# Chapter 11
# The Context of Schooling for Early Learners of Spanish in the United States

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**Abstract**  Not unlike in many countries around the world, language learning policies in the United States (US) for early language learners is a complex process that is sociopolitically and historically situated. Although the US is a linguistically diverse country with no official national language, more than 30 states have declared English its official language, while none has declared Spanish official, despite its extensive use and social, economic, and political influence in the country. This chapter focuses on Spanish early language learning policies and practices in the US with children from prekindergarten through grade 2, or between the ages of 3 and 7. Because of the decentralized nature of language policies in the US and the power of each state to set policies, we focus on the state of Florida to illustrate one example of language-in-education policies related to curriculum resources, methodology, and personnel. We note the intersection of these areas for early learners of Spanish. We conclude that the rich linguistic resources of Spanish in the US have systematically been weakened as a result of monolingual policies and political pressures that fail to support native Spanish speakers, while simultaneously building modest levels of Spanish proficiency among nonnative early learners of Spanish.

**Keywords**  Early language learning · Language policy · The US · Spanish

Like most countries around the world, the United States (US) is a multilingual nation. With more than 300 million people covering a land area of approximately 3.7 million square miles, language policies and practices are complex in nature and result from a rich history of language practices. The US has 50 states and 14 territories. Importantly, language policies and practices in the US are decentralized, moving authority away from the national level to state-level organization and control. For instance, currently in the US only two states, Hawai'i and Alaska, have declared languages other than English as official (Crawford, 2000). The state of Hawai'i

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declared both English and Hawaiian as official in its constitution of 1978, and Alaska declared English and 20 Alaskan languages as official following a 2014 amendment to its official language act. Despite the two states' intention to promote native cultures and to preserve indigenous languages, these languages are frequently absent in government documents, government activities, and publicly funded publications (Alaska Legislature, 2019; Hawaii State Legislature, 2017). As of 2016, more than 30 states have declared English their sole official language (US English, 2016), despite the multilingual reality of the US.

The second most widely used language in the US is Spanish. According to data from the Pew Research Center, there are more than 40 million speakers of Spanish in the US, a growth of more than 230% since 1980 (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). Despite those large numbers, language policies and planning in the US continue to reflect large social and political movements and narratives about Spanish speakers. For instance, in the current anti-immigrant climate of the US (Crawford, 2000; Massey, 2020), immigrants to the US from Mexico and Central America, most of whom speak Spanish as a first language (Zong & Batalova, 2018), have been described in the mainstream media as criminals, rapists, and gang members (Wolf, 2018). These descriptors fuel increasingly restrictive language policies that view languages other than English—primarily Spanish—as threats to the mainstream, English-dominant US culture, power, and sovereignty (Crawford, 2000; Fermoso, 2018; Lippi-Green, 2011; Menken, 2013; Menken & García, 2010). In response, over the past century, Spanish, Hispanic, and Latinx[1] advocacy groups such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), continue to make important political, social, and economic changes for Spanish speakers (LULAC, 2019; Massey, 2016; Portes & Rumbault, 2014; Stepick & Stepick, 2009). The teaching of Spanish to young learners in the US is embedded in the tension of these competing national narratives, which affect language-in-education planning and practices.

This chapter focuses on the language-in-education planning, used interchangeably with "acquisition planning" (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005; Phillipson, 1992), for Spanish among young learners in the US. We argue that effective early language learning policies for Spanish speakers is dependent upon strong first language development in Spanish, and early learning is also associated with personnel, methodology, and curriculum policies aligned to second language acquisition theories (Ortega, 2009; Valdés, 2005; Zentella, 1997). Research on the relationship between first and second language acquisition continues to underscore the essential need for strong, early first language development to build second language development and literacy (Ariza & Coady, 2018; Coady & Ariza, 2015; NICHHD, 2000). Thus, effective early educational provision includes highly prepared personnel to support second language development, methodologies that strengthen first and second

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[1] In this paper, we use the definition given by Nieto & Bode (2012), which differentiates Hispanic and Latino/a/x. Hispanics are heritage speakers of Spanish. Latino/a/x refers to pan-Latinos who may speak other languages such as indigenous languages, Portuguese, English, and more. The use of "x" in Latinx is a non-gender-specific alternative to Latino/a.

language learning, and curriculum policies that ensure equitable access to curriculum and learning.

This chapter begins with an overview of historical and national language learning trends related to Spanish language policies and planning from the mid-twentieth century on. We describe state-level policies and underscore the various policies and programs that support young learners of Spanish. Next, we focus on the state of Florida to demonstrate how state-level policies affect Spanish acquisition planning policies for young learners. Finally, we end this chapter with implications for advancing Spanish acquisition planning efforts for young learners of Spanish.

## Linguistic Ecology of the United States

### *Sociohistorical Context of Spanish*

The US has a rich and diverse linguistic ecology. At the time of the first US settlements in what is now the territory of the US, multiple languages were used by native peoples, and some, such as Navajo, Cherokee, Ojibwe, and Hopi, continue to be spoken today (Siebens & Julian, 2011). Spanish was an original settlement language as Spanish explorers made their way to the North American continent and established the first American city in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565. As settlements and westward expansion continued, the languages of native peoples became increasingly decimated by settlers. With westward expansion, Spanish remained a widely used language spoken across a significant geographic area but particularly in the southwest US. For instance, until the Spanish-American War of 1846, modern California was Mexican territory. Spanish was a main language of communication, and the California constitution, drafted in 1849, was written in both English and Spanish. Other southern states, such as Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, which border Mexico, retain deep social connections to Mexico.

Today, Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the US following English, according to the American Community Survey (ACS) data collected by the Pew Research Center (US Census Bureau, 2017). To contextualize Spanish language use in the US, it is noteworthy that more than 13% of the US population uses Spanish as a language in the home (US Census Bureau, 2017). Continued growth in the number of Spanish speakers is the result of both new immigrants to the US who come from Latin America and continued growth in the Latino population, many of whom speak Spanish. US Census data from 2015 (Colby & Ortman, 2015) project that the Hispanic population in the US—the group most likely to speak Spanish—will grow 115%, to 119 million by the year 2060.

Important to note is that, although data from decennial US Census and the annual ACS merge Spanish speakers into one demographic group, varieties of Spanish are used throughout the US. Mexican Spanish is used primarily, but not exclusively, in the American Southwest. For instance, data from the 2017 US Census indicate that

Florida has one of the most diverse Hispanic populations in the US. As of 2018, the Puerto Rican population was the second largest group of Spanish speakers in Florida (21%) following Cubans (28.4%). Together, Cuban and Puerto Rican Spanish speakers encompass almost half the state's Latinx population, while the other half consisted of South Americans (18%), Mexicans (13.2%), Central Americans (11.2%), Dominicans (4.3%), and other Latinos (3.6%) (Figueroa, 2020). Cuban Spanish is prevalent in Florida and notably the Miami area (García & Otheguy, 1985), following Florida's close proximity and social and economic ties to Cuba. Puerto Ricans, who primarily speak Spanish, are distinct from other Hispanic groups due to their long-standing colonial relationship with the US, which began following the Spanish American War of 1898 (Capielo et al., 2018). The US acquisition of Puerto Rico as a territory in 1898 has resulted in the creation of what has been termed a "transnational" identity or a "nation on the move" (Barreneche et al., 2012, p. 15). With the constant and circular movement of Puerto Ricans from the island to the mainland and back again, the citizenship status afforded them by the 1917 Jones Act and the island's political status as an Estado Libre Asociado (Free Associated State), Puerto Rico has become what Barreneche et al. (2012) called "the flying bus" or a revolving-door migration characterized by repeated and continuous round trips between the island and the mainland (p. 14). Capielo et al. (2018) described these migratory processes as follows:

> Puerto Rican migration takes three forms: the "one-way migrants," who move permanently to the mainland; the "return migrants," who after many years return to the island from the mainland to re-establish residence; and the "circular migrants," who migrate back and forth between the island and the mainland. (p. 196)

The growing dominance of the Puerto Rican community in the US propelled by a "nation on the move" (Barreneche et al., 2012, p. 15) has reinforced Spanish as a key language not only in the state of Florida, but also in many major US cities across the US mainland (Duany, 2017).

Spanish speakers in the US wield tremendous social, political, and economic influence in the country. Social movements, such as the Chicano rights movement in the 1960s and the Cuban refugee crisis of 1959–1963 following the overthrow of the Batista government in Cuba by Fidel Castro, fortified Spanish speakers as participants in those social and civil rights movements. The Cuban refugee crises led to the first publicly funded two-way immersion (TWI) bilingual program in the US in 1963 in Miami, Florida (Coady, 2019a), at a time when other bilingual education programs were also beginning to emerge (Fránquiz, 2018). Currently, Spanish is the most widely used language as a medium of instruction alongside English in bilingual education programs across the US (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2019). Thus, the growth in Spanish as a medium of instruction in school for young learners is influenced by national trends in US immigration policies, mainstream sentiment, and federal and state educational policies that either promote or restrict bilingualism.

## Education for Young Learners of Spanish

### *Additive and Subtractive Bilingual Education*

Spanish (and its multiple varieties) language programs can be additive or subtractive. *Additive* language programs are those programs in which a language such as Spanish is added or enhanced through schooling. The ultimate goal of additive language programs is to build second language competencies and literacies without taking away or restricting use of the first language. In contrast, *subtractive* language programs do not support long-term language and literacy development or growth and generally lead to a loss of the first language, as speakers shift from use of the home language to the dominant language of school and society (Wright, 2019). In practical terms, language programs such as bilingual education in school are implemented for a variety of reasons, including the social demographics of the surrounding community and social desire to build bilingualism and biliteracy; the linguistic resources of the community, including qualified bilingual teachers; access to bilingual curriculum; and garnering local community and family support (Soltero, 2016).

Soltero (2016) notes that buy-in among families and communities for additive bilingual education programs is essential, because families in the US fear that their children "will not learn English, will not do well academically, and will experience discrimination and prejudice" (p. 32). In a similar vein, Enever (2018) underscores the importance of parents and stakeholders in implementing educational programs for young learners. These concerns about first and second language development result from misinformation about language learning processes. These concerns also reflect broader social narratives about the status of minoritized languages, language use, and literacy in US society (Ovando, 2003; Ruiz, 1984).

### *Language Programs for Young Spanish Learners*

Language learning programs are a key structure through which language-in-education planning for Spanish among young learners can be supported and implemented. There are three main ways that Spanish learning programs can be implemented in the US: (a) in federally funded early learning programs, such as Early Head Start and Head Start, which include children from ages birth through 5; (b) in bilingual education programs, such as TWI education or transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs for children from kindergarten through grade 2; and (c) Spanish as a foreign language taught in the early grades for children in kindergarten through grade 2. Less formal approaches such as home care, nannies, or au pairs are other ways for young learners to acquire Spanish at young ages, but there is limited, systematic research in this area. Figure 11.1 demonstrates the program types and approximate ages of young learners in the US. Figure 11.1 also shows the funding sources for these programs: federal, state, or local funding.
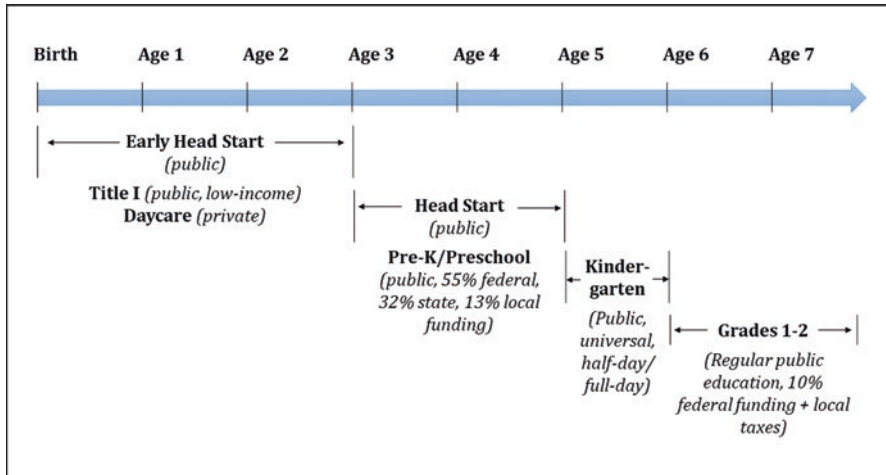
**Fig. 11.1** Early Learning Programs in the United States

Language-in-education planning is affected by the home language backgrounds of young learners in the US. For example, among young learners who are first language speakers of Spanish and who use Spanish exclusively in the home, early educational programs should introduce oracy and literacy through Spanish to support language and literacy development of students (Snow et al., 1998). Building on Spanish speaking students' home language is a more efficient approach to overall literacy development. However, this does not always happen in early learning programs. Other learners who are not native Spanish speakers also benefit from additive bilingual education programs for young learners (Wright, 2019). The latter group comprises young learners of Spanish for whom Spanish can be learned as a foreign language in school. We refer to these two groups of students collectively as young learners of Spanish in this chapter, but note that the process of early language learning and building literacy differs for these groups of students. The following section discusses Kaplan and Baldauf's (2005) framework for language-in-education planning.

## Language-in-Education Planning Framework

In this chapter, we use Kaplan and Baldauf's (2005) framework of language-in-education policy and planning. Their framework specifically focuses on the policy and planning decisions made to develop language learning and teaching programs (Baldauf, 2005). Kaplan and Baldauf describe different features of language-in-education planning for acquisition purposes, notably the areas of methodology, curriculum, and personnel. In reality, these three areas overlap in the sense that the language abilities of teachers (personnel planning) support effective

implementation (methodology) of curriculum for Spanish with young learners. For instance, a teacher who is prepared to teach in bilingual programs with young learners of Spanish may utilize curricula that build upon the early literacy skills of children, whereas a teacher who is less prepared in both languages may emphasize one language over another. This is to say that the range of policies associated with methodology, curriculum, and personnel reflects the realities of the micro-level language landscape (the classroom) and the resources available to enact the policy.

Kaplan and Baldauf's (2005) framework is useful in examining how state policies in the US are framed for young learners of Spanish. For the US, curriculum resource policies consist of support for bilingual students and families, budgetary considerations to implement the curriculum, access to programs with bilingual or dual language (DL) curricula, such as state-funded voluntary prekindergarten (pre-K) programs, and how groups of students enroll in the programs. Methodology policies consider funding, materials, and instruction for young learners of Spanish, including the preparation of teachers and educators for students. In addition, methodology includes assessments in Spanish and the ability to monitor and evaluate the quality of instruction. Finally, personnel policy at the state level is a complex array of state-level guidelines and mandates that guide policy and preparation of teachers and educational leaders.

## *US Programs for Young Spanish Learners*

**Head Start**  Starting at birth, public programs, such as Early Head Start, Head Start, kindergarten, and public education programs, are in place to support young learners of Spanish (Fig. 11.1). Head Start programs are federally funded programs for children from birth to age five from low-income backgrounds (OHS, 2019). In addition to support for a child's social-emotional health, cognitive development, and well-being through parental supports, Head Start programs support language and literacy development for young learners. Responding to the increasing demands of pre-K education and school readiness, congressional reauthorization of Head Start under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 mandated literacy and language skills improvement (Powell et al., 2010). Head Start programs are funded through the federal US Department of Health and Human Services and aim to build school readiness. In 2017, 37% of participating families self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 23% indicated that Spanish was the primary language used in the home. With the need to build first language oracy to introduce literacy, an increasing number of Head Start programs currently offer Spanish native language support for young children (ECLKC, 2017). This underscores the increasing understanding among educators of the role of the first language in young children's bilingual development (Raikes et al., 2019).

**Bilingual Education Programs**  Bilingual education programs are programs in which more than one language is used as a medium of instruction to teach academic

content. In the US, Spanish is the language most widely used in bilingual programs in addition to English (CAL, 2019), and most of those programs are designed for children from kindergarten through grade 3 or 5, depending on the model. Over the past 20 years, there has been exponential growth in programs increasingly referred to as DL (Boyle et al., 2015; García, 2009). Examples of bilingual education programs are one-way immersion, TWI, and TBE programs. While one-way immersion bilingual education programs have a majority of young English learners who speak languages such as Spanish, TWI programs include English-speaking students in combination with non-English speakers, both of whom receive education in two languages. TWI programs generally have 50% native English speakers with 50% other language learners such as Spanish speakers. Espinosa (2013) notes the cognitive and social benefits of bilingual education programs for young Spanish speakers and learners and makes the following statement:

> English-only instruction in preschool is a detriment to Spanish development without providing an additional boost to English development. Thus, it appears that some form of bilingual education in preschool is additive rather than subtractive, meaning that children experience overall language gains: they maintain and develop their first language (which has cognitive, social, and cultural benefits) while beginning to acquire English skills. (p. 14)

Espinosa concedes that despite the benefits of bilingual programs for young learners, several areas impede implementation of the programs, namely, access to the programs, high-quality instruction, bilingual teachers, and family engagement.

TBE programs are subtractive in that they provide native language support only insofar as students (mainly Spanish speakers) learn English. The aim of these programs from kindergarten up to about grade 3 is to transition children from native language instruction into all-English instruction (García, 2009). TBE programs have been in decline over the past decade in the US, and TBE programs themselves are transitioning into TWI models. One example is the Orange County School District in the Orlando, Florida, area, a densely populated region. In agreement with similar findings across the US, the district has found that DL TWI programs are more effective for Spanish-speaking students in their acquisition of both Spanish and English, and English-speaking students also show gains in both languages (Durán & Palmer, 2014; Lindholm-Leary & Genesee, 2014; McField & McField, 2014; J. Medina, personal communication, 2019). Noting the important role that bilingual and multilingual competencies play in the education of bilingual learners, de Jong et al. (2019) made the following statement:

> Insisting on one-language use by teachers and students may limit students' ability to use their entire linguistic repertoire when working in either language of instruction. This, in turn, will restrict student learning and student engagement and can marginalize certain identities and home language and literacy practices. (p. 112)

This increase in TWI programs is indicative of how the field of bilingual education has responded to demands for bilingual language development through bilingual programs in the US (Coady, 2019a). In the following section, we focus on language-in-education planning in the state of Florida and demonstrate how policies are interpreted and implemented at the state level.

## Spanish for Young Learners in Florida

As noted earlier in this chapter, states in the US have tremendous scope and power to frame and implement language policies that meet the needs of their populace. We provide examples of this using the state of Florida, particularly demonstrating how states impose language-in-education planning policies and implement those policies for young learners of Spanish, the context in which we work. We focus on the specific program types, curricula, and personnel preparation in Florida for children between pre-K and grade 2.

### *Florida Language Context*

The state of Florida has about 21 million people, and approximately 28.7% speak a language other than English in the home (US Census Bureau, 2017). The 2017 ACS report indicates that about 21% of Florida's population speaks Spanish. Florida declared English its official language in 1988 under Ballot Measure 11, and the status of English is enshrined in the Florida constitution. Despite this declaration, everyday communication from state websites, including Florida voting ballots, are available in Spanish and English. Thus, although Florida policies lean politically toward a monolingual orientation, in practice the state offices must respond to the multilingual realities of the people in the state, in which Spanish is a prominent and important language.

In addition, although English is the official language of the state, that designation was not intended to affect educational policies. In recent years, however, the Florida Department of Education (FL DOE) has used the state's official English status to circumnavigate the federal government's recommendation for states to develop and use native language assessments for English learner students, of which about 85% are Spanish speakers in Florida (FL DOE, 2018). As noted earlier, Florida's proximity to and history with Cuba and Puerto Rico fortifies social ties with those communities, which constitute a significant diaspora (Figueroa, 2020). Noteworthy is that, subsequent to Castro's takeover of Cuba in 1959, Miami, Florida, became the experimental site of the first funded TWI program in the US, Coral Way Elementary School, in 1963 (Coady, 2019a). Currently, there are more than 125 elementary (primary level) bilingual education programs in 12 out of 67 of the state's school districts (Coady, 2019b), and about 90% of those programs serve Spanish and English speakers as young participants.

### Policies in Florida for Young Learners of Spanish

Florida offers universal pre-K across the state. The funding for this program derives about 50% from the federal government, 32% from the state of Florida, and 13% from local sources such as property taxes (Fig. 11.1). The state then allocates funding for school districts, of which there are 67 in the state. The districts then make determinations about the types of programs and the languages in addition to English in which the programs are offered, if any. Local and state policies address the objectives of language teaching and learning. In particular, there is increasing demand for Spanish-English DL immersion, such as TWI, programs in Florida, especially for children in grades kindergarten through 5 (FABE, 2019), with the goal of building literacy in English and in Spanish. Unfortunately, limited resources are available to prepare teachers for young learners of Spanish, and some school districts hire Spanish language teachers from Spain in bilingual education programs (Mackinney, 2016) to meet the demands of personnel policy. This is due to the fact that not enough teachers are trained with high levels of literacy in Spanish to facilitate instruction in Spanish in formal school settings.

Florida's language policies remain contentious. Since 1990, state-level policies for ELs [English learners] mandate 300 hours of preparation for pre-K through grade 6 teachers across five curricular areas: second language teaching methods, assessment, cross-cultural communication, applied linguistics, and curriculum. Educators must pass a state assessment to receive the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsement on their teaching credential. When this mandate was implemented in 1990 following a legal court case, English learners—primarily young speakers of Spanish—had been experiencing low academic achievement relative to native English speakers. Despite more than 25 years of implementation of this teacher education (personnel) policy, the gap between English learning students and native English speakers has not significantly closed, calling into question the effectiveness of this policy (Coady et al., 2019a). Owing to the restrictive nature of language policies in Florida, it remains difficult to assess Spanish language proficiency among young learners of Spanish and of Spanish-speaking students who participate in TWI or TBE programs.

### Preschool Language-in-Education Policies in Florida

There are limited data and information about Spanish and bilingual education programs for children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Florida. Since the launch of the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Florida program in 2002, the state has required access to preschool education for all 4-year-olds. Florida is one of only four states that serves over 70% of 4-year-olds in state-funded preschools. However, data on the learning outcomes from this group of students are not widely available (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018). In addition, although the state has large numbers of

Spanish speakers, the FL DOE does not report on preschool-level English learners or young learners of Spanish participating in bilingual education programs.

Florida's School Readiness Program, which is a separate initiative that began in 1999 and was expanded in 2001, provides financial and health support to children between ages 3 and 4 whose parents are migratory laborers (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018). The School Readiness Program collaborates with other state programs serving young learners, such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and VPK (Office of Early Learning, OEL, 2019a). Florida administers annual developmental screening to all children in the School Readiness Program instead of screening or collecting enrollment data based on children's home language (OEL, 2018a).

As illustrated in Table 11.1, in terms of curriculum policy, there are no specific Florida state standards for young learners of Spanish or their Spanish language learning development. Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (ELDS) encompass the following eight domains: (a) physical development, (b) approaches to learning, (c) social and emotional development, (d) language and literacy, (e) mathematical thinking, (f) scientific inquiry, (g) social studies, and (h) creative expression through the arts. In the language and literacy domain, the objective is stated as developing children "to communicate with sounds, words and gestures, and eventually, the way they learn to read and write" (OEL, 2019b). In addition, the social studies domain includes standards about identifying, understanding, and exploring cultures. Unlike some other states that provide specific standards for preschool home language or Spanish language learning standards, Florida only provides standards for language and literacy development without specific reference to English or other languages.

Concerning methodology policy, the FL DOE is required to provide a list of approved curricula that meet the School Readiness Program performance standards (OEL, 2018b). Among the list of approved School Readiness curricula, Scholastic Big Day for Pre-K is one curriculum that is provided in both English and Spanish

**Table 11.1** State-level Pre-K Curriculum, Methodology, and Personnel Policies in Florida for Spanish Learning

| Curriculum policy | Methodology policy | Personnel policy |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program | School Readiness Program curriculum | BA required only for lead teachers in public and nonpublic schools |
| No enrollment data by home language; developmental screening | For example, *Scholastic Big Day* for pre-K English/Spanish | Specialization in pre-K not required |
| Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (ELDS) | Child assessments must be aligned with ELDS | No specific bilingual training required |
| Objective: learning to communicate, read, and write | | Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC); 10 hours/year in-service professional development |

and that includes materials, professional development (PD), and technology to implement the curriculum. In addition, Florida's assessment or developmental screening of a child for school readiness must align with the state's Early Learning and Development Standards (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018).

Finally, all of Florida's 67 school districts must provide a 300-hour VPK program during the summer months, June–August, each year. Although only lead teachers in summer VPK programs are required to hold a bachelor of arts (BA) degree in Florida preschools, 71.5% of the teachers hold a BA (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2018). Teachers can specialize in areas such as early childhood education, pre-Keducation, family and consumer science, or any other teacher certification areas. Teachers in both public and nonpublic preschools must maintain a valid credential (CDA or FCCPC, see Table 11.1) and renew it every 5 years. Also, all child care personnel are required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of in-service PD training every year. Although credentials are clearly stipulated for teachers at the pre-K level, no specific personnel policies, such as training requirements or qualifications, are in place to support bilingual learners or young learners of Spanish, let alone state-level data collected to report on pre-K level bilingual teacher qualifications.

## Kindergarten Through Grade 2 Language-in-Education Policies in Florida

Across the state, the number of students who speak languages other than English such as Spanish determines the type of programs and the way those programs are implemented. For instance, in urban area such as Orlando and Miami, bilingual education programs with Spanish speakers continue to grow (e.g., OCPS, 2020). For children at younger ages, Early Head Start and Head Start programs can support first language acquisition in Spanish when educators are prepared through personnel policy and when they have support from the local school district and community. Additive bilingual programs such as TWI programs that continue beyond Head Start into the lower elementary grades—that is, kindergarten through grade 2—support Spanish language development for Spanish speakers and English speakers.

The FL DOE provides resources, instructional toolkits, and standards through their online portal of state standards (CPALMS, 2019a). The state standards contain English Language Development standards (ELD.K12.ELL), which set guidelines for English learning students' English development in content areas including language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. However, there are no specific standards provided for young learners in grades K–2, but rather general standards for all K–12 grade levels. World languages standards, including standards for learning Spanish, are organized based on performance levels rather than grade levels. Those are divided into nine levels: novice low/mid, novice high, intermediate low, intermediate mid, intermediate high, advanced low, advanced mid, advanced high,

and superior. Each performance level includes the following areas: interpretative listening, reading, and communication; presentational speaking and writing; culture, connections, comparisons, and communities. Due to the absence of grade-level world languages standards, young bilingual learners of Spanish have no opportunity to develop bilingual academic language and literacy skills through a comprehensive curriculum that meets both their performance level and their developmental level.

As outlined in Table 11.2, the objectives of language learning are determined at two levels. The state policy, as illustrated in the English Language Development Standards, is to develop students' ability to communicate knowledge and information in English. In addition, the world languages standards aim to foster the development of linguistic skills and understanding of linguistic features in languages other than English (CPALMS, 2019b). At the local school district level, subtractive and additive approaches and orientations toward second language acquisition, described earlier in this chapter, also determine the goals of teaching English or world languages to young learners of Spanish.

Under the 1990 Florida Consent Decree, described earlier as a policy that guides the preparation of teachers of English learning students, all school districts are required to collect data of students' home language and national origin. Based on the data, whether a student is in need of ESOL program services is determined by a committee of educators, in conjunction with data on the student's proficiency levels in English. Followed by the identification of ELs, a written LEP (Limited English Proficient) student plan outlines a student's instructional program type and time as well as English language assessment data. There are limited data on students in grades K through 2 who are not required to be have their English language development assessed. Furthermore, CPALMS (2019b) provides limited lessons or resources to teach content in Spanish to young learners. Most lesson plans and resources about Spanish language or culture are covered in the context of Spanish history in social studies for upper-grade levels 4–12 with the exception of a counting lesson given in both English and Spanish for students in grade levels K–1.

In terms of personnel policy, all of Florida's public school teachers are required to obtain a bachelor's degree and should complete prerequisites in a teacher preparation program (Teacher Certification Degrees, 2019). A major challenge in Florida

**Table 11.2** State-level K-2 Curriculum, Methodology, and Personnel Policies in Florida for Spanish Learning

| Curriculum policy | Methodology policy | Personnel policy |
|---|---|---|
| Subtractive vs. additive programs | English language assessment, LEP student plan | BA required for lead teachers |
| CPALMS standards: English language development and world languages | Limited Spanish lesson/resources | ESOL endorsement (300 master plan points or 15 college semester hours) |
| Objective: communication in English and understanding in world languages | TWI, TBE, or world languages programs (K-3 or K-5) | Few dual language or bilingual certificate programs |

is identifying personnel with adequate training to teach in additive bilingual education programs. School districts offer in-service teacher PD for kindergarten through grade 2, and recently a bilingual certificate to prepare educators in TWI dual language education programs has been made available to educators working in those programs. Among credentialed teachers, the 300-hour ESOL requirement to work with nonnative English-speaking students remains in place (Table 11.2). However, the emphasis of that program is on English language acquisition, suggesting a subtractive orientation and not one geared toward building the bilingual landscape of Florida in which Spanish is a resource for growth and learning (Ruiz, 1984).

## Discussion

This paper examined three areas of Kaplan and Baldauf's (2005) framework related to language-in-education planning for young learners of Spanish using the state of Florida as an example of how states implement policies in a decentralized government structure. In the case of the US, a small portion of federal funding flows into the state, and local school districts use follow state guidelines and laws to implement local policies. The decentralized structure in which states determine and set educational programs, policies, and practices is meant to allow states the flexibility they need to respond to local demographics and needs. However, although there are nearly 300,000 identified English learning students in the state of Florida, with the vast majority Spanish speakers, the state maintains an English-as-official-language stance, which underscores the politically conservative position of unifying people through a misconceived "one language–one state" policy (Fishman, 1991). The policy further advances the nation's English-only narratives as demonstrated in the subtractive orientations of the language-in-education policies. Thus, there are ongoing tensions between the building of linguistic resources through personnel, methodology, and curriculum policies and state financial support to do so.

Moreover, Florida demonstrates how curriculum policy can be additive or subtractive, depending on whether Spanish-speaking children will receive support for their home language in Early Head Start, Head Start, or kindergarten programs. The general position and orientation of the state is on English language acquisition, a subtractive learning policy. Yet despite the state's stance that English is the official language, Spanish is increasingly being used in schools, as larger numbers of school districts in the state experience the benefit of TWI and additive bilingual education programs for Spanish- and English-speaking students. A major challenge to this growth is the limited number of certified teachers who can provide academic instruction through Spanish into the middle elementary (primary) grades. Furthermore, limited resources are provided to teach content areas in Spanish or promote children's bilingual development, but this can vary tremendously across the state's 67 school districts.

Thus, as this chapter demonstrates and argues, personnel, methodology, and curriculum policies are deeply intertwined and difficult to distill, as each affects the

other. Personnel policies that include preparing highly qualified teachers and educators (such as bilingual paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, and caregivers) must insist on professional knowledge of the relationship between first and second language acquisition theories. The more educators understand and build upon young learners' first languages, the stronger students' long-term learning outcomes. The methods used by educators that build on early oracy for first and second language literacy should also include contrastive linguistics for Spanish and English; indeed, young bilinguals benefit directly from this metalinguistic knowledge (Coady & Ariza, 2010; Coady et al., 2019b). Finally, the degree to which curriculum policies reflect and affirm students' identities—including their language and cultural identities—will further reveal how successful early language learning is and can be. These three areas—preparation, implementation, and access—are clearly interrelated to support early language learning and literacy. What is clear from this chapter is that local language-in-education policies are embedded in larger narratives at the state and national levels in the US. This creates friction for speakers of Spanish in the state who aim to maintain and build the home language.

## Implications

Spanish speakers continue to be the largest minoritized language group in the US but continue to face among the lowest rate of educational attainment or school readiness owing to the minimal support provided to young learners of Spanish and access to native early language learner programs (Figueras-Daniel & Barnett, 2013). Our review of curriculum, methodology, and personnel policies in the US using the example of the state of Florida has the following implications. First, systematic survey data of children's home languages and bilingual programs or instruction should be provided by the state with data collected on the types of methodology, personnel, and curriculum policies used and desired. High-quality early childhood education and early bilingual development are known to predict students' academic achievement in later years (Nores et al., 2018). However, language policies regarding young bilingual learners' equitable access to early childhood education remain limited in Spanish relative to the number of speakers. In particular, state-level datasets do not provide enrollment data on children's home languages or the DL programs in each school district. Even when considering early bilingual learners between kindergarten and grade 2, systematic data that would elucidate how DL or bilingual education is provided to young learners of Spanish, data are limited or absent altogether.

Second, high-quality curriculum and support for bilingual instruction in pre-K through early elementary grades are needed. Comprehensive policies and curriculum with research-based resources and professional development can further support young learners of Spanish in the US (Nores et al., 2018)—that is, for both native and nonnative Spanish speakers. For example, despite Florida's effort to provide preschool education to young learners of Spanish through programs such as

VPK, School Readiness Program, Head Start, and preschool education, those programs are organized separately from the public kindergarten through elementary grade (grade 5 or 6) education. These separate policies between pre-K and grade 2 impose challenges with respect to providing high-quality and consistent educational programs for young learners of Spanish. In the US, federal policies toward young learners of Spanish, that is, both English speakers learning Spanish and native Spanish-speaking children, remain embedded in a national narrative that positions Spanish as an inferior, racialized language but, as Valdés (1997) predicted two decades ago, a desirable and economically advantageous language for speakers of English to learn.

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