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# The Controversial Passage of Proposition 227

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The Controversial Passage of Proposition 227

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**Abstract**

When Proposition 227 passed in 1998, it essentially ended a thirty-year program of bilingual education in California of students with limited English proficiency, and replaced it with a controversial, year-long, intensive English-immersion program. Paying close attention to how each side of the debate was framed in televised programming and local newspapers, this paper examines why such a controversial law was able to pass by popular ballot. After researching the popular opinions of the previous program of bilingual education as well as the narrative of the state concerning how it views its immigrant populations, with the children of Latin American immigrants most heavily affected by the new law, this paper seeks to put the passage of Proposition 227 into perspective. When the initiative was proposed, it appeared to present a simple and concrete solution to a complex problem that had been brought to the attention of many Californians. Despite its strong political opposition both at the state and federal levels, without any concrete alternative solutions, the California voting public chose to put their faith in an untested solution. This suggests that voters in California are willing to take a chance with a controversial proposition rather than wait for legislative reform when it comes to an issue as important as the education of 1.4 million students. With California often being viewed as the up and coming trend setter in the United States when it comes to passing new laws, it becomes important to understand what is influencing voters within the state and how the sudden publicization of long-term issues can influence voters into passing questionable policies.

When Proposition 227 passed in 1998, it essentially ended a thirty-year program of bilingual education in California and replaced it with a controversial English-immersion program that was meant to transition children from their primary language to English over the course of a single school year. Such a controversial proposition was able to pass due to its presentation to the voting public as a simple, concrete solution that would eliminate a failing program and teach English to 1.4 million children in California. Reports before the California legislature, congressional hearings, and school board meeting minutes provide insight into how the current program of bilingual education was perceived while both newspaper articles and televised debates provide essential insight into understanding how the proposition was presented to the public, including the most heavily affected Latino public, and why such a controversial program was able to pass.

In order to understand such an event, the context surrounding the passage of the proposition will be described: the prior program of bilingual education as well as its criticisms, the history of language issues in California, and the program that Proposition 227 mandated. Then, other perspectives on how California perceived its primarily-Latino immigrant population, why Proposition 227 was able to pass, and how Californians viewed the previous program of bilingual education will be examined. Finally, the perceived problems of bilingual education will be analyzed followed by an examination of how proposition 227 was presented to the public. This should provide insight into how the proposition passed.

Understanding why Proposition 227 passed requires knowledge of the previous program of bilingual education, which had existed since 1968, knowledge of how that program was implemented and what criticisms it traditionally received, and knowledge of how the issue of language had been treated historically in California. Following that, the program that Proposition

227 passed as well as those who introduced it can be explored in closer detail as well. This background information should then allow for further analysis of why the proposition passed.

### **Bilingual Education Legislation from 1968 to 1998**

On January 2, 1968, the Bilingual Education Act was passed into law, becoming the first federal law to address language within the American educational system. It noted the importance of addressing the needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and provided federal funds for schools that were willing to implement bilingual education programs. Initially, it did not define bilingual education in any clear way; it didn't clarify whether bilingual education was aimed at students transitioning to English or at preserving the primary languages of the students as they learned English. Furthermore, it didn't actually mandate that schools implement bilingual education programs. Instead, the law simply provided funding for those that did. Because of this, very few schools implemented such programs in the first years following the act's passage.<sup>1</sup>

During the time of the Bilingual Education Act's passage, the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement was pushing hard for equality across races and cultures. By 1963, a bilingual education program in Dade County, Florida had garnered national attention for its success in teaching Spanish-speaking Cuban students, bringing the issue of bilingual education to the forefront of many minds. Then, in 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act demonstrated the federal government's willingness to legislate on education, something that had been left up to state governments previously. The political atmosphere was ideal for introducing

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<sup>1</sup> David Carleton, *Student's Guide to Landmark Congressional Laws on Education* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 161-162.

legislation on bilingual education and, when the act was introduced by Democratic Senator Ralph Yaraborough from Texas, it was one of many similar proposals.<sup>2</sup>

In 1970, clarifications of the scope of the Bilingual Education Act as the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education mandated that all school districts with more than five percent of the population being LEP students had to take steps to address the language needs of these students.<sup>3</sup> These clarifications were made in response to the increasingly national visibility of Latino activists, who were making the “educational neglect” of their children known. Further clarifications were made as minor court cases defined how the law was to be interpreted.<sup>4</sup>

Then, in that same year, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in the case of *Lau v. Nichols*. A lawsuit had been filed for a number of Chinese students in San Francisco that were unable to understand the English instruction that was given in their school, and it was decided by the court that special assistance must be given to LEP students in order to ensure that they are given equal opportunities in the classroom. At first, the decision gained very little public attention, but that increased when the Office of Civil Rights began visiting schools to ensure that the needs of LEP students were being met.<sup>5</sup> The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare’s Office of Civil Rights clarified things further in 1974 when they created the *Lau Remedies*, which stated that English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction was insufficient and that some level of instruction in the student’s first language was necessary in order to ensure that the students were given “education on equal terms”. An amendment to the Bilingual Education Act

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<sup>2</sup>Amado M. Padilla, Halford H. Fairchild, and Concepcion M. Valadez, ed. *Bilingual Education : Issues and Strategies*. Sage Focus Editions, v. 112. (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1990), 30-33.

<sup>3</sup> Luis Rodriguez, "Discretion and Destruction: The Debate Over Language in California's Schools," *Texas Journal on Civil Liberties & Civil Rights* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1999), accessed March 1, 2017, Academic Search Premier.

<sup>4</sup> James Crawford, *Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory, and Practice*. 3rd Ed. (Trenton: Crane Publishing Co, 1995), 41-43.

<sup>5</sup> James Crawford, 45-46

in that same year turned the focus of bilingual education towards preserving the students' first language and pride in their cultural heritage. This called for not only on an education that was bilingual but one that was also bicultural.<sup>6</sup>

Then, in the mid-seventies, the rhetoric around bilingual education began to change. Previously, there had been great, bipartisan support of the program in the name of increasing civil rights and respecting multiple cultural identities across the United States, but by 1975, that had changed. Backlash against the Civil Rights Movement and foreigners, who spoke languages other than English was asserting itself. A study released by the American Institutes for Research further inflamed the subject by saying there was no real proof that bilingual education programs taught students English better than English-as-a-second language programs. In fact, schools were seen as keeping students in bilingual education programs longer than necessary to meet bi-cultural needs rather than language needs. This study would later be recognized as having been conducted poorly, but at the time their message was a powerful when saying that bilingual education was an unnecessary program.<sup>7</sup>

In 1978, after as the fear grew that students were staying in primary-language classrooms longer than was strictly necessary, the aim of bilingual education shifted from preserving the language and culture of students to transitioning to English as quickly as possible. The 1978 amendment to the Bilingual Education Act placed students that were already fluent in English in bilingual classrooms in order to both hasten the language-acquisition process and address the issue of segregation caused by bilingual classrooms, segregation of students of color from white

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<sup>6</sup> Carleton, 165-166.

<sup>7</sup> Crawford, 48-49.

students often was a side effect of separating students based on language. It also went further, explicitly spelling out the role of bilingual classrooms as aids in the English-learning process.<sup>8</sup>

Three years later, in 1981, an upset parent sued his local school district for failing to provide adequate bilingual education to his children, thus denying them their right to an education, in *Castañeda v. Pickard*. With the decision of this case in the father's favor, the court provided three new guidelines for evaluating bilingual education programs. First, the instruction had to stem from approved educational theories. Second, the program had to be taught by trained teachers and given all the resources necessary to put it in place. Finally, it had to be reviewed and found effective for LEP students.<sup>9</sup>

When the Republican, Ronald Reagan was elected in the 1980 election, it was on the promise of creating a smaller government with less oversight and spending. Many of the base that elected him viewed *Lau* and Title VII as too much government oversight, subjects that should be left up to the state level. Republicans during the Reagan years led the push for allowing English-as-a-second-language instruction as well as other modifications to the program.<sup>10</sup> By 1983, the lobbying group, US English, was gaining support across the United States, calling on the public's fear of immigrants and foreign languages to lobby for English as the official language as well as English-only instruction in schools.<sup>11</sup>

With these political currents at work, the state of bilingual education shifted again as local schools were given more control over their individual programs in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Crawford, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Crawford, 58-59.

<sup>10</sup> Crawford, 53-55.

<sup>11</sup> Crawford, 64-66.

<sup>12</sup> Carleton, 167.



In 1984, an amendment to the Bilingual Education Act approved the use of English-only instruction if it was specifically designed for LEP students and limited schools to five years of federal funding for bilingual education programs. Furthermore, the 1988 amendment increased funding specifically for programs that used “special alternative instruction techniques”, which further diversified the types of programs being implemented across the nation, sometimes crossing the threshold into experimental territory.<sup>13</sup>

During the 30 years between the passage of the federal Bilingual Education of 1968 and the passage of Proposition 227 in California in 1998, bilingual education went through many changes. When bilingual education was first passed, it specified very little in how the program should be formatted and wasn't mandatory. Following a series of Supreme Court cases as well as amendments to the Bilingual Education Act, some set standards were able to be put in place for schools implementing bilingual education programs. Yet, the expectation for how bilingual education programs should be carried out continued to fluctuate as the intent of the policy shifted between preserving language and culture to making a hasty transition into speaking English during 1974 and 1978. Furthermore, control over bilingual education programming shifted in the 1980s from control at a federal level to stronger control for the local districts themselves. By 1998, the program appeared to have stabilized, as no new legislation on the federal level had been passed for ten years.

### **Traditional Criticisms of Bilingual Education and its Implementation**

Bilingual education has been a controversial topic since it was first passed into law in 1968. This has largely been because its definition has been left unclear, which has made it

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<sup>13</sup> Rodriguez, 210-211.

difficult to determine the effectiveness of the programs.<sup>14</sup> “The House of Representative and Senate hearings on bilingual education reflect the multiple purposes that commentators believed bilingual education could perform. Some community representatives believed that bilingual education programs could instill a respect for cultural heritage in Hispanic students, regardless of their English fluency. Other community leaders wanted the Act to extend beyond LEP students and teach second languages to all children. On the other hand, some experts and officials supported bilingual education as solely a means to assimilation for children who were not fluent in English.”<sup>15</sup>

Traditionally, as a result, bilingual-program implementation was extremely varied from district to district. Some schools implemented programs that provided more than three hours of primary language instruction. Others created programs that were mostly English-based but use primary-language instruction as an additional aid. Still, other districts used English-only programs that were specifically designed for LEP students. Due to these variances, conducting studies on which programs were best aiding students was largely unsuccessful since there were simply too many factors that differed when comparing programs from district to district. This has left it difficult for school districts to find and implement programs that have truly been tried, tested, and found to be successful.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the topic of what the purpose of bilingual education should be has been largely debated as well, debating whether the aim should be on furthering multiculturalism or assimilation, Americanization. Initially, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 did not specify the purpose of the Act, other than aiding LEP students to succeed in American public schools. Then,

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<sup>14</sup> Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States 1960-2001* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2004), 56.

<sup>15</sup> Rodriguez, 196.

<sup>16</sup> Rodriguez, 214-215, 218-219.

the 1974 amendment directed public schools to work towards preserving culture and primary language. Following that, the 1978 amendment reversed that position, and placed the focus solely on students obtaining fluency in English as quickly as possible. It becomes clear that the Bilingual Education Act, itself, reflected that ongoing debate as it shifted from one end goal to another. By 1998, the aim of the act was stationary, directing bilingual educator to transition students to English as quickly as possible, reflecting the growing English-only movement in the country.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Language Controversy in California**

Language has always been an issue of contention within the state of California since it was ceded as a territory to the United States in 1848. At the end of the Mexican-American War, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ceded the territories that are today California, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and other states today to the United States. The treaty mandated that the citizens within those territories, who were once Mexicans and had suddenly become Americans, would be allowed to maintain their language and culture. For the first few years, this agreement was honored, and the newly-American citizens were able to continue speaking Spanish in schools and in government settings without a problem.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, the tone quickly changed from one of multiculturalism to one of “Americanizaion”, or American nationalism. “Schools were used to propagate the sense of nation so as to create the hegemony needed by the new elite to maintain their power relationship over the indios and mestizos. Schooling was the tool to disseminate the ideals of a new

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<sup>17</sup> San Miguel Jr., 82.

<sup>18</sup> G. San Miguel Jr and R. R. Valencia, “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The educational plight and struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest,” *Harvard Educational Review* 68, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 354-355, 357, accessed March 10, 2017, Summon.

society.”<sup>19</sup> From the outset, public schools were segregated, separating white students from Mexican-American students. Schools for Mexican-American students were usually extremely underfunded and lacked experienced teachers, resources, and appropriate classroom conditions. As early as the 1850s, California removed all courses that spoke of Mexican history or culture from the curriculum. Following that, English-only instruction in public schools passed as a state law by 1870. Mexican-American students, who spoke Spanish as a first language, struggled in public schools with comparatively lower achievement-rates than white students who spoke English as a primary language.<sup>20</sup>

For the next 80 or so years, education in California continued in that vein until *Mendez v. Westminster* legally ended segregation within California schools, although segregation often continued in practice.<sup>21</sup> Twenty years later, in 1967, Ronald Reagan signed the repeal of the law that mandated English-only policies in public schools. During 1968-1969, just as the Bilingual Education Act was passed, it was found that schools serving LEP Mexican-American students in California, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, and Arizona were only teaching 5.5% in ESL classrooms and even less were receiving assistance from primary-language programs. Despite having large populations of LEP students throughout these Southwestern states, very few were receiving any sort of special assistance while learning English.<sup>22</sup>

Under those circumstances, 200 Mexican-American students walked out of Wilson High School in Los Angeles, California on Friday, March 1, 1968, spurring a week of walkouts throughout LA schools. By the following Friday, over 15,000 students had walked out in protest

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<sup>19</sup>Susana Y. Flores and Enrique G. Murillo Jr., "Power, Language, and Ideology: Historical and Contemporary Notes on the Dismantling of Bilingual Education," *Urban Review* 33, no. 3 (September 2001): 190, accessed February 15, 2017, ERIC.

<sup>20</sup> San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, 357, 371-372.

<sup>21</sup> San Migue, Jr. and Valencia, 380.

<sup>22</sup> Crawford, 35, 41.

of the poor state of schooling they were enduring. These protests culminated in demands for the hastening of public-school reform, the demand for bilingual education instruction that would include primary-language instruction, and school atmospheres that would celebrate Chicano culture. Their protests forced adults and their schools to consider the issues they were facing immediately and led to the creation of the Educational Issues Coordinating Committee (EICC) by Mexican-American parents and college students in order to monitor the state of education for their students continuously. Since then, walkouts continued to be used as a tool, on a much smaller scale, in California when students were dissatisfied with the quality of education that they and their fellow students were receiving.<sup>23</sup>

Moving forward, the 1970s, a decade of strong advocacy for civil rights alongside key bilingual education guidelines such as those in “Lau”, set the stage for “the most progressive, single most important bilingual legislation in the country”. In 1976, Assemblyman Peter Chacón and State-Senator George R. Moscone passed the Chacón-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act in the state of California.<sup>24</sup> This act established that all schools had to identify the primary languages of their students, and that primary language instruction along with cultural heritage had to be taught in bilingual classrooms in each elementary school with more than 10 students from the same language and cultural background. Individual, specialized English-language-acquisition programs had to be designed in elementary schools with fewer than 10 LEP students of the same background and had to be put in place in all middle and high schools. The law also mandated that at least one third of the students within each bilingual program should be students that spoke English as a primary language in order to maintain desegregated

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<sup>23</sup> F. Arturo Rosales, *Chicano!: The History of the Mexican Civil Rights Movement*, (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1997), 184-185, 191-194.

<sup>24</sup> *Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education*, s.v. “Chacón-Moscone Legislation,” accessed October 13, 2017. Sage Reference.

classrooms.<sup>25</sup> Yet, the program continued to allow for the adaptability necessary to instruct a diverse population of students by including not only basic bilingual education programs, but also allowing for experimental programs aimed at meeting the needs of specific student populations.

Additionally, the law mandated that bilingual education instructors obtain state certification, and that non-bilingual instructors who work with LEP children be trained in how to work with students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.<sup>26</sup> Still, California recognized the lack of appropriate teachers and allowed for waivers to be given to teachers that were attempting to learn a new language as long as aides that spoke the language were in each bilingual classroom.<sup>27</sup> Following the passage of the Chacón-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act, criticism of bilingual education programs, especially bilingual-bicultural programs grew in California monumentally. The act is believed to have spurred the English-Only movement and was viewed by many Californians as pandering to “non-Americans”. Surprisingly, despite increased state funding, the law received heavy criticisms from within the schools themselves as well since many were outraged at the idea of having to recertify their long-trusted and experienced instructors. By 1980, the criticism of the act was so great, that an amendment was passed that refocused its purpose on growing English immersion and ESL programs in the state, rather than maintaining a student’s primary language and culture through the California Public School System.<sup>28</sup> In 1987, the act was not renewed by the California Legislature, but most schools continued with instruction as they had since 1976.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Crawford, 196.

<sup>26</sup> *Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education*.

<sup>27</sup> Crawford, 196

<sup>28</sup> *Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education*.

<sup>29</sup> Crawford, 196.

Prior to the passage of Proposition 227, between 1980 and 1993, the number of Limited English Proficiency students within California public schools increased by 254%.<sup>30</sup> By 1997, California had 1.4 million students, or 1 in 4 public school students, that required language assistance. At this point, 30% of LEP students were taught in mainstream classrooms, another 40% were taught in specialized English classes, and the final 30% were taught in primary language classrooms.<sup>31</sup> Seventy-seven percent of these students spoke Spanish as their first language with Vietnamese and Filipino-speaking students making up the next two largest groups of language-minority students in the state.<sup>32</sup> By the 1990s, with such a large population of LEP students, bilingual education had become a central issue in California.

Then, in February 1996, headlines such as “Latino Parents to Boycott School Bilingual Plan” and “80 Students Stay Out of School in Latino Boycott” shocked many readers of the *Los Angeles Times*. The issue of bilingual education was brought to the forefront of many Californian’s thoughts as parents boycotted an elementary school, calling for English-only instruction in California’s largest LEP district: Los Angeles.<sup>33</sup> With 80 students missing from a school of 460, the administration was losing \$1,600 a day in funding. The loss of money successfully garnered the administration’s attention, in a way the parents’ previous petition had not, and allowed them a seat at the table to discuss the bilingual education program they believed to be failing their children. Yet, the administration, along with many others, was already moving

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<sup>30</sup> Rodriguez, 212.

<sup>31</sup> The Legislative Analyst’s Office, “Proposition 227: English Language in Public Schools,” The California Legislature’s Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor, June 1998, accessed March 28, 2017, [http://www.lao.ca.gov/ballot/1998/227\\_06\\_1998.htm](http://www.lao.ca.gov/ballot/1998/227_06_1998.htm).

<sup>32</sup> Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health, “English Learners in Public Schools, by English Learner Status,” *Kids Data.org*, accessed April 5, 2018, <http://www.kidsdata.org/topic/347/english-learner-status/>.

<sup>33</sup> Amy Pyle, “Latino Parents to Boycott School Bilingual Plan,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 1996, accessed October 25, 2017, [http://articles.latimes.com/1996-02-13/local/me-35409\\_1\\_bilingual-education](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-02-13/local/me-35409_1_bilingual-education)

in the direction the parents wanted, having significantly increased the time spent on English in bilingual classrooms at the start of the 1995-1996 school year.<sup>34</sup>

Following that boycott, Ron Unz began his campaign for Proposition 227 to end bilingual education programs in California and replace them with year-long English-immersion programs.<sup>35</sup> In March of 1998, as the public gained interest and the campaign for Proposition 227 gained momentum, the California Board of Education attempted to assuage the public's complaints and opened up the option for schools to individually choose whether they implemented any primary-language programs or not.<sup>36</sup> Proposition 227 was passed just three months later on June 2, 1998.<sup>37</sup>

### **The California Initiative Process and Understanding Proposition 227**

Californians have been passing both statutes and constitutional amendments by popular ballot since the initiative process was established in California in 1912. An initiative can be introduced by either a petition with a certain number of signatures, as in the case of Proposition 227, or by the California Legislature. The rules for the initiative process require that the proposition can only concern a sole subject, so as not to confuse voters, and, while a proposition can be an amendment to the Californian constitution, it cannot revise the constitution and change the current structure in place.<sup>38</sup>

Traditionally, the Californian Initiative process has been known to generate a significant amount of controversy with its proposed initiatives. "In general, it seems, attention to the

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<sup>34</sup> Amy Pyle, "80 Students Stay Out of School in Latino Boycott," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1996, accessed October 25, 2017, [http://articles.latimes.com/1996-02-14/local/me-35833\\_1\\_district-schools](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-02-14/local/me-35833_1_district-schools)

<sup>35</sup> Johanna J. Haver.

<sup>36</sup> Rodriguez, 213.

<sup>37</sup> Flores, 200.

<sup>38</sup> Kathryn Mickle Werdegar, "Living with Direct Democracy: The California Supreme Court and the Initiative Power – 100 Years of Accommodation," *California Legal History*, Annual 2012, accessed November 1, 2017, Expanded Academic ASAP.



initiative process is directed toward the hot button issue of the moment. Once the moment passes, so, too, does interest in the issue.”<sup>39</sup> Sometimes, once the initiative passes, its constitutionality comes into question, and it must be considered by the court. A proposed initiative is never considered by the California Judiciary system until after it has passed since the question of constitutionality is moot if the proposition fails to become law. Furthermore, the Californian courts tread carefully when evaluating a passed initiative, being that it is supposed to be viewed as the people’s will, direct democracy. Yet, if the proposition violates the single-subject rule, attempts to revise the California Constitution, or is in violation of the United States or California Constitution, the court will declare it invalid.<sup>40</sup>

With the initiative process in place for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many analysts and political scientists have attempted to understand how Californians decide to vote on ballot issues. Two main theories take the lead in trying to explain the decision-making process. One theory is that of “self-interest”, arguing that people vote for whatever outcome they think will benefit them the most. Conversely, the second viewpoint argues that voters are only motivated to change things when they experience a sense of “disillusionment” with the system in place, which can be drawn from a number of social, economic, and other factors. Still, other theorists are still attempting to discern what motivates Californians to vote the way they do when it comes to direct democracy initiatives.<sup>41</sup>

When considering Proposition 227, it is important to consider the context in which it was passed on the popular ballot. Proposition 227 is often associated with two other highly

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<sup>39</sup> Bruce Cain, Elisabeth Gerber, and University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies Staff. *Voting at the Political Fault Line: California’s Experiment with the Blanket Primary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), accessed November 3, 2017, Proquest Ebrary.

<sup>40</sup> Werdegar.

<sup>41</sup> Cain, 40-41.

controversial propositions that passed during the 1990s: Proposition 187, which passed in 1994, and Proposition 209, which passed in 1996. All three propositions have been viewed as attacks on a multicultural California, and were questioned on the basis of whether or not they violated the constitution.<sup>42</sup> Because of this close association, a further examination into Proposition 187 and Proposition 209 must be explored.

Beginning with Proposition 187, the proposition marked one of the most publicly debated issues in California's history. It refused to allow undocumented immigrants in California the use of public services including, but not limited to, healthcare and K-12 and university public education. Furthermore, it mandated that anyone working in these public service sectors alert the authorities about anyone they thought might be undocumented.<sup>43</sup> The proposition promised that its goal was to ease the financial burden of undocumented immigrants on California's struggling economy while still being accepting of immigrants that came to the state through legal channels. Opponents of the proposition maintained that it was unconstitutional and required public service sector workers to profile immigrants that they "suspected" to be undocumented, thus forcing the association that all immigrants from Latin America are illegal and don't belong.<sup>44</sup> The Proposition passed in 1996 but was never enforced following an immediate court injunction on the basis of unconstitutionality.<sup>45</sup>

In similar manner to how Proposition 187 was viewed as an attack on immigrants and multiculturalism, Proposition 209 was seen as attacking minorities and multiculturalism as well. Proposition 209 mandated that California end any affirmative action programs in place in order

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<sup>42</sup> *Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia*, s.v. "California Propositions 187, 209, and 227," accessed October 19, 2017, Sage Reference.

<sup>43</sup> Robin Dale Jacobson, *New Nativism Proposition 187 and the Debate over Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xiii, accessed October 26, 2017, Proquest Ebrary.

<sup>44</sup> Jacobson, 1, 54, 66-67.

<sup>45</sup> *Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia*, 4.

to discontinue the practice of “reverse discrimination”, where one discriminates against privileged populations such as men or white people by allowing minorities preference in employment or university admissions for example. Those in favor argued that they were in line with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and were seeking to end costly and discriminatory practices. It passed in 1996 and was challenged on a constitutional basis, but was allowed to continue as law, effectively terminating Affirmative Action in California.<sup>46</sup>

Having explained the popular ballot context in which it was considered and passed, one can begin to examine the proposition at hand, Proposition 227. It passed in 1998 and was a highly controversial proposition that drastically changed how Limited English Proficiency students were treated in Californian schools. The proposition essentially ended bilingual education within California, and replaced it with a one-year, intensive English program. This marked a huge change for a state where approximately a quarter of the students were LEP students.<sup>47</sup> It was especially notable in contrast to the only other legislation on Bilingual Education in California, the Chacón-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Act, which was active between 1976 and 1987, enforcing primary-language instruction in California classrooms.<sup>48</sup>

The proposition, otherwise known as “English for the Children” or the “The Unz Initiative” was authored by Gloria Matta Tuchman and Ron Unz immediately following the boycott of the Los Angeles elementary school in which parents demanded English-only education for their children.<sup>49</sup> Gloria Matta Tuchman was a first-grade teacher that based most of the methods defined within Proposition 227 off of her own experience with LEP students within her classroom, although she never had taught a bilingual education program as short-term and

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<sup>46</sup> *Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia*, 2, 4.

<sup>47</sup> The Legislative Analyst’s Office.

<sup>48</sup> Crawford, 196.

<sup>49</sup> Haver, 31.

intensive as a one-year long English immersion program without any primary language aid.<sup>50</sup>

Conversely, Ron Unz provided the funds for the campaign and quickly became considered the face of the campaign. Having appeared briefly in the 1992 race for governor, California was slightly familiar with the businessman. Unz had lost that gubernatorial race, winning only 34% of the vote, but had been far more successful as a businessman than a politician.<sup>51</sup> With a PhD in Physics from Harvard, he created multi-million-dollar business named Wall Street Analytics, which sold software programs that analyze investments.<sup>52</sup> Having tried his hand at business, Unz decided that he wanted to become a politician. Unfortunately, many viewed him as too intellectual and lacking in social skills and the necessary connections to have much success. Furthermore, his platform came across as quite confusing to many conservative party members. “He’s profoundly conservative on taxes, crime, and welfare, but also out of step with conservatives in manifold ways: He’s pro-immigrant but anti-multicultural; anti-voucher in pro-voucher; anti-abortion but nondogmatic, framing his position as a ‘personal view’; a free trader who is sanguine about China; an unreligious person among followers who root their politics in religious fervor; a right-wing activist driven only marginally by concerns about gays and guns.”<sup>53</sup> After his failure in the gubernatorial race, Unz turned his time and money to the California Initiative Process and Proposition 227, “With the initiative process, you can have a lot more direct impact, and if you can get your thing on the ballot, there’s a good chance you’ll win.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Rodriguez, 191-195.

<sup>51</sup>Douglas Foster, “Being Ron Unz.” *LA Weekly*, November 24, 1999, accessed October 25, 2017, <http://www.laweekly.com/news/being-ron-unz-2131367>

<sup>52</sup> Frank Bruni, “The California Entrepreneur Who Beat Bilingual Teaching,” *The New York Times*, June 14, 1998, accessed November 1, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/14/us/the-california-entrepreneur-who-beat-bilingual-teaching.html>

<sup>53</sup>Foster

<sup>54</sup> Bruni

Interestingly enough, the campaign was primarily run through low-cost tv appearances by Unz and Tuchman. Later on, Jaime Escalante was added on as the “honorary chairman” of Proposition 227. He was recognized as a famous educator, and was a father of two LEP students, one that went through mainstream classrooms and one that went through primary-language programs.<sup>55</sup> All three spent hours of on-air time campaigning for the propositions, making appearances on local channels such as KGO/San Francisco or Sacramento Online as well as on state-wide channels such as Life and Times Los Angeles or on national television on the ABC Network. They participated in heated debates with the opposition as well as in personal interviews. Unz spent more time campaigning and on-air than anyone else, lending to the image that he was the face of the initiative.<sup>56</sup> Overall, the campaign for Proposition 227 cost \$1.2 million, with \$.7 million being put forth by Unz, himself. It was a low-cost campaign with little money spent on ads, reaching people through cost-free means such as through appearances in live-television debates and coverage in major Californian newspapers like *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Sacramento Bee*, and *The San Francisco Chronicle*.<sup>57</sup>

The proposition, itself, laid out its mission to transition Limited English Proficiency students in California to English fluency as quickly as possible. “All children in California public schools shall be taught English by being taught in English. In particular, this shall require that all children be placed in English language classrooms. Children who are English learners shall be educated through sheltered English immersion during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed one year. Local schools shall be permitted to place in the same classroom English learners of different ages but whose degree of English proficiency is similar. Local

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<sup>55</sup> Rodriguez, 191-195

<sup>56</sup> Bruni

<sup>57</sup> Bruni

schools shall be encouraged to mix together in the same classroom English learners from different native-language groups but with the same degree of English fluency. Once English learners have acquired a good working knowledge of English, they shall be transferred to English language mainstream classrooms.”<sup>58</sup>

Delving further, Proposition 227 mandated that public schools only teach in English. LEP students would be put in a one-year program that would immerse them in English before they would be placed in mainstream classrooms; students with high enough English levels could bypass this with a waiver.<sup>59</sup> With this programming in place, not only was it supposed to reduce the number of necessary specialized classes, but it also was projected that it would reduce California’s spending on public schools as well.<sup>60</sup> When it passed on July 2, 1998, 61% of Californians overall voted in favor of the proposition.<sup>61</sup> In contrast, the Latino community came out to vote against Proposition 227, with only 36% of the Latino community voting in favor of it.<sup>62</sup>

Following this understanding of bilingual education legislation, the history surrounding the issue of language in California, and the program that Proposition 227 mandated, it is time to examine other perspectives on how California perceived it’s primarily-Latino immigrant population, why Proposition 227 was able to pass, and how Californian’s viewed the previous program of Bilingual Education. First, it becomes important to look at the dynamic that existed in the 1990s between Californians and an increasing Latino population since Proposition 227

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<sup>58</sup> “Proposition 227: Full Text of Proposed Law,” Alex Padilla-California Secretary of State, 1998, accessed March 28, 2017, <http://vigarchive.sos.ca.gov/1998/primary/propositions/227text.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> “Proposition 227: Full Text of Proposed Law.”

<sup>60</sup> The Legislative Analyst’s Office.

<sup>61</sup> Flores, 202.

<sup>62</sup> “El Voto Latino y La 227.” *La Opinión*, June 5, 1998, accessed December 18, 2017. Proquest Newstand.

directly affected the children of many Latino immigrants. Leo R. Chavez, Edward M. Olivos and Marcela Mendoza, and Peter Schrag all offer different insights into how this dynamic can be examined. Beginning with Leo R. Chavez and his article, “The Quebec Metaphor, Invasion, and Reconquest in Public Discourse on Mexican Immigration”, the image created of Mexican immigrants in magazines, books, and other media sources is closely considered. Chavez argues that alarmist propaganda is spread by these media sources using exaggerated language such as “invasion”, “reconquest”, and “Mexifornia”.<sup>63</sup>

Following this line of thought, he claims “Mexican immigrants and their children, and even their grandchildren, are imagined in this scenario as never becoming part of the community. Indeed, they are characterized as actively engaged in not becoming part of the community, imagined or otherwise. The narrative questions the loyalty of those of Mexican-origin and represents them as possible enemy agents who wish to redefine U.S. territory as Mexican territory. Mexican immigrants, and Mexican Americans, are cast as perpetual foreigners, as outside the “we” of the “imagined community” of the nation (Anderson, 1983; Chavez, 1991).”<sup>64</sup> Throughout Chavez’s research, Mexican immigrants were portrayed negatively more than half of the time in magazines and the city of Los Angeles, specifically, was cast as the new “Ellis Island” for Mexican immigration. As the Latino demographic grew, so did the negative media attention, lending support to anti-immigrant legislation such as Proposition 187, which disallowed illegal immigrants from partaking in any government services, such as the public-school system and emergency healthcare, a proposition that was supposed to be California’s

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<sup>63</sup> Leo R. Chavez, “The Quebec Metaphor, Invasion, and Reconquest in Public Discourse on Mexican Immigration” in *Mexicans in California: Transformations and Challenges*, ed. Ramon A. Gutierrez and Patricia Zavella (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 135, accessed June 18, 2017, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>64</sup> Chavez, 152.

salvation. Overall, Chavez points to the overly negative portrayal of Latinos in the United States as an indicator for public opinion regarding the growing demographic.<sup>65</sup>

Looking further, Edward M. Olivos and Marcela Mendoza offer a different perspective in "Immigration and Educational Inequity: An Examination of Latino Immigrant Parents' Inclusion in the Public School Context." In this article, they concentrate on the lived-experience of parents attempting to work with Californian school systems to demonstrate the inequality and social rejection that the Latino community often experiences in California. An image is created of Latino parents struggling against a system that doesn't want to include them, that looks down upon them and assumes that they are of lesser ability and worth.<sup>66</sup>

Despite the increasing demographic of Latino students in Californian schools, according to Olivos and Mendoza, schools have done very little to adapt to these changes. Race/Ethnicity, class, immigration status, and English proficiency all negatively impact the experience of both the parents of Latino students and the experience of the students themselves. They are often viewed as alien or outsiders, without prior knowledge of the length of time they've spent in the United States or consideration of whether or not they are indeed U.S. citizens. "If a person 'looks Mexican', then it is assumed that the person is a working-class, undocumented immigrant who doesn't speak English well."<sup>67</sup> Due to false assumptions such as these, any obstacles a student faces are often viewed as deriving from the home and community values that differ from those of other, white Californians. Therefore, teachers and schools often fail to include Latino parents in addressing any issues that may arise, simply because they believe them to be yet another

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<sup>65</sup> Chavez, 138, 152.

<sup>66</sup> Edward M. Olivos and Marcela Mendoza, "Immigration and educational inequity: an examination of Latino immigrant parents' inclusion in the public school context," *The Journal of Latino-Latin American Studies* 3, no. 3 (2009): 41, 48, accessed June 21, 2017, *Expanded Academic ASAP*.

<sup>67</sup> Olivos and Mendoza, 44.



obstruction in the students' road to success. This, more personal, investigation lends insight into how Latino parents are treated by specific entities, school systems, rather than by the public as a whole<sup>68</sup>

Peter Schrag, on the other hand, focuses on a wider area of research, what he calls “the ongoing ambivalence, and recurring backlash against immigrants, and especially illegal immigrants, evidenced by ballot measures in California”<sup>69</sup> in his book “California: America’s High Stakes Experiment.” He argues that Californians have been unable to ignore the growing demographic of Latinos and have responded in a xenophobic manner that is not entirely unexpected. Historically, Californians have struck out against growing immigrant populations in a similar manner. “The stories of California’s nativism and xenophobia, often tightly linked to the state’s progressivism, are familiar—the rampant bias against the Chinese in San Francisco in the last years of the nineteenth century, the alien land acts, the attacks on Okies and Mexicans in the 1930s, the support for the internment of Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor, the latter-day anti-immigrant initiatives.”<sup>70</sup>

Following this logic, the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994 until it was declared unconstitutional as well as the backlash against a bill that allowed illegal immigrants to receive their driver’s licenses were expected reactions against growing immigrant populations in California. Schrag largely blames legislative inaction on the issue of immigration for such extreme reactions by Californian citizens.<sup>71</sup> As California becomes an increasingly minority-majority state, he argues that California will be forced to address questions such as, “Even

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<sup>68</sup> Olivos and Mendoza, 43-45.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Schrag, *California: America’s High Stakes Experiment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 12, accessed June 28, 2017, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>70</sup> Schrag, 15.

<sup>71</sup> Schrag, 12, 84.

leaving aside the poor communities in places like California's Central Valley, do immigrants contribute as much in taxes and to the economy generally as they cost in public services— for schools, health care, and public safety? Would there be a school overcrowding problem in California were it not for the children of aliens, illegal aliens most egregiously? Do they take jobs from American workers and depress wages for legal residents, as Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies and his colleagues believe? Does their presence dampen the willingness of Californians to support high levels of public services?" If California doesn't address this rhetoric, Schrag argues anti-immigrant retaliation will continue.<sup>72</sup>

After looking at these three viewpoints, it is obvious that California faces a dilemma as its Latino population continues to grow. All three articles represent different aspects of the divide that exists between Californians and the Latino communities within the state, who are often portrayed as outsiders. Whether the divide is found in the alarmist media portrayal of the Mexican immigrant described by Chavez, the social rejection that Latino parents face when trying to work with California teachers and schools that Olivos and Mendoza spoke of, or the anti-immigrant policies being pushed by white Californians that Schrag promises will continue if legislators don't act. Currently, the Latino population appears to exist in a state of community exclusion and discrimination within the state of California, something that will become increasingly apparent as the population continues to grow.

Having considered the divisive attitudes of many Californians towards a growing immigrant population, one is now able to examine different perspectives on why a proposition, which disproportionately affected the children of immigrants from Latin America may have passed. Since Proposition 227 was introduced, understanding the reasoning behind a proposition

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<sup>72</sup> Schrag, 50.

that effectively ended bilingual education in California after it was passed in 1998 became very important in a state that was responsible for educating so many Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.

One approach to understanding this was that of Luis Rodriguez, “Discretion and Destruction: The Debate Over Language in California's Schools,” who asserts that the lack of a clear law explaining how bilingual education was to be implemented by schools after the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and subsequent amending legislation was a key factor in why the proposition was created. Neither the Bilingual Education Act or the later amendments to it explain in clear terms what bilingual education means, something that could vary between teaching students in their first language, assisting English-learning with some first language use, or simply teaching English in a structure that would aid these students.<sup>73</sup>

Because of this unclear definition, schools were given the power to decide on a local level how to implement this program, leading to varying levels of success between districts. Research on the success rates of different programs has been hard to perform because there are too many factors that differ between programs to give an accurate comparison. Instead, it has simply become clear that some of the programs work and some don't, district by district. In response to this, Rodriguez claims that the major authors of Proposition 227 were attempting to unify California under a single type of educational instruction and methodology for LEP students that they believed would be successful.<sup>74</sup>

Conversely, Kevin Estep argued that Proposition 227 passed in reaction to a growing perception of the Latino community as a threat by Californian voters. According to Estep, the group with dominant status in California, white English-speakers, felt threatened as California

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<sup>73</sup> Luis Rodriguez, 190, 196-198.

<sup>74</sup> Rodriguez, 190, 219.

became an increasingly minority-majority state. Proposition 227, thus, created an opportunity for that group to regain some of its power by lessening the opportunity for Latino students to have access to resources while simultaneously degrading the perception of that community. He claims, “On the surface, Unz’s comment about high English failure rates seems to be a defense of immigrant students. But such exaggerated claims, regardless of whether they reflect genuine concern or paternalism, tend to make immigrants appear less educated or less motivated than they actually are.”<sup>75</sup>

His argument, which analyzed election outcomes in relation to the success of LEP students in individual voting districts, claims that voters in districts with the highest success rates for Latino students, also experienced the highest levels of perceived threat, and, thus, were the most willing to vote for a proposition that challenged the image of successful LEP student while protecting their dominant status.<sup>76</sup> “If Anglos and other native-born citizens have historically derived esteem from their traditional lifestyle, then they may perceive that their status position is threatened by ethnic diversity, especially when the value of diversity is legitimized by government policies such as the Civil Rights Act or the Bilingual Education Act. Thus, restricting bilingual government services that “coddle” non-English-speaking immigrants and legitimize multiculturalism could be understood as an attempt to defend the *declining* cultural practices of English-speaking citizens and to enforce conformity to those values.”<sup>77</sup> For Estep, with the case of Proposition 227, it becomes apparent Californians were responding to the rise in immigrant populations in the preceding decade by increasing English-only, anti-foreigner legislation in an attempt to restore the status-quo.

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<sup>75</sup> Kevin Estep, “Constructing a Language Problem: Status-Based Power Devaluation and the Threat of Immigrant Inclusion,” *Sociological Perspectives* 60, no. 3 (2017): 441, accessed July 13, 2017, Sage Journals Online.

<sup>76</sup> Estep, 443-444.

<sup>77</sup> Estep, 442.

Johanna J. Haver, author of *English for the Children: Mandated by the People, Skewed by Politicians and Special Interests*, on the other hand, strongly disagrees. She argues that Ron Unz, and his “English for the Children” initiative, Proposition 227 passed due to a strong determination to save thousands of children from languishing in classrooms that were failing to teach them English. She brags, “Ron Unz has contributed to the improvement of the education of English Language learners (ELLs) in this country, probably more than any individual, by shining a light on federal and state policies that were failing children. He constructed his ballot measures carefully, with help from Boston University professor Christine Rossell, and he came up with a feasible alternative to bilingual education. Also, he checked with attorneys regarding education law every step of the way. He had a singular goal: to force the schools into teaching English thoroughly to the mostly Hispanic ELLs.”<sup>78</sup>

Haver, similar to Rodriguez, argues that Californians were dissatisfied with the unorganized fashion in which Bilingual Education was mandated before going even further to claim that the programs were simply not working at all. For her, Proposition 227 simply represented the first victory of many in fixing a broken system of educating immigrants in the United States.<sup>79</sup> Despite forces working against him, Ron Unz brought the problem to California’s attention and presented a solution that would work. She claimed, “Unz had credibility among the California Latino population because of his strong, vocal opposition to Proposition 187 and national identity cards, an issue associated with that initiative. Also, he was well known in that state because of this challenge to Governor Pete Wilson in the 1994 Republican Primary when, at the age of thirty-four, he had drawn 34 percent of the vote away

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<sup>78</sup> Johanna J. Haver, *English for the Children: Mandated by the People, Skewed by Politicians and Special Interests* (Roman and Littlefield Education, 2013), 178, accessed July 9, 2017, Google Books.

<sup>79</sup> Haver, 29-31.

from the incumbent. Anyone with less impressive credentials and money to invest in the movement would likely have been defeated because of the powerful entities determined to maintain bilingual education programs.”<sup>80</sup> For Haver, Unz’s passion for educating California students was what convinced voters of the necessity of passing Proposition 227.

After examining three different perspectives on why Proposition 227 passed, it becomes apparent that no one can quite agree on why the proposition passed. Rodriguez breaks down how legislation was created and interpreted in order to explain why the proposition was thought necessary while Estep pinpoints a clash of cultures as the main reason behind the success of the proposition while Haver offers yet another approach, citing the passion of one man to fix a broken system as the guiding momentum behind the proposition approval. Overall it is evident that, despite this lack of agreement on why the proposition did pass, Proposition 227 marked a significant change in policy concerning the education of Limited English Proficiency students within California, and, thus, requires further investigation.

Following this thorough examination of why Proposition 227 may have passed in 1998, it becomes important to look back at what beliefs educators, parents, and everyday people held of bilingual education, the program that was in place, at the time of the proposition’s passage. In order to best understand why Proposition 227 was thought to be necessary, one should study the prior program in place, and attempt to determine what it may have been lacking.

One way of looking at this question, was that of Steven K. Lee in “The Latino Students’ Attitudes, Perceptions, and Views on Bilingual Education.” His article evaluates a study that surveyed 280 limited English proficient students across seven Californian schools.<sup>81</sup> The

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<sup>80</sup> Haver, 32.

<sup>81</sup> Steven K. Lee, “The Latino Students’ Attitudes, Perceptions, and Views on Bilingual Education,” *Bilingual Research Journal* 30, no.1 (March 2006): 110-111, accessed August 1, 2017, ERIC.

survey's focal point was determining how the students perceived the bilingual education programs that they were in, both from an educational perspective as well as a social development perspective. Lee found that the majority of students believed that the purpose of bilingual education programs was either to solely work towards transitioning to English or to teach both languages; only a small minority believed the programs were aimed at teaching Spanish.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, a majority of students also were found saying that bilingual education programs aided them academically. "Perhaps the most striking data in this study are the view that bilingual education is helpful to their educational experience (90%). This correlates very well with their support for bilingual education (86%)."<sup>83</sup> Overall, Lee argues that while some students preferred to be put in mainstream classes in order to participate socially in school, the majority of limited English proficient students found bilingual education to be a valuable tool in their academic schooling.<sup>84</sup>

Conversely, in "Latino Immigrant Parents' Views of Bilingual Education as a vehicle for Heritage Preservation," Pete Farruggio analyzes the views of Latino Parents in California. He interviewed a relatively small sample of 58 parents with limited English proficient students, whose children were placed in both the mainstream and bilingual education programs mostly in accordance with the parent's preferences. The interview questions asked about the purpose and success of bilingual education classrooms in California, especially in relation to Spanish heritage and language maintenance.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Lee, 115

<sup>83</sup> Lee, 116.

<sup>84</sup> Lee, 118.

<sup>85</sup> Pete Farruggio, "Latino Immigrant Parents' Views of Bilingual Education as a vehicle for Heritage Preservation," *Journal of Latinos and Education* 9, no. 1 (January 2010): 6-9, accessed August 3, 2017, ERIC.

Farruggio claims that many parents choose bilingual education as a means for their children to learn both Spanish and English in the classroom. For them, bilingual education allows them to stay a part of their children's schooling. "When asked a series of questions about their children's identity and the prospect of returning to their home countries someday, almost all parents realized and accepted that their children's future lay in the United States. Fewer than one fourth of the participants, almost all heritage supporters, voiced any desire to return themselves. However, none argued for complete assimilation into U.S. society. Those who spoke about heritage generally agreed that the Spanish language should serve as a tool for preserving Latino cultural values and family unity."<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore, in addition to helping preserve Spanish, all of the parents with children in bilingual classrooms believed that their children were learning effectively in both languages. Conversely, a number of parents with children in mainstream classrooms felt that their children were struggling with English and had lost all of their Spanish. Still others, felt that separate Spanish instruction at home was the key to both maintaining Spanish and learning English effectively.<sup>87</sup> To sum things up, Farruggio concluded that Latino parents of limited English proficient children largely agree that bilingual education classes help preserve Spanish and the cultural heritage of their children while effectively teaching their children, and even those with children in English-only classrooms felt that learning Spanish at home helped their children learn more effectively in school.

Looking further, Michael D. Gurrero offers yet another perspective in "Spanish Academic Language Proficiency: The Case of Bilingual Education Teachers in the US". In this article, he lays out the problems that schools face when attempting to hire effective bilingual

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<sup>86</sup> Farruggio, 11.

<sup>87</sup> Farruggio, 13-16.



teachers. Gurrero argues that the majority of these teachers lack the level of academic Spanish to teach effectively in all the core subjects. For him, all it takes is looking at how academic English is developed in contrast to how academic Spanish is developed in the United States.<sup>88</sup>

For English, students spend kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in English classes before spending an additional four years being taught in English classrooms at the University, adding up to 17 years of English instruction for future teachers of English. Spanish instruction, on the other hand, is much more haphazard with some students learning Spanish, but usually not academic Spanish, in the home before spending an hour a day learning Spanish in high school and maybe a few hours a week learning Spanish at the university level. Due to this haphazard learning, many prospective teachers lack the lexicons necessary to teach Spanish at an academic level, let alone in a multitude of subjects.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, Gurrero argues that despite these shortages of bilingual education teachers schools cannot be picky when choosing who to hire. “The present infrastructure for developing Spanish academic language proficiency cannot support the development of high levels of proficiency in the language. Further, given the great demand for and short supply of bilingual education teachers, too high of a standard may be met by resistance on the part of teacher training institutions and local schools pressed desperately for bilingual education teachers.”<sup>90</sup> He ends with the admission that the problems that bilingual education face don’t seem like they’ll be solved quickly, and that it will be up to individual teachers to determine whether or not they continue advancing their academic Spanish or not.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Michael D. Guerrero, “Spanish Academic Language Proficiency: The Case of Bilingual Education Teachers in the US,” *Bilingual Research Journal*, 21, no. 1 (1997): 65-84 , accessed August 5, 2017, ClicSearch.

<sup>89</sup> Gurrero, 68-69.

<sup>90</sup> Gurrero, 76.

<sup>91</sup> Gurrero, 78-79.

To put it briefly, both Lee and Farruggio provide an inside look into how bilingual education was functioning for both students and parents. Lee argues that limited English proficient students find bilingual education to be an effective way to progress academically while transitioning to English. Similarly, Farruggio claims that parents of limited English proficient students depend on bilingual education, whether in school or at home to maintain Spanish while learning English. Gurrero presents the sole opinion that bilingual education really isn't functioning as it should be due to inadequate Spanish teachers, but rather than suggesting that bilingual education be ended, he suggests that the system for teaching academic Spanish be reformed. Overall, these three authors demonstrate a well of support for bilingual education both in California and the United States, right as California passed a proposition that ended it.

Having investigated different perspectives surrounding the passage of Proposition 227, an analysis of why the proposition passed can begin. When examining why the controversial Proposition 227 was passed in California, it becomes important to both understand what the perception of the current program of bilingual education was as well as how the new proposition was presented to the voting public. First the perceptions of educational professionals will be analyzed before moving on to the perceptions of the main author, and supporter, of Proposition 227, Ron Unz. Following that, both written and televised news portrayals of the controversy will be investigated in order to understand how the proposition was depicted to voters. These analyses should provide insight into how such a controversial proposition was passed.

As previously stated, it is important to understand how educators in California viewed bilingual education just before Proposition 227 was introduced. Examining a hearing, *Field Hearing on H.R. 6, Challenge for the Future: Educational Opportunities for California's Youth: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the*

*Committee on Education and Labor*, before the U.S. Congress, in which California educators address the state of bilingual education in California in October 1993 will do just that. Then, an educational report *Review of Research on the Instruction of Limited English Proficient Students: A Report to the California Legislature* by Patricia Gandara that was heard before the California Legislature as well as the school board meeting minutes of the Los Angeles Unified School District will further provide insight into how bilingual education was viewed by professionals in education.

First, the *Field Hearing on H.R. 6, Challenge for the Future: Educational Opportunities for California's Youth: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor* will be explored. The hearing discussed a bill that would raise the funding in schools both with many children in bilingual education programs as well as those with a high percentage of children below the poverty line. While the panels were limited to speakers that worked with or within the Los Angeles school system, the panelists still managed to provide a wide range of perspectives and voices from a district with 275,000 out of 600,000 students being classified as LEP. The panelists ranged from the superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District to an elementary school teacher to the director of the Los Angeles Juvenile Probation Department.<sup>92</sup>

Principal Chou of the Alhambra School district provided one example of how bilingual education was functioning within her own school in California,

“I also would like to let you know that the Alhambra School District, as well as Alhambra High School has been very active in getting our bilingual program into the way we think it should be. The district has put in a lot of resources. In earlier days we were able to get some Title, VII fundings. In those days, as you now, the Title VI funding was for three years only, and once the three years are up, it's up. So, the district had utilized whatever the money and the resources possible to continue with the services. We were really up to the capacity building language in the

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<sup>92</sup> *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor*, HR 6, 103<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 1st sess., October 4, 1993, 6, 11, 12, accessed April 1, 2017, ERIC.

legislation. However, after what has happened to California, the State had not been able to provide the resources that we used to have, so we could not enjoy what we were able to do.”<sup>93</sup>

She continued on, speaking heavily of the lack of funding as well as the lack of available teachers that were trained in providing bilingual education in core subjects for the school and painting an image of a program that was doomed to fail from the beginning.<sup>94</sup>

Similarly, other panelists repeated the same narrative. Superintendent Thomson of the Los Angeles United Schools District maintained that bilingual education has succeeded in Los Angeles schools, but that the district lacked the funding to truly create an environment conducive to learning. Ms. Elva Flores, a bilingual instructor at Eastman Elementary, spoke of her own experience teaching in a bilingual program,

“I have over 15 years of teaching experience and so I have had the benefit of implementing research-based methodology and curriculum designs. More importantly, I truly believe my students have benefited from bilingual education.”<sup>95</sup>

For those working within Los Angeles school districts that spoke at this hearing, bilingual education was something that very clearly worked, but only when it had the resources to do so.

Looking further into how professionals in education viewed bilingual education in California, in 1997, a group of researchers from the Education Policy Center of the University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute presented a report before the California legislature, making the case that bilingual education, referring to programs that used primary language instruction, is effective when given the resources necessary to succeed. The group had been tasked by the Latino Caucus of California to provide evidence, if found, that bilingual education had been successful. Patricia Gandara laid out their conclusions as well as the limitations of their study,

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<sup>93</sup>HR 6, *Hearing*, 29

<sup>94</sup>HR 6, *Hearing*, 30.

<sup>95</sup>HR 6, *Hearing*, 13-15, 52.

“Our essential conclusion is that while no single program is best for all children under all circumstances, a well-implemented bilingual program can provide outcomes "at least" as positive as a well implemented English only program and has the added advantage of potentially providing students with a second language --a considerable asset. It is only fair to note that had we been challenged to provide all sides of the debate, our conclusions would not have differed greatly, given that they are based on a considered analysis of the best empirical data we have been able to locate in the literature.”<sup>96</sup>

The report included findings from 1997 by the National Research Council that primary language instruction doesn't hinder the learning of English and that LEP students in primary language instruction programs often were the most successful in the long-term in understanding English. It also included multiple additional studies that found that primary language classrooms, when compared to other programs that used specialized English instruction, had similar success rate in learning English but had much higher primary language maintenance rates.<sup>97</sup> Concluding, the report noted that bilingual programs could be implemented correctly, but only 30% of students were currently being taught in classrooms with primary language instruction and, thus, California would need an additional 21,000 instructors, among other resources, for full implementation to occur.<sup>98</sup>

Following these findings, the school board meeting minutes of the Los Angeles Unified School District will provide insight into what bilingual education was like in a district that implemented it for almost half of its student population. In a school board meeting held on November 29, 1993, it was explained that the L.A. Unified School District was in violation of state standards for LEP students.,

“At the request of the President, the Superintendent explained that the District would request a waiver to allow the use of four pupil-free days to conduct a State Department of Education

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<sup>96</sup> Patricia Gandara, *Review of Research on the Instruction of Limited English Proficient Students: A Report to the California Legislature*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Linguistic Minority Research Inst., 1997): 4, accessed February 15, 2017, ERIC.

<sup>97</sup> Gandara, 9, 11, 23-24, 27.

<sup>98</sup> Gandara, 13-14, 17.

required LEP training program at 79 schools. He stated that the District had been found to be non-compliant with State mandates at the secondary school level in regard to the LEP program and was now required to comply or risk losing \$60 million.”<sup>99</sup>

After this explanation, the school board voted to approve the waiver and meet the federal standards. Similar to the explanations given by educators in *Field Hearing 6*, it appears that bilingual education programs in Los Angeles schools were perceived as having the capacity to be successful, but the schools were not always meeting the standards necessary in order to do so. In this hearing, the school board was working to remedy those deficits.

Following an examination of these examples, it is unmistakable that educational professionals viewed bilingual education as a program that could be very successful, but often lacked the resources to do so. In contrast to this viewpoint, Ron Unz, the author and face of Proposition 227, makes it clear that he views bilingual education as a failed program in both his personal blog, *The Unz Review*, and in televised interviews that he gave on the subject. Delving into those sources will best articulate his opinions on the matter and why he introduced the proposition.

While still gaining signatures for his initial petition, Unz outlined his main arguments, arguments that would appear again and again as the focal points for the initiative, in his blog, *The Unz Review: An Alternative Media Selection*. He began by asserting that bilingual education was a failing program, claiming that LEP children in California were not learning English because they were not being taught English in bilingual programs,

“...Many of America’s own public schools have stopped teaching English to young children from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Influenced by avant-garde pedagogy and multiculturalist ideology, educational administrators have adopted a system of bilingual education that is usually “bilingual” in name only.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Los Angeles Unified School Board Meeting Minutes, November 23, 1993. Accessed from UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, Box 680, 1. Digitization.

<sup>100</sup> Ron Unz, “Bilingualism vs. Bilingual Education,” *The Unz Review: An Alternative Media Selection* (blog), June 11, 1997, accessed April 8, 2017, <http://www.unz.com/runz/bilingualism-vs-bilingual-education/?highlight=Bilingual+education>.

Furthermore, Unz went on to attribute the failure of the bilingual education to the government funding provided to school for the educating of LEP students. He argued that as long as a student remains classified as LEP, the school receives more funding, and, thus, is incentivized to keep the child in the program for as long as possible. Because of this, schools don't encourage their instructors to teach students English and have perpetuated the myth that it takes children up to 7 years to learn a language, a myth that Unz maintained was nonsensical.

For those simple reasons, Unz created and offered Proposition 227 as an alternative to a failing program,

“All of California’s immigrant schoolchildren finally will be granted the right to be taught English, the universal language of advancement and opportunity, supplementing their own family languages.”<sup>101</sup>

With his campaign, he promised to teach English to the children in a rapid and effective manner, whereas bilingual education, according to him and other prominent supporters, had not done so previously.

Similarly, in one-on-one televised interviews, he criticized bilingual education programs in California on the basis that they teach Spanish instead of English, the language of business in America. In an interview with Sue Perez on *Our Town*, which aired in Santa Ana on KTBN, Unz explained,

“Under the current system we have right now, enormous numbers of immigrant children, especially Hispanic immigrant children, are being denied the right to be taught to read and write English properly, so many of them leave the public schools being illiterate in the public language.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Unz.

<sup>102</sup> *Our Town*, KTBN Santa Ana, aired January 29, 1998, on KTBN/Santa Ana accessed December 30, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5aVZX\\_GdSE&index=5&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOver3HJUTKdwr-8yhcos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5aVZX_GdSE&index=5&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOver3HJUTKdwr-8yhcos), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgP6b7\\_zN6M&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOver3HJUTKdwr-8yhcos&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgP6b7_zN6M&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOver3HJUTKdwr-8yhcos&index=4), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3OZjomLWEk&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOver3HJUTKdwr-8yhcos&index=3>

With Proposition 227, he promised to remedy that violation of rights and teach students English from the moment they enter the school.

Moreover, he criticized the California Legislature for keeping students in broken bilingual education programs, which he says are costing taxpayers close to \$2 billion dollars per academic year while failing to carry out their purpose. On Newswatch, which aired in Palo Alto, he informed the host, Mike Cobb, that it is only because of legislative inaction that he found it necessary to introduce Proposition 227,

“The law governing bilingual education in California expired 11 years ago, and for 11 straight years, the state legislature’s been deadlocked on the issue of either renewing the law, or modifying it, or reforming it, or doing something about it. So, in other words, the state department of education has continued for 11 straight years to invigorously enforce an expired state law.”<sup>103</sup>

With both his personal blog articles and the interviews that he gave, it is obvious that Ron Unz believed that bilingual education had failed by 1997 and that Proposition 227 would right that wrong.

Now that it is understood how both Californian educators and Ron Unz, the face of Proposition 227, perceived bilingual education at the time of the initiative’s introduction, one can move onto an analysis of how the campaign for Proposition 227 was portrayed by the media. News coverage from major newspapers such as *The Los Angeles Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Sacramento Bee*, and *La Opinión* will show what readers were hearing about the proposition. Furthermore, *La Opinión* will show what the Spanish-speaking, Latino community was told about an initiative, which would disproportionately affect them. Besides this, coverage

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<sup>103</sup> Newswatch, Cable co-op/Palo Alto, aired April 1, 1998, on Cable Co-op/Palo Alto, accessed January 3, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajlcYb48tH4&index=17&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVl1mnt\\_zREsgtEISmMVUPsk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajlcYb48tH4&index=17&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVl1mnt_zREsgtEISmMVUPsk), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDfH35G57iM&index=16&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVl1mnt\\_zREsgtEISmMVUPsk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDfH35G57iM&index=16&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVl1mnt_zREsgtEISmMVUPsk), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWkP1MKXfDc&index=15&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVl1mnt\\_zREsgtEISmMVUPsk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWkP1MKXfDc&index=15&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVl1mnt_zREsgtEISmMVUPsk)



on both local and national television station will showcase what the viewing audience heard about the proposition through both news announcements and televised debates. This media coverage should provide strong insight into what information voters had when entering the voting booth on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, where they ultimately passed Proposition 227 into law.

Starting with articles in the *Los Angeles Times*, when examining the narrative surrounding Proposition 227 from its initial proposal to its passage on June 2, 1998, it is clearly evident that the proposition was considered controversial since day one. Nick Anderson, “English-Only Campaign Turns in First Petitions”, introduced the proposition to his readers with an inflammatory tone,

“Aiming for a showdown vote in June, critics of bilingual education on Thursday turned in the first batch of voter signatures needed for a statewide measure that would require all-English instruction in classrooms.”<sup>104</sup>

He then went on to explain the two sides of the issue with the proposers of the initiative promising to teach the children English while the opposition accuses them of a hugely deceptive campaign supporting an extreme measure.<sup>105</sup>

As the campaign continued, the *Los Angeles Times* continued to report the initiative as a divisive one, with most articles announcing endorsements or opposition to the proposition. With titles reading: “Asian American Leaders Endorse Prop. 227”, “Gulf of California: Prop. 227 Splits Teachers”, “Santa Ana School Board Opposes Prop. 227”, “L.A. Latinos Join Forces to Save Bilingual Classes”, and “Wilson Backs Ballot Measure to Ban Bilingual Education”, it is clear that the *Los Angeles Times* spotlighted how Prop. 227 was dividing Californians and who was on each side of the division.

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<sup>104</sup> Nick Anderson, “English-Only Campaign Turns in First Petitions,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1997, accessed April 5, 2017, <http://www.onenation.org/article/english-only-campaign-turns-in-first-petitions/>.

<sup>105</sup> Anderson.

A couple of articles manage to briefly touch on what the proposition will do and the supporting and opposing arguments at hand. In “School Officials Say Proposition 227 Could Cost Area \$100 Million” the cost of the initiative is heavily discussed,

“District Budget Director Marty Varon told the committee that about \$73 million in state anti-poverty funds, \$25 million in state integration funds and \$6 million in federal funds could be lost if bilingual education is scrapped, but that about \$20 million the district pays for bilingual educational might be returned to the general fund.”<sup>106</sup>

And in “Voting with their Feet”, which reported on a vote “no” march in May 1998, the arguments of each side are briefly articulated. First it explains the proposition,

“Co-sponsored by Silicon Valley entrepreneur Ron K. Unz, Proposition 227, also known as "English for the Children," will be on the ballot Tuesday. The initiative seeks to place children with limited English, about 1.4 million statewide, into mainstream classes after about a year of English immersion. With limited exceptions, it would effectively end the practice of teaching in languages other than English.”

Then, it dedicates a sentence to each side,

“A recent Los Angeles Times Poll indicated that two-thirds of Orange County's registered voters would support Proposition 227. Some Latino and Asian American activists have endorsed the measure, arguing that it would be a step to overhaul a failing system. But critics contend that getting rid of native language instruction would leave immigrant students at a severe disadvantage. Others argue that the initiative is racist and anti-immigrant.”<sup>107</sup>

Yet, surprisingly enough, most of the articles inflame the divisions between voters and report on who supported each side rather than reporting on any substantive articulation of their arguments. For example, in “Asian American Leaders Endorse Prop. 227”, the article focuses on showing the support immigrant communities, the communities that would be most affected by the initiative, have for the initiative. It directs most of its attention to polling and endorsements,

“According to the latest statewide poll, in March by the Field Poll, based in San Francisco, 70% of voters are in favor of the initiative, with Asian Americans solidly backing the measure by a 6-to-1 ratio--more than among whites or any other ethnic group. Of the 1,178 voters surveyed, 75%

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<sup>106</sup> “School Officials say Prop. 227 could Cost Area \$100 Million,” *LA Times*, May 15, 1998, accessed January 10, 2018, <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/may/15/local/me-50053>

<sup>107</sup> Roberto J. Manzano, “Voting with their Feet,” *LA Times*, May 30, 1998, accessed January 11, 2018, <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/may/30/local/me-54813>

of Asians, 71% of whites, 63% of blacks and 61% of Latinos indicated that they would vote for the measure”

rather than spending time explaining the arguments in favor of the initiative. The article devotes just a brief explanation of the proposition, ““Proponents of Proposition 227, which seeks to dismantle bilingual education statewide...”<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, in “Santa Ana School Board Opposes Prop. 227”, the article highlights the controversial aspect of the Santa Ana School Board’s opposition to the proposition rather than on the arguments either side was making for or against Prop. 227. Instead, Hamashige makes clear that Santa Ana is the school district in which the co-author of the initiative, Gloria Matta-Tuchman, has her own classroom, and that her district just passed a resolution against it. Going even further, the article calls attention to Tuchman’s absence in a provocative manner, “Matta Tuchman was not at the public hearing Tuesday night, which Trustee Rob Balen called ‘cowardly.’ She was not available for comment Wednesday”.<sup>109</sup>

Even in “L.A. Latinos Join Forces to Save Bilingual Classes”, which was coverage that was almost exclusively on the vote “no” campaign, the article turns its attention to how the campaign was carried out and funded rather than on what its main arguments against the initiative were.

“Opponents so far lack the money for a major media blitz. They are fighting a proposal that is popular with a cross-section of voters. And they are turning to grass-roots organizers and the activist establishment to spread the word that 227 is a bad idea.”

It even showcases their successes without touching on the arguments they’re making,

“A Times poll taken a month ago showed that the measure had strong support among registered voters and was favored even by a slim majority of Latino voters. But campaign leaders and several outside political observers say they have seen evidence that Latino voters are turning

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<sup>108</sup> Tini Tran, “Asian American Leaders Endorse Prop. 227,” *LA Times*, April 10, 1998, accessed January 11, 2018, <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/apr/10/local/me-37976>

<sup>109</sup> Hope Hamashige, “Santa Ana School Board Opposes Prop. 227,” *LA Times*, April 16, 1998, accessed January 11, 2018, <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/apr/16/local/me-39942>

against Proposition 227 as the campaign heats up, and they believe that the overall 65%-24% margin has narrowed since the poll was conducted.”<sup>110</sup>

Having looked at the articles on Proposition 227 in the *Los Angeles Times*, it’s clear that the newspaper was reporting on divisions and incendiary quotes rather than on substance in regard to explaining the differing sides on the issue. The few articles that do touch on it are brief, and often concentrate more on explaining what the initiative proposes than whether someone should vote for or against it. Moving on to study how the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on the initiative will determine whether or not this was par for the course.

Following an investigation of how the *San Francisco Chronicle* portrayed Proposition 227, it is clear that this newspaper scrutinized how the California Board of Education, the California Legislature, and the United States Federal Government responded to the initiative. In doing so, the articles, with titles like “Bilingual Education Dealt a Blow: State Abandon Policy, Leaves it up to Districts”, “State’s Bilingual Decision Muddies Prop. 227 Debate: Initiative Contradicts New State Policy”, “Clinton Takes Stand Against Prop. 227”, “Education Secretary Blasts Proposition 227”, and “Wilson Veteos Bill, Pushes 227: Initiative’s Backers Fear Backlash, Doesn’t want His Help” manage to consider Proposition 227 in depth as a policy rather than a divisive issue the way the *Los Angeles Times* did.

As previously stated, many of the articles deal with how the state responds to Proposition 227’s introduction from March 13, 1998 to May 19, 1998. Following a decision by the State Board of Education, which allowed local districts the option to teach English-only classes, the article, “Bilingual Education Dealt a Blow: State Abandons Policy, Leaves it up to Districts” argues that the direct cause of the decision was rising unhappiness with bilingual education, but that that didn’t necessarily mean that Proposition 227 was the answer,

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<sup>110</sup> Jean Merl, “L.A. Latinos Join Forces to Save Bilingual Classes,” *LA Times*, May 10, 1998, accessed January 10, 2018, <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/may/10/local/me-48283>

“Some districts, waving the banner of ‘‘local control,’’ praised the state move even as they denounced Proposition 227. ‘‘Delivery of bilingual programs should be determined by school districts based on their needs,’’ said Linda Mayo, a Mt. Diablo school board member. ‘‘It should not be mandated by the state, because every school district has a different population that they need to serve.’’ Concord High School junior Robbie Donohoe, 17, agreed.”

Instead of advocating directly for bilingual education or Proposition 227, the author wonders how this implementation of local control will affect the campaign moving forward.<sup>111</sup>

Likewise, in “State’s Bilingual Decision Muddies Prop. 227: Debate Initiative Contradicts New State Policy”, it is argued that that same State Board of Education decision changed what the vote for Proposition 227 was about,

“The state Board of Education's decision to let school districts teach immigrant children only in English is expected to profoundly change the debate over Proposition 227, a June ballot measure that would ban bilingual instruction altogether. Until the board's decision Thursday, the bilingual controversy centered on how best to teach children who speak little English. Now, with the state's 1,000 school districts allowed to make their own bilingual education choices, the debate moves into the contentious realm of local versus state control.”

Going even further, it calls those who would continue to argue for Proposition 227 “hypocrites”. The author seems to be saying that this third option of allowing schools to decide for themselves how to teach limited English proficient students solves the problems for both sides of the issue.<sup>112</sup>

In a similar manner, the *San Francisco Chronicle* also touts the passage of a bill by the California State Legislature in May 1998 that would ultimately allow districts to decide how they would individually teach children English, with an expected time period of 2-3 years for success. In “‘English Only’ Alternate Offered Bill Would Let Districts Decide”, the bill is described in contrast to Proposition 227,

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<sup>111</sup> Nanette Asimov, “Bilingual Education Dealt a Blow: State Abandons Policy, Leaves it up to Districts,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 13, 1998, accessed January 15, 2018. Newsbank.com.

<sup>112</sup> Nanette Asimov, “State’s Bilingual Decision Muddies Prop. 227 Debate Initiative Contradicts New State Policy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14, 1998, accessed January 15, 2018, Newsbank.com

“Proposition 227 would make it illegal to teach children in any language but English, and would let parents sue teachers who failed to comply. Children would be held out of academic classes for one year while they studied English. By contrast, the Alpert bill approved yesterday would let school districts choose from several teaching methods and would require that the program be changed if children failed to learn English within two years.”

The author even appears to criticize Ron Unz for his lack of evidence of bilingual education’s failure as well as his opinion of the new bill,

“Unz seemed gleeful yesterday as he contemplated his role in forcing state lawmakers to try to reform bilingual education -- a system perceived as dysfunctional largely because children take so long to graduate into the mainstream program. ‘The notion of the state Legislature passing a bill dealing with bilingual education when the election is less than a month away -- when they did nothing for 11 straight years -- explains why people don't have a tremendous amount of confidence in state government,’ Unz said.”<sup>113</sup>

Despite the *San Francisco Chronicle*’s apparent support for a third option, local control, in place of bilingual education or the passing of Proposition 227, it still manages to report on arguments of elected officials for those two sides as well. In “Clinton Takes Stand Against Prop. 227”, President Bill Clinton’s arguments are explained in a clear and concise manner:

“In coming out strongly against the measure yesterday, Clinton's Education Department provided the following for Californians to consider:

- -- The “best research” available suggests that a one-year immersion program would be “a major mistake,” said acting Deputy Education Secretary Marshall Smith.
- -- The initiative may run afoul of federal civil rights laws, because U.S. court rulings have required schools to make accommodations for national-origin minority students with limited English proficiency.
- -- A more reasonable national goal -- not requirement -- would be a three-year limit on bilingual education.”<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, in “Wilson Vetoes Bill, Pushes 227: Initiative’s Backers Fear Backlash, Doesn’t Want His Help”, in which Californian Governor Pete Wilson vetoes the previously-mentioned

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<sup>113</sup> Nanette Asimov, “English Only Alternate Offered Bill would let Districts Decide,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 5, 1998, accessed January 15, 2018, Newsbank.com.

<sup>114</sup> “Clinton Takes Stand Against Prop. 227,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 28, 1998, accessed January 15, 2018, Newsbank.com

legislative bill that would give school districts local control and lends his endorsement to Proposition 227, Wilson's opinions are made clear,

“In his veto message, Wilson declared, ‘Bilingual education in California has been a serious failure. It has done a serious disservice by keeping (limited-English proficiency) students dependent on their primary language for far too long.’ Wilson said he was backing Proposition 227 because it dramatically shortens the length of time pupils will be kept in bilingual programs.”<sup>115</sup>

Overall, the *San Francisco Chronicle* appears to have focused its reporting on how elected officials considered the proposition, with limited reporting of polls and studies on the issue, and no articulation of the points of view of the educators and immigrant communities that would be affected if it passed. It does a more thorough job of explaining the arguments on each side despite its apparent favoring of a third option, than the *Los Angeles Times*, but still manages to ignore important viewpoints to be considered. Having come to this understanding, the *Sacramento Bee* can now be examined.

In many ways the reporting of Proposition 227 by the *Sacramento Bee* was very similar to how it was reported by *San Francisco Chronicle*. From the beginning, the newspaper reports heavily on the State Board of Education decision as well as the California Legislature's bill as a third option, but in contrast, it also weighs in heavily on polling and on sharing the opinions of educators and Ron Unz. With titles such as “Bilingual Decision Creates a Prop. 227 Paradox”, “Bid to Bar Bilingual Teaching Keeps a Big Lead”, “Divided Assembly Approves Bilingual Education Bill”, “No on Prop. 227: Bilingual Initiative is a Dangerous Experiment with Kids”, “Local Control under Prop. 227: A Key Issue, Some Bilingual Education Foes Dislike Initiative”,

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<sup>115</sup> Robert B. Gunnison, “Wilson Vetoes Bill, Pushes 227, Initiative's Backer Fears Backlash, Doesn't want His Help.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 19, 1998, accessed January 15, 2018, Newsbank.com.

and “Spanish-TV Mogul Funds Prop. 227 Foes”, it appears that a variety of issues will be covered from all sides.

From the State Board of Education’s decision past Governor Wilson’s veto of the Legislature’s bill, the *Sacramento Bee* brings the aim of the Proposition 227 debate to a debate on local control. In “Bilingual Decision Creates a Prop. 227 Paradox”, which explains the State Board of Education decision to let schools decide whether to have bilingual or “English-only” classrooms, the opinions of voters are made clear,

“What may be even more important about the board decision, however, is its potential impact on Proposition 227, the English for the Children Initiative backed by Silicon Valley entrepreneur Ron Unz, which is on the June ballot and which would severely curtail bilingual education in California. All polls indicate that more than 65 percent of Californians support it. But because the polls also show the same voters strongly supporting local control in choosing educational strategies, it’s on that issue that opponents of Proposition 227 are taking their stand. And local control, of course, is precisely what the state board decision now seems to mandate for California’s bilingual education decisions.”<sup>116</sup>

Similarly, in “Divided Assembly Approves Bilingual Education Bill”, a third option, which would represent a compromise between bilingual education and Proposition 227 is advocated for with the passage of the bilingual education bill by the California Legislature,

“‘It is not a perfect solution,’ Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles, said of SB 6. ‘I say to you, neither is the Unz initiative, neither is the status quo.’ The bill, which passed the Senate last year, cleared the Assembly 50-27. It now goes back to the Senate, where it is expected to pass again...the Alpert bill would give districts the ability to decide what type of bilingual education to offer, provided that it is based on sound theory.”<sup>117</sup>

With Governor Wilson’s veto of the bill, which is explained in “Wilson Vetoes Bilingual Bill, Backs Prop. 227”, the *Sacramento Bee* quickly appears critical of his decision, reporting a number of highly critical quotes by those who disagreed with him,

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<sup>116</sup> Peter Schrag, “Bilingual Decision Creates A Prop. 227 Paradox,” *Sacramento Bee*, March 18, 1998, accessed January 14, 2018. Newsbank.com

<sup>117</sup> Mary Lynne Vellinga, “Divided Assembly Approves Bilingual Education Bill,” *Sacramento Bee*, April 21, 1998, accessed January 14, 2018, Newsbank.com.



“However, Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles, said he was ‘appalled but not surprised’ at Wilson's veto of the local-choice bill and support for Proposition 227. He said the governor has a history of supporting divisive ballot measures. ‘This is indicative of a governor who doesn't want to solve problems. He'd rather point fingers,’ Villaraigosa said.”

With such an inflammatory tone to the article, it is clear that the author had supported the bill.<sup>118</sup>

Even after the veto, with articles such as “Local Control Under Prop. 227: A Key Issue, Some Bilingual Education Foes Dislike Initiative,” where the Superintendent of an “English-Only” school is advocating for local control rather than Proposition 227,

“The governor also said Proposition 227 “was not inspired by any one person,” but by “whole communities of people,” including the 7,000 limited-English-proficient students of the Orange Unified School District in Orange County. But talk to the superintendent of Orange Unified, and he'll tell you that local control is exactly the point. “I'm a real proponent for English-only, but I'm an Unz opponent,” said Robert French, superintendent of Orange Unified, referring to Proposition 227 author Ron Unz. “What I see is a law being thrust upon schools that didn't originate out of the needs of kids at local school districts,” French said in a recent interview. “It's bound for failure.”<sup>119</sup>

It is unmistakable that local control is an issue that the *Sacramento Bee* wants its readers to be concerned with.

Moving away from the issue of local control, it also becomes clear that the *Sacramento Bee* made an effort to keep the audience informed of campaign developments including polls and TV and radio ad campaigns. In “Bid to Bar Bilingual Teaching Keeps Big Lead”, the results from late polling are described,

“Overall, Thursday's poll found 70 percent of likely voters surveyed favoring Proposition 227, with 20 percent opposed and 10 percent undecided. By comparison, 66 percent of those surveyed last month said they would vote yes on the measure, 27 percent said they would vote no, and 7 percent were undecided.”

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<sup>118</sup> Jon Matthews, “Wilson Vetoes Bilingual Bill, Backs Prop. 227,” *Sacramento Bee*, May 19, 1998, accessed January 15, 2018, Newsbank.com.

<sup>119</sup> Phil Garcia, “Local Control under Prop. 227: A Key Issue, some Bilingual Education Foes Dislike Initiative,” *Sacramento Bee*, May 20, 1998, accessed January 14, 2018. Newsbank.com.

Following a demographic breakdown of the polling, it let each side voice their support or criticisms of the poll,

“Proponents of the measure, sponsored by Silicon Valley software entrepreneur Ron Unz, praised the latest voter survey findings...but Holli Thier, spokeswoman for the No on Proposition 227 campaign, said the poll doesn't reflect voter concerns about local control. ‘School districts need flexibility to teach children English, and that Proposition 227, with its \$50 million-a-year spending and one-year sink or swim plan, is not going to teach California's schoolchildren English,’ Thier said.”<sup>120</sup>

In regard to television and radio advertisements, the *Sacramento Bee* reported on ads from both sides. In “Prop. 227 Radio Ads Airing in L.A. Area: Two Spots Tout Anti-bilingual Ed Measure”, four radio ads for Proposition 227 were described as having both Latino parents and School Teachers speaking out for the initiative, to reach the groups that will be most affected by the initiative,

“Two ads, both 60-second spots with English and Spanish versions, are airing in the Los Angeles market, said Sheri Annis, Unz campaign spokeswoman. She said the ads are expected to run later in other markets statewide. Overall, the Unz campaign will run four English/Spanish radio ads in support of Proposition 227 and eventually hopes to buy time on television, Annis said.”<sup>121</sup>

In a likewise manner, “Spanish-TV Mogul Funds Prop. 227 Foes” describes television ads run against Proposition 227 by Jerrold Perenchio, the Chairman of Univision Communications Inc. The ads were made for English-speaking audiences and emphasized the opposition to *Proposition 227* from all four gubernatorial candidates.<sup>122</sup>

To put it briefly, the *Sacramento Bee* articles focused primarily on advocating for local control while still managing to follow polling and campaign tactics. Like both the *Los Angeles*

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<sup>120</sup> Phil Garcia, “Bid to Bar Bilingual Teaching Keeps Big Lead.” *Sacramento Bee*, March 30, 1998, accessed January 14, 2018, Newsbank.com

<sup>121</sup> Phil Garcia, “Prop. 227 Radio Ads Airing in L.A. Area: Two Spots Tout Anti-bilingual ED Measure,” *Sacramento Bee*, May 12, 1998, accessed January 14, 2018, Newsbank.com

<sup>122</sup> Phil Garcia, “Spanish-TV Mogul Funds Prop. 227 Foes,” *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1998, accessed January 14, 2018, Newsbank.com.

*Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Sacramento Bee* still lacked in substance when it came to explaining the arguments for and against Proposition 227, often barely explaining the initiative, itself. Turning to *La Opinión*, this newspaper should provide insight into how the proposition was portrayed to the Spanish-speaking, Latino community, the community most affected by Proposition 227, by a Spanish newspaper.

Immediately, it was apparent that *La Opinión* felt that Proposition 227 was an important issue to cover. Almost twice as many articles about the proposition appeared in *La Opinión* as in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Sacramento Bee*. Furthermore, the articles were much longer and gave detailed information about the proposition and its effects. While the newspaper still reported on Wilson's veto, Clinton's opposition to the proposition, and on the Santa Ana School Districts resolution against Proposition 227, it also took the time to publish articles solely on the effects of the proposition and articles that solely urged the readers to vote "no" on the proposition.

In "What do Ron Unz and his initiative 227 hide? Bilingual Education", which argues against voting for Proposition 227, the author clearly lays out the problems he perceives bilingual education to have,

"In essence, the initiative consists of the following: all children that go to Californian schools and don't know English will be put in classes in which they'll be taught the language using sheltered English immersion for a maximum of 180 days (the length of the school year). After this time, they will have to compete with native English-speakers in classes taught only in that language. Those children whose parents want their children taught in bilingual education can ask for it, and, if there is a sufficient number, the school will provide it. Perhaps after reading this paragraph, readers that ask why an initiative that seems so reasonable has created such a stir between educators, administrators, and parents. Without stop, a detailed and meticulous analysis of its ramifications reflect a very different reality, as shown below

- In the first place, sheltered English immersion doesn't exist. It isn't a term that you find in specialized literature.
- Article 2, section 305 of the initiative says that the children that don't know English will be put in English language classes for a maximum period of 180 school days.

- It also says that the schools will be permitted to put children of different ages in the same class. This could come to mean 30 students aged 5, 6,7,8,9, and 10 all together in the same room, because the criterion to place the children in class is that they have the same level of English.
- How is the teacher going to teach and how are the students going to learn? What is the teacher going to teach and what are the students going to learn? The initiative doesn't explain."<sup>123</sup>

Following this detailed explanation, he urges Latino voters not to vote for the initiative on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1998.

In a likewise manner, "No to Proposition 227 on Bilingual Education" criticizes the proposition as well. In this case, it looks more closely at the issue of local control,

"Bilingual Education certainly has problems and should be reformed. The state legislature just approved a reform, that at the least gives local districts the autonomy to decide about their own bilingual education programs. Proposition 227 takes away this possibility. Proposition 227 converts a pedagogic question of much importance to students and parents, the teaching of languages, into a question of litigation."<sup>124</sup>

Similarly, in "The Fight Against Prop. 227 Intensifies", the proposition is heavily criticized on how it has been portrayed, the lack of research to back up its methods, and is viewed as an attack on the Latino community with incendiary comments like "In many cases, the people only see the name of the initiative: 'English for the Children.' Who is going to oppose that?" and other statements like

"There isn't any study that supports 227. It's part of the political game in which Latinos have been attacked over these last few years,' asserted Arévalo. Arévalo was referring to Propositions 187 and 209, approved by the voters in 1994 and 1996, respectively. The first initiative intended to deny the majority of public services; like education and medical care to undocumented immigrants and their children but was invalidated by the federal magistrate because it was thought to violate the nation's constitution."<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Francisco Ramos, "¿Qué Esconden Ron Unz y Su Iniciativa 227? Educacion Bilingue" [What does Ron Unz and his initiative 227 hide? Bilingual Education], trans. Erin Kinney, *La Opinión*, Apr 08, 1998, accessed January 18, 2018, Proquest Ebrary.

<sup>124</sup> "No a La Proposicion 227 Sobre Educacion Bilingue"[No to Proposition 227 about Bilingual Education], trans. Erin Kinney, *La Opinión*, May 07, 1998, accessed January 19, 2018, ProQuest Ebrary.

<sup>125</sup> Jesse Linares, "Arrecia La Lucha Contra La Prop. 227" [Intensify the Fight Against Prop. 227], trans. Erin Kinney, *La Opinión*, May 23, 1998, accessed January 19, 2018, Proquest Ebrary.

Looking further, in “The Campaign Against Prop. 227 Begins: Critics say Measure doesn’t Permit the Flexibility to Teach the Hundreds of Thousands of Children who haven’t yet Mastered English”, *La Opinión* reports on protests being held across California to oppose Proposition 227,

“A coalition made up of parents, students, political representatives, and various ethnic groups protested yesterday in seven of the principal Californian cities. They declared themselves to be against Proposition 227 and at the same time committed themselves individually and collectively to strengthening the opposition campaign.”

Then, the article goes on to criticize the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Bee*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* for being in the pockets of supporters of Proposition 227 and for failing to properly explain bilingual education and the proposition to voters,

“According to the study done between November 1997 and January 1998, not one of the reports published by the *Los Angeles Times*, *Sacramento Bee*, and *San Francisco Chronicle* examined the programs of Bilingual Education that had had success or had functioned well, and the two-thirds of the articles didn’t include a definition of what bilingual education is. ‘By means of our study, we found many of the voices of the people that are going to be most affected by 227 haven’t been sufficiently heard in the coverage,” stated *La Opinión’s* Andrea Buffa, co-author of the study.”<sup>126</sup>

The newspaper went further, criticizing the lack of coverage and the lack of studies done on either program.

Additionally, another article goes on to compare Californian bilingual education programs with those of Florida. In “Forking Paths: While California Legislates Against Immigrants, Florida Walks in the Opposite Direction”, it makes clear that Florida seems to value immigrants and bilingualism while California only seeks to Americanize and attack its Latino population,

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<sup>126</sup> Lilian de la Torre-Jimenez and Armando Botello. "Inicia Campana Contra Prop. 227: Critican Que La Medida no Permita Flexibilidad Para Enseñar a Los Cientos De Miles De Niños Que no Dominan El Inglés." [The Campaign Against Prop. 227 Began: They Critique the Measure that doesn’t Permit Flexibility to Teach the Hundreds of thousands of Children that haven’t Mastered English], trans. Erin Kinney, *La Opinión*, Apr 17, 1998, accessed January 19, 2018, ProQuest Ebrary.

“Since Proposition 187 in 1994, California, once synonymous with progress, threatens to become synonymous with nightmares for the immense Latino population of the state. Meanwhile, in Florida, a conservative state, the state government not only has avoided repeating the excesses of California but rather it has even attempted to alleviate the damages caused by federal laws from 1996.”<sup>127</sup>

In the end, it reassures its audience to have faith in the power of the Latino community, that its readers can trust in themselves.

All in all, these examples should demonstrate that *La Opinión* was dedicated to, not only report on, but also fight against Proposition 227. Unlike, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Sacramento Bee*, it wasn't afraid to stray from neutrality, but, instead, strongly urged Latinos that voting “no” on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1998 would be in their own best interest. In doing so, it not only provided an opinion, but also provided detailed information on Proposition 227 and arguments on why it was the wrong choice. Overall, *La Opinión* strayed from the norm, and truly investigated and reported on the issue.

Moving on, it has become clear that Californians who only read English newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the *Sacramento Bee* were not being fully informed on what Proposition 227 would do, what those arguing for and against it were basing their arguments on. Even *La Opinión* only represented those against the proposition, so one can raise the question of how Proposition 227 was portrayed to the Californian television audience through both news announcements and televised debates, and whether or not representation of the arguments for each side are shown there.

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<sup>127</sup> Max J. Castro, “Senderos Que Se Bifurcan: Mientras California Legisla Contra Los Inmigrantes, Florida Camina En La Direccion Opuesta” [Paths that Branch Off: While California Legislates Against Immigrants, Florida Walks in the Opposite Direction], trans. Erin Kinney, *La Opinión*, Apr 20, 1998, accessed January 18, 2018, Proquest Ebrary.

Starting with short newscast announcing Proposition 227 and the ballot on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1998, it is important to note that these segments only last usually two to nine minutes, most averaging around three minutes. This was not enough time to fully explain the initiative and the arguments on each side, but instead was usually used to air inflammatory comments from either side to increase attention to the issue, polarizing the viewers. In the end, the viewer would have to seek out more information to truly be informed on voting day.

Looking at an example, on KABC Eyewitness News at 5, which aired in Los Angeles during the petition drive before the initiative was on the ballot, the newscaster, Mark Coogan starts off the broadcast with an immediately inflammatory comment, tying the proposition to propositions 187 and 209, “In 1994, it was illegal immigration, last year, affirmative action, and next June, the voters may have another hot-button, ethnically-tinged issue before them.” As the interviews go on, Ron Unz is allowed to make a quick statement in which he asserts that children aren’t learning English, “I think what we need is another approach where the children are taught English quickly and not kept in a non-English-speaking environment for five or seven years” and Alice Callaghan from Las Familias makes another inflammatory comment about the current program,

“Our families don’t want the children working in sweatshops and cleaning offices of high-priced lawyers downtown. Our parents want their children to be those highly-paid lawyer and the only way they can do that is that they become so literate in English that they do well on the college entrance exams.”<sup>128</sup>

Then, the announcement ends and the audience is left with a few strong images left to think about.

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<sup>128</sup> Eyewitness News at 5, KABC 7/Los Angeles, aired July 8, 1997, on KABC 7/Los Angeles, accessed December 30, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxPa0TdAb9k&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkJUOver3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos&index=21>

In other words, most of the newscasts use a few incendiary words, such as when they tie Proposition 227 to past controversial propositions and say that the children's only future is in sweatshops, to get their audience riled up and thinking about the issue before they move on without exploring it any further. On the news for KSEE Fresno, after announcing Clinton's opposition to the initiative, it only took one sentence to keep watchers considering the initiative, "Opponents continue to warn voters to read the initiative carefully, they say the text can be confusing and misleading."<sup>129</sup> In a similar manner, a broadcast on World News on CNN, which told the story of a father who didn't know his child was in a Chinese Bilingual Education and was fighting to have him removed only took a few words to make a point, "My kid needs a strong education in English first, and that he should not be taught a foreign language first."<sup>130</sup>

Later, as June 2<sup>nd</sup> neared, and Proposition 227 continued to divide the state, news announcements became longer, with inflammatory statements from newscasters as well as representatives from each side. On the Today Show on the NBC News Network, the newscaster announced the vote that would take place later that day, "Californians, today, will vote on whether or not to abolish bilingual education for the state's school children." Then each side had a chance to make a lasting impression. First Waldemar Rojas, the superintendent of San Francisco Schools, spoke for those against it,

"In actuality, California had this before 1967 and the reality is that 50% of the Latino students never succeeded, never accomplished, and never completed high school. Now, the dropout rate is cut in half and academic achievement is occurring."

Then, Henry Gradillas, a former principal, made the argument in favor of the initiative,

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<sup>129</sup> News, KSEE/Fresno, aired April 27, 1998, on KSEE/Fresno, accessed January 5, 2018.

<https://youtu.be/lksnnyM5-JY>

<sup>130</sup> World News, CNN, aired May 1, 1998, on CNN, accessed January 4, 2018. <https://youtu.be/pP9St2xQhtA>



“When you begin to teach a student in Spanish-only, bilingual classes, those classes will never translate into English. You only have 3 years in a high school.”<sup>131</sup> Such an announcement sent off voters with their final impressions of the proposition before they voted, yet it never delved deeply into the issue.

With short news announcements, it was clear that the objective of the newscaster was not so much as to inform, but instead to inflame interest in the debate over Proposition 227. The comments made by each side were often emotionally charged and sought to easily sway viewers to their side. For those viewers not so easily satisfied, frequent televised debates would allow the arguments from both sides to be heard. Unlike the four newspapers examined, these televised debates offered virtually equal coverage for both sides of the debate. In fact, that was their goal. And, unlike the news announcements, the debates allowed for detailed information about the initiative and what it would do as well as detailed reasons to vote either “yes” or “no”. It allowed the two campaigns equal footing and plenty of opportunities to articulate their viewpoints before June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Most of the debates followed a very similar format. In general, the debates lasted anywhere from ten minutes to an hour. Usually, one newscaster explained the proposition before turning to another to introduce the debaters and to act as moderator. One or two people usually represented each side. Arguing for Proposition 227 was almost always Ron Unz, lending understanding as to why he was considered the face of the campaign. The person arguing for the opposition varied, but was usually someone from MALDEF, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund. Most moderators asked questions themselves, but some took

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<sup>131</sup> Today Show, NBC News, aired June 2, 1998, on NBC News, accessed January 9, 2018.  
<https://youtu.be/wwDVEDAI6C0>

questions from the audience. In general, most moderators didn't force the debaters to answer questions that they avoided.

An example of how the debate questions were run can be taken from the first debate on July 29, 1997 on Life and Times in Los Angeles. The moderator, Monica Lozano asked,

“Why not allow those who are educators and professionals in this field to provide some sort of an alternative to the current bilingual education program and let those who are experts handle this? Why go to an initiative process that opens it up for such politicization and polarization as this particular issue?”

Ron Unz responded,

“You raise a very valid point. One issue is basically the experts right now are the ones who designed the current system and I think the evidence is that they're wrong but in many cases, they're unwilling to admit their mistake. Changing the law would require action by the state legislature. The existing governing law of bilingual education actually expired 10 years ago. There's no law governing this right now on the books and for 10 years, the state legislature has been deadlocked.”

And, Sylvia Argueta from MALDEF responded to him,

“Yet, throwing out an entire system is not the way we believe the change should be made. Retooling the system, yes. For instance, we agree there should be changes to the assessment of these students to find out how they really are doing, there should be changes into providing more trained teachers, more materials, but throwing out the system is not the answer and this initiative will, in fact, create a lot of polarization.”<sup>132</sup>

With similarly formatted debates being repeated over and over again, it became clear that Ron Unz, and those in favor of Proposition 227, were simply arguing the same key arguments over and over again while those of the opposition varied much more heavily. With this in mind, one can catalog the responses of the campaign for Proposition 227 and then compare them with the general themes of those in opposition to them.

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<sup>132</sup> Life and Times, KCET/Los Angeles. Aired July 28, 1997, on KCET/Los Angeles. Accessed December 30, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcQ5uuXRw-E&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOverR3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos&index=18>, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_akFrQWa9o&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOverR3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos&index=17](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_akFrQWa9o&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOverR3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos&index=17),

Starting from the beginning, when asked why he chose to introduce Proposition 227, Ron Unz always began with the same story,

“This particular effort was prompted by a series of articles I read in last year’s Los Angeles Times, describing a group of immigrant Latino parents in downtown Los Angeles who actually had to begin a public boycott of their local elementary school because the school was refusing to teach their children English. And when things have come to a point where parents have to picket at a school to force that school to teach English to their children, I think something has to be done about it.”<sup>133</sup>

Following that, he moves on to what he perceives as bilingual education’s failure rate, “Right now, only 5% or 6% of the children who don’t know English each year in California, learn English. And those numbers are staggeringly low.”<sup>134</sup> Next, he is often asked why he chose to go the initiative route rather than attempting to lobby the state legislature, to which he responds as we saw early,

“The existing governing law of bilingual education actually expired 10 years ago. There’s no law governing this right now on the books and for 10 years, the state legislature has been deadlocked.”<sup>135</sup>

Following that, he sometimes, but not always, addresses the cost of bilingual education, maintaining,

“First of all, nobody knows how much the state of California is spending on bilingual education, but it’s certainly in the hundreds of millions of dollars a year, some estimates would put the extra cost of bilingual programs at over a billion dollars a year in the state of California. These programs don’t work and it’s not through lack of funding.”<sup>136</sup>

Then, he goes on to accuse school systems of keeping children from learning English in order to keep their bilingual education funding,

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<sup>133</sup> Sacramento On-Line, Fox 40, aired December 12, 1997, on Fox 40, accessed April 7, 2017, <https://youtu.be/7TsX5WJStaw>, <https://youtu.be/36cTTatetPk>, <https://youtu.be/TnfPjurNQVw>

<sup>134</sup> California Capital Week, KVIE/Sacramento, aired September 5, 1997, on KVIE Sacramento, accessed December 30, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOiPNm5ZUdA&index=14&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOverR3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulpEemHIW3c&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkUOverR3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos&index=1>

<sup>135</sup> Life and Times.

<sup>136</sup> Life and Times, KCET/Los Angeles, aired May 27, 1998, on KCET/Los Angeles, accessed January 8, 2018. <https://youtu.be/l2EoHYFfbPo>, <https://youtu.be/uH-sxFZzPwA>

“Right now, under the current system, schools are paid more money so long as children do not learn English. If a child successfully learns English, the school loses money, and that’s the reason they claim it takes a child 10 years to learn English.”<sup>137</sup>

Going even further, Ron Unz also maintains a standard response when he or a part of Proposition 227 is attacked, “Oh, it’s completely inaccurate.”<sup>138</sup> Sometimes, he goes into more detail,

“Most of the claims made of our initiative are complete falsehoods or distortions, that is completely the truth. For example, our initiative in no way encourages or requires that children of all ages mix together, that’s a complete falsehood, it doesn’t say it in the initiative. Second of all, our initiative does not limit children to only one year of sheltered English immersion. If they have not learned enough English after one year, they can stay in the program for a longer period of time. If they need two or three years, their parents can apply for a waiver to keep them in the program for a longer period of time. They’re only moved out of the program once they’ve learned enough English to do regular school work in English. But since the overwhelming majority of the children who don’t know English in California Public schools, come into the schools when they’re five or six years old, they’re in kindergarten or the first grade, at that age it’s very quick or easy to learn enough English to be mainstreamed.”<sup>139</sup>

He even has a standard response when he feels it necessary to attack the opposition’s campaign,

“To be honest, the campaign against us refuses to defend bilingual education in any way. In fact, their campaign materials say “avoid the subject of bilingual education at all costs”. The reason they refuse to defend bilingual education is the system we have now is utterly indefensible, so instead of defending bilingual education, they try to make up utter falsehoods about our initiative to persuade people to vote against it.”<sup>140</sup>

Throughout many debates, Ron Unz and the campaign for Proposition 227 stuck to these simple eight responses to answer almost every single question asked of them. It became so common that anyone watching more than two or three debates would be extremely familiar with his answers, the arguments in favor of the initiative. In contrast, the campaign against

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<sup>137</sup> A Higher Education, KCSM/San Mateo, aired on March 18, 1998, on KCSM/San Mateo, accessed January 1, 2018. <https://youtu.be/jMEUm2jiEXE>, <https://youtu.be/-eXKtl-E4xl>, <https://youtu.be/qThBYnI31jl>.

<sup>138</sup> Bob Navarro’s Journal, KCBS/LA, aired on December 1, 1997, on KCBS/LA, accessed December 30, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0gqj15pafA&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkuOveR3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos&index=12>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEjfpHj3G8c&index=11&list=PLiFkiZ2DukVkuOveR3HJUTKdwR-8yhcos>

<sup>139</sup> Week in Review, Century Cable, aired May 15, 1998, on Century Cable, accessed on January 8, 2018. <https://youtu.be/9IHTRVJRL1Y>, <https://youtu.be/-vChJ0Nwves>, <https://youtu.be/INBuvjw56ws>

<sup>140</sup> A Higher Education.

Proposition 227 lacked both a single face and a single, unifying argument against the proposition. Instead, a multitude of debaters face Unz, each arguing a different point.

First, Holli Thier, the campaign spokesperson for “no” on Proposition 227 makes the argument that it is a “one-size-fits-all program”,

“Basically, Proposition 227 is a one-size-fits-all, sink-or-swim, 50 million dollar a year initiative that would take California’s 1.4 million school children out of their regular classes, put them in one single classroom, mixing children of all different ages, cultural backgrounds, language abilities, and give them only one year, actually only 180 days to learn English. And if the child can’t learn English in 180 days, he or she will be transferred into mainstream classes without an opportunity to learn English. You know, we say, what if the child needed two years to learn English? On the contrary, what if the child only needed 60 days? Well, I have a state mandate, a big government-state mandate that says you only have one year.”<sup>141</sup>

In another debate, Shelly Spiegel-Coleman from Citizens for an Educated America makes a similar argument, arguing that it would be extremely difficult to escape that one-year limit, a limit that Gloria Matta Tuchman’s class, the class the proposition was modeled after couldn’t meet,

“If you just read from his initiative, it says very clearly here “this is a temporary transition period, not normally intended to exceed one year”, now that means you have to be abnormal to get more than one year cause the normal track will be a year. Now, we have Gloria Tuchman, the co-author of this bill, she has the English immersion program that this is modeled after. She’s a first-grade teacher. She’s been all over the state saying that her children do exceptionally well after one year in her classroom, so we looked at her kids. After last year, not one child in her classroom in first grade had enough English to make this transition. Now that means her whole classroom would be abnormal, they would have to go for a waiver. Now let me tell you something else about her classroom, she’s a first-grade teacher, they all had kindergarten, so her kids already had a two-year program. They’re all going on to a second-grade English immersion program. They’re gonna have three years now.”<sup>142</sup>

With a different method, Kelly Hayes-Raitt, Citizens for an Educated America, attempted to assert that the argument was not about bilingual education, but was actually about an experimental program, Proposition 227,

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<sup>141</sup> A Higher Education.

<sup>142</sup> Week in Review.

“The Unz initiative is not about bilingual education, it’s a very specific proposal that will cause more problems than it attempts to solve...The reason why Mr. Unz has been unable to give us any empirical evidence on why his experiment would work is because there is none. The Ron Unz initiative is an untested experiment on California’s children.”<sup>143</sup>

Semi-similarly, Carlos Garcia, the Superintendent of Fresno Unified School District, argued that it wasn’t fair to judge bilingual education as a failure,

“The fact of the matter, only 30% of all children in California who are limited English Proficient children are in bilingual programs. So, what’s the excuse for all the other kids who aren’t in bilingual programs, why aren’t they far exceeding everybody else. The reality is that you can’t paint everything with one brush.”<sup>144</sup>

Still, in another way, Mike Honda, a California Assemblyman, argued that Latino failure rates were being taken out of context,

“In grades 9-12, Latino children, Latino students, at the secondary schools are failing at 5.6%, twice as many as white students, but the black students, the African American failing at 6.6%, grades 9-12, and they’re all being taught in English, so it’s really not the issue about bilingual education or anything else like that, there is something wrong in the educational system.”<sup>145</sup>

Sylvia Argueta of MALDEF argues that the question is being framed wrong, and thus, the debate has been framed incorrectly,

“I think what’s important is, and what’s getting lost in the debate is, that of course the parents want their children to learn English. The real question should be: how are we going to teach them English?”<sup>146</sup>

Even with all these different arguments, the opposition still argues more, concerning issues like local control, the idea of a “magical solution”<sup>147</sup>, and a united opposition of teachers and school districts.<sup>148</sup> With all these different arguments, it could be hard at times to understand where the opposition was coming from, especially when Ron Unz and his campaign had their

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<sup>143</sup> Bob Navarro’s Journal.

<sup>144</sup> Talkback Live, CNN Network, aired May 29, 1998, on CNN Network, accessed January 7, 2018, [https://youtu.be/j\\_h1BVGanl0](https://youtu.be/j_h1BVGanl0), <https://youtu.be/l6RnlmT5zRs>, <https://youtu.be/z40z0hqbKh0>

<sup>145</sup> Talk Back Live.

<sup>146</sup> Life and Times.

<sup>147</sup> A Higher Education.

<sup>148</sup> Life and Times.

answers down to a standard eight answers. For many viewers, watching multiple debates may have just increased the viewers lack of understanding concerning the opposition's side, a side which often refused to defend the current program, had no suggestions for reform, but steadfastly asked the viewers to vote against Proposition 227, a proposed solution. Overall, the televised debates finally seemed to allow those wanting to know more about the arguments for and against the proposition to hear them; those advocating for Proposition 227 just appeared to do a far better job at articulating their stance.

To put it briefly, when Proposition 227 passed in 1998 and essentially ended the program of bilingual education in California, replacing it with a year-long, intensive English immersion program for Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the question of why such a controversial proposition would be able to pass became important. Often, California is viewed as a trend setter when it comes to public policy in the United States and following this event, four other states attempted to pass legislation modelled after Proposition 227. Both Arizona and Massachusetts were successful in doing so while New York and Colorado failed in their campaigns.<sup>149</sup>

Furthermore, Proposition 227 can, ultimately, be considered a failure. Having failed to re-designate students from limited English proficient to proficient in the promised one year, students were spending just as much time in English-specialized instruction as they previously spent in bilingual education programs. And, with English being the mandated language of instruction, teachers were found to be much more limited when developing culturally-affective curriculum. The repeal of Proposition 227 in 2016 by Proposition 58 was just the culmination of this failure as it repealed the English-only requirement of Proposition 227 and allowed schools to

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<sup>149</sup> Haver, 40-90.

create new bilingual programs that focused on promoting multilingualism.<sup>150</sup> Keeping the failure of this proposition as well as California's influence on other states in mind, it is important to recognize how the campaign for Proposition 227 was carried out and how the media framed the debate in order to apply it to larger trends in public policy.

As has been noted previously, the media often framed the debate over Proposition 227 as an "either, or" debate with two options: continuing bilingual education or replacing it with English immersion. *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *The Sacramento Bee* made small attempts at advocating for a third option: local control, but their message was often lost to headlines that highlighted the divisiveness of the proposition. It becomes further apparent that the debate was focused on either keeping or completely eliminating a broken program rather than turning to reform. This appears to be a common theme in politics when dissatisfied voters lose patience with an existing system and choose to replace it rather than waiting and making small changes in hopes of fixing it.

Overall, the passage of Proposition 227 seems to suggest that voters in California, and likely the United States, are more willing to take a chance with a controversial proposition rather than wait for legislative reform when it comes to an issue as important as the education of 1.4 million students. Media's failure to properly explain the initiative and give equal access to all sides of the issue left voters with a clear understanding of the argument against bilingual education and for Proposition 227. Therefore, especially with early newspaper polls claiming support of the initiative by the language-minority communities most affected, it makes sense that the voters would see the appeal of a simpler, concrete option for solving their bilingual education

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<sup>150</sup> Ashley Hopkinson, "A New Era for Bilingual Education: Explaining California's Proposition 58," *Ed Source, Inc.*, January 16, 2017, accessed March 4, 2018. <https://edsource.org/2017/a-new-era-for-bilingual-education-explaining-californias-proposition-58/574852>



problem, with no clear, cohesive, alternative solution proposed. Yet, passing an initiative such as Proposition 227 in an effort to completely overhaul rather than reform what was seen as a failing program can be viewed as a lesson in the consequences of hastiness for Californians. Less than two decades later, Californians found themselves regretting passing such a limiting, often-viewed-as-discriminatory-program for limited English Proficient students when it failed to increase the number of students transitioning to English yearly.

Looking further, not every area of the passage of the proposition has already been explored. For example, looking at newspapers with non-Spanish-speaking, language-minority readers could provide further insight into how those most affected by the proposition viewed it. Or, radio coverage could also offer a different viewpoint into how bilingual education and Proposition 227 were portrayed to Californian voters. Investigations into areas such as these could potentially offer even more understanding about how such a controversial proposition was ever able to pass.

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