English Language Standards in California, China and Mexico: History, Comparison, and Analysis

Li Na¹ · Jolene Castillo Gregory² · Kip Téllez²

Received: 24 April 2020 / Accepted: 2 February 2021 / Published online: 20 May 2021
© The Author(s) 2021

Abstract

Learning standards have become a prominent feature for schools and school systems worldwide. Our paper describes the development of recent English teaching standards in California, China, and Mexico, as well as analyzing them for their theoretical orientations. We begin with an overview and critique of the standards movement. Our analysis of the standards in California, China, and Mexico reveals a substantial shift from a grammatical accuracy focused approach towards a communicative approach to language instruction. While this turn may be welcomed by professional educators, there are practical policy questions to be answered. We end our paper by noting additional challenges to implementing the new standards. Our general assessment is that the authors of the standards firmly believe that the new guidelines will improve instruction.

Keywords Standards · Communicative approach · National comparisons

The development of curriculum standards—one might even call it a proliferation—has resulted in many school systems and professional organizations producing a set of learning goals based on age, grade/age-level, competency, or some combination of the three. While it took time, at least relative to other content areas (e.g., mathematics), the field of language education now has many such set standards (e.g., TESOL International Association, 2006), each designed to standardize instruction.

✉ Kip Téllez
ktellez@ucsc.edu

Li Na
ichbinlina@hotmail.com

Jolene Castillo Gregory
jrgregor@ucsc.edu

¹ Bengbu University, 1866 Caoshan Road, Bengbu, Anhui, People's Republic of China

² Education Department, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz 95064, USA

Teachers, for their part, are occasionally involved in the process of creating standards but are expected to implement them in any event.

Because standards are now widespread in most countries, we thought it would be informative to examine the evolution and content of standards in three of the world's largest school systems teaching English to non-native speakers: California (Migration Policy Institute, 2020), China, and Mexico. We recognize the differences in the contexts (e.g., the learning of English as the dominant language in California vs. the learning of a foreign language in China and Mexico), but exploring standards can inform differences in how these systems approach language and language instruction, as well as contributing to our collective understanding of language teaching in an increasingly global context, in which English appears to be strengthening its hold as the world's most taught language.

We limit our analyses to the school systems serving approximately 5 to 16 year-olds, when schooling is, by and large, mandatory in most countries and required in the nations we have chosen to study. While it is difficult to obtain firm figures in all cases, we estimate that the California currently has approximately 1.2 million English Learners (EL) of a total 6.2 million students (DataQuest inquiry, 2018). In China, with a recent expansion of English teaching for students beginning at age 6, the number of students receiving English instruction stands at approximately 191 million (UNESCO, 2020). Likewise, Mexico recently began English instruction at age 5, which expanded the total English Learner population to about 27 million (UNESCO, 2020).

Before moving into our analyses, we want readers to understand that in our effort to explore standards, we are not necessarily endorsing them. Like so many "innovations" in education, standards can serve to advance or diminish students' life chances. On the one hand, standards can provide a platform onto which all teachers build their pedagogy and deepen instruction for all learners; on the other, they can turn rich instruction into dreary ritual, among any number of other consequences (Apple, 2012). However, if we step back for a moment and explore the purpose of standards in the first place, we find a range of purported reasons. Walender (2014), for instance, suggests four major justifications for both the creation of common standards:

1. Standards attempt to create a common educational experience for all students. With student mobility a concern, if a state or region is following the same standards, then a student moving from one school to another will be able to begin a new school without disruption.
2. Another goal for standards is to ensure that schools are preparing students for postsecondary education (i.e., what comes next). This rationale suggests that standardizing the curriculum will offer more students the chance to participate in additional schooling, particularly college or university education.
3. Implementing standards also aims to raise the quality of education for all students, especially those who are in underperforming schools. This justification is based on the assumption that teachers and other educators working with low-income or

language minority students will not expect them to reach high academic standards without the imposition of external standards.

4. Related to the former purpose, standards can increase rigor in schools. By setting high standards, all schools appear disciplined in preparing students for the future. This is the primary reason so many policymakers and politicians are in favor of high—and ever higher—standards. As educational reforms go, implementing higher standards is inexpensive and offers an easy campaign slogan (e.g., I voted for (or authored a bill) that raised standards in our schools).

We might also add the control of teachers' work to this list, an argument made by many educational theorists and researchers. However, a review of some selected writings on standards generally reveals the unpleasant side effects of standards controlling teachers' work, which we suggest makes their study all the more important. Analysis of teachers' contemporary work conditions (Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002; Uriarte, 2002) suggested that standards—and the textbooks that reflect them—may deskill teachers, turning nuanced pedagogical decisions into formulaic routine. More recent work in this area has shown directly the consequences when standards dominate instruction such as a reduction in teacher autonomy, less responsive and limited curriculum and pedagogical strategies, and instructional supervision without an instructional focus (Apple, 2012; Ogawa et al., 2003). For these and other reasons, educators will often disagree with the standards pressed upon them by policy makers. Teachers, in particular, are not generally opposed to curriculum standards, but they tend to object when the standards are mandated and then required via a prescribed curriculum. In addition, many teachers object to the assessment of standards that they do not believe reflects the learning goals they hold for their students (Llosa, 2005; Pease-Alvarez et al., 2010). Nevertheless, politicians and policy makers have come to favor standards as the most efficient way to influence instruction (Cohen, 1990) because as Mitchell (1984) points out:

Policy makers cannot teach students, and they cannot manage school programs unless they change jobs and join the school staff. Hence, they must find policy mechanisms that may be used to indirectly restructure the school system through influencing the actions of educators and students by changing the cultural and material environment (p. 154).

Thus, in the current educational climate, the most common policy “mechanism” to influence the actions of educators is the development of standards and the concomitant and contingent mandated assessments (Verger et al., 2019).

Educational standards may have grown more prominent in recent years, but the history of standards reveals many attempts by a wide variety of educator groups or educational systems detailing what learners should know and be able to do. Historically referred to as Language proficiency scales/standards (LPS), they are generally a series of descriptions of the different levels of competence of the language learners using a certain language (Han, 2006). One of the earliest LPS (1955) was the Foreign Service Institute Rating Scale (Herzog, 2020) which was

designed to measure the ability of military personnel to use a foreign language in their work. This scale was further developed into Interagency Language Roundtable Scale which was the first scale to include the assessment of listening and speaking in a formal testing environment. Other more recent LPS include, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) and the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012) which are all influential attempts at language learning standards. The European and Canadian language proficiency scales (LPS) are based on theories in communicative language competence and aim to accomplish the language activities, with the former focusing on the recognition of educational qualifications among European countries and the latter on regulating and assessing the second language competence of immigrants (Han & Chang, 2011). The CEFR has been the reference for language teaching and assessment in European countries and has significant impact on other countries as well, despite its limitations. Early LPS were complimentary scales serving for the assessments and tests, which were later developed into scales for language teaching and assessments influencing the policymaking, curriculum design, textbooks development, and lesson planning (Liu & Peng, 2007).

Whatever the background, the theoretical basis, the ways of descriptions, and the research methods of the LPS, the development of LPS reflects language competence in different historical periods, and a reflection of the development of language teaching and learning theories and policies while also referencing the purpose of language teaching and assessment (Han, 2006; Han & Chang, 2011). The publication of the various LPS is the result of policymakers and professional organizations, who have sought not only to influence instruction but also to, at times, sell books containing their version of the LPS, offering professional development on the implementation of their LPS, or, in the case of certain policymakers in the US, to force schools and school systems to purchase specific curriculum produced by private corporations, which often contribute to politicians and political organizations.¹ Another more recent incentive for school systems to create LPS is what we call educational globalization, the effect of which is the creation of a competitive environment among country's based on academic achievement. Media attention to reports from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) has only intensified globalization. As a result, policy makers and many educators now use terms such as 'world-class standards' routinely (Alexander, 2011); these highly charged terms are designed for their political influence.

Our review of language teaching standards is certainly not comprehensive, but we believe we have provided enough background and context for readers to understand

¹ Readers interested in which publishing companies make contributions to politicians or political causes should consult the Open Secrets web site (<https://www.opensecrets.org/>), which tracks corporate spending for political purposes.

Table 1 Summary of contextual factors initiating new standards and shift in theoretical focus across the three sites

California			China	Mexico
Contextual factors initiating new standards	Funding for EL programs, align with ELA standards	Poor student performance in English acquisition (particularly listening/speaking skills)	Extension of compulsory education	Poor student performance in English acquisition
Previous theoretical focus	Multiple theoretical stances but with an emphasis on accuracy over fluency	Grammar Translation	Grammar Translation	Grammar Translation
New theoretical focus	Krashen's Natural Approach Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics Academic language 4 Skills + collaboration Metalinguistic awareness	CEFR Communicative language teaching Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics Real Life approach International Ability approach Pragmatic knowledge Sociolinguistic knowledge 4 Skills + translation	CEFR Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics Communicative language teaching 4 skills Informal language	CEFR Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics Communicative language teaching 4 skills Informal language

the purpose behind current educational goals or standards. In the following sections, beginning with the California standards, followed by China and Mexico, we outline the development of each system's standards, as well as analyzing the foundational theories on which they are based.

California English Language Development Standards

As mentioned previously, California has historically enrolled the largest EL population in the US. Although we cannot be certain that a student determined to be an EL in California would qualify as an EL in another state (Duran, 2008). In spite of these high enrollments during the past 50 years or more, the state had no formal English Language Development (ELD) standards until 1999 (California Department of Education, 1999). The 1999 ELD standards were meant to accompany the newly developed English Language Arts (ELA) Content Standards and Reading/Language Arts Framework by addressing the specific needs of English learners. Prior to the 1999 ELD standards, individual school districts developed their own curriculum based on the needs of their EL. It is probably true that prior to the development of the ELD standards, many schools and teachers were not properly addressing the learning needs of EL, and the standards may have increased the quality of the instruction. On the other hand, it is also likely that some school systems had been developing thoughtful ELD standards and curriculum for decades. For these school systems, the California standards represented an unnecessary intrusion, a step backwards for their ELD curriculum and instruction, moving from highly reflexive teaching, tailored to the specific needs of their EL, to a one size fits all approach that many teachers believed promoted an accuracy/analysis over a fluency/functional to language instruction.

In their comprehensive review of the 1999 standards (Kuhlman & Nadeau, 1999), note the traditional focus on the four elements of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In particular, they point out the ELD standards connection to the ELA standards, with a specific note regarding the standards' emphasis on teaching reading using phonemic awareness, decoding, and word recognition, a reflection of the era, when phonics-based approaches were popular. More recently, Shin (2004) argues that the 1999 ELD standards, and the assessments that resulted from them, influenced instruction in three major areas: retention, access to courses of study, and re-designation. While noting the advantages, Shin is generally critical of the standards, suggesting that their use in these areas was not based on sufficient research. Specifically, Shin argues that the standards have been largely misused for re-designation (i.e., learners have been needlessly kept in ELD classes when they should have joined their native English-speaking peers).

Overall, it is clear that the 1999 standards were developed as a companion to the ELA standards and designed to support them. Beyond the studies we shared, we have found no previous theoretical analyses of the foundation of the 1999 California ELD standards. However, our own review reveals an overemphasis on literacy development, especially reading, which in turn relies too heavily on word attack skills rather than the comprehension of text. This finding is not

surprising given the connection between the ELA standards and the era's emphasis on decoding words as primary reading strategy. It might be too strong to say that the 1999 standards were based on an accuracy over fluency approach to language teaching, but the standards were molecular and prescriptive in a way that many educators found objectionable. After all, the 1999 standards contradicted the prevailing view at the time, which was rooted in Krashen's Natural Approach (Krashen, 1983).

A comprehensive critique of the Natural Approach is beyond the scope of our paper (see (Téllez, 2010 for a discussion), but we believe the subsequent research on Krashen's approach (and certainly the contemporary interpretation of it) resulted in EL who gained command of everyday language but failed to learn academic language we find in school subjects. Some readers will recognize this tension as the BICS/CALPS distinction originally proposed by Cummins but later refined (Cummins, 2000). In any event, the recent influence of the concept of academic language or vocabulary in schools cannot be ignored.

In the main, the 1999 ELD standards reflected a moment in language teaching theory and pedagogy in which educators were influenced by the whole language movement but still wedded to a theoretical perspective that represented a structuralist view of language teaching. The 1999 standards tried to bridge these two divergent theories, with the expected confusion.

Dissatisfaction with the 1999 standards encouraged a group of language educators in California to create a new set of standards, a task which was encouraged and funded by the growing number of California lawmakers who were once EL themselves. However, it is important to point out that again that these ELD standards came on the heels of new ELA standards, but were now based on the California's interpretation of the Common Core State Standards. The team organized by the California Department of Education to rewrite the standards reflected a new disciplinary language approach to ELD standards, and like the Common Core, focused on academic language mastery. These new standards were published in 2012 to educators already weary from trying to square their work to the new Common Core standards.

In the pretext of the document, the authors note that the new standards were intended to support EL by providing fewer (only the essential knowledge and skills are included), clearer (with explicit links to curriculum and assessments), and higher (to match the Common Core's expectations) standards (CDE, 2012). For instance, instead of five levels of proficiency, the new standards offered three, and instead of the usual Beginner, Intermediate scales, the standards used Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging descriptors, deemphasizing the hierarchical structure normally found in such documents (CDE, 2012). Next, instead of the usual categories of language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) the new standards include four elements. First, a Collaborative element, which is described as "Engagement in dialogue with others." Next, in place of Receptive language goals, the standards now include a category called Interpretive, or the "Comprehension and analysis of written and spoken texts." The third element is Productive language (formally writing and speaking) and described as the "Creation of oral presentations and written texts." Finally, two dimensions of knowledge of language are described, the first is Metalinguistic

Awareness, which is the extent of language awareness and self-monitoring, and, second, the Accuracy of Production, which is more or less self-explanatory.

Moreover, the new standards feature a fluency approach to language learning, suggesting some reliance on the Natural Approach theory, but they are most rooted in a Systemic Functional Linguistics approach (SFL). As outlined by Halliday and others, SFL does not view language as a structure but rather a system (a paradigm) that allows for meaning making in social contexts. As Halliday points out, “The system is the underlying potential of a language: its potential as a meaning-making resource” (p. 26). Here we note the emphasis on language growth (although Halliday rarely discussed language learning or acquisition). What language users must know is not necessarily the structure of the language but how the language can be used to make ideas clear to others. The 2013 standards privilege this view by introducing the “collaborative” element of language and giving it the same level of importance as Interpretive (Receptive) and Productive (Expressive). The authors of the standards make this point clearly:

The CA ELD Standards were further informed by genre- and meaning-based theories of language, which view language as a social process and a meaning-making system and seek to understand how language choices construe meaning in oral and written texts. These theories have identified how networks of interrelated language resources—including grammatical, lexical, and discourse features—interact to form registers that vary depending upon context and situation (p. 151).

The importance of the new ELD standards, however, lies not in their theoretical orientation but rather in their influence on language learning. At the moment, it is difficult to predict how the standards will alter English language teaching in California, however, preliminary research has found a weak implementation of California’s ELD standards (Santibañez & Umansky, 2018). Regardless, the state has taken a dramatic turn towards an approach that values (a) the role of social interaction in language learning, (b) meaning making over the understanding of meaning, and (c) the *use* of language in place of an *analysis* of language structure.

China’s Standards of English Language Ability (CSE): Background, Theories and Structures

In China, English is a required course in nearly every school from elementary grade three through college grade two, which means that students with a college degree will have already had about 12 years of English instruction. Many students also supplement school instruction with private school or specialized English tutoring programs. And yet in spite of the many years of English instruction, Chinese education officials have, over the past two decades, noted underperformance in English language learning (Li, 2017). Evidence of this can be seen in the mean scores on English language tests. For example, Cai (2011) found that the one-time pass rate for the CET 4 exam is only slightly higher than 30%. Even for those students who have passed the CET 4 with high scores, students frequently may not be fluent or

able to communicate in English with a native speaker, not to mention having any proficiency using English in other academic fields such as math and science, or in intercultural communication and international business. Other concerns included a reported lack of interest in learning English and high anxiety associated with English instruction.

As a consequence of these concerns, in 2014, the State Council of China initiated first the construction of the evaluation system of foreign language listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation ability; and then the LPS, China's Standards of English Language Ability were formed (Liu, 2015a, b). Thereby, working "backwards" (i.e., developing an assessment of English and *then* developing LPS to match the assessment). Supervised by the Ministry of Education of China, the working group spent three years in extensive communication and collaboration with experts from home and abroad, listening to and receiving feedback from teachers and students from 28 provinces, and guidance from professors and researchers (Liu & Peng, 2007). Specifically, literature reviews, student and teacher questionnaires, expert-related questionnaires, and a sampling of observations of typical language activities formed the LPS development process (Liu & Peng, 2007; CSE Press Conference, April 25, 2018). These in turn were grounded in four core principles: (1) Science: Using advanced theories in linguistics and scientific research methods, with high reliability and proficiency; (2) Practical: LPS must use applied English learning and teaching; (3) Operable: Useful for students, teachers, and testing organizations alike; and (4) Unique: Based on the unique present situation of China (Liu, 2015a, b).

Born of the new demands of the educational development of China, the CSE document, released in February 2018, ushered in a new era of China's English language education. It included all the levels from elementary to college, and from general English learners (non-English majors) to English elites (English majors), and it is believed that the CSE will reduce the differences between different English tests standards at home and abroad, while integrating the goal of English teaching and the goals of English learning (CSE Press Conference, April 25, 2018).

The CSE is comprehensive and divides the EL into beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. It classifies achievement into 86 tables, including one for overall language ability table, 8 sub-skill overall ability tables (listening comprehension, reading comprehension, oral expression/creating meaning in speaking, written expression/creating meaning in writing, organizational ability, pragmatic ability, interpreting and translating abilities) (See Fig. 1), 8 self-assessment tables, and 69 sub-skill ability tables (Liu, 2015a). From the Ministry's perspective, the CSE is neither a teaching syllabus nor an outline of examination, but a series of descriptions of the abilities the EL should have at a certain English level. As such, it implements can-do descriptors, a commonly used way in LPS to describe language abilities. With a unified scale, the CSE provides a common reference to the English language ability for English testers, learners and educators. The overarching focus on holistic language capacity and on the use of English in genuine settings has set the CSE apart from previous standards and signals a move to a new theory of language learning/acquisition in China (Table 1).

Whereas previous standards and examinations relied on translations of text to determine language achievement (Han, 2006), the CSE instead relies significantly

Fig. 1 The CSE framework of language abilities and standards. Adapted from English “Language Teaching in China: Developing Language Proficiency Frameworks”, by J. Liu & Pan (2019) In: Gao X. (eds) Second Handbook of English Language Teaching. Springer International Handbooks of Education (p.7). Springer, Cham. *GK* grammatical knowledge, *DK* discourse knowledge, *OK* organizational knowledge, *PK* pragmatic knowledge, *SLK* sociolinguistic knowledge, *FK* functional knowledge, *PCA* pragmatic comprehension ability, *PEA* pragmatic expression ability

on what could be called a practical competence, determined by learners’ command of knowledge of all fields and strategic knowledge as well as the application of these knowledge and strategies (Liu & Han, 2018). Building on the CEFR, CSE were developed to reflect the shifting conditions of English teaching and assessment, the demands of social development and the theories in modern language teaching, language learning and language assessment. (Liu, 2015b). Liu and Han (2018), two of the CSE developers, describe the theoretical literature that they drew on to develop the standards. Specifically, the CSE considers linguistic competence as a dynamic activity of cognition rather than a system of static and abstract rules. As such, they include language comprehension competence (listening and reading comprehension) and language expression competence (speaking and writing) as reflected in the language activities the language learners participate in by using knowledge and strategies of all kinds (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Canale, 1984; Chomsky, 1965; Han & Zhang, 2015; Hymes, 1972).

Linguistic performance or pragmatic ability is defined as the language learners’ ability to comprehend and express a certain intention by using different knowledge

and strategies (Han & Huang, 2018), and therefore it is divided into pragmatic comprehension competence (to understand the intention of the speaker) and pragmatic expression competence (to express the intention of the speaker). Comprehension, according to Krathwohl and Anderson (2001), is a transfer of knowledge, despite its form or ways of acquisition, and can be of several levels from low to high: identification, extraction, summarization, analysis, correction and evaluation. Linguistic performance should include knowledge of the pragmatic system and the strategies to use the pragmatic knowledge (Kasper & Rose, 1997). The pragmatic knowledge is part of linguistic knowledge and is considered the foundation of pragmatic comprehension and expression and is reflected in the language learners' understanding and acquisition of the utterance and competence to accomplish things, while the effect of pragmatic expression is determined by the appropriateness of the expression (Han & Huang, 2018).

Similar to Bachman and Palmer's (2010) theory, the CSE suggest that language is a mixture of organizational and pragmatic knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge includes functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge, in which functional knowledge is used to explain the relationship between utterance, sentences and texts and the intention of the speaker; Language knowledge and strategies are the foundation of pragmatic comprehension competence and pragmatic expression competence (Han & Huang, 2018). Figure 1 below shows the multiple relations among these factors.

The theoretical foundation of CSE is communicative-based and use-oriented language ability standards. (Liu, 2015a). The CSE views language ability holistically while noting language learners' needs in listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating and other language acts, based on the language users' real language level and the social demands/requirements. As such, according to Liu (2015b) CSE are a combination of the RL (Real-Life Approach) and the IA (International Ability Approach) used in describing communicative language competence and starts from the specific aspects of how the EL uses language (the language content that they can understand and use), the process of the input and output (the learning strategies adopted in using the language), and the results of their output (the verbal production or the written sentences), all of which reflects English achievement. In summary, we find that the CSE standards and assessments, like the California model, reflect a theoretical shift in language instruction from the atomized, rules-based, easily tested, structuralist view to one more aligned with a communicative, holistic, and pragmatic theory.

Mexico's National English Program

With immigrants of Mexican origin representing the largest immigrant population in the U.S., at 25% of the immigrant population (Budiman, 2020), one can infer that the largest EL population in the U.S. and particularly in California originates from Mexico. Therefore, the LPS during basic education in Mexico is deeply connected to and influences the ELD programs within schools in the U.S. We summarize the

history and three iterations of LPS in Mexico for the last 25 years and identify where possible the theoretical framework on which they are based.

The national education system in Mexico began a profound transformation and reorganization to improve and innovate pedagogical practice with the Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Básica in 1992 (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). One significant aspect of this change was an extension of compulsory education from 6 to 9 years. This also led to a significant shift in the conception and teaching of English as a foreign language (hereafter English) through the reform of the LPS known as Planes y Programas de Enseñanza (PPE 1993). Previously English pedagogy assumed the traditional grammar-translation approach, but with PPE 1993 the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach was given greater emphasis (Chavez, 2010). At the same time, English became obligatory for all middle school students. However, a study which was conducted 10 years after the creation of PPE 1993 by the Secretaría de Educación (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2006a) in 100 public middle schools found that the change in teacher practice to the CLT approach was minimal. Secretaría de Educación Pública (2006b) indicated that this failure was explained by the lack of teacher's proficiency of English as well as teacher's misunderstandings regarding the implementation of the communicative approach.

As a result of the lack of implementation of the CLT approach, in 2006 the Plan de Estudios (2006) adapted the propositions of PPE 1993 with a methodology according to the Mexican context utilizing a constructivist approach (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2006b). However, Chavez (2010) reports that in studies conducted during three school cycles from 2006 to 2009 in Durango three distinct patterns of implementation can be found: those teaching using the CLT approach (23%), those combining the CLT approach and the grammar translation approach (32%), those utilizing the grammar translation approach (45%). Although this study took place in only one state, these patterns were likely to be found in all the other states.

The Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2007–2012 (National Development Plan) strategy 9.3 recognized the need to update the study plans, contents, materials and methodologies (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). This led to the Programa Sectorial de Educación 2007–2012 under the rubric of Basic Education strategy 1.1 to identify the need to begin yet another reform centered on the adoption of a competence-based education model (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). The Plan de Estudios (2011) defines these competences including the curricular standards (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011) which we will discuss below. In addition, in 2008 the Alianza por la Calidad de la Educación, in coordination between the Federal Government and the Mexican teachers represented by the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE) union, committed to a reform of Basic Education and the teaching of English starting in the preschool level (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011).

Despite an intention to incorporate English into all grades from preschool through middle school, in 2010 only 22 of the 31 states offered English courses in their primary schools (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2010) and then only a few schools in each state taught English (Ramírez-Romero, 2015) with a coverage being less

than 10% (Ramírez-Romero & Vargas-Gil, 2019). The most recent coverage data available is for the 2012–2013 academic year in which the PNIEB English program was reported as being implemented in all 32 states, serving a total of 6,544,914 students nationally (CONEVAL, 2013) which Ramírez-Romero and Vargas-Gil (2019) state represents 12.57% of public schools and 25% of students in basic education. However, they also point out that there is not equal demographic and geographic coverage, with the focus being in major cities and only with students in the morning shift of classes, while neglecting smaller towns and marginalized areas.

The inauguration of a new president in Mexico brought a new agenda in 2012. The *Programa S246 Fortalecimiento de la Calidad en Educación Básica*, included a strategy of supporting the study of English (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2014) by creating the Programa Nacional de Inglés (PRONI) which kept the same curriculum proposed by the PNIEB but with administrative and budgetary changes (Sayer, 2015). The pedagogical principles outlined by the reform in Acuerdo Número 592 include: student centered teaching, using a variety of didactic activities, collaborative learning, emphasis in competences, formative assessment, inclusive environments, and incorporating relevant social topics (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011, 2017). The curricular standards are organized into four periods covering three grades each (1st–3rd grade of preschool/kindergarten, 1st–3rd grade of elementary school, 4th–6th grade of elementary school, 1st–3rd grade of middle school) (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011, 2017). The formation fields for Basic Education include: Language and communication, Mathematical Thinking, Comprehension and exploration of the natural and social world, and Personal development (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2017). English is connected to the communicative ability which includes the same methodology as mother tongue (Spanish) and digital abilities. However, no connections are made between the language and the other content areas.

The Planes y Programas de Estudio 2017 sets out that 5 h per week will be dedicated to teaching English each year from 3rd grade of preschool to 3rd grade of middle school (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2017) for the typical school, with adjustments for other types of schools ranging from 2.5 to 5 h per week (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). The Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (PNIEB) is organized according to habitual and concrete communication situations with three language functions: family and community, literary and pleasure, and academic (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). The objective for the 3rd grade of preschool through the 2nd grade of elementary school is to provide initial contact and familiarization with the language, while the rest of the years are dedicated to developing basic proficiency (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2017). The proficiency standards utilize the CEFR which include comprehension, expression, multimodality and attitudes toward the language and communication, which is problematic as these references were designed for adults. By the conclusion of the 3rd grade of elementary school, students are expected to demonstrate an A2 level on the CEFR and by the end of the 3rd grade of middle school, they should demonstrate a B1 level on the CEFR (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). However, no formal nation-wide English assessments are conducted and therefore Rixon (2013) points out that, “the use of the CEFR to set target levels but with no assessment at the end of primary schooling...may perhaps be fairly interpreted

as aspirations or guidelines rather than national standards to be ascertained” (p. 37). This interpretation is also evident, as various studies between 2003 and 2016 have found that, throughout the multiple iterations of LPS in Mexico, their implementation is lacking due to a mismatch between the rhetoric of the educational authorities and the contextual constraints that teachers encountered in their classrooms including: time (Basurto Santos, 2010; Basurto Santos & Weathers Gregory, 2016; Pamplón Irigoyen & Ramírez-Romero, 2013), class size, class mix and limited resources (Alcántar & Montes, 2013; Basurto Santos, 2010; Basurto Santos & Weathers Gregory, 2016; Mendoza Valladares & Puón Castro, 2013; Serrano & Hernández, 2013). Other studies also found that implementation is limited by the poor design of the textbooks which also are often distributed unevenly and late to the schools (Ramírez-Romero, 2015; Castro, 2015; Pamplón Irigoyen & Ramírez-Romero, 2013), and due to a shortage of sufficiently prepared teachers both linguistically and pedagogically (Ramírez-Romero and Vargas-Gil (2019).

The documents that the Secretaría de Educación Pública has produced throughout the past 25 years have incorporated many theoretical frameworks, although the specifics are often lost in the standards descriptions, buried deep in the documents. In addition, as Ramírez-Romero and Vargas-Gil (2019) argue, “Changes in programs or strategies seem to have been the product of political interests or partisan concerns and/or interests non-related or linked to social needs or long-term educational projects” (p. 16). They also point out that the program has not been systematically evaluated, and thus changes in the program have not been supported by data nor has a clear grounded theoretical framework been used to guide the changes. However, a close inspection suggests a theoretical framework based on a “sociocultural approach that defines learning objectives in terms of social practices” (Ramírez-Romero & Vargas-Gil, 2019, p. 25). There is a tendency in the current reform for moving from the grammar-translation approach to CLT and a stronger orientation to a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach and a focus on meaning making in a social context (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011). It also has a clear focus on the development of receptive skills (reading and listening) above productive skills (speaking and writing) and a higher degree of development of informal language over academic language (Cummins, 2000) which was also found in California’s 1999 LPS. This reform seems to reiterate the ideas put forth in PPE 1993, with perhaps a greater degree of detail to describe more specifically the learning objectives. But it is unclear whether the other factors which previous studies (Santos Basurto & Gregory, 2016; SEP, 2006) identified as impeding the implementation of the methodologies set forth by the reform have been addressed in such a way as to make implementation possible. In summary, a shift in the theoretical foundation of the LPS, similar to that seen in California and China, from a structuralist to a communicative approach is being seen in Mexico.

What We Can Learn from All Three Nations’ Standards

The most obvious change in the Californian, Chinese, and Mexican standards is a shift from the *analysis* of English to the *use* of English, as suggested by proponents of the communicative approaches to language instruction. A similar

shift from dialectical to dialogic teaching methods is also apparent in all three standards. What does this mean for educators and students in these three locations? First, we believe that many professionals will welcome these foundational changes in the standards. In California, for example, educators have long complained that the 1999 ELD standards failed to emphasize communicative approaches (Gandara et al., 2005). However, what language teachers wish for and how they will teach are not always tantamount. In addition, teachers whose voices are heard when standards are rewritten are likely to have a more progressive orientation. If a minority of teachers can influence changes to standards that are not endorsed by a plurality of educators, then any new standards will be rejected or, more commonly, ignored, and instruction will proceed unaltered. We note that the California standards are standards in the truest sense, specifying what students can learn and should learn, but only recommending how teachers should teach. By contrast, CSE specify not only instructional goals, but also the curriculum, teaching sequences and teaching periods (Yang & Zhou, 2012).

Our anecdotal data on teachers' endorsement for the new California standards reflect widespread inattention, a lack of understanding, or some combination of the two. Most teachers are not familiar with SFL and therefore misunderstand how the goals for "collaborative" language development can have the same emphasis as productive or interpretive language goals. To repeat: these conclusions are not systematic, but even a cursory review of the new California standards reveals a dramatic shift from the previous version, and teachers are understandably unsure of how to move forward.

The news from China may reveal a similar fate for that country's new standards. For instance, over 25 years ago, Anderson (1993) raised questions about whether China was prepared to move to a more communicative approach to English instruction. Questions surrounding teacher education, professional development, and overall beliefs regarding language teaching raised by Anderson are still relevant. And while we do not necessarily agree with Anderson's view that Chinese educators are in favor of instruction for rote memorization, especially when testing content knowledge, we do agree that the cultural forces are non-trivial. Providing meaningful input and eliciting meaningful output may also prove a challenge (Lee and Van Patton, 2003). Some Chinese students have shown that they have difficulty stepping out of their comfort zone to seek opportunities to interact with people and apply what they learn in contexts. However, new and interactive technologies may offer a solution to accessing native tongues and local cultures in the English-speaking countries. In any event, the shift for China is neatly summarized in a quote from Brown and Larson-Hall (2012): "For learning a language it is quite simple—one needs to actively use the language itself rather than simply learn about it" (p. 84). Learning about English has been the primary focus of foreign language instruction in China for decades. Now that English is by far and away the most commonly taught international language in the largest nation on earth, will China turn towards the active (and social) use of English? If so, teachers will be challenged to provide more interactive and meaningful contexts for EL to practice what is taught rather than just memorize the grammatical rules and expressions, and to improve themselves in the (meta-) linguistic and

(meta-) cognitive knowledge and abilities, especially for the advanced levels of teaching.

Second, we should consider current policies, curriculum, syllabus, language teaching methods and ways and forms of assessment. For the past decades, China's Ministry of Education, has been in absolute charge of the English curriculum and textbooks throughout China. Although there have been some changes, the results have been unsatisfactory, and particularly failing to balance the giant regional differences. The CSE were developed with reference to the standards of other countries, with opinions from publishers, teachers, students, parents, education authorities and the public as well. By seeking input for the CSE throughout China, the designers/educators attempted to create standards that would have wide appeal, but China is a diverse country in which local characteristics and interests must be taken into account. Local reactions to the CSE may not be enthusiastic, regardless of the process and the involvement of language teaching experts. (Yang & Zhou, 2012; Zhang, 2007).

With respect to Mexico, we find similar challenges in the implementation of the standards. However, Mexico might face additional barriers in implementing a CLT approach, given the large class sizes and limited resources. We might also point to the general issues facing public schooling in Mexico, such as, teacher professional development. Educational reforms in Mexico have historically been dominated by the national teacher union, which infamously supported a system of patronage (retiring teachers could bequeath their job to heirs or sell it outright without any Ministry or local input), labor stoppages, and other practices designed to strengthen the union (Hecock, 2014). Recent efforts at decentralizing educational decisions are meeting with some success, but the road will be long, and the necessary teacher professional development to engage the standards will be difficult to implement in any event.

In addition to the nation-specific challenges described above, we point to two challenges that will likely be shared by all three countries. As the standards move towards a more communicative approach and authentic language use, EL will need to possess intercultural communicative strategies, which have been considered beyond routine language instruction, but which are closely related to SFL language instruction and learning. As Sun (2016) points out, intercultural communication means respecting different world cultures, demonstrating intercultural empathy and critical consciousness of these, having appropriate, strategic and effective cross-cultural communication and assisting individuals from different cultural backgrounds to communicate effectively across cultures. In the new English language proficiency standards, language is not learned as an abstraction, a puzzle to be solved, but rather a tool to communicate with those who speak the language. In this way, the new standards in all three nations are inherently social and the instruction flowing from them must emphasize the social as well.

The second common challenge, the testing of English, is perhaps the most likely to undermine the best efforts by educational professionals to engage the new standards. If the examinations of English achievement retain their fixed and monotonous, skill and rule-based questions, then educators will teach the tasks on the tests and ignore the standards. Researchers in China (Li, 2017; Liang, 2012), the US (Taubman, 2009), and Mexico (Santiago et al., 2012) point out the testing schemes

steamroll even a highly prescribed curriculum. Although a full discussion of language testing is beyond our scope in this paper, we believe that future tests can be more authentic and personalized, assess deep knowledge rather than memorizing information, be collaboratively productive, and encourage the use of modern technology. If these characteristics can be applied in the future tests, then the standards are more likely to be taught with fidelity.

Standards alone cannot improve instruction, but they do hold the capacity to change teachers' minds about pedagogy. Standards tend to have a disproportionate influence from policymakers, whose interests are often political in nature, but this does not necessarily mean that they cannot be valid and useful.

The new standards for all three places view language learning as a constant and spiraling process of acquisition (McLaughlin, 1987) and therefore language teaching as open-ended, creative, and social (Richards, 2001). One hope for the new standards is that they will make the learning of English more pleasant and motivating for students. Past standards and curricula have turned what should be an exciting and rich school subject into a brutal, boring ritual. If the curriculum or the test content turns the magic of language learning into painful memorization, there is really nothing a teacher can do.

In the end, teachers will determine the fate of the standards. For many, they will need to change their way of learning and teaching about English and their method of assessment and maximize the abundant resources enabled by the era of technology and information; they will need to broaden their instruction beyond the grammatical knowledge and include cultural knowledge, linguistic competence, critical thinking capacities and a tolerance of diversity.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- ACTFL. (2012). ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012. ACTFL. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/resources/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>
- Alcántar, C., & Montes, C. (2013). Teacher and student perceptions of the learning activities in the NEPBE: A case study from Nayarit. *Mexesol Journal*, 37(3), 1–10.
- Alexander, R. (2011). Evidence, rhetoric and collateral damage: The problematic pursuit of 'world class' standards. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 41(3), 265–286.
- Anderson, J. (1993). Is a communicative approach practical for teaching English in China? Pros and cons. *System*, 21(4), 471–480.

- Apple, M. W. (2012). Controlling the work of teachers. In *Power knowledge and education*, (pp. 126–141). Routledge.
- Apple, M. W., & Teitelbaum, K. (1986). Are teachers losing control of their skills and curriculum? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 18(2), 177–184.
- Bachman, L. & A. Palmer. (2010). Language testing in practice: Developing language assessments and justifying their use in the real world. In Han, B. & Huang, Y. (2018). Defining and describing pragmatic ability in China's Standards of English. *Modern Foreign Languages*, 41(1), 91–98.
- Basurto Santos, N. M. (2010). *Transition in EFL from secondary to preparatory in Mexican state schools: Participant perspectives*. Universidad Veracruzana.
- Basurto Santos, N. M., & Weathers Gregory, J. R. (2016). EFL in public schools in Mexico: Dancing around the ring? *How*, 23(1), 68–84.
- Brown, S., & Larson-Hall, J. (2012). *Second language acquisition myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. University of Michigan Press.
- Budiman, A. (2020). Key Findings About U.S. Immigrants. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/20/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>
- Cai, J. (2011). Reorientation of the CET in China. *Computer-Assisted Foreign Language Education*, 3, 3–10.
- California Department of Education. (1999). *English-language development standards for California public schools kindergarten through grade twelve*. Author.
- California Department of Education (2012). *California English Language Development Standards: Kindergarten through Grade 12*. Author. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/eldstndpublication14.pdf>
- Canale, M. (1984). A communicative approach to language proficiency assessment in a minority setting. In Liu, J. & Han, G. (2018). Theoretical considerations for developing use-oriented China's Standards of English. *Modern Foreign Languages*, 1, 78–90.
- Castro, J. E. (2015). Los recursos educativos en las clases de inglés. In J. L. Ramírez-Romero (Ed.), *La enseñanza del inglés en las primarias públicas mexicanas* (pp. 201–227). Pearson-Universidad de Sonora-Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. (2012). Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults. Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf?>
- Chomsky, N. (1965). Aspects of the theory of syntax. In Liu, J. & Han, B. (2018) Theoretical considerations for developing use-oriented China's Standards of English. *Modern Foreign Languages*, 1, 78–90.
- Cohen, M. (1990). Key issues confronting state policymakers. In R. F. Elmore (Ed.), *Restructuring schools: The next generation of educational reform* (pp. 251–288). Josey Bass.
- Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo (CONEVAL). (2013). *Ficha de Monitoreo 2012–2013. Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica*. CONEVAL. Retrieved from http://www.coneval.gob.mx/Informes/COMUNICADOS_DE_PRENSA/FichasDeMonitoreoEducacion.pdf.
- Council of Europe. (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR). Council of Europe. Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home>
- CSE Press Conference. (April 25, 2018). Questions and answers to journalists on CES from the representative of the MOE testing center.
- Cummins, J. (2000). Academic language learning, transformative pedagogy, and information technology: Towards a critical balance. *Tesol Quarterly*, 34(3), 537–548.
- DataQuest (CA Dept of education). (n.d.). Retrieved February, 2018, from <https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
- Duran, R. P. (2008). Assessing English-language learners' achievement. *Review of Research in Education*, 32(1), 292.
- Durán Chávez, C. D. (2010). *El programa de inglés 2006 ¿consolidación o resistencia? Perspectiva desde la función técnico-pedagógica*. Cátedra de investigación de innovación en tecnología y educación. Retrieved from <http://catedra.ruv.itesm.mx/handle/987654321/265>
- Gandara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Driscoll, A. (2005). *Listening to teachers of English language learners: A survey of California teachers* (p. 32). Policy Analysis for California Education.
- Golding, E., & Greenfield, W. (2002). Understanding the evolving concept of leadership in education: Roles, expectations, and dilemmas. In J. Murphy (Ed.), *The educational leadership challenge*:

- Redefining leadership for the 21st century National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1* (pp. 1–19). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Han, B. (2006). A review of current language proficiency scales. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 6, 443–450.
- Han, B., & Chang, C. (2011). Foreign language proficiency scales in China and abroad: A comparative study. *Foreign Language in China*, 8(4), 39–45.
- Han, B., & Huang, Y. (2018). Defining and describing pragmatic ability in China's Standards of English. *Modern Foreign Languages*, 41(1), 91–98.
- Han, B., & Zhang, Y. (2015). Goals and content designs of college entrance examination. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 47(3), 426–436.
- Hecock, R. D. (2014). Democratization, education reform, and the mexican teachers' union. *Latin American Research Review*, 62–82.
- Herzog, M. (2020). An overview of the history of the ILR language proficiency skill level descriptions and scale. Interagency Language Roundtable. Retrieved from <https://www.govtilr.org/Skills/IRL%20Scale%20History.htm>
- Hymes, D. (1972b). On communicative competence [A]. In Liu, J. & Han, B. (2018). Theoretical considerations for developing use-oriented China's Standards of English, *Modern Foreign Languages*, (1), 78–90.
- Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (1999). Pragmatics and SLA. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 19, 81–104.
- Krathwohl, D.R., & Anderson, L. W. (2010). Merlin C. Wittrock and the revision of Bloom's taxonomy. *Educational Psychologist*, 45(1), 64–65.
- Krashen, S. D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. Pergamon Press.
- Kuhlman, N., & Nadeau, A. (1999). English language development standards: The California model. *The CATESOL Journal*, 11(1), 143–160.
- Lee, J. F., & VanPatten, B. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen*. Mc Graw-Hill.
- Li, V. (2017). Forty years of College Entrance Examination in China: Problems and explanations. *Examination Research*, 6, 59–65.
- Liang, D. (2012). Common problems in the elementary assessments and testing. *Journal of Shandong Normal University*, 14(02), 83–86.
- Liu, J. (2015a). Exploration on the standard-based language assessment. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 3, 417–425.
- Liu, J. (2015b). Some thoughts on developing China common framework for English language proficiency. *China Examinations*, 1, 7–15.
- Liu, J., & Han, B. (2018). Theoretical considerations for developing use-oriented China's Standards of English. *Modern foreign languages*, 41(1), 78–88.
- Liu, J., & Peng, C. (2007). Scientifically developing the China's standards of English. *Foreign Language World*, 2, 2–8.
- Llosa, L. (2005). Assessing English learners' language proficiency: A qualitative investigation of teachers' interpretations of the California ELD Standards. *The CATESOL Journal*, 17(1), 7–18.
- McLaughlin, B. (1987). *Theories of second language learning*. Arnold.
- Mendoza Valladares, J. L., & Puón Castro, Y. (2013). The challenge of teaching English in public schools: Beyond academic factors. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 37(3). Retrieved from http://www.mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=488.
- Migration Policy Institute. (2020). States and districts with the highest number and share of English Language Learners. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/states-and-districts-highest-number-and-share-english-language-learners>
- Mitchell, D. E. (1984). Educational policy analysis: The state of the art. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 20, 129–160.
- Ogawa, R. T., Sandholtz, J. H., Martinez-Flores, M., & Scribner, S. P. (2003). The substantive and symbolic consequences of a district's standards-based curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(1), 147–176.
- Pamplón Irigoyen, E. N., & Ramírez Romero, J. L. (2013). The implementation of the PNIEB's language teaching methodology in schools in Sonora. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 37(3).
- Pease-Alvarez, L., Samway, K. D., & Cifka-Herrera, C. (2010). Working within the system: teachers of English learners negotiating a literacy instruction mandate. *Language Policy*, 9(4), 313–334.
- Ramírez-Romero, J. L. (Ed.). (2015). *La enseñanza del inglés en las primarias públicas mexicanas*. Pearson-Universidad de Sonora-Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.

- Ramírez-Romero, J. L., & Vargas-Gil, E. (2019). Mexico's politics, policies and practices for bilingual education and English as a foreign language in primary public schools. In *Bilingualism and Bilingual Education: Politics, Policies and Practices in a Globalized Society* (pp. 9–37). Springer, Cham.
- Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching[M]*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rixon, S. (2013). *British Council Survey of Policy and Practice in Primary English Language Teaching Worldwide*. British Council.
- Salas Serrano, L. A., & Sánchez Hernández, V. (2013). Voices and echoes from the PNIEB experience in Puebla. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 37(3). Retrieved from http://mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=484.
- Santiago, P., McGregor, I., Nusche, D., Ravela, P., & Toledo, D. (2012). OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education.
- Santibañez, L., & Umansky, I. (2018). *English learners: Charting their experiences and mapping their futures in California schools*. Policy Analysis for California Education. PACE.
- Sayer, P. (2015). A response to the Sorry report on the state of the PNIEB and English language education in Mexican public schools. *Mextesol Journal*, 39(4), 1–11.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP. (2006a). *Educación Básica. Secundaria. Lengua Extranjera. Inglés. Programas de estudio 2006*. Mexico City, MX: Author. Retrieved from http://www.curriculobasica.sep.gob.mx/pdf/pnieb/pe_ingles_2006.pdf.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP. (2006b). *Educación básica. Secundaria. Lengua Extranjera. Inglés. Programas de Estudio 2006*. México, D.F.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (2010). *Informe de resultados de la etapa piloto del ciclo 1. Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica y Programas Estatales de Inglés. Ciclo escolar 2009–2010*. México, D.F.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP. (2011). *Acuerdo Número 592: Por el que se establece la articulación de la Educación Básica*. México: Comisión Nacional de Libros de Texto Gratuitos.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (2014). *Diagnóstico. Programa S246. Fortalecimiento de la Calidad en Educación Básica*. México. Retrieved from http://www.sep.gob.mx/work/models/sep1/Resource/5016/1/images/diagnostico_del_programa_s246.pdf.
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. (2017). *Aprendizajes clave para la educación integral: Lengua Extranjera Inglés Educación Básica Plan y programas de estudio, orientaciones didácticas y sugerencias de evaluación*. Secretaría de Educación Pública.
- Shin, F. H. (2004). English language development standards and benchmarks: Policy issues and a call for more focused research. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 28(2), 253–266.
- Sun, Y. (2016). Foreign language education and the cultivation of intercultural competence. *Foreign Languages in China*, 5, 17–22.
- Taubman, P. M. (2009). *Teaching by numbers: Deconstructing the discourse of standards and accountability in education*. Routledge.
- Téllez, K. (2010). *Teaching English learners: Fostering language and the democratic experience*. Routledge.
- TESOL International Association. (2006). *PreK-12 English language proficiency standards*. Author.
- UNESCO. (2020). *Browse by country*. UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://uis.unesco.org>
- Uriarte, M. (2002). The high stakes of high stakes testing. In Z. F. Beykont (Ed.), *The power of culture: Teaching across language difference* (pp. 3–24). Harvard Education Publishing Group.
- Verger, A., Fontdevila, C., & Parcerisa, L. (2019). Reforming governance through policy instruments: How and to what extent standards, tests and accountability in education spread worldwide. *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 40(2), 248–270.
- Wallender, J. (2014). The common core state standards in American public education: Historical underpinnings and justifications. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 80(4), 7.
- Yang, D., & Zhou, Q. (2012). Exploration of multiculturalism in elementary education. *Teaching and Administration*, 1, 104–106.
- Zhang, Y. (2007). Designing junior high school English textbooks from the perspective of language theories. *Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method*, 11, 46–50.