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The spring 2024 issue of *GATESOL Journal* invites readers to consider how they traverse the path of multilingual learner education. The articles in the issue trace the historical policies that have led to the current state of education for multilingual learners, provide a checkpoint for evaluating assessment, create a plan for visualizing the destination, and explore artificial intelligence tools to help navigate the road ahead. This issue will highlight how language educators can work with and for their students to cultivate language across contexts through interrogating assessment results, reflecting on the trajectory of language policy, envisioning the future, and harnessing technology tools.

Surveying the Landscape

In the first article, Patterson and Schneider explore the ever-present tension between teaching and assessment. In their study, Patterson and Schneider investigate ESOL teachers' perceptions of how accurately multilingual learners' language proficiency is assessed on the Assessing Comprehension and Communication of English State-to-State (ACCESS) test (developed by World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)). The authors analyzed focus group responses to identify three main themes: techniques for assessment preparation, common perceptions of the assessment, and proposed improvements to the assessment.

In order to understand the current state of language education policy (including assessment), it is crucial to understand historical context. In the policy perspectives piece, Fu

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outlines the evolution of U.S. language education policies for multilingual learners from the passage of the Bilingual Education Act (1968) through the early part of the 21st century. The review of the progress of language policies has implications for leveraging the role of bilingual education in future endeavors to uphold the rights of emergent bilingual learners. Interpreting the policy waves is necessary for charting a path forward.

Planting the Seeds

As language education is a constantly shifting field, language educators, researchers, and assessors must not stand frozen at the crossroads. Looking ahead, both Lizdas and Duncanson provide teaching techniques that advance student growth. Lizdas describes a teaching intervention in which students are asked to engage in goal-setting and self-visualization activities to help them increase their willingness to communicate in the ESOL classroom. This paper describes a five-week intervention in which English students envision themselves as successful English speakers and set goals for communication. Lizdas suggests how the intervention might be used in other teaching contexts to increase students' willingness to communicate.

Like Lizdas's teaching technique, Duncanson's piece explores the potentiality of language development through technology-enhanced supports. Duncanson describes the potential for artificial intelligence to provide individual writing support to language learners and instructional support for classroom teachers. This paper discusses and exemplifies the use of *QuillBot*, an AI writing tool that could be used for second language (L2) writing and instruction. Duncanson describes ways to use the tool to plan meaningful and student-tailored lessons to provide an interactive learning space for multilingual learners in the language classroom.

A Note on Renewal and Transformation

The new senior editors of *GATESOL Journal,* Alex Reyes and Eliana Hirano, would not have been able to publish this long-awaited issue without the guidance of their predecessors, David Chiesa and Robert Griffin, nor without the assistance of the associate editors Ethan Trinh and Abdulsamad Humaidan. Alex and Eliana look forward to continuing to grow the journal as Ethan's and Abdulsamad's terms come to an end. The editorial team hopes that readers will find value in the spring 2024 issue and will continue to cultivate success for multilingual learners and educators.

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Are WIDA Test Results Appropriately Reflecting Multilingual Learners' Language Skills According to ESOL Teachers' Experiences? Results of a Pilot Study

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Abstract

Within the field of multilingual learner (ML) education, ESOL teachers' voices are often overlooked and underrepresented despite their integral role in developing productive and knowledgeable future citizens. This study sheds light on the experiences of ESOL teachers that administer the federally mandated annual standardized testing created by World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA). It uses focus-group interviews to gather qualitative data from two neighboring school districts in order to gain insight into the WIDA assessments' reflection of language proficiency. WIDA testing evaluates English language development by measuring academic and social language skills within the four language domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. MLs without severe, classified disabilities in grades K-12 participate annually in the Assessing Comprehension and Communication of English State-to-State (ACCESS) assessment by WIDA. Results place students into proficiency categories ranging from entering (a student new to English) to bridging (a near-fluent ML), as defined by the WIDA language proficiency standards. The interviews allowed the ESOL teachers to share their experiences with MLs' classroom performances in the four testing domains compared to their performances on the online WIDA assessments. The interview data was analyzed and categorized into three main themes based on teacher responses: assessment preparation techniques, common perceptions of the assessment, and proposed changes to improve the assessment. Each of these themes, with their local and national implications, are discussed as they affect the nature of ESOL instruction and assessment.

Keywords

language proficiency assessment, multilingual learners, WIDA ACCESS, ESOL teacher perspectives

Introduction

Appropriate instruction and assessment of multilingual learners (MLs) within education has become an increasingly important field of study. As the percentage of MLs within public schools continues to rise, research within the field of ESOL, especially pertaining to the assessment of

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English language development, remains limited. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of ESOL teachers from two local school districts in the east coast region of the U.S. regarding the nature and authenticity of WIDA ACCESS testing (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023). WIDA ACCESS assessments provide data that indicate the development of English in students whose first language is not English to appropriately guide ensuing instruction. ESOL teachers share personal experiences through focus group interviews to shed light on the various perspectives of educators regarding the authenticity of the WIDA ACCESS test results in measuring English language development. Authenticity, in the context of this study, is defined by Varga and Guignon (2020) as "a reliable, accurate representation" of MLs' English language proficiency (p. 1).

This study is significant due to general ESOL teachers' perceptions of, and anecdotal references to, the discrepancies between student performance on standardized WIDA tests and perceived English language development within the classroom. These anecdotal comments have alluded to challenges with WIDA testing as an adequate representation of MLs' language development based on teachers' daily interactions and continual monitoring of language acquisition in the classroom. These teachers share the seemingly common frustrations of perceiving the WIDA language proficiency assessments as an ineffective measure of language proficiency across grade levels, schools, and districts. Although most U.S. states measure English language proficiency using WIDA, limited independent research exists exploring teachers' perceptions of the assessments as an accurate measure of language development (King & Bigelow, 2018). Currently, the existing body of independent research into the authenticity of WIDA language proficiency assessments is limited to the quantitative findings of Coulter (2017) and the qualitative findings of Lopez and Garcia (2020) and Waters (2020). Coulter (2017) compared WIDA ACCESS proficiency ratings with previous alternative standardized testing. Lopez and Garcia (2020) interviewed ESOL teachers and found out that most teachers struggle to utilize standardized data for instruction. Moreover, Waters (2020) examined the variance in teacher perspectives of WIDA ACCESS testing based on demographics and teaching environments to determine the impact of test results on ESOL policy and decision-making. These findings support the inquiry into the authenticity of WIDA ACCESS testing.

To the knowledge of the authors to this date, ESOL teachers' experiences with the preparation for, administration of, and comparison of test results with in-class language performances of MLs have not been explored in the ESOL literature. Therefore, this study creates a unique forum to share teachers' experiences through inquiry into pedagogical techniques and beliefs surrounding the standardized assessments. Moreover, the consistently growing number of MLs in public schools creates an increasing demand for appropriate and authentic testing to track language development (Ariza & Coady, 2018).

The following sections provide readers with background information to better understand the relevance of this study in terms of (a) MLs' language acquisition, (b) legal support for appropriate language performance assessment, and (c) the nature of WIDA ACCESS testing.

MLs and Language Acquisition
When acquiring a second or additional language, MLs develop language in two domains: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 2016). Developed and defined by Cummins (2016), BICS encompasses oral conversational fluency that generally develops within one to three years of consistent social immersion in an additional language and culture. CALP includes spoken or written academic

language used in informational exchanges, typically within a formal academic setting. On average, MLs develop near-fluent CALP over the span of five to seven years with regular exposure in an academic setting and up to nine years with limited exposure (Cummins, 2008). However, Cummins' theory of language acquisition receives criticism for "creating a binary view of language" that does not always adequately reflect language acquisition (Scarcella, 2003, p. 6). In her critique, Scarcella (2003) refers to Cummins' model as a stagnant representation of language development encompassing fixed choices of language comprehension and production. However, she overlooks the progressivity of Cummins' model, in which students continuously acquire new social and academic language skills simultaneously in diverse environments (Ariza & Coady, 2018). Cummins' theory of language acquisition remains pertinent to the assessment of language proficiency because, when measuring language development, language proficiency assessments should consider the disparity between social and academic language acquisition.

MLs' language acquisition is influenced by the learning environment (Makarova, 2019), where they can gain exposure to and authentic experiences with using social language to engage in social interactions that serve as the dominant language function within a positive setting. However, authentic experiences using academic vocabulary can be limited because the language is often decontextualized and used primarily in academic endeavors (Ariza & Coady, 2018). This decontextualization results from the expectation that students utilize academic vocabulary solely within content-specific settings, such as language unique to geometry during mathematics instruction, rather than integrating domain-specific vocabulary in a variety of authentic settings. Furthermore, language-level properties and child-level properties (Paradis, 2019) can affect MLs' language acquisition rates. Language-level properties include features that impact language acquisition, such as the complexity and structural dynamics of the new language. Child-level properties are properties that relate to the individual learner to influence language acquisition, including input and output opportunities and cognitive capacity (Coulter, 2017; Paradis, 2019). Within these domains, MLs possess complex, higher-order thinking and executive functioning skills but struggle to verbalize their thoughts in a new language, resulting in a language gap (Coulter, 2017, p. 1) rather than an achievement gap (Kudo & Swanson, 2014). The educational environment also contributes to the language gap by limiting input and output opportunities on which language acquisition heavily relies. For example, classroom instruction that limits peer discussions prevents MLs from developing academic oral language during critical thinking tasks. The properties of language acquisition combined with knowledge of the complex capabilities of MLs create a foundation for effective ESOL pedagogy and assessment.

Legal Support for Appropriate Performance Assessment
The legal support for appropriate language proficiency tests in public schools is based on several legal developments starting in the early 1960s. These landmark court cases related to ML populations and ESOL education, including Lau v. Nichols (1974), Plyler v. Doe (1982), Castañeda v. Pickard (1981), and United States v. Texas (1970) (McEachern, 2022), impact the pedagogy and classroom experiences of MLs. The first federal acknowledgement of the needs of MLs within public education deemed segregation of schools unlawful and mandated federal grants to support programs for MLs (Bilingual Education Act, 1968). As ML populations rapidly expanded, claims arose that identical education did not present equal educational opportunities for MLs. The case ruled that schools must take affirmative actions to remove educational barriers for all students, including MLs (Lau v. Nichols, 1974). Subsequently, multiple court cases led to ESOL programs in public education by requiring education for undocumented immigrants (Plyler

v. Doe, 1982), research-based pedagogy (Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981), and progress monitoring through standardized testing (United States v. Texas, 1970). See Appendix A for a detailed overview of these court cases.

Nature of WIDA ACCESS Testing

MLs are federally mandated to complete a large-scale, norm-referenced, summative language proficiency assessment on an annual basis, as required by Castañeda v. Pickard (1978). WIDA currently provides assessments to 41 U.S. states and 2 U.S. territories. Originally funded by a U.S. Department of Education grant, WIDA was established in 2003 by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to design language proficiency standards and assessments for MLs (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023). To identify MLs' home languages, new students in U.S. public education must complete a home language survey (Castañeda v. Pickard, 1978). MLs without classified disabilities in grades 1-12 take the online ACCESS test administered by a local ESOL teacher and scored by affiliates of the WIDA organization. The WIDA ACCESS test determines MLs' English proficiency based on vocabulary usage, language forms and conventions, and linguistic complexity in the following content areas: social and instructional language, English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023). According to WIDA-based research, the ACCESS assessment aligns national Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with WIDA language standards (Cook, 2014; Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023) by assessing content knowledge and critical thinking skills (Coulter, 2017).

Students take this online test in four separate parts for a total of 265 testing minutes. Local ESOL teachers administer and supervise the test, following an administration model provided by WIDA. Assessed language domains include reading, writing, listening, and speaking (see Appendix B1). ESOL teachers then use the test scores to guide future instruction based on MLs' strengths and areas for improvement. WIDA uses criterion-referenced scoring to place students at different levels of language proficiency, as described in Appendix B2 (Coulter, 2017). The six levels of language acquisition are associated with a number system (1-6) starting at entering (1) for students with minimal language proficiency, beginning (2), developing (3), expanding (4), bridging (5), and reaching (6) (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023).

The online nature of this test impacts MLs' language performances in a variety of ways. According to Coulter (2017), teachers consider the negative effects of extended online testing on MLs' performances when reviewing test scores. Also, having to record themselves speaking into a computer using a headset and microphone creates an unnatural language interaction for MLs that differs from speaking with others in person (Coulter, 2017). Additionally, the writing portion requires students to type constructed responses within a time limit and deviates from MLs' writing tasks with a writing utensil and paper. Coulter's (2017) WIDA-independent study also describes the disconnect in test scores and classroom performances because the assessment requires MLs to apply grade-level content knowledge and critical thinking skills in English without considering MLs' deficits in both areas. According to Coulter (2017), only 20 percent of the testing material measures social language skills, which is evident in the updated WIDA English Language Standards Statements (2020). Only Standard 1 explicitly addresses the assessment of "language for social and instructional purposes" (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023) while the remaining four language standards for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies exclusively emphasize academic language and content knowledge (WIDA, 2020, pp. 24-25; Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023).

Research Methods

This study delved into the WIDA ACCESS tests used to measure language proficiency to answer the research question: How do ESOL teachers perceive the WIDA ACCESS language proficiency assessment as an authentic representation of MLs' English language proficiency? Discussions in focus-group interviews were chosen for data collection in order to allow participants to interact with each other and share their personal experiences with WIDA testing.

Nine of 34 invited ESOL teachers from two local suburban school districts voluntarily participated in virtual focus group interviews. Participants were identified using a sample of convenience by locating the names of local ESOL teachers on district websites and contacting them directly through email to request participation. Following university International Review Board (IRB) protocols, participation was voluntary, and participant identities remained anonymous. All participants were female, white, native speakers of English who had previous or current experiences as elementary ESOL teachers in two contiguous school districts. Three of the nine participants were employed in the largest school district in the county of interest, and, at the time of the study, 16.5% of the student population were classified as MLs according to the local school district website. The remaining six participants were employed in an adjacent school district with similar demographics. Three participants taught in both middle school and elementary ESOL classrooms but shared their experiences specifically pertaining to the administration of WIDA assessments in elementary settings to maintain consistency and specificity in the gathered data. Four participants requested individual interviews. One session consisted of two interviewees, and another session held three participants.

During 30-minute individual and group interviews, six prepared questions were posed as follows. The researchers clarified any necessary wording, such as defining authenticity in the context of this study, to ensure participants fully understood each question and answered the questions to the best of their abilities.

1. In what ways do you prepare your students for WIDA ACCESS testing, and can you provide examples of preparation techniques?
2. Which of the four domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) is harder or easier to prepare students for? Why?
3. In your personal experience as an ESOL teacher, how has the online nature of the assessment affected student performance when compared to your informal assessments and interactions with the students?
4. To what degree does the WIDA test reflect MLs' English proficiency in the four testing domains?
5. What changes could be made to the WIDA assessment to ensure students demonstrate their English proficiency with more authenticity than the current assessment results?
6. Based on your experiences, to what degree does WIDA testing require students to access cultural understandings, prior academic knowledge, and keyboarding skills?

Findings

The researchers analyzed the interview transcripts generated automatically by the virtual meeting platform. They independently coded the transcripts according to recurring themes, discussed commonalities in their theme-coding, and resolved coding differences through negotiated agreements (Belotto, 2018), ensuring interrater reliability. They then used the coded transcripts to

identify three common themes within the data: (a) teacher preparation techniques for the test, (b) teacher perceptions of the test, and (c) proposed changes to the test.

Theme 1: Preparation Techniques
The first theme, preparation techniques for the test, was separated into four categories: preparation for speaking, writing, reading, and listening. All interviewees commented on common preparations, such as conferencing with students to discuss the previous year's test scores (7 out of the 9 participants), setting goals for the upcoming year (6/9), organizing students into ability-based small groups (2/9), and practicing sample test questions (5/9) to "simulate the test as much as possible," as one teacher stated.

 Speaking test preparations. The interviewees built a comprehensive list of preparation techniques to improve each skill required for a satisfactory test score. For instance, eight of the nine teachers discussed incorporating recording technology to allow students to practice physically speaking into a microphone with a headset as a means to simulate the test format. Five teachers mentioned practicing the mechanical functions of clicking the record button, speaking for a set time, and then ending the recording. To familiarize students with talking about a topic for an extended period, one teacher has students describe a displayed picture using details and academic vocabulary while timing responses with a running sand timer. All nine interviewees emphasized the importance of acclimating students to the test format rather than providing direct instruction to improve MLs' oral responses. Lastly, four teachers have students identify relevant academic and content-specific vocabulary to track the vocabulary usage in their responses so students "use as much academic language as possible."

 Writing test preparations. Similar to the speaking preparation, seven teachers simulate the writing portion of the test in their preparation. To mirror test formats, students in grades 1-3 write responses on paper while students in grades 4-5 type responses on the computer. Three teachers discussed their focus on developing the writing process with brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing responses. These same three teachers also dedicate units of study to each of the writing functions, such as comparing and contrasting or cause-and-effect. One teacher uses a color-coding strategy to ensure students effectively organize their responses. Three participants also discussed a technique similar to the speaking preparation in which students describe a picture using details and academic vocabulary. The majority of described writing preparation emphasizes identifying and incorporating key vocabulary and academic language into the responses. Four teachers also push into general education classrooms with their MLs in a separate academic environment to connect academic content to their writing.

 Reading test preparations. Similar to speaking and writing, a common preparation technique used to familiarize MLs involves simulating the test format by using practice questions that require students to read and answer content-related questions. Four teachers found this crucial because they noticed MLs getting confused by unfamiliar academic content when answering the questions. For example, questions may provide students with a brief passage involving mathematics and U.S. currency. Although the answer to the question is provided in the given passage, MLs can become distracted by the mathematical nature of the question as well as a possible lack of prior knowledge surrounding U.S. monetary values. This distraction often affects MLs' abilities to apply language skills to effectively answer the question. Therefore, eight of the

nine teachers pose discipline-specific questions repeatedly. Additionally, these eight teachers mentioned that the instruction provided within general education classrooms, combined with their direct support, strengthened MLs' reading skills. Thus, all interviewees did not see a need to emphasize direct preparation for the reading portion of the test.

Listening test preparations. All nine interviewees direct little attention to listening practices because both social and academic listening skills develop naturally within school environments, which provides MLs with daily listening practice in their classrooms. One teacher described having MLs listen to their own recordings from the speaking practice to discuss strengths and areas for improvement using student-friendly rubrics provided by WIDA. Another teacher records prompts for students to listen to and answer questions that mirror the test. Overall, the interviewed ESOL teachers prepare MLs for each of the four testing domains similarly by mirroring the test format and emphasizing the development of academic language.

Theme 2: Teacher Perceptions of the Assessment

The second theme encompasses teachers' perceptions of the test and its ability to appropriately measure English proficiency. Two main categories arose from these perceptions: domain-specific difficulties and emphasis on academic content.

Domain-specific difficulties. All nine participants agreed that the listening portion of the test poses the least difficulty for MLs, and they devote minimal direct instructional time to listening test preparations. One teacher credited the lack of difficulty to the natural academic and social listening practice occurring in general education classrooms. Six teachers observed consistently higher scores on the listening and reading domains' multiple-choice format and partially attributed MLs' success to the limited pool of answer choices and frequent exposure to multiple-choice questions. Also, seven participants attributed annual growth in reading scores to adequate practice in the general education classroom. Five interviewees consistently identified the reading portion as more difficult than the listening portion due to content-specific questions. They noticed that some MLs tend to use academic background knowledge rather than language skills to answer content-based questions. To illustrate, and referring to the aforementioned example of students encountering a question based on U.S. currency and mathematics, interviewees described MLs' tendency to use knowledge of U.S. currency to answer the question rather than their reading skills to locate the answer provided in the passage. Despite these difficulties, all nine teachers found the reading and listening portions less difficult than the speaking and writing domains.

In contrast, every teacher identified speaking and writing test sections as significantly more difficult than listening and reading tasks. All nine teachers attributed the difficulty of the speaking test first to the unnatural test format and repeatedly described MLs' struggles with the process of recording their answers while speaking to a screen rather than a real person. They also pointed out that recording an oral response for an extended period without verbal or nonverbal feedback (i.e., prompting or nodding) creates, according to one teacher, an "intimidating" setting. Another teacher shared, "I have kids who speak perfect English who score very, very low on [speaking]" because of the students' discomfort with the response format. Additionally, eight of the nine teachers mentioned that the speaking test sets higher expectations for language than commonly found in daily conversation by requiring students to use academic vocabulary not typically used in everyday speech. To combat this discrepancy, during class time two teachers rely heavily on having MLs speak in complete sentences using relevant academic vocabulary. All nine teachers described the writing portion of the test as comparably difficult to the speaking test because the writing format

differs from state-standardized tests in which students conduct prompted text-dependent analyses with an expected response length (Writing Component, 2022). Seven interviewees also pointed out that the writing tasks require writing stamina beyond developmentally appropriate levels. MLs respond to three prompts that each demand lengthy responses with academic language and relevant content. All teachers commented that questions often referenced academic content, and four participants found that the topics were often unfamiliar or unnatural to write about for MLs. In sum, teachers perceived the writing and speaking portions to be the most difficult because of their unnatural format and the high expectation of students' command of academic language.

Emphasis on academic content. All nine participants commented on the test's emphasis on academic language and content knowledge. Six teachers viewed the content-oriented questions as inaccurate measures of language proficiency because "language proficiencies come out much lower than where the child actually is," as one teacher stated. Students receive daily scaffolding and academic support, such as visual aids, but the test provides minimal support when students use academic vocabulary. Teachers perceived the test as "very content-oriented" and "testing [MLs'] academic language" rather than measuring language proficiency. Five interviewees also noted that one challenge for MLs was that relevant grade-level standards have often not been taught at the time of testing. These circumstances create a disconnect between the test's expected prior knowledge and the students' actual knowledge, despite attempts by WIDA to align the assessment to national Common Core standards (Center for Public Education, 2014). One teacher commented, "Trying to get a student who already struggles with the language to write about something that they don't have any background knowledge about makes zero sense." Overall, the teachers perceived the test as content-driven rather than focused on language.

Theme 3: Proposed Changes
The final theme presents proposed changes to improve the testing experience for MLs and teachers. Suggested changes include: (a) comparison of MLs' test results with those of native English speakers, (b) alterations to the test format, (c) consideration of multiple data points to measure language proficiency, and (d) administration of the test later in the school year.

Comparing test results of MLs and native speakers of English. Each interviewee stressed the importance of defending the validity of the test by having native English speakers take an identical test to compare their results with those of the MLs and provide insights into where the test fails to accurately measure language proficiency. Eight teachers expressed their doubts that a native speaker would receive a passing score because of the length, format, and content of the test. One teacher cited an instance in which an ESOL teacher appealed to WIDA by asking for a native speaker to take the test, but WIDA representatives stated the results would be insufficient to disprove the accuracy of the test because of the discrepancy in language abilities between native speakers and MLs. Therefore, one teacher asked, "If a native English speaker can't pass this test, how do you expect this [ML] to?" All nine interviewees agreed that comparing the test scores of native speakers and MLs could improve performance expectations.

Altering test format. Interviewees provided multiple suggestions to maximize the authenticity of the test results, such as making the format developmentally appropriate by balancing the online and written portions of the test. While the kindergarten version of the ACCESS test is taken almost entirely on paper and involves developmentally appropriate skills, such as allowing for the use of manipulatives, the first-grade version of the test requires students

to complete three of the four testing domains online. This format requires developmentally inappropriate technology skills and testing stamina, as exemplified by one teacher who stated, "I hardly ever have any first-grade students that exit the ESOL program." Existing research by Waters (2020) on teacher perceptions of the WIDA ACCESS assessment also supports the use of developmentally appropriate testing practices by arguing for a shift back to paper forms to center the focus on language proficiency rather than computer and keyboarding skills. Moreover, every teacher discussed the unnatural format of recording the speaking portion on a computer. Six of these teachers mentioned the benefits of administering the speaking test in person to create a more natural testing environment for MLs. Six participants described students tiring during the test and rushing as their concentration fades near the end, particularly in the constructed-response portions of the test, including speaking and writing. Overall, these teachers felt that by reducing the testing time spent online, young MLs were less likely to exceed their testing stamina.

The final suggestion involves content-reliant questions. Five teachers proposed including more social language, and three of these teachers recommended utilizing academic content from the previous grade levels' standards rather than those of the current grade. This would decrease students' encounters with unfamiliar content and allow students to use higher-order thinking processes while measuring students' daily language capabilities.

Using multiple data points to determine language skills. All nine teachers recommended collecting and triangulating data to determine language proficiency with summative and formative assessments to "look at a child holistically," as one teacher described. The court case United States v. Texas (1970) also supports the use of additional data points to measure language proficiency development by demanding appropriate progress monitoring of MLs' language development. Unanimously, participants perceived the test as an inaccurate measure of language proficiency. The most common suggestions for improved measures of proficiency included using student portfolios and running records (7/9) and gathering various formative assessments throughout the school year (6/9).

Altering ACCESS testing time. Four teachers proposed a later test administration time to a) provide teachers with more instructional time before assessing student growth, and b) provide students with more time to improve their language and content proficiencies. Currently, testing in this district occurs in February, leaving nearly three months of further instruction and possible proficiency growth unassessed. Additionally, ESOL teachers first gather data on MLs at the start of the school year and then begin working with them in early October, leaving students with only three to four months of instruction from ESOL teachers before taking the test. While four teachers also considered possible conflicts with annual state standardized testing taken near the end of the school year, they continued to stress the shortcomings of the current testing dates.

Implications

Despite the small scale of this study, many significant local and national implications became evident that are relevant to the ESOL field as a whole. Locally, one crucial implication arose based on the teachers' perceptions of the varying difficulty of the test through consistent anecdotal comments about students feeling "stuck" in the program as student test scores did not align with their perceived language proficiency. A feasible solution to remedy this identified disconnect between test performance and perceived language proficiency would be to alter the state exit criteria. The state's ESOL exit criteria is based solely on student performance on the WIDA ACCESS test, as students must receive a 4.4 composite score and 4.0 in each individual testing

domain (WIDA, 2023). This single test determines whether students "are just going to be MLs for life because they can't pass the test," as one teacher noted, despite appearing proficient in daily activities. Lowering the individual domain requirements while maintaining the composite score would relieve testing pressures to create a more authentic, and holistic, reflection of students' abilities.

Nationally, alterations to the exit criteria would also improve the authenticity of language proficiency measures. One change includes considering multiple data points to triangulate data, make educational decisions, and assess progress to allow ESOL educators to determine MLs' language proficiency more accurately. Educators rely on the most effective assessment practices to measure and reflect language development and proficiency. A single test score, however, appears to not reflect MLs' authentic language capabilities based on this study's findings. Effective assessment methods integrate natural language measures and provide multiple opportunities for authentic expressions of language proficiency (Coulter, 2017). This study contributes to Coulter's research on WIDA testing by providing a unique perspective with qualitative interview data from in-service ESOL teachers and further supports the use of multiple data points to measure language proficiency. Secondly, the WIDA Consortium could benefit from accepting input from ESOL teachers with experience implementing ACCESS testing and a multifaceted knowledge of their MLs. Valuable suggestions to consider include aligning testing situations with the classroom environment, integrating more social language while reducing the number of content-related questions, and providing testing later in the year so MLs can demonstrate growth with more authenticity.

These implications provide insight into the challenges of the WIDA ACCESS test and possible solutions to improve the authenticity of the assessment. Moreover, these findings could be considered to improve aspects of standardized assessments within general and specialized educational fields. For example, holistic assessment approaches such as collecting multiple data points improve the quality of instruction and assessment throughout the field of education. Therefore, this research and its findings serve to benefit the entire educational community.

Conclusion

This study intended to shed light on elementary ESOL teachers' experiences with WIDA ACCESS testing regarding its authenticity compared to MLs' proficiency in the classroom. The passion with which the teachers shared their views encourages future research on this topic. In response to the drastically increasing number of MLs in the U.S. (Park et. al., 2017), further studies could help improve teacher and student experiences with WIDA ACCESS testing and the quality of language assessments.

Our findings contribute to a small body of research related to WIDA ACCESS testing. While WIDA-affiliated studies identify WIDA ACCESS testing as effective for decision-making based on standardized test data, pedagogical approaches, and evaluation of teachers, independent studies like ours identify several challenges with the efficacy of WIDA ACCESS testing. These are validated by Coulter (2017), Waters (2020), and Lopez and Garcia (2020). These independent studies highlight the need for improved standardized language proficiency measures to combat the discrepancy between measured and perceived language proficiencies of MLs (Coulter, 2017; Lopez & Garcia, 2020; Waters, 2020). However, WIDA ACCESS tests currently serve as the sole consideration to determine ML's language proficiency.

Further studies are needed to appraise the authenticity of WIDA ACCESS testing from the perspective of ESOL teachers to expand upon this small-scale study. Such studies could include

geographic, socioeconomic, and ethnographic diversity with larger participation pools, including voices of early childhood, elementary, middle school, and high school ESOL experiences along with responses from rural, suburban, and urban schools. Additionally, it would be insightful to compare WIDA assessment practices and exit percentages with results from other standardized language testing used in states that do not implement WIDA ACCESS testing. Overall, the ESOL field and the educational community can benefit from the findings of this study and bring the improvement of ESOL education and assessment to the forefront of educational research.

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Appendix A

Table 1

Legal Developments in Support of ML Education

Legal Development	Court Ruling	Implications for MLs
Bilingual Education Act (1968)	The segregation of non-native English speaking students in public general education classrooms is unlawful.	This court ruling was the first federal acknowledgment of MLs in public education. The ruling in favor of ML education also established federal grants to support ML education programs.
United States v Texas (1970)	An annual review of school districts by measuring the growth of MLs' language development is required in all public educational institutions.	This ruling established progress monitoring standards to track English language development and resulted in the widespread use of annual standardized testing to measure language proficiency growth.
Lau v Nichols (1974)	Identical education does not present equal learning opportunities for all students.	Public education must take affirmative action to remove educational barriers for all students and schools are to be held accountable for ensuring all students receive appropriate education.
Casteñada v Pickard (1981)	All instructional strategies must be based on legitimate educational theories and supported by existing research.	Schools must implement instructional programs, resources, and personnel necessary to provide appropriate education to all students. Educators must also be appropriately qualified and knowledgeable.
Plyler v Doe (1982)	Public schools cannot deny education to undocumented immigrants.	This ruling ensures education for all students despite background, culture, or home language. The passing of this ruling also resulted in steadily increasing ML student populations in public schools.

(Table adapted from Ariza & Coady, 2018)

Appendix B

WIDA Language Domains and Expectations

Table B1

Language Domains

Domains	Time Allotted	Expected Tasks	Answer Format	Scoring Type
Reading	60 minutes	-View a picture -Read a passage -Read the question -Click the correct answer	Selected response answers	Automatic Scoring
Writing	90 minutes	-View a picture -Read a short passage -Read the question -Write an appropriate response	Constructed response -Grades 1-3 paper response -Grades 4-5 typed response	Triangulated scoring by independent, trained test delivery partners
Listening	65 minutes	-View a picture -Listen to a voice talk -Listen to the question -Click or drag the answer	Selected response answers	Automatic Scoring
Speaking	50 minutes	-Listen to a brief exchange -Listen to the question -Record answer using a microphone	Constructed oral response recorded on a computer	Triangulated scoring by independent trained test delivery partners

(Table adapted from Coulter, 2017; Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023)

Table B2

Language domain expectations relating to English proficiency levels

Proficiency	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Entering	Understand oral messages that include visuals and gestures and contain everyday words in English	Communicate orally using gestures and language that may contain a few words	Understand written texts that include visuals and may contain a few words or phrases	Communicate in writing using visual sand symbols that may contain few words
Beginning	Understand oral language related to specific familiar topics and participate in class discussions	Communicate ideas and information orally using short sentences and everyday words and phrases	Understand written language related to specific familiar topics and participate in class discussions	Communicate in writing using language related to familiar topics
Developing	Understand oral language related to specific common topics and participate in class discussions	Communicate ideas and details orally using several connected sentences and participate in short conversations and discussions	Understand written language related to common topics and participate in class discussions	Communicate in writing using language related to common topics
Expanding	Understand oral language related to specific topics and participate in class discussions	Communicate orally using language related to specific topics in school and participate in class discussions	Understand written language related to specific topics	Communicate in writing using language related to specific topics
Bridging	Understand oral language and participate in all academic classes to recall examples and expand on ideas	Communicate orally and participate in all academic classes to discuss, summarize, present, and defend ideas	Understand written language from all academic classes to compare and summarize ideas and information	Communicate in writing using language from all academic classes
Reaching	Understand oral language and participate in all academic classes to synthesize information and recognize differing viewpoints	Communicate orally and participate in all academic classes to react, respond, persuade, and clarify multiple viewpoints	Understand written language from all academic classes to evaluate and synthesize ideas and information	Communicate in writing using language from all academic classes to produce clearly organized writing pieces of varying functions

Table adapted from WIDA (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 2023)

Tracing the History: Language Education Policy and Emergent Bilingual Learners in the United States

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Abstract

Since the passage of the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, the meaning, function, and connotation of bilingual education in the United States have undergone significant changes. In this article, the author outlines the evolution of U.S. language education policies for emergent bilingual learners since the 19th century. In particular, the article demonstrates the major waves and shifts of language education policies that either support or oppress the linguistic rights of language minoritized students, and captures how the changing social, political, and economic climate has shaped the nation's response to language diversity. Importantly, reviewing the historical evolution of language policies not only echoes the importance of policy decisions in impacting bilingual students' educational trajectories, but also informs future policy decisions in order to disrupt deficit positioning of bilingual communities.

Keywords

Emergent bilingual learners; language education policy; policy evolution

Introduction

On January 2, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In doing so, he said:

> The bill contains a special provision establishing bilingual education programs for children whose first language is not English. Thousands of children of Latin descent, young Indians and others will get a better start—a better chance in school.... [W]e are now giving every child in America a better chance to touch his outermost limits—to reach the farthest edge of his talents and his dreams. We have begun a campaign to unlock the full potential of every boy and girl—regardless of his race or his region or his father's income. (Johnson, 1968, as cited in Anderson & Boyer, 1970, p.1)

What Johnson said demonstrates the establishment of bilingual programs as a political vision, a form of educational and social reconstruction, and a site that is crucial for serious democratic transformations. The implementation of bilingual education was initially to address social, political, economic, and educational injustice, but it has remained a powerful instrument of mainstreaming language minoritized students (Akkari,1998). Indeed, even though BEA was laying out the ground for ensuring equitable educational rights for children whose first language is not English, the term and stance of "bilingual" did little to explicitly support its goal. Scholars have argued that bilingual education needs to be built on the beliefs and practices that foster and sustain linguistic and cultural pluralism and embrace cultural and linguistic pluralism as part of the

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democratic project of schooling (Harman, 2018; Paris, 2012). Yet, as I reflect on the history of bilingual education and language policymaking in the U.S., I realize the fact that Johnson's lofty goals of providing equitable educational opportunities to racially and socioeconomically minoritized groups and creating pathways to social justice through bilingual programs, after more than five decades, have not been achieved. In this vein, for anyone who has been working in the field and trying to make the connections between education for emergent bilingual learners and the broader sociopolitical landscape, understanding the history of these connections ought to remain a central focus in academic inquiry. Because only when we ensure that the historical progress of language policies is well documented, can we leverage the role of bilingual education in future endeavors for upholding the rights of emergent bilingual learners.

Since the passage of BEA in 1968, the meaning, function, and connotation of bilingual education have undergone significant changes. In this article, I attempt to provide an historical review of the evolution of U.S. language education policies for emergent bilingual learners starting from the 19th century, when contemporary bilingual education programs emerged. In the sections that follow, I first describe the demographics of emergent bilingual learners in the context of U.S. K–12 educational programs. I then identify language education policies implemented over the decades that have affected the educational opportunities and resources available to emergent bilingual learners. I further introduce the dual language education (DLE) model. By doing so, what I try to suggest is that while different language education policies impact the schooling experiences of emergent bilinguals in different ways, what these policies did not address are the racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic hierarchies between emergent bilinguals and white monolingual communities (Fu, 2021; Harklau & Ford, 2022; Thompson, 2017). The subtractive schooling for bilingual students in the U.S. reflects a symbolic politics that relegates Latinx and other minoritized communities to second-class status in society (Valenzuela, 2010). In other words, policies are subject to power relations in the broader society and can be used as a mechanism to maintain social dominance of some over others (Wagenaar, 2011).

Nevertheless, what I want to demonstrate in this article is that critically reviewing the evolution of language education policy can be a powerful apparatus. The holistic understanding of language education policies can not only help us make links between the past, present, and future, but also allows us to see the policy's textual meaning, rhetorical meaning, and social meaning when implemented under certain contexts. Just as Anyon (2005) reminded us, "As in any attempt to resolve complex issues, workable solutions can only be generated by an understanding of underlying causes" (p. 66). Given that the U.S. schooling system has long remained a hegemonic structure to perpetuate racial hierarchies and reinforce English monolingualism, Anyon's quote amplifies the need for us as teachers and teacher educators to keep a reflective gaze and advance our understandings of the interplay between power, politics, and policy.

Understanding Language Education Models in the United States
In the U.S., it is estimated that English language learners made up 10.1% of the K-12 public school student population, representing more than 5 million school-aged children (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Among this group, two-thirds of them speak Spanish as their primary language, with the next most commonly reported languages being Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, Russian, Portuguese, Haitian, and Hmong. While language diversity in the U.S. has ebbed and flowed, the diversity of language has existed in every era throughout U.S. history (Crawford, 2004).

Within the U.S. public educational system, there are six main programs implemented for working with English learners, including submersion or so-called "sink or swim" program, ESL pull out, structured immersion, transitional bilingual education (early exit), developmental or maintenance bilingual education (late exit), and two-way bilingual education (García, 2011). These programs range from the ones that expect students to learn English by simply exposing them to mainstream English classrooms (i.e., submersion), or providing a portion of ESL service during regular class periods (i.e., ESL pull-out), to those that aim to support bilingual learners' content and language learning through both L1 and L2 (i.e., transitional bilingual education, developmental bilingual education, two-way bilingual education). Specifically, in transitional programs, teachers only focus on helping students acquire English as quickly as possible, while in developmental and two-way bilingual models, teachers use students' home language and English to support their bilingual proficiency and construct knowledge in both languages (de Jong et al., 2023). Following other scholars (e.g., Brooks, 2015; García & Lin, 2017; Gebhard & Harman, 2011; Menken, 2008), this paper will demonstrate that bilingual education in the U.S. has been primarily focused on developing English proficiency rather than the development of bilingualism and biliteracy– despite the label "bilingual" (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017). The ironic reality is that bilingual education in the U.S. is actually for the purpose of teaching English and not about educating students in two languages (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). For students who are classified as English learners in K-12 schools, access to inclusive practices in bilingual education has been deeply lacking (Menken & Solorza, 2014).

With regard to the issue of how to name students who are dominant in a language other than English, a series of terms have been used by educational and policy officials. These terms have included "Non-English Proficient", "Limited English proficient", and "English language learner" or "English learner". In particular, state or local educational authorities prefer to use the term "English language learner" or "English learner" as protected labels to denote students' language learning needs and their eligibility for special funds and instructions (Torres-Guzmán et al., 2005). However, these terms are problematic because, as Wiley (2001) notes, they "attempt to apply a single label to a complex situation" (p. 29). In this regard, scholars have criticized that the ELL/EL label devalues other languages while intentionally putting English in "a sole position of legitimacy" (García & Kleifgen, 2017, p. 4). Furthermore, it places the focus of language development solely on the part referring to "academic English" while ignoring other aspects of students' language development (García & Kleifgen, 2017). For these reasons, I adopt the term emergent bilingual (García, 2009) in this article to recognize the value of students' home language, acknowledge students' social bilingualism positively, and highlight their emerging capacity of becoming fully bilingual. It is such a lens that informs my read of language education policies in ways that place bilingualism, biliteracy, and students' language rights at the center.

History of Educational Policies in the United States for Emergent Bilinguals
In the following sections, I seek to outline the evolution of education language policies for emergent bilinguals in the United States since the 19th century. In particular, I attempt to capture how changing social, political, and economic forces have shaped the nation's response to language diversity (Ricento, 1998). Indeed, as I follow the timeline to trace the changes in language education policy from the 19th century through the early 21st century, it has become obvious that the beliefs, models, and views on the effectiveness of bilingual education in general have undergone much evolution according to the changing historical events (Crawford, 1999; Kim et

al., 2015; Wiley, 2002). In sum, the aim is to assess the evolution made in language education policy with respect to emergent bilingual learners and to see where we might go from here.

Late 19th Century-1960s
Until the end of the nineteenth century, bilingual education was widely authorized in a number of states. Locally operated bilingual education was provided throughout the United States in many non-English languages, including French, Norwegian, Italian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, German, and Spanish (Kloss, 1977/1998). Although, during this period, immigrant groups managed to maintain their heritage language while participating in the civic life of the new nation, it is important to note that bilingual education in the 19th century was not intentionally for the promotion of bilingualism. Rather, many localities provided bilingual instruction without state sanction, and "a policy of linguistic assimilation without coercion" seemed to prevail (Ovando, 2003, p. 4). With the new wave of immigrants from Europe in the early twentieth century, the Americanization movement came into being as many native-born residents perceived the mass immigrants as a threat to society (Blanton, 2004). By educating foreigners in English and conveying "American values" in schools, the Americanization movement eventually became characterized by cultural and linguistic assimilation, political loyalty, as well as construction of national identity (Behdad, 2005). During the Americanization era, the use of languages other than English were prohibited by harsh restrictive language policies and bilingual programs were quickly replaced by English-only instructions.

The xenophobia of World War I caused the United States to push for monolingualism and curtail bilingual programs (Ramsey, 2010). In particular, German as a foreign language was eliminated in most schools and English-only instruction started proliferating during the post-World War I period. From the 1920–1960s, English immersion, or "sink or swim" policies became dominant methods of instruction for language minority children (Hakuta, 1986). For linguistically-minoritized students, there were few or no remedial services provided, and education was restrictedly dominated by monolingualism (Baker & Jones, 1998). Behind the "sink or swim" approach is the belief that language minority students themselves should be the ones responsible to assimilate into the U.S. society. Language policies, during this period, served as a practical tool to tame the conquered groups' ideological principles, destroy minority cultures, and help the nation maintain colonial domination (Crawford, 1992).

1960s-1980s
With the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the 1964 Civil Rights Act, bilingual education advocates started engaging in transformative practices to acknowledge the plight of language minoritized students and endeavor to nurture linguistic diversities. The passage of Bilingual Education Act (BEA) (1968), Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, indicated a major shift of establishing and funding bilingual programs for emergent bilingual students. Specifically, the amendment provided financial assistance to local educational agencies and attempted to meet the special needs of students with "Limited English Proficiency" (LEP). However, the aim of BEA was ambiguous and controversial. Following the guidance of BEA, it was unclear whether the purpose of the Act was to help children become literate in two languages or to transition them into English at the earliest moment as possible (Crawford, 2004). As Crawford (2000) writes, "the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 passed Congress without a single voice raised in dissent. [But] Americans have spent the past 30 years debating what it was meant to accomplish" (p. 107). Despite the ambiguity of the law, BEA marked a significant step in moving away from

the "sink-or-swim" approach and provided the initial foundation for ensuring the legislative credibility of supporting students in bilingual instruction.

The next landmark in the evolution of language education policy for emergent bilinguals was the 1974 Supreme Court case Lau v. Nichols (414 U.S. 5637). In this Supreme Court case, approximately 1,800 non-English-speaking Chinese students alleged discrimination grounded on the lack of supplemental English classes in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). Consequently, basing the unanimous decision on the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Court ruled public schools receiving federal funds must provide linguistically-minoritized students with supplemental language instructions to ensure their rights of receiving equal education. The Lau verdict had an enormous impact on the development of bilingual education in the U.S. and further led to the passage of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act in August 1974. With this Act, Congress affirmed the Lau decision and expanded its jurisdiction to apply to all public school districts, not just those receiving federal financial assistance (Teitelbaum & Hiller, 1977).

1980s-2002

After the previous 20-year period of opportunity, however, bilingual education was challenged and attacked by a new political perspective in the 1980s, which no longer cherished minority communities' ethnic culture. For example, in 1981, newly elected President Reagan amplified his political standing with the following statement:

> It is absolutely wrong and against American concepts to have a bilingual education program that is now openly, admittedly dedicated to preserving their native language and never getting them adequate in English so they can go out into the job market and participate. (R. Reagan, public speech, March 3rd, 1981)

Building on Reagan's political agenda, by 1988 English-only programs were allowed to receive as much as 25% of Title I part A school program grants - a significant increase from four percent adopted in 1984. The increase in funds for English-only programs reflected the political strategies that intentionally eliminated languages other than English from the educational system.

At the state level, a clear consequence of language prejudice is reflected in the passage of Proposition 227 in California (1998), also known as the "English for Children" initiative. The endorsement of Proposition 227 in California came close to placing emergent bilingual students back onto the "sink-or-swim" approach. That is, students can now only receive a maximum one-year instruction in their home language before being placed in mainstream English classrooms (García & Curry-Rodríguez, 2000). Following the passage of Proposition 227, similar legislation was passed in Arizona (Proposition 203) in 2000 and Massachusetts (Question 2) in 2002. Simply put, these initiatives represent a trend of the modern English-only movement across the states that threw bilingual programs into turmoil.

2002-2015

After the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, bilingualism as a resource and tool in the education of emergent bilinguals has been increasingly marginalized (Crawford, 2004). That is, under NCLB, education was envisioned as an activity that measures students' success solely based on performance on English-only high-stakes tests (Menken, 2008). As part of this process, the term bilingual, which Crawford (2004) has called "the B-word", was systematically been erased from the legislation and from the names of official bureaus and laws. García (2009)

documented how the progressive elimination of the term bilingual was represented at the federal level (see Figure 1). In short, the erasure of "the B-word" implies an intentional disarticulation of issues surrounding bilingualism.

Figure 1.
Elimination of the Term "Bilingual" from the Names of Official Bureaus and Laws

BEFORE	AFTER
Title VII of the ESEA, known as the *Bilingual* Education Act	Title III of NCLB, known as Language Instruction for *Limited English Proficient Students*.
The Office of *Bilingual* Education and Minority Languages Affairs	The Office of *English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement* for Limited English Proficiency Students
National Clearinghouse for *Bilingual* Education	National Clearinghouse for *English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction* Educational Program

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized by President Barack Obama in 2015, as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Under ESSA, states are required to hold schools accountable for the progress of English learners towards language proficiency and academic progress. While ESSA continues the goals of NCLB of ensuring high standards and accountability, it lessens federal oversight over education and decentralizes accountability decisions to state and local levels. By providing state and local education agencies the autonomy to establish standards and report on students' progress, ESSA brought an era in which emergent bilinguals' schooling experiences vary across states and are deeply associated with state immigrant policy contexts (Callahan et al., 2020). That means, emergent bilingual learners can end up being served with very different programs depending on state and local policies. In this sense, the diversity in approaches to educating bilingual learners are across different states offers valuable insights into the political discourse within specific contexts (Welton et al., 2023).

Contemporary Dilemmas in Bilingual Education in the U.S.
In recent years, the profile and demographics of English learners have changed tremendously. While emergent bilingual learners may typically be portrayed as students who recently arrived in the U.S. and primarily speak a language other than English, recent studies show that the majority of students identified as English learners (ELs) were born in the U.S. and likely have been exposed to English before entering school (Johnson, 2023). In response, the model of dual language education (DLE) or two-way immersion started to make inroads recently. Students in DLE programs are typically described as a combination of emergent bilingual learners and students who speak English as their primary language. The involvement of both groups of students signals a growing awareness of equity and language rights and offers an alternative to the pervasive English-only stance (de Jong et al., 2020). Instead of solely focusing on the English proficiency of emergent bilingual learners, the goals of DLE programs gear towards "developing bilingual skills, academic excellence, and positive cross-cultural and personal competency attitudes for both groups of students" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p. 30).

Despite the laudable goal, it is crucial to be aware of the power dynamics in the DLE classrooms. Specifically, DLE programs separate English and the partner language during class to provide uninterrupted instructions in each language. However, such strict language separation in DLE programs inadvertently overlooks the fluid bilingualism of many emergent bilingual learners and forces students to be categorized as speakers of either English or the other (paired language), thus causing language minoritized students to be alienated (de Jong, 2016; Howard et al., 2007). At the same time, DLE makes bilingual education a product whose consumers are not necessarily emergent bilingual learners (Petrovic, 2005). In this way, emergent bilingual learners' home-language proficiency becomes a commodity that is desired by white middle-class parents (Palmer, 2010) and for the profit of white middle-class children (Flores & Garcia, 2017).

Discussion and Conclusion
In this article, I reviewed the evolution of language education policy in the U.S. from the late nineteenth century until the early 2020s. The brief look at the historical profiles of policies in the field provides evidence of the continuing need for developing more equitable bilingual education programs as well as indicating the demand for more informed policymakers, well-prepared teachers, and critical researchers. As we have observed, language education policies have seen major waves and shifts in the value and models that either support or oppress the linguistic rights of language minoritized students. The lack of coherence on policy for emergent bilingual learners rests upon the complicated relations lying between politics, language, education and society. Thus, it is important to understand not just what language ideologies and value discourse are presently embedded in language education policies, but also how the ideologies and discourses have come to domination and for what reasons.

For example, on a positive note, it is within the context of the Civil Rights movement that bilingual education emerged, as part of a broader effort to dismantle white supremacy and instill cultural pride in Latinx and other minoritized communities (Flores & García, 2017). The massive policy shifts toward standardized testing and accountability in the 21st century reflect neoliberal consideration of the language skills of individuals and the nation; the recent movement leaning towards DLE programs represents a free-market interpretation of bilingual education that result in it being more accessed by privileged groups than language minoritized communities. Briefly, the programs, forms, and policies of language education for emergent bilingual learners in motion in the U.S., are not absolute and isolated changes but rather a correspondence of complex, enduring and evolving elements in relation to governance (Ball, 2016).

Overall, this review contributes to the contemporary field of language education policy related to ESOL programs in two ways. First, through tracing the evolution of U.S. language education policies as it pertains to K-12 emergent bilingual learners, this review enables us to have a more complex understanding of the relationship between politics, policy, and education. Second, situated in the ramped up xenophobic rhetoric and the recent anti-immigration socio-political context, this review provides critical implications for ESOL teachers and educators to engage in the dense policy work and create liberating and healing spaces for (im)migrant bilingual students. For critical teachers and educators who are committed to advocating for students' language rights, it is crucial to connect flows of politics, power, and language policy to acknowledge the value of students' home language, amplify the fluid bilingualism of bilingual students, revive a sense of agency, and fight for students' linguistic rights and educational equity (Bacon, 2020; Fu & Aubain, 2023).

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Using Self-Visualization and Goal-Setting Activities to Increase Willingness to Communicate

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Abstract
One obstacle many English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers face is getting all students to participate and speak in English in the classroom. Willingness to communicate (WTC) is therefore a relevant topic, as it is the probability of initiating communication, given both the choice and opportunity to do so. Some of the many factors that play into WTC are how students view themselves as learners of English, the kind of learners they hope to be, and what goals they set for themselves. This teaching techniques piece describes a five-week intervention utilizing goal-setting and self-visualization activities in an adult ESL class to increase students' WTC and provides suggestions for adoption in other contexts.

Keywords
Willingness to communicate (WTC), self-visualization, goal-setting, confidence, motivation, ESL

Introduction

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is the probability of initiating communication, given the choice and opportunity to do so (MacIntyre, 2007). WTC is a complex construct to study, as it involves factors such as motivation, classroom setting, and students' self-perception as learners of English. Students with higher levels of motivation are more likely to communicate in their second language (L2). Teachers can also greatly impact students' motivation (Fen Ng & Kiat Ng, 2015). Teachers can, for example, increase motivation in the classroom by creating a positive learning environment, implementing student goal-setting, and promoting positive self-evaluation (Fen Ng & Kiat Ng, 2015). All of this, in turn, can improve learner attitude and confidence. The way students view themselves as learners of English and the kind of learner they hope to become, meaning their vision of their future self (e.g., as an effective and capable user of English) also affect WTC. Students who establish a strong self-image as competent users of English are more likely to communicate in the target language inside and outside the classroom (Lee & Lee, 2020). Enhancing learners' vision of their ideal L2 self increases students' confidence and motivation to learn (Magid & Chan, 2012). Goal-setting and self-visualization activities have led to significant increases in WTC and motivation when implemented in an ESL class (Al-Murtadha, 2018).

The goal of this teaching technique was to increase ESL students' WTC by implementing a five-week intervention program including self-visualization and goal-setting activities. This technique combined aspects of previous studies (e.g., Al-Murtadha, 2018; Magid & Chan, 2012) that looked at the impact of self-visualization and goal-setting activities on WTC to evaluate their effectiveness in the success of ESL students. These activities included guided visualization, scripted imagery, and creating specific goals and action plans.

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Description of the Intervention
Prior to starting the intervention, students completed a demographic form to collect preliminary information. One class session was video recorded, and the teacher completed an observation scheme to evaluate students' participation during whole group discussions and activities. The criteria for the observation scheme (adapted from Cao, 2014) are listed below.

1. The student responds to a question asked by the teacher about vocabulary.
2. The student responds to a question asked by the teacher about language form/grammar.
3. The student volunteers to participate in a class activity.
4. The student volunteers an answer without being prompted/asked by the teacher.
5. The student reads a question/text off the board.

For five weeks, the intervention activities were implemented once a week for 20-30 minutes during regular class time. All students participated in the intervention.

Based on the observation scheme, four students were selected to participate in semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the teacher-- two students with low class participation, and two with high class participation. Levels of participation were defined by the number of times they participated in whole group discussions, as measured by the observation scheme. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to gather more information on students' desire to participate in class and what obstacles they faced regarding participation. Students were asked questions about their desire to participate in class, in situations in which it was easy for them to participate in group discussions, and what obstacles they faced in participating. Students reported that they wanted to participate in class more often, but that they were uncomfortable speaking in front of a group because they were nervous that they would make a mistake or that others would not be able to understand them.

Week One
In week one of the intervention, students completed a general visualization activity (based on Sun, 2019, see below). Students were instructed to close their eyes and then the instructor read the numbered steps aloud.

1. Close your eyes and begin slowing your breath to a calming, relaxing rhythm.
2. Visualize a place where you feel content and calm. This might be somewhere you've visited or an imagined scene of somewhere you'd like to go.
3. Use your five senses to add as much detail to your image. What do you hear? Can you smell relaxing fragrances, such as trees, blooming flowers, or something cooking? Are you warm or cool? Can you feel the air on your skin? Is the sky bright, dark, stormy, full of stars?
4. Imagine yourself moving forward, feeling calmer and more peaceful as you enter your vision more deeply.
5. Continue breathing slowly as you look around the scene you've created, fully experiencing it with all of your senses.
6. With each inhale, imagine peace and harmony entering your body. Visualize exhaustion, tension, and distress leaving your body as you exhale.

After the guided visualization activity, students listened to success stories of other English learners. One of the classroom volunteers who recently moved to the United States and learned English shared her story, including her successes and challenges learning English. In the last and main activity, students created a list of their strengths and weaknesses as English learners.

Week Two

In week two, students described and pictured themselves as future L2 learners, speakers, workers, etc. through guided and scripted imagery (see below). Students first closed their eyes and listened to a scripted imagery activity about the perfect job interview (from Magid & Chan, 2012).

> Close your eyes and imagine that today is the day of a very important job interview in a large, famous, international company that you have been dreaming of working in for a long time. This job could be in any part of the world where you would like to live. You have prepared very well for the interview and as you get dressed, you are feeling really confident that you will do well. As you look at yourself in the mirror, you are happy with how professional and mature you look. You arrive at the company a few minutes before the interview and are feeling very calm as you wait to be called into the boss's office. When you step into his or her office, you can see that the boss is impressed by your business-like appearance, your friendly, confident smile and your firm handshake. He or she asks you to sit down and starts to ask you questions. Although some of the questions are quite difficult, you are able to use your excellent English to answer all of them extremely well. You can see that the boss is pleased and very satisfied with all of your answers. The boss is also impressed by your fluency, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in English. You show him or her that you have so much knowledge, so many skills and are highly qualified for this job of your dreams. As the interview ends, there is no doubt in your mind that you will get this job. Stay with this feeling of complete confidence as you open your eyes and come back to this room.

After listening and reflecting on the scripted imagery, students spent time reflecting on a positive and successful experience they had using English in the past. Students wrote down notes about their experience and then described it to a peer.

Week Three

In week three, students discussed broadly their goals as future learners/speakers of English. For example, they were prompted with questions such as:

> "Do you want to be more confident speaking English?"
> "Do you want to engage in more conversation in English?"
> "Do you want to speak more fluently in English?"

Students then made a list of any obstacles they might face in reaching these goals and shared these lists with each other, then with the teacher.

Week Four

In week four, students reflected on how they could reach their broad goals from the previous week by setting SMART goals (Doran, 1981), which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and

time-based. Students were taught a brief lesson on SMART goals, were given some examples (see below), and then they each wrote down three goals - one for the semester, for the next year, and for the next five years.

> *SMART Goal Examples*
> This semester: I will watch a TV show in English for one hour a week for the next two months.
> Next year: I will finish reading 3 books in English within the next year.
> Next five years: I will be able to speak English fluently and be confident communicating with others in English.

The purpose of writing three SMART goals was to create specific, concrete goals that students would be more likely to achieve, especially because they would be completed outside of the classroom.

Week Five
In week five, students revisited the SMART goals they created the previous week. They discussed their progress since the previous week and how realistic their goals were. They also discussed whether they enjoyed the intervention activities, their effectiveness on students' WTC, and whether students planned to do similar goal-setting activities in the future. The discussion took place in pairs, then as a whole class.

Outcomes
At the outset of the intervention, students exhibited hesitancy towards engaging in the activities, reflecting a common apprehension among English language learners regarding speaking and participation. Many expressed concerns about making mistakes and felt uneasy speaking in front of their peers. During the initial stages, students found it challenging to identify their strengths, likely due to their unfamiliarity with such introspective exercises.

However, as the intervention progressed, a noticeable shift occurred in the classroom dynamics. Over subsequent weeks, their receptiveness to the activities grew, along with an increasing willingness to participate in the class. Students began to vocalize their appreciation for the exercises, acknowledging their newfound ability to reflect on their language learning journey. In post-intervention semi-structured interviews, this sentiment was echoed, with students attributing their enhanced confidence and reduced anxiety toward speaking English to the intervention activities.

Conclusion
This teaching technique was done in an adult ESL class, but it can be adapted for any age or skill level by modifying the language and the topic of the activities. The activities in the intervention were targeted for students with an intermediate-advanced proficiency level as they are conducted completely in English, which required students to reflect on their English language learning journey in their L2. Activities could be modified for more novice L2 learners by conducting parts in the students' L1. This teaching technique requires little preparation, and although this intervention was implemented over five weeks for twenty minutes each week, it can be shortened or lengthened based on the students' specific needs. These activities could be implemented, for example, for a few minutes at the beginning of class as a warm-up.

The teaching technique was adopted in an adult ESL class with the goal of increasing student WTC and participation. The idea was that by completing activities to help students reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and create goals, they would understand the need for speaking in the target language, gain confidence in the target language, and therefore speak more frequently in class. Students responded positively to these activities, as described in the section above, and there is potential for these activities to increase the confidence and WTC of English language learners across contexts.

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Supporting L2 Writing Using QuillBot

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Abstract
As Artificial Intelligence (AI) grows in accessibility and popularity, educators are faced with the challenge of adopting this new form of information disbursement. AI platforms could benefit language learning by providing individual writing support in addition to instructional support for the classroom teacher. AI platforms could pose risks to student fidelity with AI-produced work products. This paper will discuss and exemplify the use of QuillBot, an AI writing platform, that could be used as a teaching and learning tool for second language (L2) writing instruction. By using this technology to plan meaningful and student-tailored lessons, educators can continue to provide an interactive learning space for multilingual learners (MLs) in the language classroom.

Keywords
Artificial Intelligence (AI), language learning, teaching and learning tool, L2 writing instruction, multilingual learners (MLs)

Introduction

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms emerge, teachers and academics are interested in exploring how this new technology supports multilingual learners' second language writing development. Teachers may integrate AI tools throughout the writing process – planning, drafting, editing, and revising. In the planning stage, AI tools may be used to help learners begin writing (Barrot, 2023) – a commonly challenging aspect for writers of all proficiency levels. Subsequently, in the drafting and editing stages, multilingual learners (MLs) could use AI as an editing tool to make suggestions on vocabulary usage, syntax, and discourse structure. One can simply prompt Chat GPT with the following request: "Hi, Chat. Can you please provide me with suggestions on how to fix the cohesion and coherence of this paragraph?" Ultimately, these tools have the potential to assist students across all stages of the writing process.

From a research perspective in second language writing, Jia et al. (2022) discovered that learners' writing skills improve with AI-generated corrective feedback. Additionally, toward the end of the writing process, students' language can be supported with Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) systems when implemented in a context-appropriate manner (Alharbi, 2023). This growing body of research indicates the potential of AI tools to support language learners at various stages of their language development.

Specifically, this teaching technique piece will highlight the utilization of QuillBot, a tool designed to bolster sentence structure and vocabulary proficiency among multilingual learners. However, before delving into strategies for incorporating QuillBot into instruction for multilingual learners, it is imperative to first examine the potential risks associated with AI.

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Risks of AI

Although AI provides various language support platforms, educators should view AI with a critical lens. Ethical considerations will include considerations relating to the AI platforms chosen. AI is limited in that it only knows the information that it has been given by its program users. According to Vaccino-Salvadore (2023), there is possible biased language generation and the perpetuation of stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice in language learning interactions with AI. AI could produce misinformation, such as incorrect information relating to historical data. In his research, Barrot (2023) claims that teachers should provide students with appropriate ways to engage with technology, including ethical considerations and precautions. Therefore, it is essential to highlight the risk of AI platforms becoming biased, racist, and discriminatory based on information received.

In the ML classroom, educators should be mindful of which programs will produce the most accurate language support. MLs are learning academic and communicative language, so teaching the differences between written and spoken language is imperative. AI is a tool to support the acquisition of these different language domains. Moreover, students should learn ways in which to use AI as a learning support tool and not as a tool for plagiarism. When using QuillBot as a teaching tool, educators should plan for student writing to occur within the classroom space and under their supervision. This will prevent any student from using this platform or any other AI writing tool to do their work for them.

QuillBot

QuillBot is an AI platform that provides writing support by displaying sentence structure and vocabulary variations in a side-by-side format (see Figure 1 below). A writer may input a sample of their writing and see the changes by mode, QuillBot's term for writing style. The modes available through the platform are labeled as standard, fluency, formal, academic, simple, creative, expand, and shorten. Each mode provides distinctive wording and phrasing at the platform's discretion. Additionally, there is a custom writing mode, with the premium account, that enables the writer to use writing style variations like Shakespeare, a social media influencer, and Gen Z slang, to name a few.

Figure 1
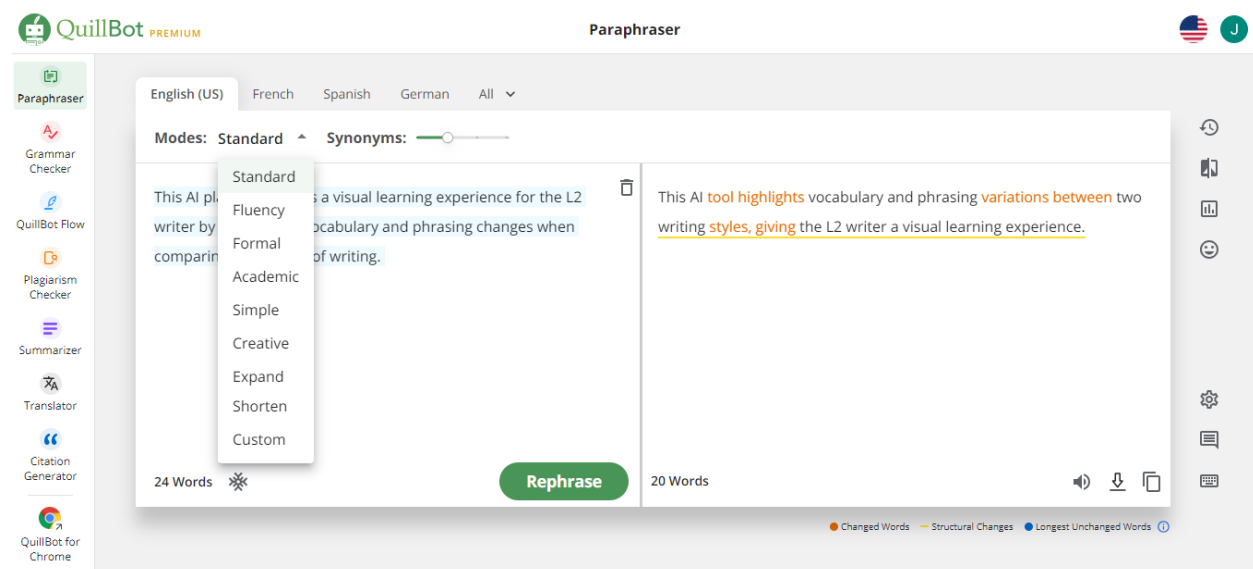
The platform is available in 26 languages and provides paraphrasing, a grammar checker, a plagiarism checker, QuillBot Flow which is a co-writer feature, a summarizer, a citation generator, and a translator feature. The grammar checker scans any writing input and makes grammar corrections and/or suggestions. The plagiarism checker scans writing for parts of the text that may not be cited correctly. The co-writer feature (see Figure 2) provides grammar, spelling, and phrasing suggestions to the right of the screen as the writer types into the QuillBot platform. It also provides feedback on writing similar to what a human instructor may give.

In the classroom, QuillBot may act as an additional resource for learning about different writing styles. When using the paraphrase tool in the program (see Figure 3), writing that is input into the left-hand side of the screen results in changes in phrasing and vocabulary on the right-hand side of the screen. A valuable aspect of this platform is that it provides a visual comparison of writing so the learner sees the changes that may happen throughout changes in writing style.

Figure 2
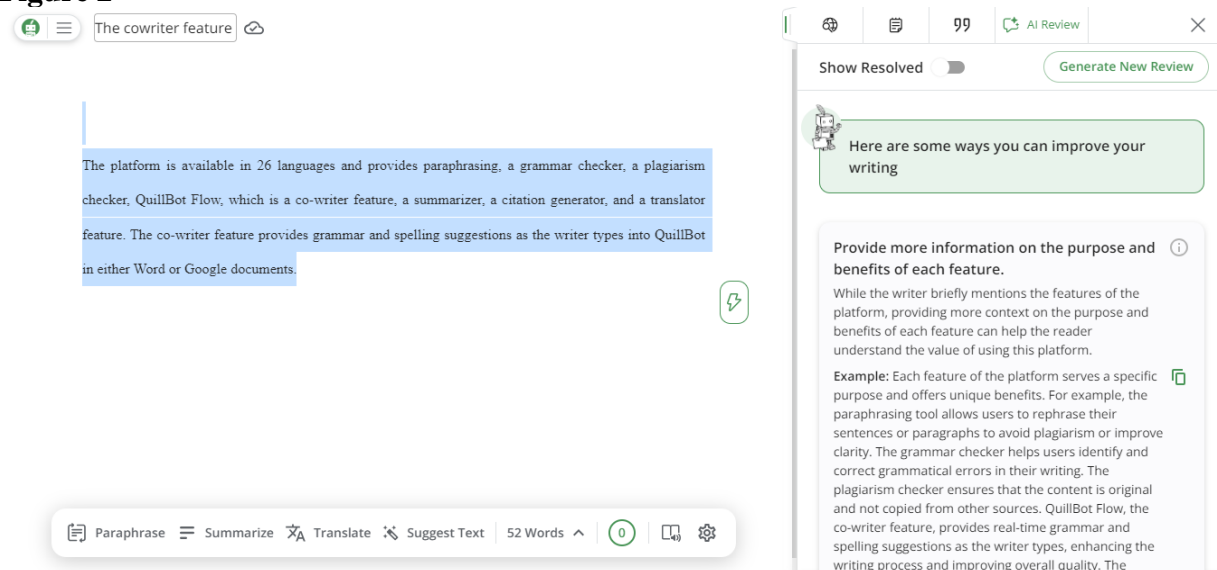
Figure 3
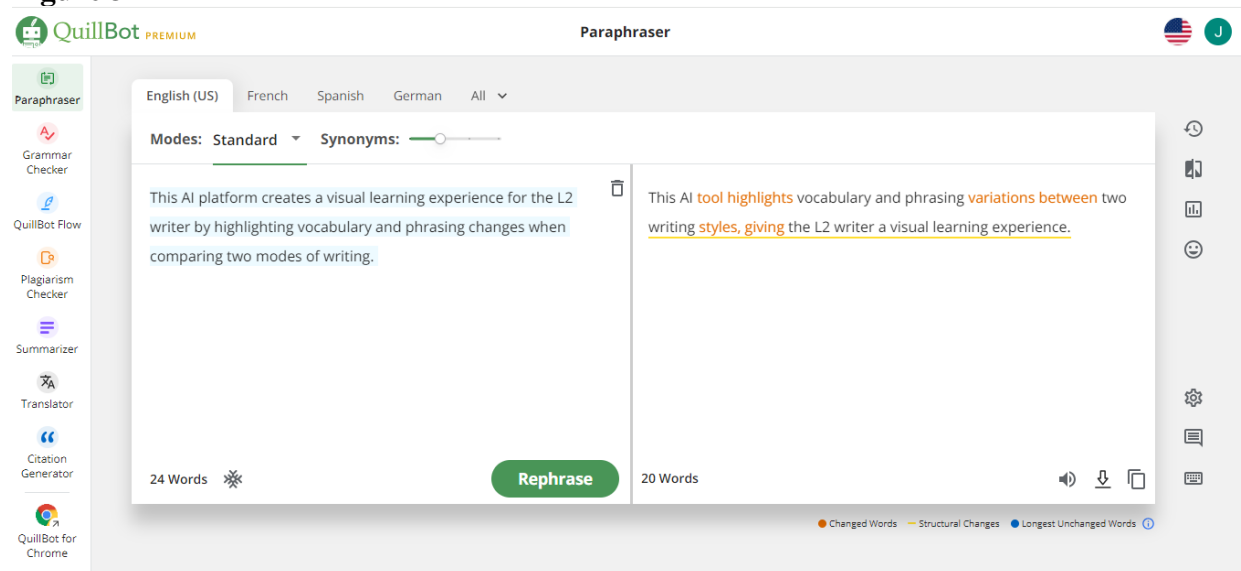
Teaching Example

When teaching narrative writing in a seventh-grade classroom, QuillBot could act as a co-teacher, aiding students in their writing process by providing suggested revisions. I will demonstrate how to use this platform for a 10-minute warm-up exercise.

Step 1: Provide a writing prompt asking students to write about their best birthday memory.
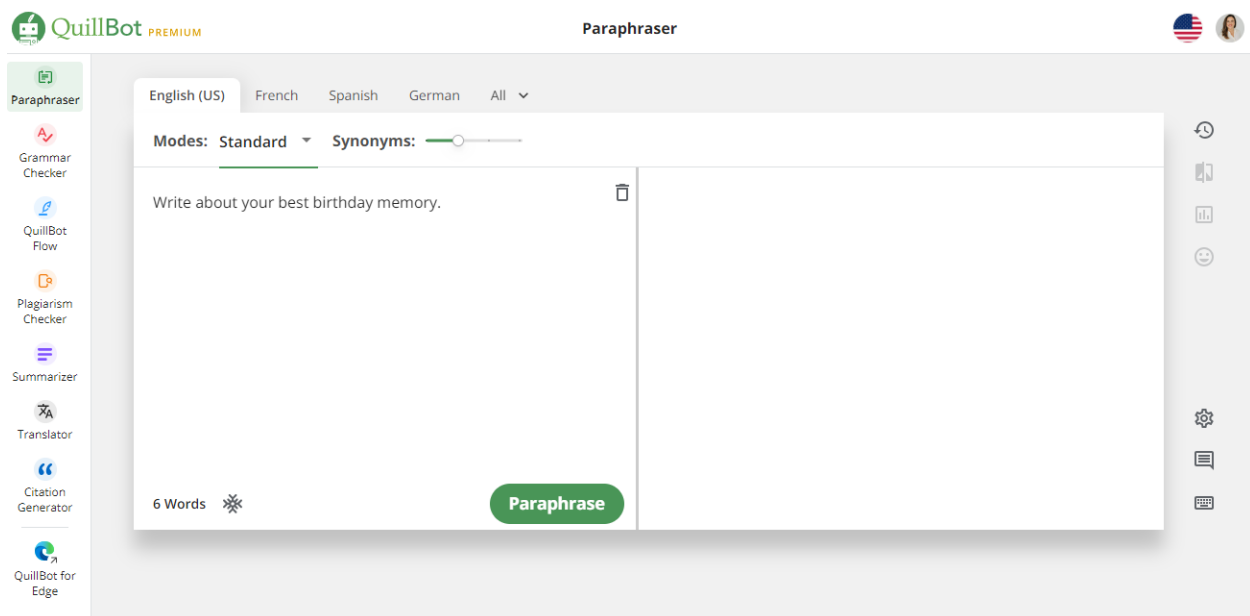
Step 2: Display a sample writing about a birthday memory in QuillBot.
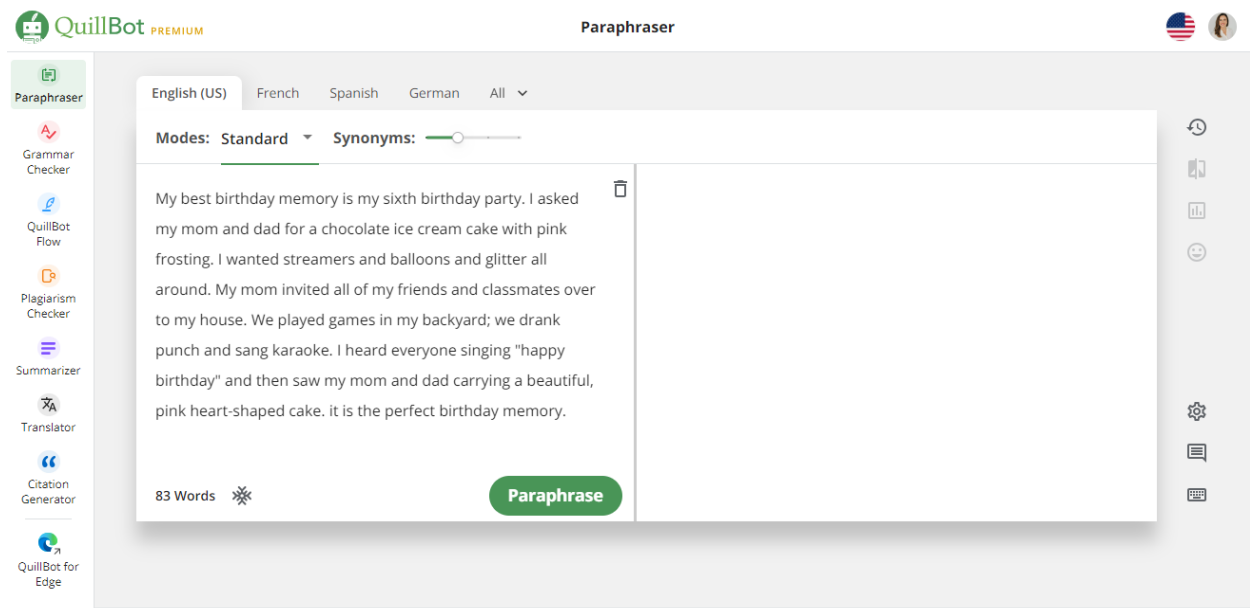
Step 3: Show the birthday memory sample in different genres of writing, discussing the variations in phrasing and vocabulary use. Students then compare and contrast the two genres - formal and academic below.

Formal

Academic

Step 4: Students will take their previous writing sample and write it in a different genre.

In a separate lesson, the students could divide into small groups, with their writing samples, and practice making changes to these samples when given a particular genre. By focusing on a particular genre, each group would have the opportunity to not only practice writing in this genre but also to work with other students to make genre-specific changes in phrasing and vocabulary. As a whole class activity, students would share their original writings and their new writings in the chosen genre for their group. Other groups would have the chance to make suggestions for changes or to ask questions about the reasoning behind the changes made. Samples from each student group would be compared in QuillBot to samples given by the platform. The class discussion would continue with a list of common features seen in each genre of writing. After a few lessons of writing practice as a whole group and in small groups, a final individual student assessment could be a writing assignment where students are given a sample of writing and asked to change it to a particular style.

L2 Writing & QuillBot
In the language classroom, QuillBot may be a tool for building student efficacy in L2 writing. QuillBot provides several supports for L2 writers, most notably the paraphrase tool. Using QuillBot's paraphrase feature, L2 writers may explore various styles of writing. This AI platform creates a visual learning experience for the L2 writer by highlighting vocabulary and phrasing changes when comparing two modes of writing, hence supporting the development of writing style variations for L2s.

Conclusion
Educators have the opportunity to integrate AI as a beneficial tool for writing in the classroom so students may use these programs effectively outside of the classroom. Leveraging platforms like QuillBot empowers teachers to assist L2 writers by providing grammar and phrasing suggestions, essentially allowing AI to function as a collaborative co-teacher, exemplifying writing learning processes.

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