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Katherine Phillips

The Hidden Curriculum of Silence: How implicitly transmitted values in U.S. schools silence
immigrant ESL students and perpetuate low social capital

Swarthmore College

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Abstract, Keywords

This literature review examines the hidden curriculum of U.S. schools as it pertains to immigrant students learning English as a second language (ESL). The hidden curriculum, as coined by Jean Anyon (1980), refers to the implicit cultural values established in schools, which students must navigate in order to be accepted into the social world. These norms heavily influence the school experiences and trajectories of newcomer immigrants in the United States. Throughout this analysis, I examine how the hidden curriculum functions to strip ESL students of their language, culture, and autonomy, as well as how the hidden curriculum of dominant practices in U.S. schools excludes and is inaccessible to immigrant ESL students.

The hidden curriculum of ESL manifests through the silencing and lack of autonomy of immigrant ESL students. In particular, these are demonstrated in classroom content, expectations of students, unstated requirements surrounding parental involvement, and homework embedded with cultural norms and inaccessible language. These hidden curricula create incompatibilities between home culture and that of the American school system that are particularly exigent to surmount. This has a multitude of implications in identity formation of immigrant ESL students.

Keywords: Hidden Curriculum, Immigrants, Identity Formation, Infantilization

Introduction

In a time period in which the systemic racism embedded in American society is evermore exposed and confronted, uncovering values that are covertly transmitted to students of color in American schools is of utmost importance. One way in which implicit values are communicated is through the “hidden curriculum” of schools. Jean Anyon (1980) coined this term to refer to the collection of ideas and values that students learn through the process of schooling but which are

not included in the formal curriculum of school subjects. The hidden curriculum may transmit ideas of critical importance, such as racial hierarchies and subordination. In particular, the hidden curriculum transmits ideas that have serious material consequences in students' lives, such as racial hierarchies and gender subordination. For example, Morris (2005) details a hidden curriculum in which schools encourage black students to "dress like white students" because the fashion of the dominant culture is more easily accepted. Morris (2005, p. 28) details: "The hidden curriculum tacitly teaches students unspoken lessons about their race, class, and gender." Likewise, Thornberg (2009) details a hidden curriculum of "social control" (2009, p. 246), in which school rules teach students to be docile and unquestioning of the social order; students who internalize rules and norms are rewarded for being 'good pupils'. These hidden curricula stem from ideologies, though not always concretely or explicitly stated, are nonetheless practiced and reproduced through peer and teacher relations, school routines, and extracurricular contexts and discourses. Examining and exposing these tacit norms can be the first step in dismantling the social reproduction of racism and xenophobia in American schools. However, student access and understanding of the norms embedded in a hidden curriculum is biased towards students who already have had exposure to American norms throughout their childhood. Identity formation is a crucially important outcome of the hidden curriculum of social reproduction, and needs to be considered by educators in their reflection of pedagogies and practices.

In addition to communicating sometimes-harmful messages, for immigrant students learning English as a second language, accessing the hidden curriculum can also be arduous. English language learners who have not had much exposure to either specific social practices nor more advanced versions of English may misunderstand or not recognize subtle cues in the hidden curriculum (Corado et al 2019). Furthermore, recent immigrants enter the school system with

conflicting norms, some of which may be perceived as intentionally problematic by teachers, peers, and other school personnel (Vang, 2006). For example, students who come from cultures in which children are taught not to look at teachers or elders when being scolded may be perceived to be ignoring their American teachers' discipline, showing disrespect, or avoiding consequences.

The hidden curriculum is heavily reliant upon dominant social opinions and practices. These curricula demonstrate which knowledges and experiences are most valued, and which are not. These incompatibilities routinely present a steep challenge for immigrant students to negotiate their cultural identities and social scripts. Students learn these norms through the school socialization process (Rahman, 2013), which non-immigrant students are exposed to from their first interaction with the American school system. In this paper, I discuss the social context of immigrant schooling and the hidden curriculum. How do implicit and explicit teachings about society and schools influence immigrant students? What is the hidden curriculum for immigrant ESL students in the US and how does it impact identity formation?

Method

To investigate these questions, I engaged in a literature review. Using databases such as Swarthmore Tripod, JSTOR, and ERIC, I explored the following search terms: Immigrant, ESL, English as a Second Language, Hidden Curriculum, Identity, and Social Norms. From there, I used three main determinants for selecting sources. My first factor was whether the ESL students are immigrants. I chose immigrant ESL students as the main focus of this study in order to explore intersections between citizenship status, race, and language in the hidden curriculum. Furthermore, immigrant students and ESL students experience an intersection of two highly

contested and racialized social standings. Secondly, my included research describes immigrant ESL students from early to mid-adolescence, as this stage of development is critically important in identity formation attention to identity development. Lastly, I included mostly qualitative studies, some of which used the framework of the hidden curriculum specifically and some that did not. In those that did not, I determined what constituted the hidden curriculum as phenomena described in terms of social reproduction or dominant cultural practices.

Theoretical Framework & Analysis

Social context and the hidden curriculum

The original framework of the hidden curriculum comes from social reproduction theory, which contends that schools reproduce social stratification by selectively transmitting certain skills according to social class (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Apple 1979 and 1982; Bowles 1977). In Jean Anyon's foundational work on the hidden curriculum, she explores class reproduction and how schools implicitly prepare students to take on different social roles, such as vocational work, wage workers, or doctors (Anyon, J. 1980). She argues that schools develop these roles for their students through differing curricular values and practices that instill distinct relationships to authority and work. Anyon (1980) splits her analysis into four types of schools of stratified classes, contending that lower-class schools tacitly prepare their students to fill the lowest roles in society, whereas the highest-class schools ready their students to participate in the most elite social positions.

Her first two schools, which she deems *working class schools*, have families whose incomes are typical of 38.6 percent of the population. Less than a third of the fathers of these children engage in 'skilled' work, as Anyon describes; fathers tend to work as stockroom

workers, semiskilled and unskilled assembly-line operatives, auto mechanics, maintenance workers, and security guards. The classrooms in the working class schools employ rote behavior and very little decision-making or choice. Teachers tell the students to copy steps of the assignment as notes to be studied; this work is then evaluated, not whether the answers were right or wrong, but whether the child adhered to the steps laid out by the teacher. In these schools, conforming behaviors are emphasized, and teacher expectations and assignments revolve around whether students adhere to the particular rules of completing the assignment itself, not the content that the assignment targets.

Anyon's *middle-class school* parents engage in three typical types of work: a very small group of skilled, well-paid workers such as carpenters, plumbers, and construction workers; parents in working-class and white-collar jobs such as technicians, firemen, and teachers; parents with occupations such as accountants, "middle management," and small business owners. The income range of these families are typical of 38.9 percent of the population. In this school, Anyon argues, teachers encourage decision-making towards one correct answer. These students are taught that acceptable behaviors are ones which follow specific guidelines. This manifests itself on the classroom level as following directions in order to get the right answers, but these directions habitually emphasize some choice, some decision making. Answers are usually words, numbers, or facts, with little room for differing interpretation. Students must give answers in the correct order and cannot make up their own answers or rules.

The fourth school, the *affluent professional school*, is majority upper-middle class, the family incomes representing approximately 7 percent of the families in the United States. These parents work as, for example, cardiologists and corporate lawyers or engineers. The students in the affluent professional school are expected to express and apply ideas and concepts, as well as

work creatively in carried out independently. The students are continually asked to employ individual thought and expressiveness. Teachers ask that these students produce creative works, such as editorials or creative representations of ideas through pictures or crafts. The teachers expect that their students exhibit individuality and, in doing so, give few rules to be followed.

The *executive elite school* matriculates students of the top 1 percent, whose parents are often top executives in multinational corporations. There are no children of color in this school. Work in the executive elite school intentionally develops analytical, intellectual, and reasoning skills. These students are expected to develop intellectual products of top academic quality and to use schoolwork to achieve and to prepare for social success.

Social reproduction, then, occurs as school assignments, acceptable behaviors, and expectations prepare children with the skills and dispositions congruent to their class position (Sayer, 2019). This “hidden curriculum” of schoolwork is the tacit preparation for future work roles in a stratified class system, embedded in differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices, which develop varying cognitive and behavioral skills. Students learn what is acceptable and what is not, what behaviors are expected of them, and what roles they are expected to occupy.

More modern work on the hidden curriculum develops the Anyon idea of hidden expectations of students beyond class, evolving the idea into assumptions, expectations or unspoken or implicit values of parallel categories such as race, language, and citizenship-status. These more recent studies argue that the hidden curriculum enforces behavioral patterns and beliefs that develop within individual schools (Alsubaie, M. 2015); in other words, unlike Anyon’s (1980) idea of different types of preparation across schools, these hidden curricula can manifest for students of different sociocultural identities within the same school community.

This idea of the hidden curriculum, importantly, has critical implications; students that have access to a school's hidden curriculum are bolstered to succeed, whereas students for whom accessing the implicit norms of their schooling system is a challenge are typically not set up for success.

Social reproduction and the hidden curriculum play a significant role in ESL education, both through tacitly transmitted values and broader, more overt ways. For example, schools with high minority populations seldom hire qualified teachers to teach their ESL students and those who are less proficient in English. The content in these settings is often of lower academic challenge, the quality of teaching pedagogy is often poorer, and ESL students are routinely left underserved (Vang, 2006). These teachers are often less prepared and task students to complete classroom work that is not backed by pedagogy, but rather is 'busy-work'. This work, therefore, is often of a lower caliber and these students develop a rule-following mentality in approaching work. The hidden curriculum trains these students to fill lower positions in the broader social order.

The interplay between social context and implicit norms in schools is critical in the lives of newcomer immigrant students. Because schools are one of the few public spaces in which immigrants and non-immigrants engage on a regular basis, they become crucial negotiation sites of stratification by language, race, and documentation status (Olsen, 1997). Moreover, as immigrant students in American schools begin to develop English proficiency and skills, they often learn that being "Americanized" is not only learning a new language, but a culture deeply embedded with racialized structure and order.

Indeed, the hidden curriculum influences immigrant Americanization in more covert ways, like classroom behaviors and clothing; parallel to Morris's (2005) analysis of the

racialized implications and discourse surrounding clothing, immigrants are often acutely aware of their dress, and struggle to ensure that their appearances match with American standards (Valdes, G). Critically, though, the hidden curriculum also reflects systemic racism and discourse that permeates American society. As McKay and Wong (1996) highlight, ESL immigrant students are subject to colonialist and racialized discourse on immigrants that largely influences the way in which they conceptualize themselves. These discourses reflect eurocentric and white supremacist views of Euro- and American societies. Students subject to these discourses are required to reflect on their racial formation, in which racial identity is a product of social structures and hierarchies as well as cultural representation (Omi and Winant, 1994). For example, beliefs that adhere to racialized views of immigrant students that are often present in schools are (1) non-white immigrants are more unruly than those immigrants who can pass as white in the mainstream, (2) among non-white immigrant students, Asian immigrants are “better” than Latinx and other immigrant students, (3) English-speaking skills are an indicator of intelligence, personal status, and degree to which a student is Americanized, and (4) the status of being an immigrant and of English proficiency are viewed as a defect? from which students must be “saved” (McKay and Wong, 1996).

These hidden curricula of race and Americanism marginalize immigrant students in academic settings, requiring immigrant students to become English-speaking, coercing students to abandon their native language(s) in order to participate in academic and social life, and pressuring students to find one’s place in the U.S. racial hierarchy (Olsen 1999, Valdés, G 1998). Furthermore, proficiency in English is perceived as giving individuals greater social and economic opportunities (Sayer, 2019) and is thought to be linked to global competitiveness and modernization (Bruthiaux, 2002; Vavrus, 2002); the racializing hidden curriculum, paired with

the status of English, not only as the predominant language of the United States, but as a transnational *lingua franca* (Garcia, 2005), may lead teachers to view their job as civilizing students to the English-speaking world.

Immigrants may have pre-existing social norms and expectations that are incongruent with those in the culture of the American school system; students must either integrate their old conceptions with new assimilated norms or abandon previous knowledge altogether (First, 1988). As immigrant ESL students are routinely met with such contrastive expectations of academic behaviors and practices they must learn to navigate the new academic hidden curriculum in order to succeed. In Valdés's *Learning and Not Learning English*, she details the story of Bernardo, a Mexican-American student who came to the American school system with strong academic preparation and an expectation of being challenged in school. His educational experience in the United States stripped him of intellectual rigor, as his new middle school ESL program deemphasized collaboration, valued only rote grammatical and vocabulary skills, and discouraged students from engaging in intellectually challenging or communicative activities. The school's ESL program was treated as, Valdés critiques, "just another language class," ESL teachers imposing decontextualized English grammatical and vocabulary skills and not preparing ESL students to navigate academic discourses, skills, and the challenge-level of mainstream classes. Bernardo was left to navigate his mainstream classes by himself, without any aid in integrating the academic socialization, learning, and life skills he needed to succeed (Valdés, G. 2001).

The hidden curriculum reflects dominant cultural values, practices, and worldviews and, in turn, communicates which practices are perceived as the most valuable. As the hidden curriculum is transmitted implicitly, immigrant students must navigate peer interactions, teacher

relationships, and school routines to access these cultural values (Corado et al 2019). To explore the hidden curriculum in this way, ESL immigrant students must (1) learn to communicate with their newfound and perhaps rudimentary English skills, (2) speak only with others with whom they share native language fluencies, or (3) not communicate at all. An inaccessible hidden curriculum causes significant social, academic, and cultural disconnects and clashes as students struggle to decode and adhere to teacher expectations and acceptable behaviors.

The hidden curriculum serves as a mechanism of social conformity as immigrant ESL students must assimilate new social norms and scripts with those to which they have previous exposure. In accessing these cultural values and expectations, immigrant ESL students are stripped of their autonomy and agency as they are exposed to the norms of immigrant subordination and racial hierarchies.

The Hidden Curriculum of ESL

Subordination, Loss of Autonomy, and Lack of Agency: Pedagogies of Silencing

ESL immigrant students are often taught to adhere to implicit norms of subordination and may be infantilized in the way they must interact with materials, teachers, and pedagogy. Additionally, low teacher expectations combined with further experiences of xenophobic discourse and implicit teaching in textbooks and homework systemically underserve ESL students.

Immigrant students are habitually infantilized in their learning processes in various ways. First, unlike in foreign language instruction, published materials developed for English as a second language instruction seldom include first/native language (L1) support. Without it, beginners cannot interact with the materials without help, thereby making self-study difficult

and decreasing student autonomy (Auerbach and Burgess, 1985). Furthermore, as schools are critical sites for reproduction of language ideologies - in particular, those that emphasize "correct" and "incorrect" ways to engage in language use - ESL students are often taught that the way in which they utilize English and their ability to successfully do work are in direct opposition (Bourdieu 1991; Milroy and Milroy 1991). For example, a "correct" way to engage in language is to utilize only English, and to do so in a highly proficient fashion. This juxtaposes with low English proficiency to produce students who are viewed as those who engage in "incorrect" language use and are unable to complete their work by using only low proficiency English.

In addition, textbooks are important sites in which the hidden curriculum is communicated, as they have direct influence on pedagogies, the types of learning emphasized in a classroom, and a student's access to cultural norms. In her work *Learning and Not Learning English* (2001), Guadalupe Valdés emphasizes the differences between English-learning textbooks for ESL learners and foreign-language learning materials for native English-speaking students. Foreign-language textbooks contain ancillary materials, explanations, and creative activities in *both English and the target language*, allowing a multitude of entry-points for native English-speaking students as they delve into elective secondary language learning. These experiences are often self-led and structured around student autonomy. Often, these materials contain English glossaries and annotations to which students can refer as they analyze literature and challenging texts.

In contrast, ESL textbooks, targeted for students who are forced to learn English in order to succeed in school and American society, are often split into separate books targeted for each learning objective (i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing). A district will often buy only

texts focusing on one of these four categories, assuming that teachers will then supplement the other skills with their own materials, which is often either not done at all or done rudimentarily. Importantly, these textbooks are almost exclusively *English-only*. They contain no glossaries in students' native languages and no annotations of readings. Unlike foreign-language textbooks, ESL textbooks contain no text segments in students' L1s and do not give opportunities for strategy development. ESL immigrant students, therefore, are entirely dependent on the teacher and other students who may know more English than they do in order to access content. This effectively strips ESL immigrant students of their autonomy as they are forced to rely on others in order to navigate ideas and texts, express their opinions, and engage in content (Valdés, 2001, p. 25-27).

Translanguaging is an effective and powerful tool for language learners, as it encourages students to use their full linguistic and communicative repertoires and enables students to negotiate meaning and knowledge themselves (Garcia, O., & Wei, L. 2013; García, O., Johnson, S. & Seltzer, K. 2017; García, O., & Kleyn, T. 2016). However, many ESL immigrants are further silenced in classrooms without adequate L1 or translanguaging support as they must navigate how to express complex ideas all while using rudimentary forms of a new-to-them language. Students for whom English is an entirely new language are often unable to express complex thoughts in English, and instead, are forced to revert to a state of quasi-infancy as they navigate how to conceptualize, form, and produce understandings and phrases.

Further, English-speaking ability is often viewed in mainstream American society as an indicator of intellect, Americanization, and value; immigrant status and limited English proficiency are, in direct contrast, viewed as deficits, not only of student intellect and cognitive maturity, but to their personal worthiness (McKay and Wong, 1996). Therefore, inability to

express oneself in a native language not only silences students and strips students of autonomy, but further debilitates students through the social implications of not knowing English. This loss of autonomy manifests in homework completion, as well as English-only rhetoric. Combined with systemic silencing of ESL immigrant students through teacher expectations, implicit teachings in homework and textbooks, and xenophobic discourse, ESL students are repeatedly exposed to a hidden curriculum which aims to remove their cultures and identities from the school system.

Teacher Relations, Expectations, and Academic Behavior Discourses

ESL immigrant learners are positioned in a web of extremely complicated power relations and discourses. Representations - images, stereotypes, and archetypes that serve to stabilize and homogenize the identity of ESL immigrant students, their backgrounds, and the academic expectations to which they are held, have significant consequences for student attitudes towards learning, student identity, and student autonomy. These representations are often unconsciously crafted and interplay with student / teacher power dynamics in producing limited student agency (Harklau, 2000). These unequal power relations between teacher and student are radically amplified when the student is labeled as an ESL student. Similarly, teacher roles and ESL student identity manifest in interactions that reflect oppressive power relations due to intersections of immigrant status, age, language identity, and typically race, which is conducive to student subordination and uncertainty in cultural identity (Cummins, 1997). Moreover, restriction of ESL immigrant student agency is bolstered through societal sentiments about deficiency of immigrants and the liberation associated with Americanization (McKay and Wong, 1996). Americanization through the hidden curriculum often requires that immigrants abandon

cultural and language identities; however many teachers perceive their schools as ones in which all students are equally positioned and, in doing so, are not able to see the active process of exclusion of immigrant ESL students (Olsen, 1997).

Discourses that prescribe appropriate student attitudes and behavior are both: (1) academic, through values, rules, and pedagogical practices such as grading, seating arrangements, and assignment expectations; and (2) social, through imposed values of what is deemed acceptable in parental, teacher, and peer relationships. For example, McKay and Wong detail the pedagogies of an ESL teacher, “Mr. Thomas,” who held behavioristic assumptions about his students and about the language-learning process. His pedagogies employed rigid listen-speak-read-write sequences, decontextualized vocabulary, and mechanical writing (such as fill-in-the-blanks and other rote writing skills). Although Mr. Thomas’s view may not have been a fully deficit-based one - he details that his reasoning is so that students “know what to expect” in his classroom - his treat-rewarding system for good behavior and his rejection of native-language literacies and previous school experiences require that students abandon their pre-formed knowledges and experiences. Moreover, he made no effort to integrate proficiencies in native languages and instead required rigid English grammar and spelling exercises, which he would not read until they were “cleaned up” - that is, utilizing only stellar and perfect English, even if this entails abandoning more complex, intricate ideas that are complicated to form in a novel second language. Mr. Thomas’s belief that a student’s thoughts and knowledge are not valuable until he or she can speak, read, and write in “cleaned up English” as well as his pedagogical practices effectively infantilized his students in his mission to submit his students to, as McKay and Wong write, “cognitive overhaul and rescue” (McKay and Wong, 1996). This

was done, not explicitly, but rather through his classroom's hidden curriculum of acceptable behaviors and expectations.

Teacher perceptions often align with student behaviors, academic development, and outcomes. These perceptions are often pre-formed and dependent only on immigrant-status, as the hidden curriculum routinely designates students that are not native or thoroughly proficient English speakers as having lower intelligence and as being less likely to achieve in school. For example, Kossak (1990) contests that teachers often think more positively of higher-achieving, conforming, and 'front-row' students than they do of those who speak their native languages or sit in the back row. Regardless of the other identities or behaviors that immigrant students maintain, the representation of immigrants is homogenized, as the ESL immigrant identity is the most salient determiner of teacher perception (Kossak, 1990).

Vang (2006) describes a study by the California Department of Teacher Education, in which 52 second-grade teachers listened to tapes of children who either (1) spoke Standard American English and were native English speakers or (2) used minority dialects or were not native English speakers. The teachers considered and identified most of the students in category 2 to be students with low IQs and reading scores based solely on audiotapes. Students for whom English is a second or supplemental language are often labeled solely on their language use and may perform in accordance to their teachers' low expectations of them (Vang, 2006). Similarly, Bang (2009) argues that teachers, in their assessment of student understanding, often focus primarily on the students' proficiency in English, and in determining grades, understanding of the content is often of lesser importance than English language proficiency itself (Bang, 2009, p 60).

Importantly, even teachers who appear to love their students may still infantilize and silence them. As Bartolomé (2008) argues, deficit-based versions of care for immigrant students

can be racist, limiting, and oppressive. For example, a teacher can claim to love and care for their students, but if it is informed by implicitly transmitted deficit views of their students, they “lovingly” coddle their students, further oppressing ESL immigrant students in schools and reproducing social insubordination (Bartolomé, 2008). This deficit-based version of care is complimented by Olivio’s analysis of ESL Talk Management, in which teachers, either intentionally or unintentionally, implement mechanisms for controlling interactions. Often, this is perceived as giving students structure, but it often has consequences for student language learning and productivity. For example, she details five mechanisms that control classroom interactions: (1) lessons taking the form of answer and response, (2) teachers initiating interactional sequences, (3) teachers controlling turn-taking systems, (4) teachers using “elicitations” to generate student talk, and (5) teachers using contextualization clues. These cultivate a classroom culture in which the teacher controls the international agenda, student talk is minimized and in response only to the teacher’s initiations, and the teacher controls the direction of the classroom discourse. These ideas of structure are based in deficit views of immigrant students and infantilizes and silences student participation and ideas (Olivio, 2003).

The prevalent discourse of immigrant struggle often cultivates low expectations of ESL immigrant students among teachers, which in turn perpetuates the hidden curriculum of subordination. The American idea of immigrants - coming at the bottom and having nothing, working their way up in the world, coming from a place of lesser opportunity - informs a damaging perception of immigrants in that, by nature of being an immigrant, they are lesser, need to be helped, and are insubordinate. The idea of immigrant struggle and challenges may be perhaps somewhat socially conscious in that it introduces the idea of immigrant-unique hardships, but also simultaneously leads to descriptions of immigrant students as lacking intellect

and academic ability. In other words, when an ESL immigrant student doesn't succeed in school, this discourse suggests that it is because of external challenges rather than because of the school's oppressive and incompatible curricular values and norms; when he does succeed, it's because he had to work extremely "hard" in order to do so, and not that he possesses natural intellect or academic ability. For example, Harklau (2000) cites a school counselor who details that one ESL immigrant student "[had] to work hard" in order to "stick it out" in school, and commented that another ESL immigrant's high grades were a product of "pure determination and lots of time," rather than intellect, cognitive ability, or academic propensity (Harklau, 2000).

Furthermore, utilizing a deficit model of bilingualism creates a view of ESL immigrant students who are "fundamentally stigmatized" (Rampton, 1995, p. 292; Firth & Wagner, 1997), in which teachers view immigrant students as those who struggle academically and emphasize what immigrant students can not do relative to their monolingual, native English-speaking peers. For example, one teacher in Harklau's study commented, "It must be like somebody who's very bright and has a stroke. And can't express themselves" (Harklau, 2000). This sentiment is further expressed on a national level. In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), in which Chinese students and their parents sued the San Francisco Unified School District for English-only instruction, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas is cited, "We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful" (Douglas, 1974).

Paired with this deficit view of immigrant students, teachers often perceive contrastive cultural and social norms as intentionally problematic behaviors (Vang, 2006) and maintain mental representations of immigrant students as compliant, well-behaved students (Harklau, 2000). The representation of well-behaved, hardworking, persevering immigrant students

reinforces societal notions about the immigrant experience and is reminiscent of norms of younger children in schools (Harklau, 2000). For example, Harklau describe an immigrant student whose teacher rated her “attitude” and “behavior” as excellent despite his previous comments that she needed to treat lab work more seriously, often didn't read material or do work, had done poorly on assessments, and her participation and organization was only satisfactory (Harklau, 2000). All of this, he must have reasoned, was irrelevant to that she was overcoming enough extracurricular challenges to arrive to class. Teacher’s attitudes, critically, often become self-fulfilling prophecies as teachers' implicit prejudiced attitudes may be highly correlated with student performance; student academic achievement was most favorable when their teachers' implicit biases favored the ethnic group to which the student belonged (Peterson et al, 2014).

Implicit teachings in assignments and curriculum

Because ESL immigrant children must learn both the English language and complex academic content simultaneously, they often lag behind their native-English-speaking peers in content-learning (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Instead of teacher attention to closing this gap through thoughtful homework assignments which expand upon classroom knowledge and experience, homework often creates an insurmountable barrier for immigrant ESL students due to characteristics in students’ family and school ecologies (Benner, Graham, & Mistry, 2008). For example, limited English proficiency is a particular challenge in homework, as students often do not have the academic English skills needed to complete assignments independently (August & Hakuta, 1997).

As Bang (2009) argues, failure to complete homework may cultivate negative attitudes in teachers toward their immigrant students because timely, efficient, and correctly completed homework is often an important determinant of grades (Bang, Suarez-Orozco, Pakes, &

O'Connor, 2009). Furthermore, immigrant youth may encounter many challenges in homework completion, including limited English proficiency and lack of resources at home. Parental involvement has been shown to be of critical importance in homework achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001), and immigrant adolescents often experience less parental involvement in homework than native-born youth because immigrant parents often work long hours and have limited English proficiency (Bang, 2009, p 9). Homework completion, without native language support, requires that another family member be proficient enough in both English and the content material in order to help. Inaccessible language support in the materials being taught in classes and in homework, likewise, often results in immigrant students being unlikely to acquire English regardless of the length of their time in an ESL program or the United States in general (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008).

Further, the hidden curriculum for ESL students involves the idea that non-English-speakers are not capable of the same academic achievement as native speakers; consequently, ESL students are often given materials that do not meet grade level standards for content and are infantile in nature. Teachers often develop ESL pedagogies around less important academic tasks that are not related to the overarching academic content or curriculum (Vang, 2006). Similarly, having good grades and success in school is not always linked with content mastery or academic skills for ESL students, due the juvenile standards to which they are typically held. Good grades are often a part of covert inhibition of minority students' academic potential in the future, as they are typically not challenged or pushed, but rather exposed to only infantile material while their mainstream peers tend to be given more complicated and interesting content. In addition to substantially divergent content standards, grades in ESL programs are not often indicative of the same academic standards as those in a mainstream classroom; for

example, ESL classrooms may base a particular assessment grade off of whether a student could read the passage aloud, but the same grade in a mainstream classroom would reflect that a student could comprehend, produce, and synthesize creative ideas based on that passage (Vang, 2006). It may be reasonable to expect grading at the beginning level for newcomer students, but if ESL classrooms never approximate mainstream classes, immigrant ESL students are underserved and not experience equitable access to content.

Moreover, content and materials have significant influence on student affect and perceived cultural values. In particular, the English language is presented as a hegemony of its native-speakers' norms and values in ESL materials and textbooks (Rashidi and Meihami, 2016). ESL textbooks express social and cultural ideologies (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.90) and cultural biases that influence ESL identity, which complicates success that is based upon both mastery of English and ability to negotiate a school's culture and hidden curricula (Ndura, E. 2004). Ndura contests, (Ndura, 2004, p. 143) "the content of instructional materials [for example, textbooks] significantly affects students' attitudes and dispositions toward themselves, other people and society." ESL textbooks must incorporate varying cultural perspectives in order for students to discover different cultural values and expectations (Shin, Eslami, & Chen, 2011), but ESL textbooks often do not equally represent different cultures or perspectives (Tseng, 2002; Yuen, 2011).

Meanwhile, ESL students often view materials they are given as trusted and unchallenged resources that provide the skills necessary to negotiate curriculum, expectations, and meanings of peer and teacher interactions. Instructional materials such as textbooks, therefore, transmit both overt and covert societal values, cultural mediation, and hidden curricula. To complicate this tacit preparation to conform to the hidden curriculum, ESL textbooks often present an

English-speaking country in connection with nations around the globe, transmitting to students that, although some values presented may be harmful to them, they must continue learning English in order to engage with broader society (Garcia, 2005).

Ndura (2004) describes three major forms of bias in Elementary through High School ESL textbooks: Stereotyping, Invisibility, and Unreality. Stereotyping, she describes, is demonstrated through the portrayal of one set of people exhibiting a particular set of behaviours and roles. For example, she details a textbook's story about two white explorers and their black and indigenous helpers. This story depicting a black man and an indigenous woman serving a white man in the context of an ESL textbook feeds covert ideas of racial hierarchies and socialization to students who are themselves negotiating complex societal contexts. The phenomenon of Invisibility, Ndura contests, is the outright omission of information that greatly contributes to either individual or societal cultural identity. She describes a 1996 textbook's depiction of the Taos Pueblo Native Americans as a group who "have a strong spirit and are close to nature," (1996:43) but makes no mention of religion, cultural values, or other cultural content in order to describe this assumption (Ndura, E. 2004). Perhaps most importantly, most ESL textbooks fail to discuss discrimination, racism, or prejudice (Ndura, E. 2004). This ESL textbook bias, Unreality, intentionally avoids discussion of social hierarchies and issues in favor of a more idealistic view of current issues and history. For example, The 'Lewis and Clark' story in *Highpoint* (2000: 83–92) is told from a white man's perspective, whereas their enslaved counterparts, Sacagawea, and all other indigenous people are effectively erased. Stereotyping, Invisibility, and Unreality portrayed in ESL textbooks lead to profound transmitted notions about racial hierarchies and cultural values, specifically with respect to students of color (Ndura, E. 2004).

Parental Involvement: Homework Help, Engagement, and Community

The strictly-defined nature of parental involvement practices in schools routinely marginalizes minority families and creates cultural incompatibilities for ESL immigrant students (Doucet, 2011). Regimented practices of parental involvement, likewise, contain a hidden curriculum related to community values, parental roles, and behavioral expectations (Kapferer, 1981). Ideas surrounding parental involvement in schools transmit expectations about culturally accepted parental roles, such as degree of homework involvement, parent-teacher communication, and schoolwide practices.

The widespread myth that immigrant parents and parents of color do not care about their children's education - which has roots in complex circumstances of incompatible cultural norms and inaccessible English-only school settings, among other phenomena - further marginalizes immigrant parents and can outright erase them from the school culture and system (Abdul-Adil and Farmer, 2006; Doucet, 2011; Valdès, 1998). Doucet (2011) describes a Cult(ure) of Capital that is assumed in U.S. schools, in which parents are expected to know about how to gain advantages for their own children in the school system (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) by providing them with the best teachers, tutors, and materials (Birenbaum-Carmeli 1999; Reay 2008). However, this knowledge is not always easily accessible for those who experience marginalization in social class, race, ethnicity, language, nationality and citizenship, as there are no formal or concrete rules regarding parental involvement.

Complicating this idea, Brantlinger (2003) illustrates that when parents do not engage in these behaviors, they are looked down upon by others. Middle-class white mothers upheld and constructed rhetoric detailing that low-income children were less capable than their own, and additionally, that low-income parents valued education less than themselves. Although

low-income and immigrant are certainly not synonymous, there exists substantial evidence that there is high correlation between systemic poverty and race in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2020). In these Cult(ure)s of Capital, immigrant parents may not be viewed as “good” parents, and are often stereotyped as not valuing their children’s education (Doucet, 2011). Immigrant parents’ lack of engagement in these practices may lead to negative evaluations of their parenting practices, their care about their children, and their intellect.

In particular, Doucet (2011) describes challenges facing immigrant parents as they embark on homework experiences with their children. She details the story of Florelle, a second-generation mother who relayed that, despite checking in with her son about his homework every day, she received a letter from the Boston Public Schools that he did not turn in his homework regularly and performed poorly on classwork. Florelle explained that she thought the letter was some kind of test score and, with her limited English, she felt that talking to his teacher would not be helpful. Doucet further details a second-generation mother, Pauline, who believes:

[Schools should] find people who have experience to help kids with things parents might not be able to help with, like homework... you might not speak English or be able to understand the homework. Haitian kids here need someone like that, someone like you [Doucet] who can talk to them, they can talk to you, tell you their problems.

In Bang’s (2011) study of newcomer immigrant students’ homework experiences, parental support plays a critical role in how students are able to engage in homework practices. The availability of homework help, particularly from someone in a students’ household, is associated with higher rates of homework completion and greater enjoyment of learning in general (Xu, 2005; Xu & Corno, 2003). In contrast, immigrant parents often can not attend to or engage with their children’s schooling to the extent that parents of native-born, middle- and

upper-class families can. Many of these parents may have received limited English support and learning opportunities and may not be able to help with schoolwork (Bang, 2011).

ESL immigrant students often learn through this phenomena that they either (1) need to receive help in order to succeed, or (2) may not be able to communicate their ideas effectively enough to complete homework and outside-of-class activities.

Regimented ideas about parental involvement in schools are often hidden to immigrant parents themselves, cultivating negative perceptions of immigrant parents as not caring about their children. Furthermore, immigrant parents are often unable to help their children with homework, which is a fundamental aspect of homework completion and enjoyment. Even with help, outside involvement and support - which are often required to complete assignments - effectively strip ESL students of their autonomy in engaging with schoolwork.

Discussion & Conclusion

Immigrant Silencing and Identity Formation

According to Cummins (2006), identity is one of the most important aspects to consider in teaching language minority students. Furthermore, teachers and educators must critically analyze the links between identity and language and how language practices influence identity (Garcia, 2009). These identities are believed to be continual and ongoing negotiations between an individual and their environments, shaped by experiences, behaviors, and ways of engaging in language and practices. The ESL student's identity formation, therefore, is contingent upon how they conceptualize themselves in a new academic environment, and what roles they fill within this context (Hawkins, 2005). This school context itself is influenced deeply by the greater discourse surrounding immigrants, language use, and race, which, in the United States, is

influenced by nationalist ideology, anti-immigrant sentiment, and xenophobic rhetoric. Fears of English becoming obsolete, of immigrants not speaking English, and of English takeover by minority languages uphold discriminatory policies both in general and in schools (Greathouse, 2001). These discourses can deeply influence immigrant ESL students in how they view school and themselves.

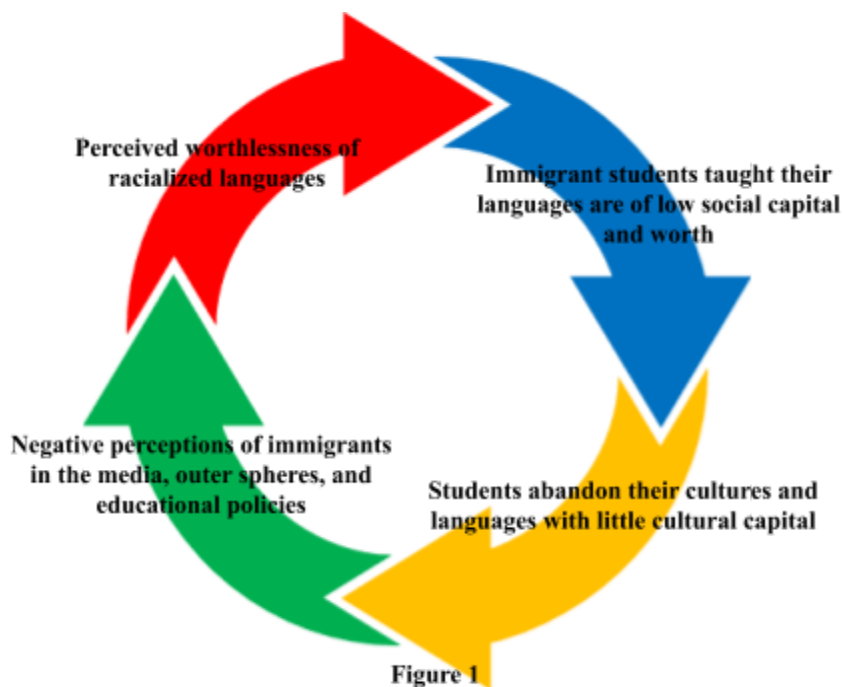
In her work to dismantle nationalist and xenophobic ideas surrounding minority language use, Pennycook (2007) describes the “myth of international English” (p.90), or the misconception that widespread learning of English can help alleviate poverty and oppression; English teaching is described as the “key to a better life for the underprivileged” (p. 102). This view is closely linked to deficit views of immigrant English language learners as in English lies the key to a better life - their previous lives, first languages, and cultures, are irrelevant and render them underprivileged. Social reproduction through the hidden curriculum of ESL contradicts the idea that English creates opportunity for children across socioeconomic classes, races, and citizenships.

Thus, immigrant students often attempt to resist being labelled as English language learners, drawing strength from and attention to their other identities (McKay and Wong, 1996). Immigrant identity itself is deeply influenced by bilingualism and the connotations of being an ESL student. Language itself is foundational as one builds communicative strategies with linguistic features, facial expressions, movement, and other “semiotic behavior,” which work together to build socially accepted ways of communication in a particular context. The development of a bilingual identity is similar, but different in one key way: immigrants whose race or physical appearance differs from the majority may continue to be identified as “foreign” despite acquisition of the dominant language and all of its communicative components

(Salomone, 2010). As Pierre Bourdieu (1991) writes, immigrants may never fully acquire the cultural capital of being recognized as native or legitimate.

Furthermore, the perceived worth of a language is often influenced by the value ascribed to its speakers. For some immigrant groups, the racialization of language can deeply influence identity development and perception, cultivating a sense of marginalization and worthlessness. Intrapersonal perception of worth reflects the degree to which the other masters or utilizes the dominant language. In particular, the hidden curriculum of schooling requires that students conform to the schools ascribed rules of language use. When schools utilize English-only ideas or view immigrant identity or non-dominant languages as deficit, immigrant children are taught that their languages are invisible and that they are useless and of low social status and worth (Salomone, 2010).

This rejection of non-dominant language and native cultures often drives students to



abandon cultures and languages that reflect little or no cultural capital. This, then, reinforces damaging representations of immigrants and language in outer spheres, which then influence educational policy and view (Salomone, 2010). This creates an ongoing cycle of negative immigrant

self-perception, cultural capital, and ideas of worthlessness (Figure 1).

Discussion

The rejection of native languages and cultures through the hidden curriculum of immigrant ESL reproduces both language and racial hierarchies in schools. For adolescent immigrant ESL youth, the perceived low social status of their races, backgrounds, and languages, are conducive to negative immigrant self-perception and worthlessness (Salomone, 2010).

Immigrant students are actively stripped of their autonomy through teacher expectations, implicit teachings in homework, lack of L1 support, and xenophobic discourses in American schools and society. A critical implication of the hidden curriculum for immigrant ESL students is identity formation, which is both highly racialized and dependent on language practice. Further research is needed to explore the connections between translanguaging pedagogies, care, and the hidden curriculum of silencing immigrant students. How can these things destabilize social reproduction of racial hierarchies in the classroom through the hidden curriculum?

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