

Annotated Bibliography: SUMMARY + COMMENTARY/EVALUATION/ RELEVANCE

Sample by Anna Schwulst @ SPU

What are the arguments for and against establishing English as the official language of the U.S.? [NOTE: Citations not in APA format]

Barker, Giles, Noels, Duck, Hecth, Clement. "The English-only movement: a communication analysis of changing perceptions of language vitality." *The Journal of Communication* 2001. 3-37. Seattle Pacific University Library, Seattle, Washington. <<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118994122/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>>.

This paper, which ultimately rejects the English-only movement, examines the linguistic effects of the movement on minority languages, specifically the Spanish speaking Hispanic population in the U.S., and investigates how the spreading of English affects their language vitality. The authors conclude that English-only initiatives have had negative effects on people in the U.S. who do not speak English or have limited English skills. The paper is helpful because not only does it discuss the broader issue of the effects of the English-only movement on minority languages, it also specifically examines the Hispanic population and offers tangible solutions to the problem of linguistic oppression.

Baron, Dennis. *The English Only Question: An Official Language for Americans?* Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1992.

The English Only Question is Dennis Baron's personal account of the problems he encountered while trying to function as a normal citizen in the U.S. and struggling because of his lack of English. He says that he felt intentionally discriminated against for speaking a minority language in the 1960s, and also explores the implications of America's history of treating English as a superior language and foreign languages as inferior. The book describes the political, legal, educational, and sociological affects that officializing the English language could have on the U.S. This book is helpful because it describes the dangers of declaring English as the official language, and how it could affect those who do not have English as their first language.

Brown, Robbie. "Nashville Rejects a Law Making English Its Official Language :[National Desk]." *New York Times* [New York, N.Y.] 23 Jan. 2009, Late Edition (East Coast): A.13. *New York Times*. ProQuest. Seattle Pacific University Library, Seattle, Washington. 14 Mar. 2009 <http://0www.proquest.com.deborah.spu.edu:80/>>

This article, from a recent *New York Times*, recounts how voters in Nashville rejected an initiative that would make English the city's official language. According to the article, one of the main goals of the proposal was to restrict government officials from communicating in any language other than English, which definitely has implications for the value of language diversity. The article includes comments from both proponents for and critics of the bill. This article provides a glimpse of what is happening with the English as an official language debate today, in 2009. When researching an issue such as this, it is not only beneficial, but also absolutely crucial for the outcome of the research to investigate what is currently happening, and how people are responding to the issue today. While it is essential to research the history of the debate and look at various perspectives, it is just as necessary to investigate how the debate is playing out now, if the researcher wants to be truly informed.

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Crawford, James, Ed. *Language Loyalties: A Source Book on the Official English Controversy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

The book *Language Loyalties* is a collection of sources that works to provide the reader with an informed and balanced look at both sides of the official language debate in the United States. Although published almost 20 years ago, it still offers a useful account of the issue's history and includes staggering facts about America's views on the English language from just two decades ago, giving today's reader the opportunity to see how far we have (or haven't) come. Not only does it go into the legal issues here in America, the book also includes international perspectives on the debate. This collection of over 85 articles is a beneficial source to anyone who wants to take an in-depth look at the debate's recent history and compare it to today's prominent thoughts and opinions on the topic.

Ferguson, Charles Albert; Finegan, Edward; Heath, Shirley Brice; Rickford, John R; Wiley, Terrence G. "Language planning, language policy, and the English-Only Movement." *Language in the USA*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

This textbook explores the history of American English, looks at regional and social varieties, and delves into a cornucopia of sub-topics concerning language use in America. The text specifically addresses my research question in Chapter 17, titled "Language planning, language policy, and the English-Only movement" written by Terrence G. Wiley. Wiley is a believer in the ideology of monolingualism and sees multi-lingualism as unable to co-exist with such a dominant language. He discusses the idea that English is the un-official official language of the U.S., so to speak, claiming that the U.S. already functions as if English had "official" status, and goes into explaining the implications for the future of such a language. This text is a valuable resource for anyone researching English in the U.S. because the book as a whole offers useful insight on the sociolinguistics of language in America. Also, it specifically addresses my research question and provides a unique perspective on the topic. Unlike many of the sources in this annotated bibliography, which tend to try to be objective, this author has a definite viewpoint in mind. Thus, it would be very beneficial for the researcher to juxtapose Wiley's persuasive argument with that of an anti-English-only resource from this list.

Ricento, Thomas. "Political Theory and Language Policy." *An Introduction to Language Policy*. London: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

In this book, Thomas Ricento discusses the complexities of language policy. In the chapter "Political Theory and Language Policy," the author seeks to find the reasons for the emotional intensity that is almost always behind language policy debates, specifically behind arguments supporting official English legislation. He draws a connection between these strong emotions of English-only arguments to national identity politics, claiming that many find multilingualism a threat to national unity. In the chapter, Ricento discusses the rationale behind the official English arguments, and attempts to explain the strong push for legislation when it seems as if English already functions as the official language of the U.S. To some, it seems, the English language is permanently connected with American virtues, and to establish English as the official language would permanently ensure the stability of those so-called "American" values. The article is a unique addition to this annotated bibliography because, rather than simply laying out the arguments for or against the officialization of English, the author analyzes the motives behind the specific arguments in order to unearth the roots of the issue.