Department of History, “The question is vague. I know that all students in the CLA must take at least two semesters of a language (other than English) at the 200-level or above.” This perspective was one of the most common responses given by faculty members.

Other answers centered on English proficiency, responses regarding TOEFL, and requirements for graduate students. These three frequent responses begin to approach an understanding of the de jure policies at the institution. One faculty member in Engineering, also a non-native English speaker, noted the existence of the policies related to the English entrance requirements for students before taking classes in their major, “I know that there are minimum TOEFL and IELTS scores that students must have before taking courses in their major. I also know that if students take a certain number IEP courses, then they can enter courses in their major.” A multilingual faculty member in the School of Pharmacy also noted the English language proficiency requirement that is at the core of language policy at the university, “I know that students at the University of Mississippi must demonstrate English Language Proficiency prior to enrolling as a degree seeking student.” Other faculty members, such as this one in Art & Art History” made assumptions as to the language policies at the institution, “I assume that students must meet a minimum TOEFL score for admission to study.” While these answers do scratch the surface of the de jure language policies, none of the answers completely addressed the policies in place at the university and the number of faculty members who accurately named at least one aspect of the policy were in the significant minority.

4. Knowledge of policies for support

Over 78% of faculty members (140, n=178) indicated no knowledge of policies in place at the institution to support non-native English speakers. This question sought to get to the heart of knowledge of support for non-native English speakers; however, this question could also have been phrased differently. This was identified by a faculty member in Biomolecular Sciences, “I’m not sure if this question is worded properly. A policy is one that offers a guide to decisions

and, as such, I am not aware of any formal ones at UM. Within our program, when we identify students who are lacking in their English skills we require that they participate in ESL programs on campus.” As there are no policies in place at the institution to support these students but, rather, policies that require them to prove competency through a standardized test, this question might have read better as, “Do you know of any institutional support structures to aid students with difficulties pertaining to language?”

Though the question could have been worded differently, some of the short answers did represent faculty knowledge of some of the traditional structures in the institution to support non-native English speakers. Offices or campus programs that provided support to international students “lacking in their English skills” as the Biomolecular Science faculty member put it, were listed most frequently. The “English as a Second Language” or “ESL Program” and “ESL Classes” were the most frequently cited programs for non-native English speakers. Additionally, the “Intensive English Program” or classes in that department was the second most cited response; though, in actuality the Intensive English Program is only ESL program on campus and the department that administers all ESL classes at the university.

5. Belief in providing additional support for NNS

When asking university faculty whether the university should provide additional support for non-native speaking students, 77.6% of faculty members surveyed (135, n=174) believed that they should.

However, these numbers changed slightly when the exposure of the professors to non-native English speakers was incorporated. When looking at faculty members who in the last year

had not taught a class with at least one non-native English speaking student and answered this question, only 67.6% (25, n=37) believed that the university should provide support for non-native speakers whereas 81.2% (108, n=133) of faculty members who had taught at least one non-native English speaker within the same timeframe believed that these students deserved support from the institution. This number was even higher among non-native English speaking faculty exposed to at least one non-native English speaker in the last academic year. Nearly 94% (15, n=16) of NNS faculty members who had been exposed to at least one NNS students within the last academic year believed that non-native English speakers should receive support from the institution.

The top four themes emerging as justifications for or against additional support were firstly that all students should be supported equally, second, that this would help with increasing diversity and internationalization, third, that the espoused goals of the institution called for it (the same number of faculty members noted that they were unable to answer due to a lack of knowledge regarding current support efforts) and finally, that if the institution recruits international students, then it has a responsibility to support them.

The most common justifications for supporting non-native English speaking students centered on equality and the support of all students accepted into the institution. A faculty member in Psychology noted that providing English support would simply level the field, “Provided they can handle the work otherwise, non-native students should have the opportunity to earn grades commensurate with their understanding of the material. If that's hurt by peripheral differences, e.g. their native language uses a syntax that differs from that used in English, offering extra support with written assignments seems to be only leveling the field.” Likewise, a faculty member in the School of Journalism wrote, “If the university accepts non-native English

speakers, it seems intuitive the university would also recognize an obligation to provide requisite support.” However, as intuitive as this might seem, some faculty members had alternative perspectives on the priorities of the institution. A Philosophy & Religion faculty member who noted that, “I already struggle teaching students whose native language is English” held that the money for programs which might help students with their English should be used elsewhere. They stated, “Money used to provide this support would have to come from other forms of support that are more important (we do not have unlimited resources). We’re already doing too little to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds in Mississippi.” While this perspective to help disadvantaged domestic students is admirable, this argument represents a false dichotomy. Providing support does not necessarily equate to less support elsewhere. As other faculty members noted, international students can and should be used as resources at the university. Even if they need support in certain areas, they provide a significant resource, if utilized, in terms of bringing the world to campus:

As the number of non-native speaking students continues to increase and as the University attempts to attract these students, it seems that the institution has an obligation to help support these students and find more effective ways for them to be successful. Whether this be ways to improve writing or conversational skills, the help that the University provides will not only help these students thrive, it will also help to create a community on campus that is more open and inviting to students who are non-native English speakers. We send a strong message to our students about our commitment to them by types of support we provide for them. Additionally, these programs send a message to our native speakers of the need to be aware of the world outside the United States and that the ability to compete and grow on a global level is tied to effective communication.” – UM Faculty Member in Counselor Education

Though this debate may give rise to questions of allocation of resources, while non-native English speakers may need some assistance, they can also be resources if the institution is willing to see them as such. Currently, it seems that the institution has historically, as Ruiz

would note, seen language as a problem. This would require a reworking of current systems at the institutional level that would prioritize language as a resource. However, this perspective would severely challenge the state status quo and, as history has demonstrated, enacting change can be very difficult.

Ultimately, further and deeper integration of international students into the general campus life would contribute to creating globally aware citizens, especially those students who might not have the chance to engage with populations outside of state boundaries. These students are those who would benefit the most from this exposure in an increasingly globalized world and workforce. Ultimately, a majority of the faculty surveyed hold that the institution has some responsibility to provide support, especially if the institution is actively recruiting tuition-paying non-native speakers.

6. The role of language in student success

When asked about the role of language in students' success both their field and more generally, faculty members resoundingly believe that language plays a role in both cases. While faculty overall felt that language had more of a role in students' general success, this was partially due to faculty members in STEM fields and mathematics citing that language was less integral to their field which was heavily math and science based. One faculty member in Physics & Astronomy noted, "In a small number of cases it does play a role, but overall what determines a student's success in an area like physics are mostly other factors." Similarly, a Psychology faculty member noted the importance of editors in his field, "When publishing in psychology, editors will take care of any language errors. The content matters more than the manner in which something is stated." and a Pharmacy faculty member echoed this sentiment, "My field is a

scientific one. My non-native speakers are quite successful as researchers.” Finally, and perhaps most directly, a mathematics faculty member gave little clout to English, as they cited mathematics as its own language, “Mathematics is essentially its own language. Adequate comprehension of English is required to understand our classes, but only at a very basic level.”

Overall, 90.3% of faculty (159, n=176) believe that language plays a “large role” in students’ success in their field and an overwhelming majority of 96.6% (170, n=176) believe that language plays a large role in students’ success in general.

Though some of the faculty members in science and mathematics held that language did not play a role of large importance, their opinions were not representative of all members of the STEM fields. A faculty member in Chemistry wrote, “Good science is useless if you cannot effectively communicate your results to others in the field.” This perspective was also held by a faculty member in Biomolecular Sciences, “In my field students must disseminate their discoveries in a scientific manner. By using clear and concise English, the experimental conditions can be repeated by other scientists in the field.” While an Engineer noted the role of communication in any realm, “It plays role in any activity where human is involved. If you cannot communicate, you cannot succeed.”

The most prominent themes emerging from these questions cited the importance of communication overall. A faculty member in Exercise Science wrote that, “Language is the gatekeeper for student success.” This was the most cited theme for both questions followed closely by the importance of language skills for writing and for verbal or speaking skills. Other less frequently cited themes were reading, research purposes, and listening/understanding.

A business faculty member summed up some of the difficulties that stem out of a lack of coherent communication, stating that the importance of language stems from people being able to relate to each other, “Primarily as they can relate to others...inclusiveness often requires a base understanding of one another and certainly communication is a large part of that. In addition, university is difficult enough learning the course material, when you add a language requirement on top of that, it complicates matters.”

7. The equality of classrooms for non-native English speakers

Interestingly, though the majority of faculty members surveyed believe that the institution should provide additional support for NNS students and that language played a large role in the success of students both in their field and in general, more than half of the faculty members surveyed believe that their classroom or classrooms at the institution are equitable places for students whose native language isn't English. Exactly 59.3% (102, n=172) indicated that their belief that their classrooms or classrooms at the institution were equitable places for NNS students while 40.7% (70, n=172) believe that there is inequality in them. When factoring in NNS faculty members, the numbers predictably change. Faculty members who are also NNS tended to believe that their classrooms were more equitable, with 77.8% (14, n=18) of faculty holding this belief. This makes sense in that NNS faculty members are better able to empathize with NNS students and therefore better understand how to support them, despite the potential for more complicated language barriers. This same line of reasoning was applied when examining faculty members who felt prepared to teach NNS students in their classes. Those faculty members who also spoke at least one other language generally felt more prepared to teach these students than those without knowledge of other languages.

Overall, faculty members who were English native speakers were more divided and had views more reflective of the general population, with 57.1% (88, n=154) feeling that their classrooms were equitable. Factoring in faculty exposure or non-exposure to NNS students did not make a significant difference in the percentage breakdowns of English native speaking faculty. There was also not a considerable difference in monolingual English speaking faculty members as exactly half of them (29, n=58) felt that their classrooms were equitable places for native and non-native speakers alike.

Those faculty members who felt that classrooms were not equitable predominantly cited that equality, by nature, was not possible in the classroom. One faculty member in mathematics stated bluntly that classrooms cannot be equal for non-native speakers, “Because they can’t be.” Another faculty member, this one in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, elaborating slightly, stated, “They are on an unequal playing field with native speakers.” Other Sociology & Anthropology professors delved even deeper into how language, seen through the lens of Ruiz as a problem, makes equality in the classroom currently impossible:

I really work hard to be as 'equitable' as possible in my classes. We discuss ethnocentrism, education, and social inequalities a lot. However, I cannot say for certain that students whose language is a language other than English would get the same out of the class as native English speakers. Of course, we'd need to define whose English as there are quite remarkable differences in how people speak and read English, especially here in the South Eastern United States where class and race divides are embodied verbally.

And:

Of course not. I believe that most professors want their classrooms to be equitable, but ultimately they help reproduce class, racial, and linguistic divisions in MS. When the tacit power dynamics surrounding language use are not in any way explicit for university administrators or the faculty, then they are unconsciously reproduced from generation to generation.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, faculty members who believe that classrooms are equitable tended to cite intentional personal efforts to help all students as the main reason why they believed in equality in the classroom. One faculty member in Writing & Rhetoric remained general in their description, “I support, and require my students to support, improving everyone's English language skills.” while an English faculty member cited a specific tactic that they utilized, “I confer with non-native speakers after class to inquire about any language issues that they may have.” Overall, faculty members who believe that their classrooms are equitable seem to believe in the importance of extra effort on their part or of thinking outside the box, “I am always willing to work with non-native English speakers to both improve their use of English, but also to find different ways to accomplish the learning objectives for the course.” concluded a faculty member in Leadership & Counselor Education.

The second most cited reason faculty members felt that classrooms were equal for native and non-native English speakers was that, essentially, faculty members felt that NNS should have adequate English language skills prior to enrollment and thus the playing field must be level. A faculty member in Music Education said that classrooms are equal but students, “...must read, write, and understand English well.” A faculty member in the Department of History stated similarly, “All students are treated fairly. All are expected to be proficient in English.” This argument, however, as addressed earlier in this paper and in-depth by Briguglio & Watson (2014), does not hold. Automatically assuming that a native speaker and a NNS are on equal footing regarding a language is inherently unequal. Moreover, an entrance requirement in the form of language ability is not necessarily the same as the level that students need to be at to pass all of their classes at the institution. A 100-level English course and a 400-level Anthropology course are going to require very different levels of English ability and simply

holding the belief that if those students are admitted then they have equitable access to the material presented is not a logical conclusion.

Though this was not researched, it would be interesting to see the difference in faculty members' perspectives on their own classroom when compared to the classrooms of other faculty members. With the predominant belief among faculty members that the university should provide additional support for non-native speakers, it seems natural to assume that classes, overall, would be unequal or else there would not be overwhelming backing for developing additional support infrastructures. However, the question did not specifically differentiate between the classrooms of that particular faculty member and other classes at the institution. The possibility exists then, that faculty members believe that their classes are equitable but that the issue arises within classrooms at the institution that are not their own.

8. Classroom challenges

Lastly, faculty members were asked if they believed that non-native English speakers come across more challenges in the classroom than native speakers. Despite more than half of the faculty members believing that their classrooms or classrooms in general were equitable for non-native English speakers, 93.2% (165, n=177) held that non-native English speakers face more challenges in the classroom.

Several major themes emerged from the short answer sections of this final question. The most commonly cited theme had to do with NNS simply facing more barriers than English native speakers. This includes the double workload of understanding not only the material for the course but the language utilized to explain that material. A faculty member in Biology put it this

way, “They must focus on both trying to understand what is being said, as well as trying to understand what is being taught.” Faculty members felt that these challenges were not only present in the coursework but other areas within the classroom as well. A faculty member in Social Work directly addressed some of the challenges non-native speakers face, “Of course they do. If one does not understand nuances of a language, or understand the meaning of a word, it challenges the person in terms of learning and understanding and application of the material. It can also lead to a sense of isolation, or even withdrawal in the classroom, further affecting learning.” This sense of isolation and withdrawal was also touched on by a faculty member in Nutrition and Hospitality Management, “They feel shy to ask questions in class or to engage in group projects although they often perform much better in tests.”

Other prominent themes included challenges to understanding the material or lecture or expressing themselves through discussion or questions. Faculty also commonly answered this short answer that, while NNS students have more challenges, this heavily depends on their level of fluency or English skills. Other faculty noted that these students simply have to work harder or take an increased amount of time with their work.

Interestingly, the percentage was lower among non-native English speakers though the sample size was considerably smaller. Of the 20 non-native English speaking faculty members to answer this question, 80% (16, n=20) indicated that they believed that NNS faced more challenges in the classroom. The short answer portion of this question helped little in illuminating the four faculty members who believed NNS do not face more challenges in the classroom. Two of the four respondents did not provide a response to the short answer questions and the other two respondents were very general, with one NNS faculty member in Political Science noting, “They should have little difficulty performing all the necessary tasks required in

the course.” In theorizing an explanation for this discrepancy, as examples of academic success themselves, NNS faculty members may subconsciously subscribe to the bias that if they are able to succeed in higher education then other non-native speakers should as well.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

American colleges and universities increasingly promote internationalization, both in terms of broadening students' perspectives, increasing the enrollment of international students, and hiring more international faculty and staff. International populations, due in part to the diversity of their backgrounds and their breadth of experience, have the potential to globalize the landscape of American higher education. Within this population, non-native English speakers represent the most significant sub-group and, as a minority group their numbers are noteworthy. Depending on the university, their numbers often exceed many other demographic groups in size. However, international students frequently contend with superfluous barriers to success. One of the most blatant but often overlooked barriers these students face is that of language. Oftentimes, non-native speaking students will have English as a second, third, or even fourth language while many American students lack proficiency in even a second. Yet, due to English's role as the de jure or de facto language of instruction at many U.S. institutions and the accompanying regulations on language within the administrative hierarchy of American education, these students are left to fend for themselves, provided that they manage to pass the standardized language tests required for admissions.

Language policy then, defined by David Cassels Johnson as any "policy mechanism that

impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language...” plays an integral role in the experience of non-native English speaking students at American colleges and universities. To explore this impact, my research examined the policies in place influencing students at a mid-sized state institution in the American southeast while also delving into faculty perspectives on policy and the way that these faculty members act as language policy implementers.

Part of the strength of this research is that it identifies the importance of the perspectives of faculty members on language policy, an integral area within educational and policy research which has not received much attention. The presentation of descriptive statistics in conjunction with a policy analysis help identify a significant disconnect between hierarchical policy at the state and local level and what transpires in the classroom. This research has also illuminated widespread faculty beliefs regarding the importance of language and disagreement over the level of support given non-native English speakers. Moreover, the lack of information regarding hierarchical language policy that faculty members receive was plainly identified.

Three of the frameworks central to this research have been Ruiz’s framework of language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource, Ricento and Hornberger’s “layered onion” of language policy, and Johnson’s perspective of faculty members as “language policy implementers”. These three frameworks come together to demonstrate the role that faculty members have in interpreting the multifaceted realm of language policy and the importance of how institutions and individuals view language. As Ruiz notes, educational institutions must begin to utilize the perspective of language-as-resource rather than the current normative views of language-as-problem or language-as-right. Only then will the United States truly begin to shift language policies to support non-native speakers and favor more developed second language education.

While many of the faculty members identified with the language-as-resource perspective, the policies investigated at nearly every level were not supportive of this view and faculty members overall did not feel adequately equipped to assist non-native speaking students. Additionally, a change in perspective would help bilingual or multi-lingual non-native English speakers be valued as resources; contrasting with the tragically typical perspective that places sub-native competence as a deficiency.

Ricento and Hornberger's onion metaphor plays out in this research with faculty members representing a layer of the onion not quite in line with the rest of the bulb. The outer layer of the onion, national language policy, leaves the creation and implementation of policy up to the states. The state of Mississippi continues to develop restrictive policies on language use; yet these policies, along with the IHL policies, do not completely filter through the other layers of the onion. Institutional policies have more influence but towards the center of the onion, faculty members act as implementers of the policies that surround them. Without their knowledge of these policies and without their support, these policies have little effect in the classroom. This research demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of faculty members at a mid-sized public institution in the southeastern United States knew little about the language policies at the state or even institutional level. Furthermore, a vast majority of faculty felt that language plays an integral role to student success and that additional support should be provided by the institution for non-native English speakers. These beliefs put them at odds with the policies positing English as the *prima facie* language and with current trends to provide NNS who gain admission, despite an imbalanced system, little to now support after enrollment.

Faculty members are not alone in this perspective, however. Research in the field of language policy is beginning to support their suggestions. Briguglio and Watson, studying

language across the curriculum in Australia, argue that “international universities” need to do more than admit students who can test out of the English requirements. In their article, “Embedding English language across the curriculum in higher education: A continuum of development support,” they state that it is integral for institutions to increase their language and academic support services for these students. The purpose of which is to graduate students capable of communicating in the “language of delivery, increasingly English around the globe,” through embedded language development. This differs from the current American (and Australian) procedure of simply dropping students into the curriculum once they’ve passed the requisite English test for admission.

Clearly, policymakers at the institutional level and beyond should consult with faculty members and researchers when making policy changes. Not only are faculty most involved with the students affected by these policies, but in the vein of much of the literature, they are able to implement policy in their classrooms as they see fit. The disparities that exist within the perspectives and classrooms of the 178 faculty surveyed highlight the prevailing disconnect between hierarchical language policies and faculty members as policy-implementers.

This research has also demonstrated that many faculty members feel unprepared to teach non-native English speakers. A very practical implementation of this research would be the enactment of training for faculty members who teach NNS students or, at the very least, making resources available for those faculty members who have difficulty connecting with these students. Those faculty members who indicated being comfortable teaching non-native speakers were primarily faculty who had learned from experience or who were NNS themselves. These students should not be subject to professors who struggle to teach them until those faculty members have enough experience to be adept. Likewise, faculty members should not be subject

to the unenviable position of being uncomfortable in a classroom that they are tasked with leading. This is a disservice to all students and faculty members at these institutions.

While better preparation of faculty members would help alleviate some of the concerns regarding equitably educating NNS, an overhaul of language policy would also be beneficial. Language policy, as a general rule, is most successful when designed in conjunction with the populations that it affects. This is reflected in Björkman (2014), who holds that while some researchers have concluded that perhaps language planning may be ineffectual due to globalization; language policies likely would be effective if they were based on a clear understanding of the language practices already in place. This is also demonstrated in “Creating Official Language Policy from Local Practice: The Example of the Native American Languages Act 1990/1992,” Warhol’s 2012 examination of the Native American Languages Act. Unfortunately, there is clearly a significant difference in the de jure and de facto policies at work in institutions of higher education. Reforms that incorporate a variety of perspectives from NNS students to faculty and administrators would not only help education become more equitable but move us away from the perspectives of language-as-right and language-as-problem to that of language-as-resource. This perspective would help us as educators prepare more globally aware citizens who are able to communicate not only in other languages but cross-culturally as well. As the faculty members surveyed in this research believe, institutions that actively recruit international students have a responsibility to provide them support. If these educators, as academic leaders within their classrooms, believe that NNS students are not receiving adequate support, further research should be incorporated into making suggestions for future changes.

1. Limitations

While this research has developed a basis for further studies in the realm of language policy in the classroom, the survey itself was rather limited in scope. Delving deeper into the perspectives of the faculty members through a more qualitative approach such as interviews or observations might substantiate this research. Furthermore, additional questions could highlight some of the differences between various fields of study that faculty members represent. The study was also limited by geography. As language use varies heavily by region within the United States, the linguistic portrait of Mississippi is very different than that of California, New York, or Nebraska. This represents a significant limitation on truly understanding language policy and faculty members' perspectives on language use nationwide.

Moreover, the examination of policy contained within this study revealed little about the impetus for these policies beyond tangential associations and speculation. There is not significant information regarding language policymakers incorporating the perspectives of experts in the field but rather, the policies are often attached to other pieces of legislation. While interviews with policy makers may have provided a broadened viewpoint on the background of these policies, with the increasingly prohibitive language policies in Mississippi, this is not certain.

The scope of the population of this research also represents a limitation. This survey only examined the perspective of faculty members as "language policy implementers". This does little in terms of providing the perspective of the students affected by both the de jure and de facto policies within the language communities of which they are a part. Though other studies have confirmed the disadvantage that students who are NNS face, to gain a holistic perspective

on a specific institute of higher learning or higher education within a specific state, research that encapsulates the perspective of all members affected by the policies of those bodies should be explored.

While this study certainly has its limitations, it represents a solid foundation for other research to build upon. The student population of NNS within American higher education is significant and continues to grow. Understanding the plight that these students face through research on language policy at the local level represents an important focus for the future. By understanding how language policy plays out in classrooms and the knowledge and perspectives of faculty members, policymakers can better understand how policy plays out locally as well as how to craft effective policies that do not limit language but see language as a resource to be utilized by all students – English native speaker and non-native speaker alike.

2. Areas for future research

The field of language policy, while growing, tends to be macro in scope. Large scale regulation is where a significant percentage of language policy research takes place but, as Johnson notes, teachers are the implementers of that policy. This research has illuminated the disjunction between statewide and institutional language policy and one of the foremost layers of Ruiz's onion – implementers of that policy. Future research in the area of language policy, especially in terms of higher education, would do well to examine how that policy is implemented and how it impacts the populations it was intended for. This research has also raised the question of how these policies affect international students, particularly non-native English speakers. Areas of future research should address these concerns.

Future research should also evaluate policy in other regions of the country. As there is no national language policy within the United States, individual states determine their own policies. As Sonntag (2000) notes, language ideologies are not predictors of specific language policies; rather, language policies are contingent on sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions of time and place. Thus, these factors are likely to influence the various public institutions under the umbrella of other regions and states in a variety of ways. In order to propel a change of attitude regarding language nationwide, the current language environment of the states must be understood. Only then can change be proposed and steps towards enactment of more inclusive and effective policy commence.

Lastly, language policy does not only affect college and university students. Many non-native English speaking students in K-12 encounter additional challenges daily as participants in the American education system. These students are often placed in remedial classes simply for not being able to communicate as effectively as some of their monolingual classmates. By looking only through the lens of higher education, K-12 education is being overlooked. While this research, like all research, needs some limitations, K-12 represents an important demographic that represents a drastic possibility for changing the way that Americans view language skills. By changing the culture of language learning early, we are better equipping future college and university students with a more nuanced understanding of language and the cultural knowledge that also entails.

3. Closing

Ultimately, many international students step outside their home countries and cultures to attend school in the United States. They do so believing that the institutions want them there and

will do what they can to assist them in their pursuit of success. Many of the international students currently studying in the United States are proof that these students work hard and overcome many obstacles, including adjusting to life in a foreign environment and academic setting, but also to a new culture and language. However, these students face additional challenges outside of the norm. When asked about these challenges, one professor of Counselor Education at The University of Mississippi put it this way, “Yes. I’ve referred to [the challenges] in earlier questions, but I am constantly amazed at the courage required to come to a new country that is a world away from your home and family and to engage in the demanding world of academics. It has been my experience that our non-native speakers are able to read English well enough for the most part. The conversational skills seem to come more slowly. We should be doing more to help our students in this area.” Though language policy is certainly complicated, it is imperative that educators understand its orientation and the extent that it is exercised.

In terms of the orientation of specific policies, Farr and Song’s 2011 article, *Language Ideologies and Policies: Multilingualism and Education*, identifies that while educating multilingual students presents a unique set of challenges, most current language policies are “top-down” oriented, essentially factoring out the perspectives of those the policy affects. Additionally, they demonstrate how language policies based upon “commonsense beliefs and political orientations” are generally what motivate language policies rather than pedagogical considerations or research evidence. The current study has clearly demonstrated that policies developed in this way can be ineffective in the classroom depending on the faculty members’ particular experience, perspective, or ideology.

Farr and Song also address the role of language ideology, “... language ideologies are not simply about language, but also involve social and cultural conceptions of personhood,

citizenship, morality, quality and value, etc., they have material effects in the world and thus are particularly important to understand.” Though the perspective was not unanimous, an overwhelming majority of faculty members at The University of Mississippi believe that non-native English speaking students are affected by current perspectives on language and the policies that accompany them. In the classroom, these policies are implemented both overtly and covertly and place additional barriers to access and success in front of non-native speaking students. As language is inherently tied to power, English-only policies, whether de facto or de jure, deprive students of learning opportunities and demonstrate contempt for other languages and dialects. In the vein of Ruiz, in order for current views on language – as either a problem or as a right – to change, we must first take a hard look in the mirror and examine how academic institutions are treating language. Only through open critique will we as a culture begin to see language as the resource that it is, a vehicle of communication that opens doors to an increasingly globalized world.

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APPENDIX

FACULTY SURVEY

- a) Department:
 - b) Specialization:
 - c) Years Teaching at The University of Mississippi:
 - d) Native/First Language:
 - e) Second/Foreign Language(s) (if any):
1. Do you have any specific language requirements in your courses, for example, only speak/write/etc. in English?
 2. If you have NO explicit requirement, do you feel there is an understood or unspoken” expectation of English in your courses?
 3. In the past semester, have you had someone in any of your classes whose native language was not English?
 4. If yes, how many students?
 5. In the past academic year, have you had someone in any of your classes whose native language was not English?
 6. If yes, how many students?
 7. Do you feel prepared to teach students whose native language is a language other than English or your native language?
 8. Why or why not?
 9. Do you know of any language/language education policies in Mississippi?
 10. If you know of any language/language education policies in Mississippi, what are they?
 11. Do you know of any language/language education policies at The University of Mississippi (UM)?
 12. If you know of any language/language education policies at UM, what are they?

13. Do you know of any policies at The University of Mississippi (UM) to support non-native speaking students?
14. If you know of any policies at UM to support non-native speaking students, what are they?
15. Do you think The University of Mississippi should provide additional support for non-native speaking students?
16. Why or why not?
17. Do you believe that language plays a large role in a student's success in your field?
18. Why or why not?
19. Do you believe that language plays a large role in a student's success in general?
20. Why or why not?
21. Do you feel your classrooms (or classrooms in general at this institution) are equitable places for students whose native language isn't English?
22. Why or why not?
23. Do you feel that students whose native language isn't English have more challenges in the classroom than native speakers?
24. Why or why not?
25. Additional comments?

VITA

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