Linguistically Diverse Adolescents Navigating Dominant Language Ideologies in an ELA Classroom

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This case study examines the ways linguistically diverse middle school students engage with text-based discourse in an English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. Participants attended a linguistically diverse public school within a mid-size district, a collar community of a large urban center. This study makes use of the concept of language ideologies, specifically focused on dominant language ideologies—those actions, beliefs, and representations in action through social contexts that historically act to marginalize other language varieties (Lippi-Green, 2012). This case study is situated in a critical sociocultural frame (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007), using critical discourse analysis and drawing from multimodal discourse analysis to understand the perceptions of four focal students who self-identify as linguistically diverse as they engaged in text-oriented discourse tasks such as book clubs, partnerships, and collaborative work with digital literacies. Findings demonstrate students’ struggle between dominant language ideologies and notions toward a more linguistically inclusive learning environment. Findings also suggest that linguistic ideologies are instantiated in diverse ways including embodied, verbal discourse (e.g. discussions), through composition (e.g. prompted writing), and through collaborative structures (e.g. book clubs, partner work, etc.) with text and text-based work. Likewise, even in the absence of curriculum specifically focused on linguistic diversity, students held a keen awareness of intricate connections between language and power. The research in this dissertation suggest implications for policy, teacher education, and professional development, as well as the importance of bringing students into critical conversations regarding the power of their voices.
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It’s a love, a passion. Its function is like a preacher’s: to make you stand up out of your seat, make you lose yourself and hear yourself. The worst of all possible things that could happen would be to lose that language. There are certain things I cannot say without recourse to my language.

—Toni Morrison, 1981

So we believe that we’re supposed to say this word like this, and then [they say] we’re supposed to say this word like that. It will be like, um—it will be—it will be like a change in your religion.

—Cameron, Study Participant, age 12

As both author Toni Morrison and study participant Cameron (a pseudonym) suggest, language is deeply personal because it acts as an identity marker. Their comparison of language to a religion—evoking also belief, identity, honor, and tradition—resonates with the ways sociocultural and critical language and literacy scholars have shown that “saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things” (Gee, 2014, p.2) Both comments also acknowledge the relationship between language and power. In schools, language is often presented simply as a set of neutral rules to be followed, but this is misleading. Language and literacy studies show that school-based discourses often privilege White, middle-class, and male language usage—commonly referred to as “standard” English (Souto-Manning, 2017; Goodwin, Cheruvu, & Genishi, 2008). Qualifying labels, such as standard or academic (e.g.
academic language, academic discourse, academic settings), often work to exclude languages, spaces, and people who are not invited or do not abide by contextual rules associated with terming something academic (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Young, 2014). Regardless of the terminologies used to describe the relationship between language and power (e.g. Standard English, Language of Power, Mainstream English, and/or Dominant American English), labels seem too often to speak to deficit effects and the exclusionary nature of the linguistic hierarchy perpetuated in schools (Delpit, 2008; Alim & Smitherman, 2012). More specifically, these labels and values tend to marginalize the ways language holds a “central role in the construction, maintenance, and transformation of racial and ethnic identities” in school spaces (Alim, Rickford, Ball, 2016, p. 7). Language ideologies are informed, nurtured, and sustained by histories of systematic racism in this country. Language ideologies cannot be separated from racism. In fact, the bonds between language and race are visible and valued in all facets of life which is why it is particularly striking that, in schools, students are so often taught (consciously or subconsciously) to subscribe to only one, standardized way of communicating. Dominant language ideologies at play in schools communicate whose language counts in that space. Therefore, it is important to explore the dominant or standard language ideologies—those beliefs and subsequent actions within and in reaction to language. In this study, I will move between the aforementioned commonly-used label Standard English (SE), and the more critically-aligned term Dominant American English (DAE) to refer to the language registers most often used in schools. Likewise, I will employ terms, such as text-oriented and text-based discourse to describe the language and the structures associated with embodied, multimodal, collaboration in ELA instruction in lieu of more ethnoracially-coded terms such as academic discourse or academic language.
Traditionally, our society privileges students who ascribe to dominant language norms while marginalizing students whose languages follow non-dominant practices. Moreover, employing linguistic nimbleness (such as fluidly utilizing multiple language varieties) is often seen as inappropriate or inaccurate (Rymes, Flores, & Pomerantz, 2016). Even during instances where students are not asked to erase their linguistic diversity, negative perceptions persist. Rosa (2009) suggests that in schools, “students are encouraged to embrace their inherent ethnoracial selves insofar as this locates them squarely within the confines of institutional measures of success.” (presentation slide 2). One such example is the practice of code-switching, or choosing “the pattern of language appropriate to the context” (Wheeler and Swords, 2004, p. 475). Code-switching is a familiar practice in schools and even encouraged in the Common Core’s focus on “appropriate” language use across varying contexts. Although it is sometimes considered to be a practice aligned with cultural inclusivity, the mandate to code-switch can actually perpetuate bias against linguistic diversity (Young et al. 2014). For example, when asked to switch languages, a bidialectical student (with facility in both African American English (AAE) and Dominant American English (DAE) must understand the subtext that the code-switching stipulation will almost always drive toward the adherence to DAE in school, and not to the use of AAE. Similarly, a bilingual student who engages in translanguaging practices (Garcia, 2009) to employ both of her languages to communicate understanding and convey meaning in unsanctioned, school learning zones might be encouraged to situate her message within one language or another. Often the intention in cases such as the one described above would be to foreground that student’s learning within larger normative discourses such as the one that surrounds DAE. Both examples show how pervasive dominant language ideologies and corresponding discourse structures tend to reinforce linguistic hierarchies in schools (Godley & Escher, 2012).
When a person’s language is denigrated by microaggressions or belittled with constant corrections, there is an impact on trust and belonging within a school community. Asking (or requiring) students to choose between their language practices while implicitly upholding DAE can have consequences for students, teachers, and schooling that are worth investigating.

Furthermore, these biases inhibit critical components of successful learning environments (Brown, Bloome, Morris, Power-Carter, & Willis, 2017). When a student’s speech is publicly or privately micro-corrected, students may struggle to feel heard (Gutiérrez, 2008; Paris & Alim, 2014), teachers may struggle to support authentic learning (Alvermann, 2002; Moje, 2010), school administrators may struggle to build a safe school culture, and community members may feel ostracized (Barrett, 2014). Even taken on their own, each of these outcomes is divisive, but together they can create a genuinely untenable learning environment.

This study focuses on how language-minoritized middle school students perceive their language experiences within a classroom discourse community (Flowerdew, 2000) in the English Language Arts (ELA) discipline. Bomer (2014) suggests that “the subject English often imposes on young people the culture, values, practices, and thinking of an adult culture already in the process of becoming a past culture.” (p. 12) For many linguistically diverse students, ELA imposes an additional abstraction of racioethnic-adult culture not aligned with their own.

Discourse communities are often referenced in conversation with academic literacy. A discourse community, as per Herzberg (1986), makes, “common assumptions that discourse operates within conventions defined by communities, be they academic disciplines or social groups.” (p.1). Flowerdew proposed an updated definition of discourse communities intended to be inclusive of a broader range of communities and the manner in which they might be categorized. He does this by highlighting the specialized ways discourse happens in communities, “stress[ing]
the participatory, negotiable nature of learning and the fact that learning is not always based on overt teaching” (Flowerdew, 2000, p.28). In schools, discourse communities often have little autonomy to authentically cocreate discourse norms yet, students are expected to abide by the rules of the discourse community created within each classroom. In this study, I draw from scholars who have defined the ways discourse is contextually situated (Brown et al, 2017; Gee, 2004) and also those who have worked to disrupt the notion that specific discourse are “academic” and aligned with to learning (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Therefore, this study will focus on discourse, those multimodal ways of communicating and collaboratively meaning-making, while remaining centered on student perceptions of discourse-associated frameworks such as participation structures and curricular supports meant to cultivate collaborative learning (e.g. group work, text choice, and other text-based work) within ELA. I focus on ELA because it is a content area often oriented around text, and text-based/text-oriented discourses often perpetuate linguistic hegemony (Au, 1997; Brown et al., 2017; Cazden, 2001). My goal is to better understand the experiences of linguistically diverse students as they engage intext-oriented discourse by looking deeply into how text (e.g. course material) is oriented through norms, procedures, and classroom expectations, for the purpose of discourse. Specifically, this study asks:

1) How do language-minoritized adolescents perceive their experiences with text-oriented discourse?
   a) What linguistic ideologies do language-minoritized adolescents express in and related to text-oriented discourse?

2) In what ways do language-minoritized students engage in text-oriented discourse within an ELA classroom?
a) What roles do text-relationships play in supporting linguistic diversity within these structures?

These questions are addressed through an instrumental case study in a middle school ELA classroom with a teacher who values discourse opportunities and linguistic flexibility. Data collection took place across a ten-week period and involved student language surveys, videotaping discourse-in-action during reading/literature instruction (e.g., book club discussions), and as interviewing focal students as they reflected on their experiences in text-based discourse. This study contributes to ongoing discourse, across both research and practitioner communities that understands linguistic diversity as an asset to thinking and learning environments considered “academic” by way of their situated nature in schools and preference for dominant linguistic registers (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Gutiérrez, 2001; Lee, 2007; Paris & Alim, 2014; Rymes, 2015).

Today’s Emphasis on “Appropriate” and “Academic” Discourse in the ELA Classroom

Often, school discourse studies highlight the specialized interactional patterns specific to discourse deemed school-appropriate which, “are privileged, expected, cultivated, conventionalized, or ritualized, and, therefore, usually evaluated” (Duff, 2010, p. 175). Duff and other researchers have referred to this type of discourse as academic discourse. Bloome, Power Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris (2010) refer to academic discourse as “ways of using language—the gestures, the social and cultural practices, the epistemologies, and the ideologies of an academic or professional field” (p. 48). However, scholars have challenged the very notion of academic discourse as a cultural practice often normed as white, mainstream middle-class, and likely exclusionary for students of color and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Kinloch 2009, Rosa, 2009). I will continue to explore later in the review of literature during chapter 2.
Linguistic ideologies often perpetuate discourse norms that designate particular kind of language as appropriate or inappropriate for school spaces (Duff, 2010; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rymes, Flores & Pomerantz, 2016). Students use a wide variety of tools to gauge communicative appropriateness in school (Godley & Loretto, 2013; Gutiérrez, 1995; Flores & Rosa, 2015). Often these norms are context specific (e.g., dependent on ideologies of the classroom teacher), but are also influenced by national trends in education and other sociocultural influences.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) have recently provided an entry into discussion of more detailed summative standards for learning. As a result of the various ways American schools are adopting these standards, shifts are occurring in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and teacher preparation that ultimately change what it means to be a learner in schools today. Because these standards posit that students need not only understand the structures of language across disciplines but also more specific communication rules within each discipline, they are generating increased attention to discourse in schooling (e.g., Woodard & Kline, 2016). The nuance in the CCSS is its articulation of disciplinary communication. Specifically, the CCSS maintains that seventh grade students are to “effectively engage in a range of collaborative discussions...with diverse partners” and should be able to “adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating demand of formal English when indicated or appropriate” (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.6). With this focus, the CCSS provides potential promise in terms of supporting a more inclusive and diverse linguistic repertoire in school settings. By focusing on appropriateness, CCSS may be limiting the potential for broadening the use of linguistic diversity in schools.
Language-Minoritized Adolescents

Researchers and practitioners define adolescence and language-minoritization differently depending on their social and cultural positioning. Therefore, I articulate these terms for my study prior to a review of the relevant literature.

Who Are Adolescents?

The term adolescence may seem straightforward, but is in fact bound up with fairly subjective assessments based on social positioning, and cognitive development which require further explanation. Scholars tend to agree that adolescent years can be bookended on the low end at ten and on the high end at twenty years of age (Moje, 2008). This study is focused on adolescents not because these text-oriented literacy practices are exclusive to adolescent years but due to their prevalence in the school experiences of adolescents in middle and high school (e.g. changing classes, rotating teachers, specialized disciplinary literacies, etc.). In order to better understand how adolescents experience text-oriented discourse within an ELA classroom, I focus on a stage of schooling when young people move into more disciplinary-directed learning. The middle school years, grades six through eight, represent a time in formal schooling when students are simultaneously encountering more cognitively demanding literacy work and developing greater social independence. This is a time when students often learn develop their metadiscursiveness—the ability to read, write, communicate and understand the power dynamics at play across many discourse communities (New London Group, 1996). Moje (2008) argues that it is important to, “document how school and community contexts, as well as young people’s changing independent status and their advancing cognitive development, may play a role in their thinking about and practices of literacy” during this middle level stage of schooling (p. 110). This study focuses on students in middle school—who are often early adolescents—because it is
during this time and space where students become more independent, more aware of their social capital, and often times, more disillusioned with schooling as an inclusive institution.

This is a particularly important time in history to engage with adolescent students regarding critical issues of equity and access. This is a population who was born between 2004 and 2006, and thus began their schooling in the wake of September 11, 2001. The Patriot Act and other national policy moves have influenced the sociocultural context of their upbringing. In 2002, for example, George W. Bush signed No Child Left Behind Act into law which largely prioritized high-stakes assessments and “big data” in education (Pearson, 2009). Middle school students today have been educated since the inception of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and are constructing their identities during the height of the information age. As such, many of them have been enculturated into multimodal discourses and content-specific language structures which reflect increasingly narrow definitions of appropriate language for use in academics (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Garcia & Otheguy, 2017; Rymes 2015). Simultaneously, they have grown up with increased access to technologies and the internet in an increasingly diverse United States, and although policies and school curriculum choices have somewhat narrowed by creating more rigidly policed environments for students, opportunities for rich, diverse discourse continues to exist within middle school education. As student populations evolve and diversify, language practices among the student body are shifting toward greater linguistic diversity (Paris, 2009). These students have largely grown up in a country led by a Black president who was known, as I will discuss in greater detail later, for his linguistic dexterity (Alim & Smitherman, 2012). These middle school students are at present experiencing an unprecedentedly combative political climate infused with deficit rhetoric directed at nondominant language speakers, a situation that unfortunately, makes this study all the more timely and relevant.
Language-Minoritized Adolescents & the Codependency of Race and Language

My research is grounded in an intentionally broad understanding of who gets included in conversations regarding language-minoritization. Language-minoritized groups are those individuals for whom DAE is not their dominant lexicon of communication. Researchers crafted this phrase to bring attention to the deliberate ways in which language has been used in schooling to both empower and oppress. Specifically, this study draws on literature that points to a codependence between race and language as it relates to power in discourse (Bucholtz, 2011; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee, 2018; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Kinloch, 2009; Rymes, 2015). What I mean by this is linguistic ideologies often ascribe language and dialects as raced (Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016) and therefore need to be examined together. A critical aspect of the terminology “language-minoritized” is the implication that the word minoritized could denote oppressive action. Deficit notions of the academic potential of students from nondominant communities have pervaded our national history (as seen in alternative terms like “language-deficient,” “non-English speaking,” “linguistically subordinate”).

The terms language-minoritized and nondominant language speakers can be used to describe individuals who might be classified as long-term English learners, heritage language learners, English Language Learners, and/or “Standard” English learners. Since the 1970s, linguists have pointed out how White-centered discourse norms are given deference across social and historical space (Cazden, 2001; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Gee, 2001). Gutiérrez (2008) uses the term nondominant to better describe the power dynamics at play in inflating the language and culture of one population (White people with high socioeconomic standing) to the invalidation of other prevalent populations across the United States. The terms linguistically nondominant and
language-minoritized emphasize the systemized privileging of one form of language over all others.

Traditionally, language-minoritization has been studied with English language learners (Garcia, 2014; Lippi-Green, 2012; Morales, & Martinez, 2009; Palmer, 2009; Razfar, 2011) and speakers of African American English (Kinloch, 2009; Labov, 1972; Paris, 2009; Smitherman, 1977, 2002). Historically, these two groups have had their cultural and educational assets misappropriated in traditional education contexts. Research attests to the ways the languages used by these groups have been viewed through a deficit lens, and even systematically excluded from schools through formal policies. As Kinloch (2009) described in her case study of the experiences of two African-American teens navigating the complex terrain of achieving academic success, even when such policies are not in place, self-doubt and societal pressures work against promotion of nondominant languages in school. One contributing factor to this deficit prospective, even within Latinx and African American communities who speak marginalized varieties of English, could be the long history of racism in relationship to language across the United States. For example, the Ebonics debate in California (Smitherman, 1998; Alim & Smitherman, 2012), the case for African American English within the Ann Arbor school systems (Smitherman, 1998; Kinloch, 2009), as well as the work to defund the ethnic studies program in Arizona (Sleeter, 2018).

For my study, I consider nondominant language learners to include a diverse range of marginalized populations who have been historically “othered” in schools: English language learners (ELL), African American Language (AAL), and other heritage language learners. My study takes a wide-lens view of who gets included as language minorities due to the damages inherent in excluding people who feel oppressed by dominant language practices in schools. It is
important to begin to draw touch-points across diverse communities, such as native Hawaiian (Au, 1980), African American English (Kinloch, 2009; Paris, 2009; Smitherman, 1998), Spanish (Lippi-Green, Garcia, 2009; Razfar, 2005), and people from the Native Nations (Spolsky, 1970; Philips, 1983; Tuck, 2009), to articulate similarities and differences in linguistic assets. While I am interested in experiences across racial and ethnic groups, this study takes a deeper look at the intersectional experiences of oppression for racially marginalized groups (e.g. AAE speakers vs. southern white dialects). When schools make an authentic commitment to support linguistic diversity, students can begin to draw on their potential. Lippi-Green (2012) refers to the “linguistic facts of life” (p.5), meaning that the dialects we grow up with are woven into all that we do—again reinforcing the entangled nature of language and identity.
Statement of the Problem(s) & Contribution of this Study: Why Study the Text-Oriented Discourse Experiences of Language-Minoritized Adolescents?

Language minoritized adolescents, for whom Standard-American English is not a dominant lexicon of communication are a critical population to understand. Middle school children are a particularly discerning group. Much research has been done to better understand student engagement in the middle school years (Alvermann, 2002; Moje, 2007, 2002). One reason for a lack of engagement from traditionally marginalized groups could be due in part to deficit positioning of their heritage, home, and popular languages and systematic exclusion from what counts in classroom discourse. With today’s focus on literacy across disciplines (Moje, 2007; Palmer, 2009), it is important to acknowledge that each discipline has rules and norms. That said, those rules and norms are spoken by people who hold ideologies associated with language(s). I am interested in how those rules and norms dismiss or exclude varieties of language not considered “standard”. Although there is a good deal of literature on student participation in classroom discourse (O’Flahaven, 1989; Raphael & Goatley, 1992; Raphael & McMahon, 1994; Cazden, 2001), there are relatively few studies that take up the topic from the perspective of the students engaged in the discourse communities. Scholars have designed studies to better understand how aspects of identity, power, and bias relate to languages used in schools (Brown et al., 2017; D’warte, 2014; Kinloch, 2009; Paris, 2009). These studies have exemplified the impact of deficit lenses in relationship to motivation, membership, and learning inherent in the topography of traditional learning models that work to marginalize nondominant language practices (Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016; Lippi-Green, 2012). By questioning the norms and linguistic practices widely seen to be befitting school learning, we can better account for the
impact of discourse in linguistically diverse classrooms (D’warte, 2014; Gutiérrez 2001; Kinloch, 2009; Palmer, 2009).

Students who are more comfortable speaking in non-dominant forms of English are working against a myriad of biases both in and out of school (Thomas & Collier; 2002; Gutiérrez, Morales, & Martinez; 2009; Razfar, 2006; Young et al. 2014). Studies show that these students are aware that they operate within the deficit narrative that compares them to their “standard” language-speaking peers (Reed, 1967; Delpit, 1995; Hill, 1998; Smitherman, 1995). These comparisons provide an unjustified advantage to students who ascribe to the variety of English deemed school-appropriate; most often, DAE. In 1995, Lisa Delpit suggested that Standard English was the “language of success” (p. 68) and substantial work has been done to acculturate nondominant language speakers into the colonizing discourse of what passes for appropriate communication in schools (Flores & Rose, 2015; Moje, 2007; Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2015). However, subsequent research has shown that acquisition of that success language does not eradicate the deeply rooted biases and negative presuppositions faced by non-dominant language speakers (Fought, 2006; Kang & Rubin, 2009; Kirkland & Jackson, 2009). Furthermore, some research supports the idea that being able to access and move between multiple languages actually provides access to more power than having facility in only the language of success language (Alim & Smitherman, 2012). In their book, Articulate While Black (2012), and subsequent paper (2014), Alim and Smitherman point to the way that Barack Obama was able to engage a variety of registers and languages (DAE, AAE, and Spanish) to reach across audiences and empower his messaging whereas his opponent, Mitt Romney, struggled to work outside of his monolingual fluency of DAE, and therefore lacked depth and relevancy. This example surfaces important parallels to linguistically diverse middle school classrooms. The
limiting nature of monolingualism may inhibit authentic student-teacher/student-community relationships. Linguistic and semiotic tools in traditional school settings are advantaging an increasingly small population of speakers of Standard English (Lippi-Green, 2012).

I align my work with many others critical sociocultural researchers who argue that assimilating to a focus on teaching students to make “appropriate” language choices is a flawed and dangerous goal (Nelson & Flores, 2015). The linguistic ideology of language appropriateness assumes that rules limiting language afford some rarified air to status quo dominant American English. Research shows that, linguistically, there is nothing relatively better or more complex about DAE (Lippi-Green, 2012). My study considers text-oriented discourses as iterative, contextualized, multimodal, and multilingual. When trying to understand how communication evolves, devolves, and fails to launch in academic settings it is important to review the large body of extant research on language and learning—the focus of chapter 2 in this dissertation.

**Conclusion**

U.S. population trends over the past fifty years have shown an increasingly diverse population. With a student population enriched with increased diversity in experience, race, class, culture, and languaging, there is an even more urgent need to responsibly attend to linguistic diversity in school instruction. From a very young age, children are aware of the power of both their words and those with whom they are in communication. Wyatt (2001) found that children as young as preschool adjusted their speech to align to whom they were talking, and Souto-Manning (2013) warns that linguistic competence does not reside in linguistic alignment. The importance of a more inclusive approach to supporting use of diverse languages in schools is because communicative intent can become stifled by biases associated with various types of
languages if and when they are considered misaligned of substandard. There has been much research done to demonstrate the need to adhere to pedagogy that is both culturally relevant (Irizarry, 2007, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2005) and sustaining (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Paris & Alim, 2014; Lee, 2017). My goal is for this study is to speak to this need by unpacking the experiences of adolescent learners who already have strong non-dominant linguistic skills (e.g. facility with African American English), and may or may not be interested in adding disciplinary ELA discourses (sometimes including DAE), to their existing repertoire. Sociolinguist Rosina Lippi-Green warns of this:

“I acknowledge that my home language is viable and adequate and I acknowledge that my home language will never be accepted is to set up an irresolvable conflict...One of these positions must be challenged or amended if the conflict is to be resolved. (quoted in Young et al., 2014, preface)

What follows is a review of literature that will define academic discourse, investigate its relevance in education (past, present, and future), and name specific groups who benefit and are hindered by these practices as well as promising practices which might begin to amend this “linguistic push-pull” (Lippi-Green, 2012).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study was designed to better understand ways that middle school students experience text-oriented discourse in an ELA classroom, using a theoretical frame focused on how dominant discourse structures affect linguistically diverse speakers. In this chapter, I outline the critical sociocultural theory I use to examine the intersection of a linguistically diverse student population, and the dominant language ideologies--values, beliefs, and resulting discourse structures used within a middle school, ELA classroom to support learning (see Figure 1). Next, I explore empirical and theoretical literature pertinent to my phenomena of interest—language ideologies in school settings, linguistically minoritized adolescents, and work toward a more discursively-heterogeneous learning environment. Finally, I will explicate studies that have showcased promising practices related to linguistically diverse communities engaged in academic discourse.

Figure 1. Theoretical constructs informing this study of the experiences of linguistically marginalized students in middle school ELA classrooms.

Critical Sociocultural Theory: The Intersections of Language, Race & Power in Learning

This study is grounded within a family of critical and sociocultural theoretical constructs used to problematize power and equity relationships in schools. I draw most heavily from critical sociocultural theory (CST) (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007) which forwards learning as
bound to power through highly cultural and contextual patterns. This study is also influenced by sociocultural-historical theory, as it identifies the complex historical undertones of linguistic ideologies associated with race and ethnicity. Additionally, I employ a lens toward educational linguistic theory, and those of critical literacy to highlight the connections language and power have on learning (Hansfield, 2016). As a theoretical construct, CST garners strength from well-established theories which prioritize the social and embodied nature of learning (Bakhtin, 1984; Gee, 2001; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978) with transformational approaches to the ways in which nondominant languages are approached in academic settings (Freire, 1970; Garcia, 2009; Morelle, 2008; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Paris & Alim, 2014; Young, 2014). I draw from CST as a centering frame because it problematizes power and equity, (e.g., from critical race theory and feminist theory) to point to inequities and injustices at work in school settings.

Building on the work of Lev Vygotsky and understandings that cognition and language are social and embedded in cultural contexts (Gavelek & Bresnahan, 2009), sociocultural theory explores the intersection of social and cultural factors that drive meaning making. This view has direct connections to the important role socially situated learning plays in literacy—specifically, that learning is built with and determined by social constructs (Heath, 1983; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1984). Au (1997) explains the importance of such work this way, “Sociocultural research on school literacy learning attempts to explore the links among historical conditions, current social and institutional context, inter-psychological functioning, and intra-psychological functioning.” (p.182) As such, my work is situated within conditions of past, present, and future with the aim to support the work of linguistically diverse students getting more equitable access to opportunities for literacy learning in school-based settings.
Although sociocultural theory opened up research to the more complex realities of how people engage in literacy and learning, critics point to the limited way the field addresses power, identity, and agency (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). Consequently, the development of critical sociocultural theory has expanded the work of the sociocultural traditions by pushing on the status-quo of what works in education and who matters in learning for social transformation.

From the foundations of sociocultural theory and research, this more critical view of learning aims to impact the larger political climate in traditionally nondominant communities. Linked to the work of Paolo Freire and his seminal text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), CST takes up the lived experiences of people marginalized by dominant culture (Hansfield, 2016). This theoretical lens cultivates space for critical inquiry of power traditions imposed on marginalized groups based on race (Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Kinloch, 2010; Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 1986), language (Garcia, 2009; Gee, 2001; Gutiérrez, Morales, Martinez, 2009; Lippi-Green, 2012), gender (Kumashiro, 2000; Moje & Shepardson, 1998; Morita, 2009), and socioeconomic (Finder, 1997; Freire, 1970; Heath, 1983) standards for learning. Furthermore, scholars have used this theoretical form to investigate the intersections of these marginalizations to shine new light on opportunities to disrupt inequities in education (Brown et al., 2017; Lee, 2002; Paris & Alim, 2014). Key here is a commitment to move research trajectories from study, to building awareness, to encouraging access and transformation. The transformational nature of CST is what makes this approach to issues of learning and agency an appropriate fit for this study.

CST undergirds this study’s conceptualization of how language and learning intersect. Learning is socially and historically mediated through signs and symbols, the most powerful of which is language (Gee, 2012; Halliday, 1993). Language is culturally and historically situated while also working in real-time. To borrow from the Bakhtinian (1981) philosophy, language is a
tool for making meaning and derived through diverse transactions. Fecho and Meacham (2007) explain that language is “our primary tool for making meaning, those processes that shift our language also shift our meaning” (p. 168). They speak also to the “continually generative process” of discourses leading to increasingly more established literacy practices (p. 168). This view of language and learning as transactional and connected are particularly important to studies such as this that are designed to challenge deficit norms of language and cultural diversity in academic settings. Specifically, I draw from sociolinguistic research as I aim to understand the roles of linguistic ideology—the conscious and subconscious representations of identity through languages (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014; Woolard, 1998), communicative repertoires—those embodied ways of communicating across communities (Rymes, 2010), and interactions during text-based tasks within an ELA setting (e.g. whole group discussions of texts, book clubs, and text-centered partner work). This research investigates those intersections of language, race, and culture in an ELA classroom with a community who is working to support diverse voices.

Language Use & Socialization in School

As sociocultural and sociocritical theories have been developed in educational research, a complementary line of study on sociolinguistics has also emerged (Spolsky & Hult, 2010). Sociolinguistics prioritizes the role language plays in social interactions in the development of knowledge and learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). It acknowledges that through language, people situate their positionalities, cultures, and overall identities (Blommaert, 2005).

Drawing from fields of anthropology, linguistics, and literary analysis, sociolinguistics sometimes utilize a sociocritical lens to see patterns and inequities inherent in language ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014). Researchers in this field have
designed studies around the acquisition and use of language across a wide swath of communities and contexts specifically aimed to highlight inequities driven by race and ethnicity (Gumperz, 1977; Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 1977). Across this field of literacy and language research a lens for the differentials between in and out of school literacies began to emerge (Heath; 1983; Labov, 1972). Awareness of the challenging choices faced by linguistically diverse students schooled through institutions firmly situated in DAE been explored for years. In 1984, Shirley Brice Heath wrote of this misalignment in ways that still seem pertinent today:

Schooling may bring with it a growing sense of dissonance between the knowledge transmitted by the familiar groups in which we first achieve our identity and the subsequent transitional educational experiences of lifelong learning. Every student must then search for the degree of correspondence among the prior learning in home and community, the teachings of formal institutions, and the information and skills which the adult world of work and leisure will demand. (p. 251)

While this trend opened up pathways for more culturally-mediated view of language and learning, linguistically diverse student populations are often still “othered” through research and practices that view White, monolingual language speakers as the norm in American schools (Lippi-Green, 2012). While there are implications of this viewpoint for all language-minorized speakers in schools, they are particularly negative for non-White youth in the way language is often negatively ascribed to race. Moreover, this notion that the dissonance between school and home languages is meant to be navigated primarily by the child puts undue burden on the marginalized minors and allows adults and adult-constructed structures, norms, and institutions to remain unchanged (Souto-Manning, 2013).

**Moving from Academic Discourse Toward Text-Oriented Discourse**
This study draws from scholars who have explored discourse designed for the purpose of teaching and learning (Alvermann, 2002; Au, 1997; Cazden, 2001; Gutiérrez, 2008; Raphael & McMahon, 1994)—with the understanding that place and space do not define the academic potential of communication (Flores, 2015). Specifically, this study is concerned with reframing traditional language structures used in settings considered to be academic (e.g., schools, disciplinary spaces) in favor of linguistic diversity. This move is situated within a larger effort to problematize the exclusion of races and language practices from those spaces and discourses traditionally held as zones of learning (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Kinloch, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2017). Schools, government, and other critical social spaces are examples of zones that have been normed as spaces for dominant language structures and practices traditionally argued to be “academic,” thus upholding an exclusivity that requires further evaluation.

Problematising what counts as school-based discourse aligns with the work of critical sociocultural and sociolinguistic scholars who have questioned the notion of academic language. Flores (2015) and others (Snow & Uccelli, 2009; Souto-Manning, 2013) have called into question the notion of an inclusive approach to anything labeled academic. Qualifying labels, such as academic (e.g. academic language, academic discourse, academic settings), often work to exclude languages, spaces, and people who are not invited or do not abide by contextual rules associated with terming something as academic (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Young, 2014). Therefore, I will forgo the use of the term, academic discourse, in favor of text-oriented and/or text-based discourse to describe both the language and the structures associated with embodied, multimodal, collaboration in ELA instruction.

Similar to the Bloome et al (2010) definition, I am interested in the disciplinary “ways of using language—the gestures, the social and cultural practices, the epistemologies, and the
ideologies” (p. 48) within English Language Arts, which often involves an orientation to texts/literature. There is a continued need to surface ways that schools can better serve linguistically diverse students through reexamining text-oriented discourse practices, which are often deemed academic. When schools take up the banner of multicultural education and inclusive learning environments without taking a critical eye toward what counts as academic in terms of space, time, personhood, and language use the initiative is not set up for success. Language and identity are inextricably linked and therefore, must be accounted for when attempting equitable learning in ELA and beyond. Discourse, oriented to text, within the ELA classroom context is at the center of the discourse activity analyzed for this study. Text-oriented discourse evokes the situated nature of language and learning in ELA and can act as a medium to support a more inclusive view of language appropriate for meaning-making in schools (Brown, et al. 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Kinloch, 2010).

**Literature Review: Linguistic Diversity and Text-Based Discourse Practices**

Power dynamics inherent to language-in-use in school have been widely theorized and studied through sociocultural and sociocritical lenses (Gee, 2001; Leander, 2002; Moje, 2007). Gee (2000; 2001) presents four analytic categories for identity consideration that are useful windows to the power dynamics in language: nature identities (physical markers), institutional identities (those assigned to individuals by larger societal structures), discursive identities (those created within relationship with others), and affinity group identities (those constructed through ways of knowing and doing toward a specific goal) (Moje, 2004). Foregrounding these categories supports a critical lens and highlights “the importance of creating effective context for learning in schools and the important relationships between the nature of the context for learning and what gets learned and how what gets learned is learned” (Gutiérrez and Larson, 1994,.p. 25).
Because I am grounding my study in exploring how text-oriented discourse is perceived by language-minoritized students, it is worthwhile to discuss the power dynamics within traditional discursive structures geared toward learning in schools.

A critical eye towards the intersection of language and learning has evolved across educational research communities for decades. Of particular note is the Students’ Right to Their Own Language (SRTOL) resolution from the National Council for Teachers of English, which was developed and adopted in 1974 by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). This resolution called for students’ rights “to their own patterns and varieties of language” within school settings. This resolution is noteworthy in both its date of authorship (over forty years ago) and the relative lack of tangible progress toward the actualization of this resolution in academic settings. An important artifact toward the effort to disrupt deficit language ideologies at work in schools, “...the resolution serves to legitimize human differences defined by cultural and linguistic varieties in educational contexts (Kinloch, 2009, p.107). SRTOL, points to a need to understand that linguistic diversity comes to school in many forms, as Smitherman (2000) suggests, “not only reflect[s] a different class but also a differences race, culture, and historical experiences” (p. 381). Kinloch (2009) reminds us that the call SRTOL put to the research community over thirty years ago was an important commentary on a need for academic reflexiveness in an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse society (see also Williams, 2013). Critical reflection on that call can push forward a need to better position linguistically minoritized students based on those articulated rights. These rights can also be explored through explorations and better understandings of both teachers’ and students’ linguistic ideologies, in that they act as representations of how language and social worlds intersect (Lewis, 2018; Woolard, 1998).
**Dominant Language ideologies.** Language and identity are inextricably linked: “When human beings use language they are simultaneously displaying their beliefs about language” (Razfar, 2005, p. 405). Beliefs or ideologies regarding language refer to both the spoken word and the speaker. In schools, these beliefs become more complex as there present themselves in so many places and at so many levels in educational systems (school districts, local schools, classrooms, teachers, peer-to-peer, etc.). Often in schools, dominant language ideologies present themselves through the under-the-surface beliefs as well as practices of teachers (e.g. colonializing names on a roster, ex: Jorge to George) as well as long-standing traditions which marginalize nondominant language practices (e.g. English-only policies (Lippi-Green, 2012) as well as positioning DAE as the language of power (Delpit, 2008), To understand how these dominant ideologies play out during text-oriented discourse, I draw from sociolinguistic research on the role of linguistic ideology—the conscious and subconscious representations of identity through languages (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014; Woolard, 1998), on interactions during text-based tasks within an ELA setting (e.g. whole group discussions of text, book clubs, and text-centered partner work). Taking a critical sociolinguistic perspective, Rosina Lippi-Green (2012) suggest standard language ideology as defined by:

- a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class. (p.67)

Language ideologies, regardless of their orientation “are not confined merely to ideas or beliefs, but rather is extended to include the very language practices through which our ideas or notions are enacted” (Razfar, 2015, p.288). Further, Woolard (1998) defines language ideologies...
as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (p. 3). As language ideologies get enacted in schools through beliefs-in-practice and as representations both conscious and subconscious, they are worthy of deep consideration. Therefore, it is important that this study holds a critical eye on the prevailing language ideologies of formalized institutions, in this case a middle school classroom.

Sociolinguist Nelson Flores (2015) calls to our attention, “prescriptive ideologies, which dictate that there is one correct way of using languages and arbitrarily privilege particular linguistic practices while stigmatizing others” (p. 150). This is an important reminder of the extant literature establishing “the logic of nonstandard English” (Labov, 1969), and how necessary it is to honor diversity related to “ways with words” (Heath, 1983), as well as “funds of knowledge” that multilingual children bring to the classroom (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). This critical, sociocultural approach is especially important when considering engagement with text-oriented work within ELA classrooms determined to be academic in nature. As Morita (2004) argues, academic socialization is more about negotiating cultural and hierarchical identities than predetermined knowledge of a specific domain. He explains this throughout his multiple case study of academic discourse socialization experiences with Japanese graduate students in their struggles to “be recognized as legitimate and competent members of their classroom communities” (p. 573). Becoming “legitimate” through academically-oriented discourse is echoed in Patricia Duff’s (2010) review of language socialization. Here she suggests that this type of discourse draws from a “social, cognitive, and rhetorical process,” connected to identity, she goes on to elevate this process referring to it as, “an accomplishment, a form of enculturation” (2010, p. 170). Alternatively, some scholars reject the notion of academic discourse outright, calling for a need to broaden what counts as academic (Flores, 2013). This
shift positions critical sociocultural research in a place to break free of traditional confines of places, languages, and ideologies considered academic. Said differently, who among us is positioned to deem a place or a person as academic—or not? What are the ramifications (both intended and unintended) for relegating a person or place, unacademic?

**Linguistic registers.** Related to language ideology in-use is the concept of linguistic registers, or “ways of speaking that vary according to activity” (Rymes, 2016). Registers are important tools for discourse in that disciplines, locations, and cultures each call for their own adherence to norms of register. In fact, within each discourse community there may be several registers at play at any given time. Gee (1996) referred to the bundling of registers as part of an “identity kit.” In his work with cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), Cole (1998) also prioritized “multivoicedness, the principle that every form of human interaction contains within it many different selves, arranged in multiple, overlapping, and often-contradictory ways.” (p. 292) Complexities inherent to registers and their relationship to identity kits and the ability to work through a multivoicedness are prevalent in building opportunities for meaningful discourse in schools. For example, in a middle school book club discussion of *SeedFolks* by Paul Fleischman, students may be adhering to a formal, academic register as called for by their teacher. This might mean that they are using sentence stems fed to them through a minilesson and provided for reference on a chart on the wall in the discussion area. They may be incentivized to use these registers, deemed academic by their teacher, through participation points or positive verbal reinforcement by their teacher. At the same time, students will likely be peppering the text-based conversation with a more casual register. This might take the form of qualifying remarks, embodied communication (e.g., physical positioning in their chair), moving across modes (e.g. speaking in a more casual register while typing in a more formal register on a
tablet during group work), use of personal examples, or affirmations and/or silencing of one another within the discussion (Power-Carter, 2007; Leander, 2002; see also Leander & Boldt, 2013). Leander (2002) Scholars have studied silencing in particular for the ways in which it counters DAE. For example, Carter (2007) studied the discourse exchanges of two Black teenage girls participating in a British Literature class centered around White, Eurocentric ideals and found the two students engaging in powerful acts of reclaiming silence as a participatory act.

Similar choices were employed by younger Black children to mediate race-based conversation, specifically through silencing White students who were more hesitant to engage in the discourse (Schaffer & Skinner, 2009).

Across a school day, adolescent students choose a wide array of registers and position themselves in particular ways to make their messages heard across a variety of audiences, for a variety of purposes, through a variety of modes (spoken, written, polymodal—with integration of technology-based discourses). Some students are able to do this with ease and without guidance, and some need specific support. Embedded in each of these ways of communication, and each of these identity kits, are socio-historical values and ways of being which can be honored and grown in school learning environments. Fostering students’ ability to access and cultivate a broad understanding of the diverse languaging practices they might have or that others bring with them to school, requires support from both the larger school community as well as from educational policy which could protect space for other language varieties in school learning. The next section will reflect on how educational policy has impacted the intersection of language and learning, specifically to support linguistically diverse practices to surface, survive, and thrive in schools.
Dominant Language Practices as Policy

For more than a decade, state and national policies have begun to take up the connections between language and learning and apply them in educational initiatives with various degrees of success. For example, in 2006, California’s Department of Education advocated for teaching of “academic language” as defined as “more difficult, abstract, technical, and specialized vocabulary and concepts used in texts and tests” (California Departments of Education, 2006, p. 15). A wide range of differentiations in the definition of what counts as academic discourse impacts the way students experience learning said to be “academic” in nature. Often, the marker of deep understanding is being able to take a complex concept and drill down to the essentials. When teachers are directed to take learning in the opposite direction, increasing abstraction and making the metaphorical fence higher and harder to climb, who will participate and why?

More recently, CCSS standards have ushered national attention towards the study of a more inclusive connection of language and learning. Innovative and critical thinking are concepts articulated throughout the CCSS that provide teachers choice opportunities to cultivate potentially meaningful, discourse communities. However, as Woodard and Kline (2016) critique, the CCSS standards do not employ a sociocultural lens for learning. Specifically, there is more work to be done to enhance learning for students who are culturally nondominant and linguistically-marginalized. We are still operating within a time when any student, left unqualified by label, is assumed to be White, male, and a native-speaker of DAE. Under these conditions, nondominant language speakers need strong, allying voices from research, policy, and practice working on their behalf if they are to be included.

There is great concern and urgency to address what many scholars point to as a chasm between students’ success and standardized measures of achievement (Moje, Young, Readence,
& Moore, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2011). Several of these prominent scholars have rallied toward the cause of better preparing our adolescents for the literacy-related skills necessary for participation in current and future society (Alvermann, 2002; Moje, 2000, Lee & Spratley, 2010). Critical thinking and skills associated with authentic discourse are being forwarded as a powerful method to teach the 21st century skills (Darling-Hammond, 2010; National Research Council, 2011) needed to develop an informed and empowered citizenry.

"Language, oral and written, is the most dominant medium through which students communicate their evolving understanding.” (Lee, 2001, p. 131) This statement underscores the concept that there is no more prevalent process than discourse in which students engage with each other and their teachers toward learning. This claim is further supported by the inclusion of specific standards in large-scale initiatives such as the CCSS (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) as well as the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013). These two banks of standards spotlight the position of academic discourse in both middle and high schools in substantive ways. Woodard and Kline (2016) point out that the CCSS encourage exploration of dialectal variety in both reading and writing standards in grades five and above, particularly through a focus on “appropriate” language choices in different contexts. This is a move toward a more asset-based view of language diversity, but omitting spoken mediums of language diversity limits and is inattentive to literature that is demonstrative of the importance of language variation in learning (D’warte, 2014).

**Language-Minoritized Adolescents and School-Based Discourse**

Problematizing school-based discourse is not a new practice for researchers. In fact, in a French publication from the 1960’s, Bourdieu, Passeron, and de Saint Martin (1994) suggest that
academic discourse, “serves to perpetuate the distance between experts and novices to some extent, to the experts’ advantage” (Duff, 2010, p. 171). Classroom discourse as a site of inequality (Blommaert, 2005) is critical to the foundation of my study. As Bloome and Arlette (2013) point out, and Freire’s (1970) concepts of reading the world before reading the word supports, using language is not as simple as a set of formulas. In fact, an overly prescriptive approaches to discourse can have a silencing effect (Carter, 2007; Leander, 2002), particularly on nondominant language speakers (Cazden, 2001; Christenson, 2011; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). This section will focus on sociocultural and sociolinguistic research related to how language is used in school as a tool for communicating power, identity, and agency (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007).

This case study aims to more deeply understand ways discourse structures, texts, and text-oriented work impact literacy learning for linguistically nondominant students. Generally, the classroom is the point of entry for school literacy and school language. It is through this language that learning takes place (Wilkinson & Silliman, 2000). Over the past fifty years, sociocultural researchers have amassed a great deal of research on literacy practices both in (Brown et al., 2017; Hicks, 1996; Lee, 1997) and out of school (Alvermann, 2010; Heath, 1983; Lam, 2009; Philips, 1983). This work suggested that school-based discourse differs from the types of languages students experience and engage with outside of school (Valdes, Capitelli, & Alvarez, 2001). Delpit (1998) has referred to this language differential as the language of power. Other researchers consider the set of skills associated with text-based discourse in schools as related to the specialized ways of reading, writing, and speaking within the various disciplines. In this review, I will focus on types of discourse as they refer to ways students feel required,
motivated, or generally inclined toward these constructs during text-based work within an ELA classroom.

There is little debate of the value of peer discussions within both the research community and the teaching community (Nystrand, 2006; Commeyras & DeGroff, 1998). In organizing this section, I employ two assumptions regarding discourse in the classroom. First, spoken discourse is the dominant medium through which classroom culture is built (Rymes, 2016). Second, school-based discourse is built upon common practices prioritized by the discipline, the teacher, the students, and the larger, socio-historical context (Engerstrom, 1999; Cazden, 2001; Rex, 2003). From this perspective I will review prominent literature related to the key role school-based discourse practices impact and are impacted by sociocultural and historic aspects of equity related to race and ethnicity.

**School-based Discourse as Hegemonic Space**

There are a wide varied of discourse patterns commonly used in school spaces. For this study, I am interested in a broad view of school-based discourse activities as approached through the following two lenses: (1) The text-oriented, school-based discourse experiences within English Language Arts (ELA) middle school classroom, and (2) The way that language ideologies, related to text-based discourse activity, are formalized as classroom expectations and through group experiences. Although these lines of consideration could be followed through the lens of a school community, or through the teacher’s instructional choices, this study will look closely at how activities designed to generate text-oriented discourse within a classroom are perceived by students. For this reason, these activities will include whole group discussions, small group work, and partnership collaborations designed by the teacher to support engaged
learning. Later, I will unpack a few examples of discourse patterns typical of school-based discussions.

**Traditional Discourse Methods.** Perhaps the tradition most widely referenced in classroom discourse is that of turn-taking patterns, such as, IRE (Initiation, Response, and Evaluation) first discussed by Hugh Mehan (1985), and later widely connected to the work of psycholinguist, Courtney Cazden (2001). IRE was surfaced as a concerning classroom construct in that it seemed to infer a false dichotomy of correct and incorrect thinking. When classroom exchange is formatted through a series of teacher-asked (often known) questions (Nystrand, 2006), expected student-response, and then (often public) teacher-evaluation, there is very little room for the zone of proximal development (ZPD) known to be critical to for learning (Gavelek & Bresnahan, 2009). IRE has become a construct deeply embedded in what counts as school-based discourse despite research showing its limitations for learning (Johnston, Woodside-Jiron, & Day, 2001; Nystrand, 1997). For example, Johnston et al. (2001) looked across four cases of teachers, two of whom were engaged in typical IRE structured classroom discussion and two of whom designed discussions that were meant to facilitate a co-constructed thinking. Through examining the discourse patterns in the contrasting classrooms, findings show that discursive environments reliant on IRE not only forward the metaphor of teacher filling the empty brain of students but also works to instill the behaviors and reifies hierarchical roles and ways of knowing (Johnston et al., 2001). These results are important as they highlight the manner which student-epistemology is built upon the classroom environments created for them in schools.

**Teacher-Prompted, Text-Oriented Work.** In an effort to facilitate high-level academic conversation, teachers often supply the discourse community with supports. For example, teachers often supply a set of exemplar language by way of sentence stems and encourage and/or
require their use throughout discussion, multimodal supports such as a tablet to heighten engagement (Bacon, 2018), or prompts related to the topic to focus the discussion. Each of these tools are designed to scaffold student discourse in support of the type of communication aligned with teacher/school/standard-based appropriateness. For example, sentences stems used to forward text-oriented discourse (e.g. “In the text it says…”/”This makes me think…”) relate to what Bakhtin (1986) referred to the “relatively stable types of speech utterances” Often, teachers feel that is it their responsibility to expose students to language stems they deem to be academic and then enforce their use as a way to support ELA speech genres. In the case of this study, these types of supports were put into place with a goal of engagement in critical, text-oriented conversations. By compelling students to take-up specific text-oriented language through specific structures (IRE, call-and-response, book club, etc.) teachers may be assuming they are supporting access to “language of power” or “success languages” (Delpit, 1995; 1998) through evoking language that may lead to deeper text-oriented discussions rather than surface-level talk that doesn’t stay within the text. This is especially true for teachers attempting to support their linguistically nondominant students. For example, Wheeler and Swords (2006) studied the effects of code-switching in a bidialectical (AAE and Standard-English) classroom and found that supporting students to “switch” to standard-English practices did not work in as an additive approach to learning about their home language, in this case AAE. Said differently, the type of code-switching supported by Wheeler and Swords’ (2006) research did not work to evoke a more inclusive linguistic ideology with the bidialectical students. Instead, learning to switch gave students a more negative sense of their AAE.

There are certainly other ways teachers can prompt their students to engage in discourse oriented to text in ELA. For instance, they can model, suggest, and even require embodied ways
of engagement in discourse activities. Often, this is done through embodied discourses (Gee, 2001), such as stance and footing (Goffman, 1981), with the intent to instill discourse structures seen as academic and attentive. An example of the ways teachers structure embodied discourse is through the suggestion of particular kinds of physicality (ex: eye contact, moving body to face the speaker, nodding in agreement/encouragement). The CCSS suggests students adhere to discourse norms regarding eye contact, a value which researchers have shown to be culturally dependent (Au, 1993). Ultimately, norms for text-oriented discourse used in ELA classrooms are locally constructed and instituted by the classroom teacher (Cazden, 2001). As Gloria Ladson-Billings reminds us, “We teach what we value” (as quoted by Paris & Alim, 2017), and with that in mind, work needs to be done to better align the values of a mostly White, female teaching field toward the nondominant language practices of their student populations (Bacon, 2018).

**Multimodal Approaches to Text-Based Discourse.** Beyond traditional methods for supporting students to engage during text-oriented discourse (e.g., participation points, discussion stems, one-mic rule), multimodal tools, those that “combine two or more modes in representation—linguistic (written words), visual, audio, gestural, and spatial” (New London Group, 1996—as quoted by Mills, 2011, p. 35), are also used.

For example, aligned to promises of meeting 21st century learning goals (Darling-Hammond, 2010; National Research Council, 2011), students are sometimes afforded opportunities to have technology integrated into their daily discourse practices. Growing digital literacy skills, including a focus on collaborative learning, can support text-oriented discourse. For example, students can diversify their learning by space (online and in-person) and time (on campus and virtual communities). One study described ways adolescent English Language Learners (ELLs) used online, fanfiction sites to take risks in their writing and work in
collaborative ways through networked composition (Black, 2005). Another study surfaced the potential for more authentic feedback and metacognitive reflection through digital formats (Chandler-Olcott and Mahar, 2003). As schools work to keep pace with the changing landscape of out of school learning and 21st Century Skills (Darling-Hammond, 2010; National Research Council, 2011), students are gaining more and more access to technology to support their literacy skills and skills with literacies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

Studies have also shown how adolescent students are able to work across multimodal facets of communicative practices employing several modes simultaneously (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Alternatively, research has surfaced instances when students have been over-assumed to be “digital natives,” a problematic notion because its assumption of access (all students of a certain age have access to certain technologies) and value (all students of a certain age care about technology enough to have learned its functions) (O’Brien & Sharber, 2008). For example, Mills (2011) explores four assumptions related to digital literacies in schools including the need to support to utilize technology beyond the gateway of engagement. Important here is an awareness that digital tools—like other discourse tools used by teachers—can be used to recreate and/or perpetuate dominant discourse patterns. Although tools such as tablets, easy access to the internet, and innovative apps, are often touted as critical for engagement and skill development, they are just tools and require careful scaffolding to maximize their potential as learning tools. These resources alone can not shift pedagogies or traditional discourse structures.

As learning communities are becoming more linguistically diverse, the notion of a pluralistic approach to language and learning as it relates to multimodal text-oriented work is more than just a suggestion for more equitable education but rather a necessity for ethical, instructional practice.
Resistance: Talking Back to Hegemonic School-Based Discourse Structures

This study aligns with an asset-based approach language diversity where students, especially those who are polylingual, benefit from more inclusive language ideologies. Scholars, policy makers, and practitioners have debated the place and value of nondominant languages in schools. Debates on Ebonics, dual-language practices, bilingual programs, and standardized language practices have fueled many community and district language wars and policies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Gutiérrez, 2001; Kinloch, 2009; Paris, 2012; Palmer, 2008; Razfar, 2006; Smitherman, 1998).

Likewise, scholars have been exploring how certain perspectives, often White and male, have been given deference in schooling for decades (Au, 1980; Gutiérrez, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2014; Smitherman, 2013). Shifts in population demographics have afforded our nation a more racially and linguistically diverse student population. Language-minoritized adolescents are an increasingly prevalent and diverse population across our educational landscape. By 2030, 40% of the school-aged population will enter classrooms with home languages other than English in the United States (Thomas & Collier, 2002). This richness in backgrounds provides increasingly diverse funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) in classrooms across the country. Among a sea of potential, schools have been slow to utilize these linguistically diverse funds in support of equitable learning. School-based learning seems to be overwhelmingly presented in accordance with White, middle-class ways of speaking “Standard English” (Cazden, 2001). As populations diversify, our cultural climate has grown increasingly hostile towards those who are nondominant English speakers. Embedded in a larger drive for accountability and college readiness, there is a clear call for students to gain mastery of various discourses considered academic in nature (Woodard & Kline, 2016). Discourse spaces hold affordances and
tension for all learners; students from marginalized populations are specifically disadvantaged by the structures in place in the *white gaze* of everyday language activity sets (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Gee, 2001). Unless standards for learning are written to clearly include nondominant languages, a default to DAE as the status quo is too easily upheld under the umbrella of *academic discourse*. There is a case to be made regarding the dangers of requiring students striving toward mastery of one type of languaging (potentially Dominant-American English) by the omission of their own, minoritized-language(s). Likewise, there are potential ripple effects to urgent calls for increasing use of DAE without consensus on whose discourse is counted and whose is cast aside for the sake of rigor (Rymes, 2015; Zacher Pandya, 2011).

There is growing dissent relating to ideologies which forward DAE as the *lingua franca* for high-quality discourse in school settings (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Goodley, Sweetland, & Rickford, 2004). National educational policies prioritizing 21-Century Skills have contributed to an increase of interest in discourse determined to be academic in nature—meaning it aligns to disciplinary literacy and content specific norms. Over time, researchers have studied how language designed for academic purposes “stands in contrast to everyday informal speech that students use outside the classroom environment” (Bailey & Butler, 2003, p. 3; see also Cummins 1984, 2000). Endeavors toward raising awareness regarding differences between linguistic registers were often critiqued as oversimplifying and decontextualizing language used for academic purposes. As Schleppegrell (2004) argues, “to call any language decontextualized ignores the context all language realizes” (p. 16) More recently, critical scholars (Flores, 2015) have questioned the “rigid dichotomy between “academic” and “non-academic” language that has little basis in actual language-in-use.” (blog post, October 1, 2015, paragraph 4). I agree with the concept that traditional thinking regarding academic language forwards a false dichotomy
and that there is a need to call attention to the ways that non-dominant language speakers engage in important discourses in schools that deserve recognition. Often, text-oriented discourse practices are viewed as academic which can (consciously or unconsciously) perpetuate deficit perceptions of nondominant language practices exclusionary to equitable learning environments.

There are ways students act in resistance to both discourse structures as well as those discourses within the structures. One instance of this is found in a study of Black female students evoking silence as an act of resistance to reconceptualize White discourse space (Carter, 2007). Leander (2010) also suggests that the act of silencing is an often overlooked way for minoritized discourse participants to reconfigure power differentials in their favor. Taking a close look at how linguistically nondominant students act in empowered ways through text-oriented discourse can elucidate important tools for equitable work in classrooms.

Other studies have shown student resistance to dominant discourse norms by challenging and engaging the IRE structure in nuanced ways within classroom discourse (Candela, 1999; Owocki & Goodman, 2002; Wells, 1993). This was true of Candela’s (1999) study into how traditionally marginalized students employed the IRE structures to usurp power and flip the structure within an urban, fifth grade classroom in Mexico City. This discourse analysis study focused on the ways students appropriate resources to gain power within a traditional discourse construct in a science classroom. Data from this study showed the student involvement in classroom discourse as divergent from the traditional IRE structures in that the students were taking the role of initiator, traditionally held by the teacher (Candela, 1999). Given a meaningful topic, students were able to engage in complex participation that shifted the power dynamic, “asymmetry shifts over to the students’ side, as they manage to alter the roles and local relationships.” (p. 156) even while remaining within the IRE construct for discussion. Important
in this study was use of dynamic resources, such as appropriation of teacher language, evaluation of others thinking, silencing and refusal to participate, and other tools available to the students in this discourse community. These results bring rich complexity to the varied impact dominant language ideologies (in this case, the discourse structures of a science classroom). Specifically, this study elucidated the potential for traditionally-minoritized students to disrupt hegemonic structures of discourse (in this case, the teacher-student IRE construct).

**Resistance by Speakers of African American English.** What Candela’s (1999) study did to surface resistance to IRE structures by nondominant speakers in Mexico echoes the work of William Labov (1972), whose research surfaced deficit ideologies regarding AAE. This work is of particular importance for speakers of African American English (AAE) who continue to be stigmatized by deficit language ideologies in school-based settings regardless of a wide body of research showing the complexities and value of AAE language practices (Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 1977, 2005; Young, 2014). As Morita (2004) reminds us, “academic socialization is not simply a matter of acquiring pre-given knowledge sets of skills, but involves a complex process of negotiating identities, cultures, or power relations” (p. 575). These negotiations likely require a more dynamic approach to discursive norms than the described, highly structured protocols for learning, such as traditional text-based discourse structures.

**Bilingual Student Resistance.** Studies of resistance explored in bilingual settings are also important to consider when taking a comprehensive view to support linguistically nondominant students. This work has taken aim at the traditional linguistic practices of classroom learning to show ways students employ their linguistic authorities in academic settings. For example, Palmer (2009) used both ethnographic and discourse analysis methods to study how academic identities were constructed and deconstructed for language-minoritized
students based on the intersections and language and power. Her study was situated in an elementary school with students learning in a two-way (Spanish/English) immersion classroom with a clear motivation system in place to deter students from code-switching. The structures put into place to silo the two languages did not deter students from using code-switching on a regular basis. Furthermore, students were observed using forms of peer-regulation regarding code-switching that reified social hierarchies rather than worked to further separate language practices. Interesting here is the way even young children are using the symbolic capital of language to enact dominance on one another giving structural boundaries that silo languaging in this school setting.

**Toward Discursive Heterogeneity: Potential for Text-Oriented Discourse in ELA**

In this study, I draw from understandings of disciplinary literacy to ground text-oriented discourse within English Language Arts (ELA) as a content area of focus. Heller and Greenleaf (2007) describe disciplinary literacy practices as essential to the teaching and learning in content areas. As a definition, they suggest that the work of disciplinary literacy is to “recognize the the unique skills, reasoning processes, and knowledge practices of any given discipline.” (p. 48) The specialized ways of communicating within a particular disciplinary domain (Alvermann & Moore, 1991; Leinhardt & Young, 1996; Moje, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003) relates to how I look at text-oriented discourse during literacy learning in an ELA instructional block.

Disciplinary literacies is a field of study that has gathered significant support in both research and practice with the adoption of the CCSS and is pertinent to this study of the experiences of nondominant language speakers during text-oriented discussions in ELA. Specific to ELA, threads to text-oriented talk can be found in several CCSS standards. (Specifically,
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4: “Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation” and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.6: “Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.”

Given just these two standards, one can see that students who are not fluent speakers of DAE and/or students who feel conflicted about the ideologies connected to DAE are not positioned in a language neutral way given these CCSS directives. For example, appropriateness regarding eye contact and voice volume can be viewed as cultural regulated norms. It’s reasonable to think that clear pronunciation is subjective given particular geographic locations, linguistic repertoires, and cultural backgrounds. This standard seems particularly complex in terms of supporting linguistic diversity during spoken discourse given the subjective nature of what might constitute as clear pronunciation. The concept of linguistic alignment as competence is important for consideration (Souto-Manning, 2013). For example, a study of over one hundred pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward dialectical differences showed that respondents felt comfortable attributing personal characteristics based on dialectical differences (Cross, DeVaney, & Jones, 2001). In fact, according to the study, White respondents tended to rate White speakers highest and Black speakers lowest; likewise, Black respondents rated Black speakers highest and White speakers lowest. This research is pertinent to the how important addressing linguistic ideologies is for equitable educational experiences for students who are linguistically diverse as well as those who are monolingual//monodialectical. As Goodley and Escher (2012) warn, “When bidialectal students perceive that dialects such as AAE are
unacceptable in classrooms, that perception can lead to a decline in academic motivation and reduced literacy learning” (p. 705).

Middle and high school teachers have needed to make significant shifts in planning and often in their own understanding of their subject to prioritize a disciplinary literacy approach to instruction (Pearson, 2013). This study is motivated by the ways students shift their discourse norms to encompass both norms of disciplinary literacy, norms of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and other norms they intend to attend to during these discourse structures. By centering this study on the linguistically minoritized students, I hope to understand a more complete picture of a community of practice—centered on those marginalized by the typical language practices upheld in school spaces.

**Language-Minoritized Adolescents**

This section moves from the mediums of communication central to my study (e.g., talking, writing), to the people central to my inquiry. As stated in my definition of language-minoritized adolescents, this subset of learners is often overlooked at the macro-level (CCSS and NGSS) and micro-level (curricular planning) of the educational landscape. However, it is critical to discuss how linguistic and cultural diversity both impact, and are impacted by, traditional school learning. Therefore, this section will review existing literature on linguistically nondominant language speakers and their experiences in text-oriented discourse structures. I begin by describing research related to language-minoritized speakers adolescents engaged in literacy practices. I will conclude by highlighting research on promising practices related to disruption of monoglot language practices in schools.
Problematizing a Singular Approach to Language

Recently, scholars are taking into account “superdiversity,” a more expanded view of diversity within populations (Vertovec, 2007). This concept surfaces an increasingly heterogeneous diversity cultivated by the complex ways migration and communication technologies have made an indelible impact on culture. The phenomena of superdiversity sits in direct conflict with the ways traditional schooling has addressed language and learning (Blommeart, 2013). Superdiversity supports the concept that students draw from various communicative competencies and linguistic registers (Jørgensen, Karrebaek, Madsen, & Møller, 2011; Rampton, 2006; Rymes, 2016) to tailor their messages to various audiences. As our population has become more linguistically diverse, studies exploring various polylingual approaches to learning in schools have begun to counter the monolingual, English-as-only practice germane to traditional schooling. Gao (2014) suggests that the changes in linguistically diverse educational settings should require a reassessment of the long-standing concept that language-minoritized students should serve as “faithful imitators” (p. 59) to the model of DAE.

Linguistic diversity has been studied from several angles and will be briefly explored in this section in the form of code meshing (Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2014; Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007) and translanguaging (Williams, 1996; Garcia, 2009; Canagarajah, 2011). Superdiversity is a concept important to understanding linguistically diverse classrooms and subsequent learning. In her studies of language rights in bilingual education, Palmer (2008) stresses the ways that nondominant language speakers struggle to construct their academic and social identities within the confines of schooling. As Blommeart (2013) reminds us, “Learning a language is never enough” (p. 195). This concept is supported by research which
shows that building awareness of linguistic differences does not necessarily lead to positive ideological shifts (Kirkland & Jackson, 2009; Wheeler & Swords, 2006).

**Code meshing.** As previously mentioned, middle school students have access to a growing communicative repertoire and become increasingly able to blend and *mesh* language to increase communicative goals. Code-meshing, the merging of language variations in-practice, is an evolution of a more dichotomous and more publicized practice, code switching (Young et al., 2014). To *switch* into a particular code or dialect depending on the audience and context (Wheeler & Swords, 2010) presupposes that language can be siloed. In classrooms today, students are often encouraged to understand a need to code-switch through contrastive analysis which is meant to teach students that grammatical differences between DAE and other, often undervalued varieties (Rickford, Sweetland, Rickford, & Grano, 2013). This practice has been critiqued by scholars who problematize the siloed approach to language. For example, in their book, *Code Meshing As World English*, Young and Martinez (2011) explain that code switching is akin to “acceptance, advocacy, and teaching of an outmoded view of literacy that stems from dominant language ideology” (p. 199). In contrast, code meshing can be taken up as a way for students to be more empowered through linguistic diversity. Michael-Luna & Canagarajah (2007) describe this by suggesting that the practice of meshing can be “used for specific rhetorical and ideological purposes in which a multilingual speaker intentionally integrates local and academic discourse as a form of resistance, reappropriation and/or transformation of the academic discourse” (p. 56).

As Morell (2015) asserts, “There is no reason that an English class cannot be a multilingual class when we have multilingual students. We have to exhibit courageous leadership to make this happen, in our current age of linguistic racism” (p. 317). In their article on culturally
responsive teaching for ELLs, Oliveira and Shoffner (2017) point to the complex levels of academic infrastructure (policies, traditional deficit ideologies, lack of pedagogical knowledge) that need to be addressed to better meet the needs of ELLs in regular ELA classrooms. Specifically, they argue for the need to engage ELLs in the critical literacy skills through linguistically responsive teaching.

Code meshing has been held up as a particularly promising behavior when considering the multimodal life of linguistically diverse adolescents. In their study of bilingual adolescents use of multimodal resources for literacy learning, Pacheco and Smith (2015) found that, “layering of modes allows for students to express identities in ways not typically afforded” through more traditional unilateral methods such as composition (p. 296). Broadening the scope of what is possible in which combination of codes to mesh and when can open up more inclusive avenues for literacy learning.

**Translanguaging.** Where code meshing works to deconstruct hard lines along linguistic registers, translanguaging recognizes a similar practice along lines of languages spoken and written. Translanguaging is a theory that describes how multilingual speakers utilize their full linguistic repertoire (Garcia, 2009). This practice is of particular importance regarding how language acquisition is studied in theory and understood in practice. Garcia and Leiva (2014) describe translanguaging as primarily a bilingual performance as well as a pedagogical approach to multilingual education which encourages the totality of their linguistic resources. Overall, translanguaging points to a much more fluid and nonlinear approach to language-in-use.

Translanguaging approaches to education have been shown to increase knowledge production in mainstream classrooms. Duarte (2016) used a sociocultural discourse analysis study to understand how adolescents across four schools in Germany were using translanguaging
skills during peer-to-peer academic discussions as a natural form of learning. Using micro-
analysis of several speech acts, Duarte shows “how translanguaging is used to scaffold meaning
through interaction and contribute to jointly solving school tasks.” (p. 13)

Critical sociocultural research regarding academic discourse for adolescents should
include ways linguistically nondominant students utilize their complete linguistic repertoires to
engage in discourse. Specifically, code meshing and translanguaging are promising practices for
linguistically diverse learning communities.

Language Practices of Promise for Adolescent Literacy

Public schools in the U. S. are now serving a majority minority population (Maxwell,
2014) which provides an exciting opportunity to renorm traditional ways of schooling.
Additionally, school-based discourse practices take on particular prominence within the world of
adolescent literacy for various reasons. In the past decade, literacy research has grown
increasingly interested in adolescent literacy practices (Alvermann, 2002; Moje, 2013).
Similarly, researchers have pointed to the impact restrictive language ideologies have by
perpetuating an opportunity gap for linguistically diverse students (Godley & Escher, 2012). This
occurs through a myriad of conscious and subconscious ways DAE is shown to be valued over
other language varieties in school settings.

A quick Google search of “adolescent literacy” will result in just under a million entries.
This growing interest in adolescent literacy may be spurred on by the fallacy of inculcation
(Snow & Moje, 2010). This is the false assumption that pouring literacy resources into primary
literacy will eradicate literacy deficiencies later. Years of neglected literacy learning during
adolescent years has led to a reconfiguration of high school and college-level reading and writing
curricula (Snow & Moje, 2010). In an effort to address the problematic literacy situation
American adolescents and their teachers are facing, prominent scholars in the field outline specific practices of promise for further consideration and study.

Moje and Snow (2010) suggest three main components important to adolescent literacy design: dedicated support of language and literacy skills, incorporation of literacy skills into content instruction, and additional support for struggling readers. Similarly, Alvermann (2002) advocates for five research-based considerations for adolescent literacy: student engagement and self-efficacy, strategic support for academic literacy, additional support for readers who struggle, an eye toward critical literacy, authentic and participatory approaches to learning. The ideas put forth in both the work of Moje and Snow (2010) and separately Alvermann (2002) show substantial overlap. Given these suggestions, a study aimed at a critical sociocultural understanding of the experience of language-minoritized students engaged in work meant to support language and literacy skills through participation in text-oriented discourse seems particularly well-matched with adolescent learners.

Alvermann (2002), Moje and Snow (2013) are not alone in their assertions regarding what matters for adolescent literacy. There is overwhelming research in support of foregrounding student voice and choice in literacy learning. As Phelps & Weaver (1999) explains in their study of public and private voice in adolescent discourse, “inviting and supporting students’ personal voices” (p. 352) allows students a stage to approximate a variety of social, political, and gendered roles available to them. Without this space, authentic exploration of discursive learning contexts is hampered.

There are several methods that teachers can employ to construct powerful experiences in text-based discussions for nondominant adolescents. When looking across the literature, two key trends are student choice and authentic practice. As Alvermann (2002) and later Snow and Moje
(2013) show, adolescents thrive when they are brought into the decision-making phases of instructional planning—including text choice, modality preference, and curricular content. For example, Raphael, Kehus, & Damphousse (2001) described the impact of choice with their work in middle school Book Club. Students were afforded the opportunity to self-select books based on interest. Often in book club, themes are developed and students grouped based on these themes. This is important as it works to grow academically discursive partnerships based on choice.

Authentic practice is another critical trend in the construction of successful text-oriented discourse experiences in middle school. Prior to Alvermann outlining five key factors of adolescent learning, she and her research team (1990) designed a study to reflect teachers’ perceptions of classroom discourse practice. This study supports her later assertion of the importance of critical literacy and authentic participation. Godley and Escher (2007) found that bidialectical (AAE and SE) students viewed their participation in whole group ELA discussions as a safe and appropriate time to practice language varieties, specifically SE without negative judgement. Creating and protecting learning spaces to discuss and practice multiple language varieties is a promising practice for supporting linguistic diversity in school. Alvermann warns against inauthentic teaching materials meant to facilitate discourse when stating, “if teachers feel bound to adhere closely to materials that define the nature and tempo of interactions (e.g., materials containing questions that require students to recall information in short form), then those materials will define discussions.” (p. 320) The research team concluded that teachers plan more meaningful and authentic discussions when they were able to closely listen and support discourse as it happened, as opposed to facilitating it off a script.
Teachers who conscientiously and creatively engage with their students outside of the safety of long-standing academic structures of discourse reap the benefits of authentic communication and higher potential for learning (Raphael, 2001). For example, prioritizing student-centered discourse, versus sage-on-the-stage directing one question to a particular student, requires a nimble, confident teacher. However, there are consequences to consider and careful planning must be attended to in order to facilitate empowered work in student-centered discursive learning. Lee (2001) states, “Counterscripts focus on issues that are different from the immediate goals of the teacher. Often, they are pockets of activity viewed by the teacher as being disruptive. Although the student-generated questions are not direct outgrowths of the focus initially established by the teacher, in a sense constituting a counterscript, they are still consistent with the larger, long-range goals of the teacher in terms of apprenticing the students into sophisticated literary analyses” (p. 106).

Flores and Rosa (2015) further propose that schools and school systems operate on an “appropriateness-based” scale for language diversity. This scale reifies White, middle-class, language ideologies and forces language-minoritized students to acquiesce to these standards without naming them as such. The concept that there is an “objective set of linguistic norms that are appropriate for academic settings” (p.149) begs the question, “appropriate for whom?” Several important studies have explored the differentiated ways that communities use language to engage in literacy acts (Brice-Heath, 1983, Scribner & Cole, 1981; Williams, 2013). Using culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies as a theoretical frame, Williams (2013) designed a study to explore ways of forwarding language diversity in a college writing course. This study, a response to the call for action in Students’ Right To their Own Language (SRTOL), gave specific instruction regarding the linguistic validity of African Verbal Traditions (AVT) to
students. Through learning about the structures of their own languaging, students were able to make strong arguments for integrating their AVT into academic writing (Williams, 2013). This work shows the importance of doing more to support differentiated and authentic discursive experiences. Moreover, this line of scholarship honors the idea of heritage practices (Paris & Alim, 2015) which illustrate the importance of the dynamic aspects of historical and contemporary positioning.

**Representative Text as Opportunity for Promising Practice**

In the ELA setting, discourse practices aimed at bringing students together in culturally sustaining ways need to attend the impact of text and text-oriented work. Historically, text used in schools have lagged behind the racial, cultural, and linguistic demographics represented in most classrooms in the United States (Biancarosa & Snow, 2003). Multicultural literature can be defined as literature by—and/or about people who are members of groups considered to be outside the sociopolitical mainstream of the United States (Harris, 1994; see also Boston & Baxley, 2007). Multicultural literature is often spoken about as having potential as a representative text—meaning text that represents diverse characters, situations, backgrounds, families, and other nondominant ideals. Such literature have grown in accessibility in the past decade. Research on the importance of representative text has made its way to classrooms across the country with the understanding that representative texts, written by multicultural authors who write engaging stories, with positive characters “can positively affect the literacy experiences of young adolescents” (Boston & Baxley, 2007, p. 564). In their study of Black female adolescents, Boston and Baxley (2007) stress the importance of foregrounding these positive text-based experiences as a counternarrative to White, male-centered curriculum common in American schooling, stating that “a positive racial identity in Black students has been associated with
academic aspirations, achievement, and preschoo1 attitudes and behaviors (O’Connor, 1997; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001; Resnicow, Soler, Braithwaite, Selassie, & Smith, 1999)” (p. 564) That said, there is still more to understand about the role of multicultural texts used in multicultural classrooms. One important way to work toward honoring linguistic diversity in ELA classrooms is through a keen eye trained toward how cultures and languages are represented in the texts available for discussion.

Although there is a growing body of literature in support of representative texts, work can be done to better understand the importance of linguistically minoritized students experiencing their languaging practices in texts. Sims-Bishop (1990) suggests that one of the strongest indicators of accurate representation of African Americans in texts are, “the structures that identify the speaker as a member of the African American community.” (p. 560). Wanda Brooks’ (2006) research shows the importance of culturally conscious texts as one way African American girls in her study worked to make sense of literacy instruction. It is important to ensure that all students experience representative texts that validate diverse languaging practices. Authentic work toward multicultural texts should include languages that fit the experiences of the characters as well as the intended audiences.

**Prioritizing Student Experiences**

Thus far, I have explored how research communities have studied various aspects of classroom discourse, and the importance of looking at text-based discourse through the experiences of language-minoritized, adolescent learners. Researchers have done a substantial work to underscore and raise awareness around how classroom discourse can support student meaning-making (Alverman, O’Brien, & Dillon, 1990; Cazden, 2001; Raphael & Goatley,
Although many studies analyze student discourse, what is often missing is student voice, and specifically, insight into how student view their participation.

One often cited study that does deal with student experiences is a multicase study by Alvermann et al. (1996) exploring the perceptions of middle and high school students on their involvement in text-based discussions. This study is interesting for its methodological approach using video-assisted interviews as well as the way it centers on student perspective. Across each site in the multicase study, researchers engaged directly with student participants through videotaped discussions and follow-up focal group interviews during which students viewed segments of their participation in discussion. The researchers were able to point to critical awarenesses students had regarding successful participation structures within discussions (e.g., working in small groups, knowing/liking group members, contributing to the discussion, and staying focused) as well as an overall importance of discussion as a means of learning. Likewise, Evans’ (2002) follow-up study in this same line of research with younger, fifth grade, students resulted in surfacing the importance of group dynamic related to safety and participation. Specifically, students reported complexities related to both gender and social hierarchy at play in the success of academic discussions in school. Students’ reporting on their experiences in both studies provided important information regarding issues of identity, power, and agency which reinforces the need for a more critical sociocultural approaches to foreground student perspective (Lewis, et al, 2007). Specifically, Evans (2002) points to a need for further study regarding potential language conflicts relating to perceptions of positioning within group discussions. Both the Alvermann et. al and Evans studies contribute to the literature base foregrounding my study. Methodologically, they utilize both videotaped observation and video-cued interviews to directly engage with the student participants to better understand their classroom discourse experiences.
However, neither study addresses the experiences of non-dominant language speakers, which is of critical importance towards humanizing sociocultural research.

Deeply held connections between language and identity are held across demographics. All groups have distinct accents, differing dialects, diverse languages, and corresponding ideologies and as such, issues connecting language and identities are highly complex and often contested. Lippi-Green (2012) identifies data from the Pew Hispanic Research Center from 2010 showing a strong correlation between individuals self-identified nationality with the language they speak. For example, respondents who self-identified as speaking primarily English self-identified as American. In contrast, those who self-identified as Spanish-speaking were more likely to provide a nation of origin other than the United States (categorizing themselves as “Mexican” or another Spanish-speaking nation) regardless of their birthplace. This data is important as it speaks to the inevitable link between language and identity.

In a 2009 case study on Black youth’s perceptions of language rights, Kinloch compiled qualitative data from two years spent with two African American teenage males who lived and attended school in an urban area. Kinloch’s study foregrounded the students’ perceptions of how their language influenced their academic success and thus gained access to a deep level of insight. Through a series of interviews, talks, and “rap sessions” with the two study participants, Kinloch (2009) worked to understand the relationship between student perception of language in relationship to their “struggle for academic success” (p. 117). Over the course of this study, students were candid in their reflections of the dichotomous relationship of Black and Academic English, for example, Phillip, one youth participant asked, “How can I leave me and my Black English home? I’m nobody’s traitor” (2007, p. 104).
Engaging language-minoritized adolescents in authentic discourse—toward an academic goal or otherwise—requires use of a counter narrative that sees polylingualism as a rich asset to all learning communities. Expanding our understanding of the experiences students have within classroom discourse and amplifying their perceptions might allow for a climate that feels less contentious and more empowering for nondominant language speakers.

**Conclusion**

The work of empowering students through communicative methods is the right work for our increasingly diverse nation. We live in a society that leverages the power of language in very real ways. In an increasingly digital world, language and discourse have become more diversified at an almost dizzying speed. Adolescents students are expected to engage in multimodal ways both in and out of school, sometimes with little scaffolding toward success. Politically, our current climate speaks to the ways we are increasingly reliant on real-time discourse; social media privileges those who respond quickly, critically, and succinctly. What counts as standard is changing for groups of people; this is often playing out in divisive ways. What counts as academically appropriate is also changing. School language can no longer float as an iceberg with only Dominant American English above the surface and all other viable languages submerged below the ocean of learning.

In a call for a dynamic approach to pedagogy concerned with “foregrounding heritage practices of communities of color...” (p.85) Paris and Alim (2014) surface culturally sustaining practices meant to support the more diverse student population, previously marginalized by American schooling. The researchers go on to posit that youth must understand the importance of effective communication from a polylingual perspective (Kinloch, 2009; Evans, 2002). There
is a clear need for asset-based pedagogy, models of learning meant to support and build up language-minoritized adolescent learners.

The Common Core State Standards provides an opening to push the boundaries of a zone of proximal development used by students, teachers, and instructional leadership upholding monoglot learning norms. Stakeholders at all levels need to consider ways of reimagining current structures of school-based discourse. Special planning needs to be done at the micro & macro level in education to advantage the value of our increasingly language-diverse student population. This will likely involve cognitive dissonance for teachers and administrators, as well as students and their families, as it surfaces oppressive classroom structures currently in place; nevertheless, the work is critical.

Adolescent students from language-minoritized groups need to see and hear themselves within the curriculum and relate to their teachers as allies for empowerment (Tatum, 1992). They need to work with text that is representative of diverse language practices and have space to reimagine discourse structures that are based in monolingual ideologies. Understanding more about how students experience text-oriented discourse can inform more culturally sustaining curricular choices, empower students, and continue to build a counter-narrative to pervasive deficit perspectives of language-minoritized learners. We need to prepare our students to participate; not only for their future, but for their today.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to question the deficit narratives often aimed at nondominant American English speakers by prioritizing student experience. Therefore, my approach the design of this study was to describe instances of students working in and reflecting upon text-oriented work. This chapter will outline the methodology I used in order address the following overarching questions:

1. In what ways are language-minoritized students engaging in text-oriented discourse experiences in an ELA classroom?
2. How do language-minoritized adolescents perceive their experiences with text-oriented discourse?

Methodological Approach

I designed this instrumental case-study to critically address these questions to understand literacy and discourse practices within a linguistically diverse, middle school community. Qualitative research seeks to better understand human phenomena through observation and description of experiences of selected individuals or groups. Instrumental case study design is centered around the relationships within a phenomena of interest (Stake, 2005). This method aimed to understand an emic, or insider, perspective through an exploration of language and behaviors occurring naturally within a given context (Duke & Mallette, 2011). Creswell (2013) outlines several key characteristics of qualitative research: the natural setting, the methods of data collection, and the employment of inductive and deductive reasoning through reflexivity with a commitment to focusing on participant perspectives. He is speaking to a humanizing form of research when he calls for researchers to be reflexive, suggesting that we strive for a “holistic
account...identifying the many factors involved in a situation” (2013, p.47). Similarly, Freire (1998) advocates that “No one is born already made. Little by little we become, through the social practice in which we participate” (p. 79). In that tradition, I selected case study methodology, in combination with a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 2013), as a humanizing approach (Paris & Winn, 2014) for this project. As outlined in Chapter 2, my theoretical framework is grounded in a critical sociocultural (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007) approach to be descriptive, reflexive, and mindful of the ways that each stakeholder in the study, myself included, becomes more throughout this instrumental case-study (Yin, 2014). Methodologically, the design of this study takes up a critical lens in that it was informed by the need to address colonizing approaches (Paris & Winn, 2014) to research that overlook the voices of minoritized study-participants.

Barone (2004) posits that quality case study research is needed to record, “patterns of behavior rather than a one-time event” (p.24). My approach to this case study was grounded in the belief that these patterned, discursive events are socially constructed but lived out differently through each participant within the larger discourse community (Moje & Lewis, 2007). As Creswell (2013) outlines, case study design affords open-ended descriptions using diverse sets of tools to describe how students understand their role in discursive events. The tools I employ, including critical discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 2013) and paying close attention to the semiotic messaging used in one middle school classroom are meant to determine patterns related to student participation and perceptions that might aide in a deeper understanding of the role of language, power, and learning. Fairclough (1989) refers to “language as a form of social practice” specifically, a “conditioned process” embedded in society and “not somehow external to it” (p. 20-22). It is due largely to the concept of language as a process conditioned into people
that I approach the data through a critical lens. The methodologies that informed this study draw from an understanding that language, and in this case—text-oriented discourse, is a socially conditioned process in need of deeper understanding. Data collection prioritized opportunities to forefront student voice through interview reflections driven by the suggestion by Erickson and Schultz (1992) that, “on the topic of student experience, students themselves are the ultimate insiders and experts” (p. 480).

**Project Overview**

Consistent with case study research (Yin, 2009), I spent 10+ weeks in a middle grade urban English Language Arts classroom conducting videotaped observations of students engaged in academic discourse activity such as book clubs, class discussions, small group, and partnership work. Intermittently, I completed video-cued interviews (VCIs) with a small group of focal student-participants as they reflected on their experiences within these communities of practice. In these VCIs, I showed students clips of themselves engaged in text-oriented discourse within Ms. Limerick’s ELA class and asked them prompted, open questions about those events. To collect more authentic and nuanced data, these collaborative reflections centered on talk and discursive interactions within the classroom setting (Norris & Jones, 2005). Drawing from Creswell (2013), my data collection was guided by emergent design aimed to prioritize student experiences embedded in the potentially contested space of a linguistically diverse, ELA learning community. As a researcher, I drew from my knowledge as a former middle school classroom teacher and building administrator to design a study that was least disruptive to instruction and most fruitful to authentic case study research, knowing full-well that the ecosystem of a classroom was unpredictable and fluid.
Analysis was ongoing during data collection and took place after the close of the field work. I employed an in-depth critical discourse analysis which surfaced patterns associated with power, identity, and linguistic ideologies as they related to where students chose to use elements of their diverse linguistic repertoire (beyond the DAE typical of the classroom community), when they chose to integrate their communicative repertoires (Rymes, 2010), as well as patterns for how focal students reflected on linguistic diversity. These tendencies surfaced both in reflection of their own practice as well as that of their peers. Although it was not a driving analysis for this project, I also drew from tools of mediated discourse analysis (MDA) (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon & Scollon, 2004); its attention to semiotic elements of communication (gesture, gaze, and other communicative markers) helped me get a more complete understanding of the embodied ways students engaged in text-oriented discourse. Themes across the datasets related to linguistic ideologies and language rights in schools. These themes were representations of reflections, reactions, and thoughtful approaches to understanding students’ engagement in text-oriented discourse. Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 2013) afforded the chance to train an eye towards the power dynamics at play within text-based discussions rooted in DAE. This type of analysis surfaced the complex ways students’ experienced text-oriented discursive within their ELA classroom.

**Context of the Study**

In order to bring a particular awareness to the experiences of language-minoritized youth, this study paid close attention to various practices embedded in text-oriented discourse, such as text choices, discussion protocols, and participation requirements as they all tend to be hallmarks of classroom discourse in traditional middle school instruction (Alvermann, 2002; Cazden, 2001; Raphael, Kehus, & Damphaus; 2001).
The elementary district where the study took place was situated in a socioeconomically, racially, and linguistically diverse, large, urban suburb just outside of a Midwestern city. I will call it Hill City. The district educates over 2,000 middle school students who are geographically spread across four middle school buildings within the district. For decades, this racially diverse district has struggled to rectify issues of racial and socioeconomic equity and achievement across their public school system (Barr, 2014). According to a study of third-through eighth-graders nationwide, White students in this district are almost 4 grades ahead of the national average and Black students are 0.6 grades below. Because members of Hill City take pride in the diversity of the town, the study has caused the community to address some systemic inequities in a very public way. In 2016, the district began to take action to address issues of equity by issuing a bold *Pledge to Educational Justice* statement, as well as, professional development for staff and ongoing outreach to the community.\(^1\)

The district’s *Pledge to Educational Justice* statement articulates specific goals for promoting equity and addressing systemic racism. Of particular note to my project, their goals include the need to, examine long-standing educational practices that promote racial disparities of marginalized people (e.g., academic tracking, suspension rates, and other examples of decades-long opportunity gaps). This district is specifically committed to changing institutional structures which continue to other people based on their “identity, culture, or economic status” (retrieved from District website). These priorities provide a clear connection to the need to prioritize a more diverse definition of *appropriate* norms during text-based discourse. The

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\(^1\) To decrease identifiability, I do not include a citation to this study, and have given the Pledge to Educational Justice a pseudonym.
statement goes on to identify a need to honor student strengths and implement culturally relevant teaching practices. This study was designed with a frame toward exploring language experiences within Hill City because it is a community that is already committed to addressing the deficit narrative of monolingual, colonizing ideologies (Paris & Winn, 2014).

This district is home to four distinct middle schools within the larger, K-8 structure. This case study took place in one of the middle grade classrooms. Traditionally, this district is closed to predoctoral, dissertation studies. I worked hard to build relationships with stakeholders at the school and district level so that I could position my study within this particular district based on their previously explained commitment to equity work. It is worth note that the classroom teacher, school administrator, district Chief Officer of Research, Accountability, and Data, as well as the district Superintendent all approved this project. This approval was especially important in reference to the fact that this project was initially rejected by the office of research for a large urban district, one with thousands of linguistically diverse students, because “There appears to be minimal direct benefit to [district name]” (email correspondence, 3/18/2016) based on the sample size not being of significance to the district mission and vision. This detail of the journey of this research project is worth noting because as a research community, we are limited in scope of progress, impact, and contribution when we cannot get through the proverbial door. Efforts to bridge a more trusting and functional relationship with large school districts tasked with educating thousands of linguistically minoritized students are critical to the foundational underpinnings of my study and worth further consideration.

Matching the School and Teacher to This Study

In an effort to find a teacher whose pedagogy matched the call of my study—one who was particularly interested in cultivating linguistic diversity, I solicited recommendations for a
focal teacher and school from multiple contacts within the district: I met with the district superintendent, the district executive director of curriculum and instruction, as well as connecting with teachers and school social workers I know and have worked with in the past. Though this process I was referred to two schools and a handful of teachers as potential study participants. I established relationships with the more racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse of the two schools recommended to solidify the site for this study.

The school. The research site serves approximately 600 students with over 50% low income status. According to the school’s Illinois Report card (2016), serves a population that is about 30% White, 40% Black, 20% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and over 5% identified as two or more races. Seven percent of the population identifies as English Learners which is a classification that would render those students eligible for bilingual education; this figure represents a slight dip in identified EL students over a 5-year span for this school.

Rymes (2016) suggests that close attention be paid to social context, interactional context, and context of individual agency to support the humanizing approach to classroom discourse analysis. From a critical sociocultural perspective, context is key to understanding that the text-based discourse within the classroom is informed by life and histories outside of school (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007; Norris & Jones, 2005; Gutiérrez, 2009). Therefore, it was helpful for me to record what Rymes (2016) refers to as, “establishing shots” (p. 57) of the neighborhood, the school grounds, and the classroom environment prior to the start of each observation to help develop a more accurate perspective of the context. Students matriculate all around the school across their day and those spaces outside of the classroom inform their interactions within the classroom space and time. For example, in each hallway around the school there were positive, empowering multicultural messages (e.g. figure 1). My approach to
researching in this school was to try to spend as much time on campus as I could to understand the classroom environment and social dynamics within text-based discourse but also within the in-between times (transitions) as they can illuminate much about discourse rules within a classroom.

![Figure 1: Examples of environmental print posted in the front entryway to the school.](image)

**Classroom Teacher(s).** It was important to match my research to a teacher who characterized specific attributes aligned to daily work with text-oriented discourse within a learning community of linguistically diverse students. To support teacher recruitment, I created short one-page informational flyer. I hoped to work with a classroom teacher who most closely aligned to the following criteria:

- Currently works to forward and honor a multilingual learning environment
- Prioritizes student discourse in planning and instruction
- Demonstrates openness, eagerness, and availability for participation in this study

Over a series of cursory conversations with the building administrator, he suggested several teachers who might be interested in participating in this study but that one teacher, Ms. Limerick (pseudonym), would be a particularly good fit for this study based on her commitment
to collaborative learning. Ms. Limerick has been teaching in the district for over thirteen years. She is known within the district as a stellar classroom teacher and teacher-leader. She is regularly asked to provide professional development to her peers at the school level. Recently Ms. Limerick earned a place as a finalist in a prestigious, area-wide teaching award. Ms. Limerick actively looks for ways to grow her practice. Because there were several students with complex learning needs and IEPs in this sixth grade ELA class, Ms. Limerick co-taught with a veteran special education teacher named Ms. Morning (pseudonym). Ms. Morning worked with Ms. Limerick in a full-inclusion capacity during the ELA block serving both students on her roster as well as taking on active co-teaching with Ms. Limerick. Often the two would employ a conversational call-and-response way of interacting (e.g. Ms. Limerick would bring Ms. Morning into a minilesson by asking her to confirm thinking or provide an example) that worked to engage students. Although I had regular communication with Ms. Morning while on campus, Ms. Limerick was my point of contact for this study.

**Ms. Limerick’s Approach to ELA Instruction.** Students in Ms. Limerick’s class were afforded several, daily opportunities for collaborative work intended to foster and extend text-based discourses. She made intentional moves to make her room a welcome place for students coming in with diverse languaging practices through building collaborative discourse structures such as; book clubs and partnerships. When meeting with students during one-on-one conferences she encouraged them to “say what they thought—however they wanted to get it out” (Transitional Talk, 11/16/2017). At the same time, however, dominant discourse typical to school teaching and learning were also visible in her instruction (e.g., whole group participation structures grounded in IRE, Cazden, 2001). Given the nature of a 78 minute ELA instructional block, she afforded some type of text-oriented discourse extended periods of time (from 15-30
minute sessions) more than once over the course of each session. Students came to class with an understanding that they would get multiple opportunities to engage with one another through text-based dialogue. Additionally, students’ jovial, social tone while transitioning into the teacher-designated work aligned with their survey responses indicating an overall preference for collaborative work.

During text-based discourse experiences, students were often given solid blocks of time (anywhere from 15-30 mins.) with only proximal supervision for active collaboration. Both Ms. Limerick and Ms. Morning would circulate and pop into groups to listen-in, offer clarifications, or redirect when they referred to as “sidebar” conversations. It was common for students to be provided with several multimodal tools to support their learning and collaboration including access to; the text which centered the discussion, a graphic organizer, a rubric and/or discussion norms, a tablet wired for internet, and the structures for discourse (book club, partnership, whole group). Within this structure for text-based discourse, students were often observed working within language structures aligned to DAE such as closely following and/or parroting the teacher-created discussion prompts (written exclusively in DAE) and opting to center school discourses over other communication tools at their disposal (e.g., non-dominant ways of being in discourse through speaking, writing, and technology). In contrast to ways they identified themselves as nondominant language speakers, during text-oriented discourse, focal students in this study tended to align with standard language practices they viewed appropriate for school-based discourse, most often at the exclusion of other discourse activity. Their apprehension regarding which (and/or whose) languages are appropriate for learning align with Wiley and Lukes (1996) assertion that, “..standard language ideology is used to position speakers of different varieties of the same language within a social hierarchy” (p. 511).
**The Survival Unit.** As a district, ELA instruction followed a workshop approach to distribution of time—meaning, there was a short lesson which often involves modeling or some time of direct instruction of a skill or strategy, followed by an extended work time where students are reading independently and/or meeting in collaborative groups. Each ELA session then closed with a share or brief summary of the learning outcomes for that day. During the time that I was observing in room 204, the class was engaged in text-based unit centered around seven key qualities related to survival, namely acting in ways that are: self-reliant, innovative, adaptable, resilient, perseverant, incisive, and resourceful. The students worked through whole group text (*Sahara Shipwreck*) as well as a teacher-selected themed around survival for choice-based book clubs (*Freak the Mighty, A Long Walk to Water, Homeless Bird, Upside Down In the Middle of Nowhere, Crossing the Wire, A Long Walk to Water*). Students were often directed to questions related to the theme of survival unit and/or the strategies associated with how Ms. Limerick wanted students to approach their text that day (see figures 2 and 3).

*Figures 2 and 3. Typical questions to drive daily work in room 204.*
At the start of the Survival Unit, students were introduced to the theme of the unit through interactive read alouds using titles Ms. Limerick felt exemplified the survival terms used throughout the unit. These titles ranged from contemporary to historic, fiction and nonfiction. Over a few weeks, Ms. Limerick sections from each text to the class, stopping in pre-planned intervals to prompt students with questions and point to aspects of the texts where she thought they “might miss something big because they don’t have the background context.” (interview, 10/13/2017). She often used her document camera to display the text and point specifically to sections for whole group discussion (frequently through the use of popsicle stick-prompting) as well as partnership debriefing to get her students, “thinking and talking and pushing each other to go deeper about the text” (interview, 10/13/2017). Using a model for gradual release of responsibility (Fisher & Frey, 2013), she often led students through brief, whole group text-based discussions before sending them to smaller groups or partnerships to continue collaborative discourse. Although linguistic differences were not the focus of these discussions, Ms. Limerick often used these whole group gatherings to highlight cultural and dialectical differences embedded in the text.

Matching Focal Student-Participants to This Study. After a general information session with the entire class, all students were invited to sign assent forms and their parents were invited to sign consent forms. Following the introduction all students were given consent and assent forms to complete and return to me within two weeks. Ms. Limerick warned me that this class was notoriously challenged to return documents sent home (e.g. field trip slips), but in the end ten students returned their forms within the two week period of collection.

After meeting with Ms. Limerick to review the contents of a Language Survey I created with the intention of giving it to the consented students in order to determine focal students, she
decided that it would be worthwhile for all of the students in the class to take the survey. She was interested in what the survey would show and wanted to use it to inform her instruction. Thus, each member of the class took the survey as a class assignment. The Language Survey acted as an introspective questionnaire designed to engage students through reflecting on the impact language(s) have on their lives (e.g., How often do you think about the language/words that you use to communicate with people around you?; see Appendix A). Specifically, there were questions to support the self-identification of students’ linguistic diversity and feelings of language-minoritization (e.g., Use the space below to describe ways your communicate with language has helped you or made things difficult for you in your life). My aim here was to design questions that address potentially discriminatory practices in traditional schooling along with personal reflection to support the creation of a counter-narrative to norms which delegitimize home languages and literacies (Gutiérrez, 2011; Lee, 2004; Morales, 2017). From a research perspective, this tool provided a baseline for Ms. Limerick to understanding all the diverse linguistic backgrounds represented in the classroom, and for me to understand the backgrounds of the consented students. The design of the survey queries into how students have experienced language and choose to employ language across their lives. The survey addressed: functional and frequent language use, such as asking students to reflect on all of the languages they speak both in and out of school; and questions that speak to language ideologies, such as asking them to reflect on ways their spoken languages have given them opportunity and/or limited their access. The survey helped me ascertain how focal students registered their level of membership in dominant and nondominant linguistic communities.

From the larger pool of consented participants, I selected six focal students based on their self-identification as being linguistically diverse. Additionally, I consulted Ms. Limerick to
ensure that the study requirements would be a good match for each respondent. Because the
texture of this study was to not interfere with students’ normal approach to text-oriented discourse
and did not want to infringe on their own boundaries for reflecting in conversation with me, and
outside researcher, it was important to understand their discourse disposition. For example, if a
student had been habitually truant, generally uncomfortable talking to outside adults, or regularly
pulled from class for outside services, this study might not have been a strong fit for their
learning disposition(s). Thus, with her feedback, I moved forward with four focal participants for
this study.

**Focal Student Introduction**

Responses from the language survey, consent/assent forms, and conversations with Ms.
Limerick and Ms. Morning led me to the selection of four focal students: Lew, Anika, Jackie,
and Cameron (all names are pseudonyms). By way of introduction, I will share background
information shared with me by each of these sixth graders who self-identified as linguistically
diverse. There are ways in which each of these focal students exhibit behaviors indicative of
other study participants as well as the corpus membership of room 204. However, their stories
are their own and a snapshot into their linguistic ideologies, cultural positions, and larger
journeys.

**Lew.** Lew self-identifies as a mixed-race sixth grade male. His father is “Black, from
America” and his mom is “Polish” (VCI, 11/20/2017). He has a very close relationship with his
White, Polish-born grandparents and takes online courses to learn more Polish to be able to
communicate better with them around the house. In the sixth grade ELA classroom, Lew easily
moves across groups (racial and gender) and modes (collaborative and individual work zones) of
learning. His language survey indicates that he often changes his communication style depending
on who he is interacting with at that moment. Throughout the project, Lew primarily pulled from dominant language practices (DLP) and also showed facility with African American English (AAE), especially during peer-to-peer collaborations. Overall, Lew reports that he prefers working with partnerships or in small group rather than whole group discussions during ELA.

Anika. Anika is an African American girl with high social standing in this ELA classroom. Her opinion and approval are regularly sought after by both genders and among all racial groups in the class. In whole group, she is soft spoken and communicates “under the radar” (Ms. Limerick, Transitional Talk, 11/2/2017). Based on her responses from the language survey, Anika’s learning preferences include small group and partnership work. She favors discussion-based learning where she can be comfortable with her peers and her thoughts are respected (language survey and VCI 12/20/2017). Throughout the study, Anika’s linguistic repertoire reflected a polyglot approach to discourse inclusive of SE registers alongside fluid use of AAE to navigate various demands within this highly-social classroom. Anika regularly navigated the assigned tasks within text-based discourse structures while simultaneously engaging in parallel conversations which were text-based and socialized using AAE.

Jackie. Jackie, a first generation Filipina-American, is a soft-spoken leader in group settings. She mostly prefers group work and partnerships but only when all members are comfortable with each other. Jackie is well liked and relied upon in groups to keep the conversation focused although she can also hold her own during sidebar conversations. At home, she speaks two Filipino dialects which she views as a disadvantage because her friends don’t speak those languages and so she only uses them with her parents. That being said, she feels limited by not being fluent in these dialogues because she would like to “speak fluently in all of the languages she speaks” (VCI, 12/5/2017).
**Cameron.** Cameron self-identifies as a black male with Asian ancestry. He reports English as his primary language and can pull up other English-language varieties (specifically, AAE). He reported that he can also speak some Japanese which he has taught himself through “hours of watching Anime” (VCI, 12/5/2017). He brings the biggest personality among the twenty three sixth graders. When I approached Ms. Limerick with my rationale for this study, her immediate response was, “This would be perfect for Cameron!” (Initial Interview, 10/13/2017). His presence alters the chemistry of the room; when he is happy, confident, and clear, Cameron is quick to support classmates and build up the community. His peers are careful to watch out for his mood(s), because when he is bothered or put-off he can lash-out and/or shut-down. He has strong beliefs in what “school talking” (Transitional Talk, 11/27/2017) should look like. He spends a lot of energy jockeying between social pulls and general distractions inherent to classroom life (organizing papers, keeping his technology updated and charged, sidebar conversations centered on out-of-school activities and/or media). In terms of workstyles, Cameron gravitated toward more social options as methods of learning which are very comfortable for him (working in small groups, discussions, partnerships, book clubs).

**My Role in Relationship to the Study**

As a researcher, this case study is informed by years spent as a middle school teacher and school administrator. I employed several descriptive, data collection methods such as observations, video cured interviews and artifact collection to support a strong understanding of the discursive rhythms within this ELA classroom. The reliability of my datasets relies on my ability to properly situate myself as a researcher within this learning environment. Thus, it was important for the students to understand why I was there and that they felt comfortable in conversation with me regarding their text-oriented experiences. As mentioned above, they asked
questions from the first moment I entered the room and continued to ask questions related to the study and my life during each visit. The flow of my interactions with members of the class involved brief conversations, updates on life in and out of the classroom, and general pleasantries (e.g. talk of upcoming holidays, weekend plans, book recommendations, etc.). These casual conversations helped me to become a more connected member of the learning environment and less of a siloed outsider.

At this point, it is important to name and consider how my identity as a monolingual, White, upper-middle class, cisgender heterosexual, able-bodied adult female influenced the interactions I had with the participants of this study. The differences in race (White observer: African-American, Filipina, focal-student participants), gender (female observer: mixed-gendered participants), and socio-economic background (upper-middle class observer: majority of students in the school qualify for free or reduced lunch), along with all other ways I am privileged in my position, work to contribute to the complexity of the relationships available to me and to the participants with whom I interacted throughout the study (e.g., although I clarified my role more than once—students seemed to see me as a teacher or at least an outside authority figure). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) points out, “The ones doing the looking are giving themselves the power to define” (p. 61). This quote was in reference to the dark history of imperialist research on indigenous peoples in New Zealand, but it is critical to call to mind as I planned and reflected on my role as a case study researcher. The perception of a power differential was something I tried to stay aware of throughout the study during times when the hierarchy was more evident (e.g. my introduction and during VCIs) as well as when it was less evident (e.g. where I positioned myself in the room, what I wore to the school). Eve Tuck (2009) reminds researchers of the damage already done to entire communities by researchers who have
aimed at “...fostering and maintaining ethical relationships with disenfranchised and dispossessed communities and all of those troubled by the possible hidden costs of a research strategy that frames entire communities….” (p. 409). As a monolingual, native speaker of DAE I come to the research with a goal to honor the lived experiences of language-minoritized people. My orientation to this work is through amplification of voices for nondominant language speakers in traditionally academic settings. These complexities were top-of-mind during the planning stage of my study and continued to drive my methodological and ethical lens throughout the data collection and analysis phases of this work.

**Pilot Study**

In 2014, I conducted a 10-week pilot study to explore the ways language-minoritized adolescents take up teacher proposed academic language (TPAL). This study attempted to better understand the *nexus of practice* of discourse-in-action (Scollon, 2001) within the context of middle school book club. Data was collected over the course of ten weeks of observations comprised of observations, field notes, and video-cued interviews within a seventh grade, urban classroom. Specifically, I used a combination of both mediated discourse analysis (Norris & Jones, 2005; Scollon & Scollon, 2004) as well as critical discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 2013) because I was interested in how linguistically marginalized youth took up language stems supplied by their teacher for use during classroom discourse. The pilot study findings supported a need to design a larger study to understand students’ experience within text-based discourse. For this dissertation study, I used lessons learned from data collection processes such as observation and video-cued interview cycles as well analytic frames, such as critical discourse and mediated discourse analysis to support surfacing of patterns and themes.
Methods of Data Collection

Aligned with case study research, this study utilized multiple methods of data collection (Creswell, 2013). The table below outlines the various methods and corresponding timelines associated with my process of collecting data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Data Collection and Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In what ways are language-minoritized students engaging in text-oriented discourse experiences in an ELA classroom?</td>
<td>Participant Observations, Transitional talk</td>
<td>Frequency: 1-3 times a week of ten consecutive weeks (plus one follow up observation day one month later) n= 15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Duration: 90 mins. each session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. How do language-minoritized adolescents perceive their experiences with text-oriented discourse? | Video Cued Interviews                       | Frequency:  
Teacher: two formal interviews one prior to launching the study the other at the close of data collection. n=2  
Students: 2 complete cycles with each focal student over the ten weeks. n=8 |
|                                                                                  |                                              | Duration:  
Teacher: 15-35 mins.  
Students: 18-20 mins |
|                                                                                  | Artifact Collection                         | Frequency:                                      |
Phases of Data Collection. This study took part in two phases: (Phase 1) introductions and focal group selection, and (Phase 2) discourse observation and video-cued interviews. Each phase contained more than one method of data collection: Phase 1—(a) Approval and logistics, (b) Preliminary observations (Dyson & Genishi, 2005), and (c) Student language surveys & general observations (& fieldnotes). Phase 2—(a) Videoed Discourse Observations and fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) (n= 10), (b) transitional talks with teacher(s), and focal students (n=7), (c) Focal student video-cued interviews (VCI) (n=8) and ongoing fieldnotes.

The following table (see Table 2) gives a broad overview of when the various forms of data were collected throughout the study. As previously reviewed, cycles of observations and VCIs were prompted by data as it was analyzed in reference to the research questions driving this study. The following data collection timeline was created retrospectively to give a sense of the scope and sequence of the data collected over the course of the study.
### Table II
DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Component</th>
<th>Pre-Obs. Work</th>
<th>W 1</th>
<th>W 2</th>
<th>W 3</th>
<th>W 4</th>
<th>W 5</th>
<th>W 6</th>
<th>W 7</th>
<th>W 8</th>
<th>W 9</th>
<th>W10</th>
<th>W11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Informal Observations</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informational Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consent/Assent</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Language Survey</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotaped observations</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitional Talks</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focal Student Video-cued Interviews (VCI)</td>
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<td>Field Notes</td>
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<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*indicates the two total VCI for each focal student across days indicated

(Phase 1) Introduction/Collaborative Selection

The first phase of the study was characterized by introductions and interviews. After meeting with Mr. Fitzgerald (pseudonym), the school administrator, to introduce my study and share more about the kind of teacher I thought would make a strong match, he gave me a short list of teachers he had in mind. He offered to reach out to them on my behalf with the
information I had given him (see Appendix B). After one teacher responded with interest, Mr. Fitzgerald connected us via email and I reached out with additional information requested by the teacher; at that point we set up a face-to-face meeting. I met with Ms. Limerick, the classroom teacher and Ms. Morning, the Special Education, inclusion teacher. At Ms. Limerick’s request, we met after school to further discuss my research interests, the study, and the pedagogical approach of both Ms. Limerick and Ms. Morning. This meeting helped me better understand both their personal backgrounds and aspects of their linguistic autobiography, as well as their vision for text-based discourse within daily ELA instruction. The meeting was informal, but allowed me to address a list of questions to inform the study (e.g., What are your goals for classroom discussion? How did you come to prioritizing discourse in your planning and instruction?; see Appendix C). As it was not the design of this study to implement any specific interventions, it was important that the teacher(s) already have a desire to prioritize student discourse within their instructional model.

During this first phase, the focus was on the planning and execution of the information session for students. After both Ms. Limerick and her co-teacher agreed to participate, we organized an informational talk with the whole class, where I briefly outlined salient theories on academic discourse and language ideology (Cazden, 2001; Razfar & Rumenapp, 2014; Woodard & Kline, 2016). During that introduction, all members of the classroom had an opportunity to ask questions and familiarize themselves with me as the researcher and with the process in general. My aim for this information session was to give a brief overview of the logistics of the study as well as to bring awareness to important ways that language is used in learning. During these sessions the students in room 204 were encouraged to ask questions and get a strong sense of my area of interest. During that session, students asked questions about the study (e.g. “Are you
wondering how normal people speak?”, “How many times will we meet with you?”, “Do we get out of class to meet with you?” etc.) and about me as a person, (e.g. “What schools did you go to here?”, “What are your kids’ names?”, “Why do you want a PhD?”) there questions signaled to me that they were trying to understand who I was in their space and how I would affect their learning community. Appropriately positioning myself in the classroom was critical to the success of my study (Tuck, 2009). This initial phase was designed to be multipurposed; both the information session and my first few visits to campus acted to set a foundation for a productive pathway toward a trusting, working relationship.

**Language Survey.** The first round of data collection was conducting a language survey. The linguistically autobiographical nature of this survey was designed to support self-awareness and identification of a sociocultural, linguistic history. As discussed in Chapter 2, several studies (Alvermann et. al, 1996; Evans, 2002; Godley & Escher, 2012; Phelps & Weaver, 1999) have looked at how students experience classroom discourse. A dynamic component to my study is that I was focused not only on a middle school population of students in general but, informed by a critical sociocultural stance, I was focused on linguistic ideologies and experiences within text-oriented discourse. One could argue that as a researcher, compiling data on demographics of race, SES, and linguistic categorization already collected at the district level, could provide the information I needed to identify a focal group of language-minoritized students. However, using predetermined statistics without student input lacked the humanizing qualities important to my theoretical orientation. Therefore, survey questions were designed for reflection and assessment of linguistic experiences (e.g., *What language(s) are you comfortable speaking?*, *Are there times when you have adjusted your language to send a message?*; see Appendix A). Since the primary function of this survey was in support of focal group identification, it was important for students
go into the survey with an cursory understanding of linguistic connections to dynamics of history and power (Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Kinloch, 2009). Ultimately, the purpose of the language survey was twofold: to identify students who consider themselves language-minoritized and also to begin a themed discourse with the group of focal students.

**Preliminary Observations.** During the days I spent analyzing the language survey responses, I also spent about 2–3 days a week in room 204 engaged in a series of informal visits to enrich my understanding of the classroom culture. As Dyson and Genishi (2005) suggest, preliminary observation or “casing the joint” (p. 19) involves creating and collecting classroom maps, daily schedules, and taking field notes during general observations prior to launching video observations and interviews contributed to achieve a more holistic understanding of the sociocultural life of this classroom community. Field notes recorded during this time anchored me to the discursive routines already established in room 204. Additionally, these early observations provided important contextual information regarding relationships across all students with a particular focus on potential focal students.

**(Phase Two) Observations, reflections, and Interviews**

Phase Two—the primary and intensive data collection phase of my study—was informed by Donna Alvermann et al.’s (1996) multicase study describing adolescents’ perceptions of their experiences in class discussions, through the use of observation-reflection-interview cycles. Data collection spanned the length of one complete ELA unit. Over the course of 10 weeks, I engaged in approximately two observations per week and conducted two rounds of VCIs with each focal student, each lasting between 18 and 20 minutes. Interviews were scheduled based on ongoing data analysis and teacher input. For example, observations that were particularly rich with enacted linguistic ideologies during text-oriented discourse would prompt me to plan for a VCI
cycle with one or more participants. During these interviews we watched brief video clips of their participation in text-oriented discourse or various kinds (whole group, small group, partnership work). For organizational purposes I organized each collection of observation/reflection/interview as a “cycle.” The timeline of data collection was collaboratively decided on with the classroom teacher with the aim of being least disruptive to the flow of classroom instruction while ensuring that I was in attendance regularly while the class engaged in text-oriented discourse. During each visit, I recorded focal students engaging within and across various participation structures and using multiple modalities (e.g. face-to-face and digital) participation as they engaged in their literacy lives within this ELA classroom (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

During observation sessions it was important for me to literally and physically step back to ensure limited influence over the discourse-in-action. I touched-base with the focal students a day or two ahead of filming and then again on the filming day when I arrived to be sure they still felt comfortable with taking footage on each of those days. I introduced them to the filming equipment and gave them opportunities to film themselves and one another during non-instructional moments to minimize the distraction of video work within the class period. I positioned the camera to best capture the wide range of participation structures embedded in each observation session (Leander, 2002). Over the course of each cycle I recorded students using course content and a variety of multimodal support strategies provided by their classroom teacher.

**Videotaped Observations of Text-Oriented Discourse.** Ms. Limerick and I met at the start of the study to map out a flexible schedule for observations based on when she anticipated text-oriented discourse to occur across her unit. We established a routine of following up with
one another through text and email and then again 24 hours prior to my visits to confirm out schedules. The focus of video observations on times when the student discourse was centered around text, encouraging my use of the term text-oriented discourse (see also Chapter 2). During our first meeting, Ms. Limerick shared how students in her class often engaged in text-oriented discourse. Example of the types of topic and structures she mentioned are as follows:

- A wide variety of texts types/modes (e.g., videos, music, visual images, print)
- Range of interaction structures (e.g., whole group, small group, partnerships, etc.)
- Instances when she and Ms. Morning were trying to specifically support students to talk longer and stronger about texts (lessons, rubrics, and anchor charts for ongoing support)

During observations, I moved to the periphery of the room to observe the class as they participated in a wide variety of text-oriented discourse. My goal during the observations was to be as inconspicuous as possible and let the community of practice (Wenger, 2011) take its course.

Camera positioning as well as the placement of audio equipment to capture all of the participants and relevant space of the speech event was critical to establish strong understanding of the interactional context. Rymes (2016) suggests that audio-video needs to be layered with field notes to capture the various aspects the play into this learning space. In practice, this notion was supported by Gallas (1995) who argued that, through audio-video recording and careful transcription, she was able to sift through the perceived chaos of chatter in her own science classroom to identify important patterns of discourse and pivotal learning events. Layering components of audio-video footage, written field notes, and contact summary memos (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013) with transcription and analytic memos supported my ability to
identify those important patterns suggested for decades and by multiple scholars, such as both Rymes (2016) and Gallas (1995).

The lens of individual agency within a larger social process of text-oriented discourse led me to employ the framework for critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2000; Wohlwend, 2009; Leander, 2012; Van Leeuwen, 2015). Recording for agency implicates the dynamics of power, identity at play in the types of discourse structures of interest in this study. The camera lens was trained on the range of text-oriented discourse structures throughout the unit (e.g. whole-group discussions, small group book clubs, and partnerships) and the angling was focused to capture the dialectical nature of the discourse—meaning I tried to include the active (speaking and embodied responses) and passive (embodied responses) discourse evident in each discussion. Placement of the recording devices also came up in transitional talks with both Cameron (11/2/2017) and Anika (12/5/2017) who were particularly interested in the equipment. Both students spent the most time behind the camera when I offered students a chance to play around with the recording tools. They also made suggestions about the placement of the sound recorders to maximize sound quality and minimize distraction—recommendations that I followed.

**Transitional Talk.** There are so many meaningful instances of learning and connection that can never be fully planned for when designing a critical sociocultural study. One method of data collection that I had not originally planned for was transitional talks—those instances during times of instructional transitions where unstructured conversations occurred with students and/or teachers. These transitional talks were often prompted by focal students but also initiated by non-participants and often acted to inform, clarify, and inquire an event that had just taken place. These talks commonly occurred “on the fly” lasting only a minute or so and usually took place in motion—meaning one or both of us were standing, walking down a hallway, or transitioning
around the room. After each transitional talk, I created a brief contact summary note in my field notes to summarize and transcribe the nature of these brief but meaningful interactions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013).

**Focal Student Video-Cued Interviews (VCIs).** The final stage of each data collection cycle consists of audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews conducted one-on-one with each of the focal students. These interview protocols were designed with student input and are were a central tool in humanizing my study.

The methodology for collecting the VCI’s is heavily informed by studies that have employed this technique to engage more deeply with participants (Alvermann et. al, 1999; Evans, 2002; Leander, 2002; Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 1989). Tobin and his colleagues referred to the practice as “video-cued multivocal ethnography,” and developed their method for the study *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China and the United States* (1989) and also in the follow-up study *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited: China, Japan and the United States* (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009). The researchers videotaped daily activity in preschool and then used the video to facilitate interviews with the classroom teachers across each of the settings in each of the site-countries. The crossover to my study is the connection between practice and culture as it relates to experience. Specifically, I was interested in the third space (Gutiérrez, 2008) created by the intersection of linguistic ideologies-representations (e.g. classroom culture, home culture, peer culture, and larger school, and societal culture) and text-based discourses in this ELA classroom.

A similar practice was used by Kevin Leander in his discourse-based ethnography, *Locating Latanya* (2002). Through discourse-based interview practices (Odell, Goswami, & Herrington, 1983) he engaged high school students in reflection of their participation and the
participation of their peers within a discourse episode. While explicating his methodological choice, he pointed out the need to push against status-quo discourse analysis interpretations made solely by the researcher (2002). This critical approach to discourse analysis aligns with the more humanizing approach that I attempted to bring to my project.

Over the course of the study, I engaged each focal student in four video-cued interviews. The frequency of these interviews was not fixed at the start of this study as it was dependent on several factors (school scheduling, teacher planning, student attendance/willingness, field notes, and real-time data analysis). Each interview directly referenced the observations and video footage of observations within that week. The purpose of these interviews was to engage the participants in a reflective conversation of their experiences within the observed discourse(s) in action. Planning for VCI was centered around the observation sessions, field notes, and transitional talks that preceded the VCIs. Most often, the interview was scheduled to address a cluster of video-observations for a given week or two. This approach follows the iterative nature of this qualitative case study (Dyson & Genishi, 2005).

The scope of the interview cycles was meant to become iteratively collaborative. For example, our initial interview was facilitated largely by both the written survey, completed by all students, as well as the first informal observations conducted at the start of the study. However, interviews during the second cycle were predicated on the responses given by the student participants in the observations that precede them. Additionally, as the students and I became more comfortable with the protocols and with one another, I encouraged them to contribute to the creation of interview protocols (e.g. I know that next week your book club is meeting to talk more about characteristics of survival, what are some things you might want to talk about when
Inquiries began with broad questions about the routines and procedures of academic discussion within the classroom, (e.g. On your language survey, you rated partnership work high and whole group discussion low, can you share more about how you feel during those times in class?). Overtime, conversation shifted to a more balanced ownership of turns. Questions covered macro- experiences with text-oriented discourse experiences (e.g. Are there activities and/or lessons that you like best in this class? What are some of the ways that kids in your class (including you) get to express what they think about what they read?). These questions were designed to understand more about both the discourse structures and the linguistic ideologies held by focal students. Later, questions shifted more towards the unique experiences of each respondent to address student experiences.

I found that VCIs supported students to give more detail and reflect with a critical lens regarding their participation in text-oriented discourse events discussed. One example occurred when a focal student first reflected on the level of his participation from memory and then watched himself on video, after which he revised his reflection. I also included questions aimed to better understand student perspective in the context of the larger learning community (e.g., Did you feel that everyone was comfortable sharing their thinking in this way?). My intention was to design a bank of questions that allowed for a deeper understanding into each focal students perspective of these discourse structures (whole group, book clubs, partnerships), artifacts of discourse (rubrics, graphic organizers, prompting guides, etc.) as well as the embodied communication within the moment of text-based discourse (language, gesture, gaze, footing, etc.). Prior to my observations I created an outline of questions ready for the semi-
structured interview (see Appendix D). However, it was common for the more powerful moments to surface from the unplanned directions the students steered these VCIs.

Across each cycle, the questions followed a familiar format with the first section of our conversation centered around catching up on the day or general updates from the past few days, followed by questions meant to provide a platform for each student to share his or her thinking regarding aspects of linguistic diversity (see Appendix D). The next set of question shifts to follow up on what the students were reflection upon or asking for additional clarity regarding something that surfaces during the previous observations or in a transitional talk.

Because the design of this case study is instrumental, students are working within a classroom that regularly engages in various text-based discourse structures. Therefore, it is important to ask questions about how the supports the teacher has designed are being perceived by each of the focal students; it was also interesting to hear perceptions they had of how other students experiences these discourse practices.

Whether by clarification or elaboration, participants watched sections of their participation in the video and unpacked their experiences within the discussion of focus. It is through these VCI that I intended to better understand what Norris and Jones (2005) articulate as the “...tension between the kinds of actions that discourse and other cultural tools make possible and the ways people purposefully mix these tools...” (p. 9) Following this hybridity through an instructional unit to better understand how language-minoritized students enacted various voices and repertoires as they participated in their communities of practice can provide insight into how to structure these discursive events toward success.

In the end, what mattered most was that each of the focal students felt comfortable with the pace, content, and style of these VCIs. I wanted them to be able to direct the conversation as
they felt at ease and/or inclined to do. Overall, I tried to elicit deep descriptions of these text-based experiences.

**Artifact Collection.** During the preliminary observations I learned that students were given several supports meant to create meaningful opportunities for text-based discourse beyond being placed in daily discourse groups. Questions prompts, discourse rubrics, and engaging text were consistent components used in this ELA class to orient students toward meaningful discussion. Therefore, I began collecting artifacts directly associated with their text-based discussions. In the end, I acquired texts, such as the short stories and copies of each of the novels they used during the survival unit. I also collected instructional tools such as discussion rubrics, prompts, and a collection of scans of their collaborative work. Due to the amount of time the students were working within text-based discussion, I added a literary text analysis (Birch, 2005) to my study to better understand the texts they were given as well as those they were choosing to read during ELA.

**Discourse Observations and “Hanging Loose.”** During each observation, I took field notes and scripted discussions in real time. These field notes included discourse maps, selective scripting, and, in following the advice of Bogden and Biklen (2003), being open to “hanging loose” enough as an observer to let the data naturally surface questions and themes for analysis (p. 49). Along with the audio-video supported observations I compiled field notes in a word document on a laptop as well as written longhand in a notebook. These notes were the bases for many analytic memos which helped me to triangulate data later, during critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Rymes, Souto-Manning, & Brown, 2005; Fairclough & Wodak; 2013) as I attempted to surface themes regarding power, agency, and identity across the various transcripts, in relation to structures of these discourse events. This outlook aligns to other humanizing research approaches
centered in work toward “consciousness-raising” (Paris & Alim, 2014). Surfacing discourse codes appropriate for complex, overlapping, adolescent conversations (Leander, 2002) and also in linguistically diverse situations (Candela, 1999; Souto-Manning, 2014) proved particularly challenging. To take on this task, I employed a selective transcription approach based on my research questions as well as to those questions that surfaced during the data collection phase. Dyson and Genishi (2005) refer to the important words of Ochs (1979), reminding researchers that transcription is an illustration of our theoretical underpinnings. They go on to reinforce the importance of transcribing in a way that captures the “vagaries of learning and acquisition of knowledge.” (2005, p. 72). From a critical discourse analysis lens, I wanted to capture the situated communicative repertoires in play which required passes through the data for language, embodied communication, and the simultaneous use of both to get at the intertwined worlds of language and power.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

Using my research questions and theoretical framing I employed inductive data analysis to carefully organized my data. Below is a truncated summary of the several methods of case-study aligned data collection used in this study (Creswell, 2013):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytic Cycle</th>
<th>Methods of Data Analysis</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field notes and analytic memos</td>
<td>● Reviewing video and audio recordings of observations, VCI, and Transitional Talks</td>
<td>Dyson &amp; Genishi, 2005; Emerson, Fretz, &amp; Shaw, 2011; Miles, Huberman, &amp; Saldaña, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Creating contact summary notes and descriptive memos on each focal student and across discourse structures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Choosing critical segments for careful transcription</td>
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</table>
Applying a Critical View to Text-Oriented Discourse in an ELA Classroom

Throughout the cycles of the study, drew heavily from critical sociocultural models (Lewis, Enciso, and Moje, 2007) that support the power of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough & Wodak, 2013) to convey a multimodal approach to discourse transcription. Specifically, CDA (Fairclough & Wodak, 2013; Rymes, Souto-Manning, & Brown, 2005) supported careful consideration of power dynamics within social relationships and identity construction across communities of practice, such as in this middle school classroom.

Scholars point to Critical Discourse Analysis as an important tool in educational research to “interpret and explain the relationship between educational practices, institutional structures, and societal narratives” (Rogers, 2017 p. 602). An inherent goal in CDA is understanding linguistic relationships based in hierarchies of power (Wodak, 1995). Specifically, Souto-Manning (2014) argues that “Critical discourse analysis views institutional discourses as colonizing” (p. 207). CDA is an appropriate methodology for this data given that this study is centered on the experiences of linguistically diverse students engaged in text-oriented discourse.
Data Transcription

Approaching transcription work for this study exemplifies the complexities of a critical sociocultural approach to discourse-in-use. At each stage, I transcribed in time (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) to keep the data as close to the lived experiences as possible. At times this meant transcribing critical moments in the margins of my field notebook, in the front seat of my car directly after observation sessions, or later that same day. Viewing and reviewing, listening and looking for moments where power and language were at play kept my eyes and ears trained toward moments when dominant language ideologies were impacting both the interlocutors as well as the discourse. I employed selective transcription, driven by the research questions, for each of the discourse observations. Each of the VCI’s were transcribed in their entirety given the nature of the one-to-one conversation and that each question was designed with the research questions in mind.

Video Cued Interview Transcriptions and the “works of other human beings”. The power of the video-cure interview (VCI) is in the way it can amplify participant perception over that of the researcher. During these interviews, students were given a platform to describe, explore, and question the function of these text-based discourses designed for academic work as they align to their ideologies and lived experiences as seen in video play-back. Roberts (2000) evokes a Freirean frame in his argument for critical discourse towards humanizing research by stating that there must be, “faith in the ability of others to “name the world,” together with the trust between participants, and a hope that dehumanization can be overcome” (p. 44). Although there was a lot to learn from the embodied nature of our conversations (e.g. gestures, gaze, and footing) I chose not to video tape these interviews, to support a more conversational ambiance and create less stress for the focal students. However, these transcripts include multimodal
transcription codes which field note data collected regarding multimodal elements of communication were added after the basic written transcription was complete. For example, if there were times when a focal student positioned their body, changed their gaze, or used materials such as a pen to support their processing or communication during the interview, I noted the communication in my field notes and later added these to create a more complete, multimodal interview transcription for analysis. The transcriptions used to analyze data for this study include transcription keys consistent with critical and multimodal discourse analysis (see Appendix F). Creating space for participants to “name the world” and transcribing all that is named is part of the work of this study.

The Inductive Process of Coding

Coding focused on discourse turns in relation to classroom discourse (Leander 2002). Saldana (2013) suggests that codes should “assign a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based data” (p. 3). For this reason, I employed simultaneous coding through process, and In Vivo coding of each data set (language surveys, classroom observations, transitional talks, and VCIs) through the initial coding phase. Process coding was specifically appropriate for the discourse observations as well as the VCI sessions as it afforded the ability to focus on both action and emotion across space and time (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Process coding also compliments the practice of In Vivo coding, using words and/or phrases verbatim from participant transcripts, as both coding methods honor the contextual nature of discourse-in-action. In Vivo coding was particularly important for this study in that Saldana (2013) suggests that this method “prioritizes and honors the participant's voice.” (p. 264)
Thus, during this initial round I engaged in multiple passes through each data set looking for words, phrases, frequencies, and embodied indicators aligned to critical sociocultural markers of perceptions and reflections on text-based discourse (e.g., moments of power differentials, language diversity, both gaze, footing associated with and working against dominant language practices).

During second round coding, I used both pattern coding to surface consistencies across the initial codes and axial coding to surface the conditionality of the emerging themes across the datasets (Creswell, 2013). What began to emerge were the complex ways students were engaging with ideologies connected to power, identity, and what was appropriate for school-based discourses. Examples of the first two codes included, “use of language”, “reflection of language”. Aligned with Saldaña’s (2012) focused coding, subsequent passes through the corpus of data, codes become more specifically related to focal student perceptions of their work with text and text-based discourse. Examples of these more focused, detailed codes include, “language: asset thinking”, “language: deficit thinking”, “race and power talk”, two other codes which surfaced related to text and multimodal learning; “talk about text” and “multimodal learning”. These themes that emerged talk back to research on differentiated discourses (Gutiérrez, 2001), identity (Palmer, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2015), and diversity of communication modalities (Leander, 2002).

In his landmark text, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Freire (1970) argues a need to change structures of oppressions and build conscientização (critical consciousness or conscientization in English) to, among other things, problematize structures of oppression. This “problem-posing approach involves raising awareness….moving from there to transformative action.” (Hansfield, p.80). Employing a critical lens to the power structures at play in both discourse-in-action and
through discursive reflection, I stayed mindful of surfacing any potential areas for oppression and liberation within and across discourse structures.

**Embodied Discourse-in-Action.** I also analyzed the field note observations and video footage with attention to embodied mediation. After basic transcription was complete, I went back to the critical moments when students were demonstrating linguistic diversity during text-based discourse or reflecting within the themes described above (e.g. “talk about language: asset thinking” and “talk about text”) to zoom into their embodied communication during these moments of text-oriented discourse. Next, I added embodied communication codes to more closely reflect the layered ways students expressed themselves during the text-based discourse and/or as they reflected upon those conversations. Some examples of the codes which appeared most often were the following (complete list found in Appendix F):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Embodied Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>word cut/dropped off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◦</td>
<td>word/phrase said softly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>::</td>
<td>lengthened syllable, e.g. d::ude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>latched phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
<td>deep, formal tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑</td>
<td>neutral, relaxed tone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For each transcription, the data was analyzed by speaker and then further analyzed by corresponding embodiment using field notes and screenshots from the video footage. This analysis also included identification of when students were using text-oriented or DAE within
their turn of speech. Using a chart, allowed me to analyze transcription data for a wide variety of elements of discursive structures.

In summary, I used qualitative discourse analysis methods to study the ways focal students navigate dominant language ideologies they embodied as well as those presented to them through text-oriented work within their ELA classroom.

Text Analysis

Students were engaged in text-based discourse and work oriented to text in almost every facet of their ELA block. Researchers have argued that, “texts always contribute to the structuring of power relations at both the micro and macro levels” (Fairclough, 1989, Gee, 2001) Through the beginning stages of my study, and as I observed student participants interacting with texts during the ELA block, it became clear that I needed to have a deep understanding of both the text they were assigned to read as well as those that they choose to read. Both the texts chosen for the curriculum and those selected by the students were often centered around characters who would likely speak in diverse languages and dialect patterns (e.g. primary characters Spanish-speakers from Mexico or African Americans living in the Ninth Ward in New Orleans). I wanted to better understand if, how, and to what extent texts presented linguistic diversity. Therefore, I engaged in text analysis using the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Author</th>
<th>Setting/Primary Character</th>
<th>Level of Linguistic Diversity (L-M-H)</th>
<th>Linguistic Diversity Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I analyzed both the texts chosen for the book clubs used in the unit as well as a representative selection of the texts selected by students for independent reading. While reading each text, I tracked instances where the author(s) chose to include language patterns other than Standard English. I grouped books into categories as having Low (1-5), Medium (5-10), or High (10+)
instances of linguistic diversity within a given chapter. I also took into account the race and ethnicity of each of the authors of the text, aligned to research on the importance of representative text (Brooks, 2005; Power-Carter, 2007) and discussed further in my findings found in chapter 5.

**Toward Trustworthiness**

When speaking to the complexities of the interpretive nature of case study research, Merriam (1998) reminds us that this work is “based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (p. 6). With Merriam’s assertion in mind, I have worked toward trustworthiness at each stage of this research. James Gee (2014) echoes this assertion regarding the complexities for upholding what he and other researchers often frame as validity in discourse analysis when he warns that this method reflects “reality” even though its a common understanding that discourse analysis is predicated on human interpretation. Therefore, validity cannot be a “once and for all” scenario given that the entire process an interpretation of an interpretation (p. 141). By way of support, Gee (2014) outlines validity as social rather than individual and articulates four major elements for discourse analysis as appropriate for measuring sound discourse analysis:

- **Convergence**: ways the discourse analysis offers insight into given issues of significance, activity, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems (p. 141)

- **Agreement**: the more participants who are able to “member check” the assumptions made in the analysis support that emic view of the discourse-in-action. Additionally, I engaged two peer-researchers to review my discourse matrices for coherent conclusions.
**Coverage:** connections to the discourse being analyzed and other similar situations. For example, if the CDA in my study can help predict or given guidance to similar situations within related academically discursive endeavors.

**Linguistic Details:** the ability to argue that the communicative functions uncovered by this CDA serve the linguistic functions outlined in the analysis.

Although I am forwarding the notion of trustworthiness ahead of validity in case study work (Spalding & Phillips, 2007), I draw from Gee’s framework for checking research against shared understandings for interpretive accuracy and as such, the checks articulated above were used to support my analysis. The goal of describing the analysis with accuracy and in a trustworthy manner has provided me multiple pathways to differentiate my thinking and facilitate alternative angles for viewing each data set. Additionally, triangulation of data through coded observations, coded interviews, participant checks, as well as field notes supported a deep description of the ways in which language-minoritized adolescents experience various text-oriented discursive activities (Duke & Mallette, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2013). Analysis centered on identifying emerging patterns, as well as, inconsistencies within the various sources of data (Saldana, 2013). This provided the opportunity to see themes and counternarratives which spoke to the complexities of linguistic ideologies and how those representations surface in the ELA classroom.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the research design, data collection, and analysis methods used to address the research questions central to this dissertation study. Data collection through these close observations, transitional talks, and video-cued interviews were analyzed through the lens of critical discourse analysis to describe the experiences of the focal students during text-oriented
discourse. Elucidating students’ perceptions is complex but empowering work. In the chapter that follows I will present the findings through the themes of lamination of linguistic ideologies (chapter 4), and then I will discuss the impact of both text choice and text-oriented work within discourse (Chapter 5).
CHAPTER IV

LAMINATING LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES:
LINGUISTICALLY NON-DOMINANT STUDENTS NEGOTIATING DOMINANT
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES IN THE ELA CLASSROOM

Dominant language ideologies evoke notions beyond beliefs or attitudes and speak to the social practices through which such beliefs, attitudes, biases, etc. are enacted (Gal, 1998; Kroskrity, 2012; Razfar, 2012). With that in mind, this chapter will take dominant language practices and their corresponding classroom discourse structures into account when considering dominant language ideologies. In this chapter I analyze data indicative of students’ complex and varied relationship to dominant language ideologies which often projected a deficit light onto speakers of linguistically nondominant languages. Scholars have surfaced ways dominant discourses, specifically “standard” English, work to sideline linguistically diverse speakers in schools (Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Flores & Rosa, 2015). Dominant discourses also exist in other ways, too, in the classroom—in considerations of “appropriate” registers, adherence to “academic” language, the use of IRE in whole class conversation, the use of culturally-informed conversational norms and prompts, etc. These ideologies are often taken up, reinforced, and perpetuated as the status quo in schools.

Throughout the chapter, I examine data related to student engagement with (Research Question 1) and perceptions of their academically-oriented classroom activities (Research Question 2). First, I analyze instances where dominant language ideologies were enacted and reinforced across discourse settings in this ELA classroom. I highlight ways focal students upheld and demonstrated dominant linguistic beliefs in various ways within an ELA classroom.
Then, I pivot to explore other instances where the focal students enacted critical language ideologies that work to advocate and innovate disruptions of dominant language ideologies across discourse structures, both verbal and written. To discuss the innovative ways students enacted disruption, I draw from multimodal discourse analysis. I move from analyzing the reflections on discourse events made by focal students, largely during VCI, to zooming into a text-oriented discourse as it happened. Specifically, as an exemplar, I highlight a critical discourse analysis of a partner conversation between a focal student and study participant as they negotiate a historically-situated, ethnoracial ideologies during a text-oriented discussion. Finally, I conclude with a summative analysis of these contradictions in existence with one another—how they were laminated onto one another to form complex and developing beliefs of language diversity in schools.

The Context

To ground this chapter, I briefly reintroduce the four focal students who I followed closely throughout the study. Three of these students regularly and fluidly moved between African American Vernacular English (AAE) and Standard English (SE): Lew, a boy of mixed-race; Anika, a Black, Jamaican-American girl; and Cameron, who self-identifies as Black with Asian ancestry. The fourth focal student, Jackie, self-identified as Filipino and although she is multilingual, tended to use only SE in observed discourse activities. Throughout this findings chapter, I weave examples to showcase how these focal students and additional study participants echoed, reinforced, and countered SE ideologies. Although there will be isolated instances and interview excerpts shared that are meant to explicate the findings and claims, it is important to remember that the following examples of embodied communication are all situated
within a larger context of generational social inequities within the district, town and national context.

(Re)Production of Dominant Language Ideologies

This section is organized according to three themes, each specific to ways students upheld or reinforced dominant language ideologies, by: (1) demonstrating an ambivalence toward both learning about and using multiple linguistic varieties in school; (2) resisting instances of linguistic variation; (3) distancing oneself from linguistically diverse membership (see Table 5. In the second half of this chapter, I will explore instances of linguistic agency, including instances where focal students worked against dominant language practices. The juxtaposition of attitudes and practices expressed by the same focal students speak to the complexities of supporting heteroglossic language ideologies in schools. Before exploring how students’ words and actions sometimes aligned with dominant language ideologies, I first highlight how dominant language ideologies were expressed in the “official” curriculum of the classroom (Dyson, 2003).

Dominant Language Ideologies in the Official Curriculum

Initially, my approach was to observe students as they engaged in discursive activities designed around texts/topics within the ELA classroom. This methodological move was predicated on work of a pilot study where I observed seventh grade students during planned for discursive activities. In follow-up interviews, students voluntarily surfaced issues related to language diversity both within the texts and in practice across group members. Students took a critical lens to participation structures and ways they felt constrained by tools (anchor charts, sentence stems, etc.) designed to support authentic academically-oriented discussion.
However, after “casing the joint” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p.21) for this study, where I was closely observing these participants from a different community, I began to notice that these participants were more attached to the textual practices and scaffolds for discussion related to standard-American English in schools. Over the course of hours of video observations, I determined that the bulk of literacy-based discourse occurred within the confines of dominant language structures (e.g., IRE, pairs, assigned small groups, prompted written responses). However, analysis of rounds of interview data in conjunction with observation data began to surface a disconnect between students’ awareness regarding the potential for a linguistically diverse learning environment and instances of observed linguistic diversity within their schooled literacy practices. To further explore this finding, I searched for instantiations of non-dominant language ideologies in the curriculum, and students’ attitudes towards and interactions with/around them. I discuss language ideologies in texts in greater detail in chapter 5; here, I include examples of dominant language ideologies visible in classroom discourse norms.

“Well then, you can call her Miss Clare!” One illustrative example of the dominant linguistic messages conveyed to students took place on the first day I “cased the joint” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 19). Ms. Limerick brought the students into a standing circle and, by way of introduction, suggested that we play the common camp-style name game: the rules for this game are that after saying your own name, you repeat all of the names of the people who came before you in the circle. No pressure. Ms. Limerick and I were positioned across the circle from one another by happenstance and before the game got started, she addressed me from across the circle, asking what I would like her students to call me. I responded with a quick and clear, “Clare.” Without a beat, Ms. Limerick looked around the circle and said, “All right guys, you can call her Miss Clare.” Here, Ms. Limerick overrode my request and added the more
traditional honorific, *Miss*. Despite my reminders that I would prefer to be called, “Clare”, she and the students continued more formal title. When asked about this pattern during our closing interview, she later explained that her “Southern, formal roots take over” in the classroom. When I reminded each of the focal students that they could just call me “Clare,” they each continued to refer to me as Miss Clare in front of Ms. Limerick. I include this example to showcase both the formal tone of the schooled literacy practices of room 204 as well as the deference on the part of most of the students—including the focal students in this study—to work against those norms.

**Traditional participation structures for equity-sake.** Along with a close adherence to more formal honorifics, formal participation structures were used by the teacher to focus students and build accountability. Specifically, students were often prompted to participate in whole group discussion through the popsicle stick method; names of each student were written on the end of a popsicle stick and housed in an aluminum can. Students’ sticks were pulled at random resulting in a forced participation format. Students reported mixed feelings about this type of participation structure. For example, Jackie’s feelings regarding this forced participation structure were particularly conflicted. In the language survey when asked about participation preferences, she pointed to a dislike and distrust of the forced participation structure but during a follow-up interview, she reflected on the popsicle sticks as one of her favorite parts of the class, citing the corresponding accountability the practice created. Jackie reported that most of her classmates did not like the popsicle participation structure, but she felt that it was important because it forced the teacher to be more equitable with her questioning techniques (calling on each person only once) and also forced students to be ready to think. In this case, Jackie's thinking is fluid in that she suggests the popsicle stick pull is both important to and disruptive of healthy classroom discussion.
As Jackie assumed, this traditional Initiate-Respond-Evaluate (IRE) structure was described by all other focal students as a negative participation structure. Her assumption was reinforced by multiple observations. During the popsicle pulling, I saw students physically respond to the presence of the cup by busying themselves with items on their desks, pulling hoods over their heads, or organizing their texts and notes in case they were called at random. Such moves can be similarly seen in established research on the effects of racialized participation structures—such as initiate-response-evaluation (IRE) (Cazden, 2001), and cold-calls with single speaker responses—in classrooms (Christenson, 2011; Delpit, 1988; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). In schools, dominant discourse drives the norming of student participation while substructures created by student-peers work to align or resist the dominant dialogic rules of schooling (Rymes, 2016). Students’ negative perceptions of this participation structure align with students interviewed in Alvermann et al. (1996) and Evans’ follow-up study (2002)—all point to importance of relationships and clarity of participation structures as keys to successful learning. Although Ms. Limerick expressed interest in making space for linguistic diversity in the classroom, her persistent use of honorifics and the oft-used forced, random popsicle participation strategy also demonstrated a strong ethos upholding dominant linguistic ideologies. Several times she commented on her southern upbringing and how hard it was to lean into her beliefs that students shouldn’t feel removed from learning in her room through her own modeling of language, stating that she knew that she continued a habit of “the sirs and ma’am even though it can build a wall of formality—it’s something to work on for me in the moment” (Transitional Talk, 10/30/2017). Supporting linguistic diversity and challenging dominant linguistic ideologies across various forms of classroom discourse requires teachers to unlearn, and to be mindful and vigilant about multiple aspects of discourse. As Ms. Limerick points out, it is important work,
but likely difficult and certainly on-going for many teachers.

In this next section, I demonstrate the ways that focal students utilized and reflected upon dominant language practices during academically-oriented discourse. This classroom environment was meant to provide freedom for authentic, text-based conversation, and to leave space for students to express linguistic variation. Students in the class, though, tended to reinforce dominant ideologies through their attitudes towards linguistic diversity: (1) ambivalence (2) resistance, and (3) distancing ideologies (see Table 5). In this study, ambivalence was a mixed feeling regarding learning about and engaging with linguistic variation in school. Resistance surfaced as a response to what counts as appropriate language in learning, and distancing occurred through students positioning language as siloed by place, stage of development, race, or nationality. Distancing was demonstrated through contextualizing language practices outside of school spaces and daily use, even when students regularly used them in those spaces.

Table 5
Ways and Attitudes Toward Linguistic Variation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal students’ ways/attitudes toward to linguistic variation</th>
<th>Sample comments/embodied moves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambivalence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Lack of Conscientização, or critical awareness (Freire, 1970/1995)</td>
<td>● “You're supposed to use, like, formal, like, words that are—meant for writing...just for writing...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Mixed feelings toward learning about linguistic variation</td>
<td>● “Like—like, when you're writing an essay, you don't really, like, use those short words, and, like, you're not really supposed to.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Enacting silence as subscription to Dominant Language Ideology</td>
<td>● “Appropriate tone ((puts pencil down)) it means, like ((moving to sit straight-up//shoulders back)) correct format of talking.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resistance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Wavering stance on linguistic membership</td>
<td>● “When I talk with, um, friends, it’s usually easier cuz we don’t have no expression. We’re not saying anything, usually.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (membership/denial of membership) | ● “Cause if they want to *measure knowledge*...they don’t really understand these shortened words.”
● “Now you can always tell where they’re from by their voice—it’s not just a stereotype.” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● White-washing as appropriateness</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/distancing_table.png" alt="Table with Distancing examples" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Distancing**                   | ● “Little kids, they use slang, because they’re developing. So you might use slang accidentally”
● “I don’t say slang. I say like, um—I don’t really talk about stuff like that.”
● “—Cuz I go to Lake City a lot….and they be like, ‘ain’t nutin’—she ratchet…’” so like—
that’s that Lake City talk.” |

**Ambivalence Toward Linguistic Variation**

Focal students surfaced many mixed feelings about the type of language(s) that can, should, and are used in school literacy settings. Students’ feelings about the relationship between dominant and nondominant language ideologies were fluid; as shown with Jackie in the section above, often within the same interview session, focal students would grapple with aspects of their relationship with dominant languaging practices such as participation and dialect appropriateness. This section will explore the various ways students’ thinking regarding linguistic variation wavered at times, between strong alignment to dominant ideologies and a lack of adherence to those norms. I will examine data that surfaced how students used assessment tools, participation methods, and reflection to uphold dominant language practices within academically-oriented classroom activities, such as text-based collaborations (book clubs, reading partnerships, whole group discussions).

The students held strong opinions about linguistic styles appropriate to school settings. Often, their values upheld traditional SE repertoires aligned with dominant language...
ideologies—what some scholars refer to as academic discourse\(^2\) practices. Language labels (e.g., African American English, Standard English) are often laminated to ideas of “appropriateness” for academic work in schools (Olsen, 2010), which perpetuates an exclusionary culture. Sociolinguistic scholars work to problematize the notion that any one indexed discourse (e.g., Standard English) is more likely to produce knowledge than another (e.g., AAE) (Smitherman & Alim, 2012; Lippi-Green, 2011; Rosa and Flores, 2015). This section highlights a monoglossic perspective in which monolingualism is the standard aspiration for all Americans (Flores, 2013). For example, Cameron articulated during our first meeting, “they want us to be American, considering that we’re [at] an American school” (VCI, 11/2/2017).

I have already begun unpacking the dominant participation structures, such as the popsicle pull identified by Jackie, as an example of the contested assertions that she makes that dominant language norms are both necessary and problematic for learning. I will continue now by analyzing an insightful conversation with Lew regarding the importance of streamlining toward formal, dominant languaging in school for the sake of evaluation practices. Then, I will conclude with analysis regarding the sociocritical power dynamics embedded in these views toward dominant language practices. In each of these examples, I attempt to highlight emergent thinking that each focal student exhibited through ambivalent attitudes toward linguistic variety that ultimately worked to uphold dominant linguistic ideologies in the classroom.

**“Appropriate” style as a rubric criterion.** During our second interview (12/18/2017), Lew and I reviewed a rubric used for collaborative work. The first two sections of the rubric (i.e., Introduction and Thesis/Claim) related to written components and the third (i.e., Style & Tone) was used in follow-up discussions students had in small groups and/or partnerships. During

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\(^2\) Bloome et al. (2004) describe academic discourse as, “ways of using language—the genres, the social and cultural practices, the epistemologies, and the ideologies of an academic or professional field.” (p. 49)
discussions, participants used the rubrics as a scaffold to avoid “side bar conversations” (Limerick, 11/2/18, field notes). Specifically, students returned to the rubric during and after discussions to engage in both self and peer evaluations. When this rubric was used in discussion, points for the section labeled Style and Tone were given maximum value.

Lew and I unpacked the third section, “Style & Tone,” together (see Figure 4):

![Figure 4. Rubric used to support discussion.](image)

During our conversation, I wanted to unpack aspects of this description with Lew. I asked him what he thought “appropriate” meant in this context. He told me that “appropriate” referred to the use of more formal and correct communication.

**Clare:** It’s on the rubric you’ve been filling out in class...tone that is appropriate...what do you think that means?

**Lew:** I think that it means...correct format for talking. ((picks up rubric and rereads it to self)) When you’re writing an essay, you don’t really, like, use those short words, and like, you’re not really supposed to...you’re supposed to use, like, formal, like words that are...meant for writing.

**Clare:** Mm-hmm

**Lew:** Rather than a word that is, like—uh, like, sort of shorted and slang...rather than a word that is like, meant for writing.

**Clare:** Yeah?
Lew: ((moves hands in a horizontal circle)) -rather than it being like, you being in normal conversation.

Clare: Okay

Lew: But you’d use those just to, like, uh—just because it’s shorter and easier to get off.

This example highlights a larger trend of students utilizing the term slang in amorphous ways; a phenomena I will discuss in more detail in the next section. Lew’s assertion is that slang would not be an appropriate tone for schooled literacy practices, including both writing and speaking. He also suggests that slang, or what he calls, “normal conversation,” is a less arduous form of communication. Lew’s claim that slang is both simultaneously a normal way to talk and inappropriate for school is another example of contradictions and overall ambivalence to empowering linguistic variation in school settings. He reinforces the idea that writing must adhere to more dominant linguistic norms than that of spoken discourse (Canagarajah 2007; Dyson, 2006). Additionally, Lew is suggesting that appropriate=dominant/formal English=correct, which supports a monoglot perspective on schoolish discourse in which using and speaking one language, standard English, is the norm. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) suggest that language ideologies show “a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk” (p. 55) and Lew is providing an example of that as he links appropriateness to linguistic difficulty.

Adapting to teachers’ preferences. Another way that students demonstrated ambivalence to linguistic variation was through a passive agreement to engage in more challenging discourse rules based on teacher comfort, rather than communicative need. For example, Anika surfaced ambivalence toward linguistic variation in school language use during discussions as well as shifts in and out of AAE in school. However, she did highlight
relationships with teachers who are more linguistically inclusive. During our second VCI (12/20/2017) I asked her about the times she had to think about and change how she spoke in school the most she specifically mentions one teacher (Mr. Harken) by name.

1 Clare: Do you think that changes like the learning environment for you? Like how you feel in the class, depending on how you talk?

3 Anika: No, I feel like it stayed the same. Cuz you’re still learning. It just not as much open as you wanna be.

5 Clare: Do you feel like there have been teachers who have been more or less, um, like comfortable with any of the kids in your class talking how they normally talk? Like, are there classes where you go in and you’d have to really think about how you change the way you talk?

9 Anika: Yeah. Cuz some teachers like, um, they want lotta respect, but some teachers let it slide. Cuz like some teachers, when you say something to them, they—like, Mr. Harken, he doesn’t really take it offensive.

11 Clare: Uh-huh

13 Anika: Like when you say little things, and he doesn’t really take it offensive cuz he know—he knows what he’s talking about, or whatever he’s doing. And some teachers take it real serious—and get angry

16 Clare: How do you think that changes the relationship with the kids and the teachers?

17 Anika: Um, it could actually make ’em like cool around each other. Kids like that with him. You just gotta know what you’re talking about, what you’re doing around some of the teachers, when you get around ’em—you wanna talk how they want.
During this conversation, Anika echoes a similar level of ambivalence toward dominant language norms as Lew. Here, she surfaced her awareness of the need to work outside of her more comfortable register with some teachers even when subscription to those practices would effectively silence a more authentic discourse. Anika resigns to this linguistic adjustment even though it creates walls between teacher and students (lines 3-4). She goes on to point to a need to be careful around some teachers because they require a higher level of respect (line 17-19). Anika is making a connection between formal register and teacher-respect. She expresses a value for the less-formal language practices of Mr. Harken by naming him as a teacher “cool(er),” more well-liked, and easier to speak with while also signaling a need for caution and awareness of how you talk and what you do around other teachers who do not allow for a more linguistically inclusive environment. Although Anika isn’t reporting a problem with the need to conform to these more formal discourse structures, this phenomena has been reported in other studies (Barret, 2014; Labov, 2003; Wheeler & Swords, 2006) in that upholding dominant language norms can work to silence linguistically marginalized speakers.

“Being nice” and other important tools for authentic discourse. Another example of ambivalence toward linguistic varieties surfaced during an observation of a (re)norming of group work expectations. Students were working in groups of four at tables around the room and Ms. Limerick, after checking-in with several groups, called the class to center to reflect on the progress. Unhappy with what she perceived as a lack of focus and rigor in across the groups, she paused the discussion to renorm the groups. Here she took open suggestions from volunteers in a collaborative creation of expectations for group work (see Figure 5). Students called out and/or put their hands up to be called on to contribute. This type of responsive norming, driven by student participation is often considered good practice in classrooms as well as in teacher
education. Although this session was unplanned and students were volunteering examples of appropriate expectations for group work, the volunteered examples were largely reinstatations of formal discourse rules already posted in the room. Several students repositioned themselves to better see the “Our Classroom Norms” chart posted on the south wall of the classroom and simply restated these already established norms.

![chart](image)

**Figure 5.** Co-created group expectations v. premade classroom norms anchor chart.

In this example, both students and teacher worked to perpetuate dominant discourse themes such as turn-taking, being “nice”, and use of direct eye-contact. This repackaging of pre-established norms as authentic co-creation is not called into question by any members of learning community. The perpetuation of discourse status quo speaks to a level of ambivalence toward the inclusion of more authentic, inclusionary discourse structures (e.g., learning to disagree and be uncomfortable, not feeling the need to “be nice”). Although this activity evolved from Ms. Limerick’s real-time evaluation (students were not engaged in ways that aligned to expectations), the remediation seemed to be a tacit agreement between teacher and students to recreate the pre-established discourse norms. Students conflated “nice” with respect and upheld single-speaker rules for discourse which are both aligned to mainstream classroom discourse structures.

Alternatively, it would have been interesting to see what could transpire if the stage had been set for a more authentic dialogue regarding group work expectations. Geneva Gay (2001)
posits the importance of *protocols of participation in discourse* by pointing to a potential disconnect between the traditionally schoolish, passive-receptive style of participation with that active-participatory participation framework often used by groups of color outside of school settings. These non-dominant participation structures embrace what Gay (2001) refers to as a more communal conversation style in that “the communicative styles of most ethnic groups of color in the United States are more active, participatory, dialectic, and multimodal” (p. 111). It would be reasonable to think that non-dominant discourse norms might be proposed and even take-up as contextualized discursive expectations within a group comprised of mixed-race, polylingual members. In these cases, *one-mic/single-speaker, consistent eye-contact, and being nice* might be eclipsed by norms around consistent feedback/commentary, building connections, with respect related to a more embodied engagement, rather than limited to eye-contact (Gay, 2002). In their work on culturally sustaining pedagogy, Paris and Alim (2014) push to think of what could be possible if “the goal for teaching and learning with youth of color was not ultimately to see how closely students could perform White middle-class norms but to explore, honor, extend, and problematize their heritage and community practices” (p.86) The intention for engaging in collaborative norming *could be* for democratic contribution, then, rather than shared ownership of status quo norms, as evident in the above example.

**Resisting Linguistic Variation**

Over the course of the study, another interesting paradox emerged regarding students’ awareness and comfort engaging in discussion regarding language variation. A disconnect surfaced between students feelings about linguistic variation and their ability/willingness to discuss instances of linguistic variation within their daily lives. For example, responses from the language survey indicated that focal students thought often about how they speak around certain
people, changed their methods of communication based on the situation, and felt their spoken
language(s) had not afforded them opportunities. During interviews, students could surface
instances of linguistic variance and its place in learning, but then also seemed hard-pressed to
point to examples of linguistic variation within their school day. Building consistent momentum
for these conversations was trickier than I expected given the forthright responses from the
language survey.

In this section, I explore the tensions related to students’ positionings within dominant
language communities as they surfaced across focal student reflections. I explore ways and
reasons Lew, Anika, and Cameron resisted non-dominant language varieties as viable for
learning in school settings. These observations are important when juxtaposed to a larger, more
inclusive linguistic landscape beyond school. Focal students positioned themselves as resistant to
linguistic variation in at least three important ways: (1) by overgeneralizing non-dominant
language varieties, (2) through ubiquitization of dominant American English, and (3) by
opposing heteroglossic language practices in school settings.

**Overgeneralization of Linguistic Varieties as Slang.** Anglonormative (McKinney, 2017) ideals that position Standard English proficiency as the norm for appropriate
communication were surfaced within and across focal student interviews. Linguistic diversity
was often viewed as inappropriate for the language of learning in school. Although students did
not use traditional linguistic terms to index language they felt appropriate for learning they did
hold clear distinctions for types of language. One example of this type of broad indexing was an
overgeneralization of the term *slang*. Across the focal students, slang was often used in a wide
variety of ways which is a common finding within linguistic studies related to AAE, “like other
researchers, we interpreted students’ references to slang and informal English as references to
AAE and students’ references to proper English and formal English as references to standard English even though we viewed slang and AAE as distinct” (Godley & Escher, 2012, p. 706).

The linguistic view of slang refers to a subset of words spoken by a specific group and subsequently given meaning by members of that group.

Throughout the study, each of the focal students took up the term slang and often used it as a catchall to describe language characteristics as well as personal attributes of linguistically nondominant speakers. Slang, as the focal students referred to it, took on many forms, mostly negative in connotation. The chart below highlights some of the ways Anika, Lew, and Cameron spoke about various forms of language variation which were often characterized as slang (see Table 6):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal Student</th>
<th>References to Slang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anika</td>
<td>Curse words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used by Mexican kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t say slang...don’t really talk about stuff like that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lew</td>
<td>Shortened words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easier to get off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catch phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not something people study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The way they talk in Lake City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Might use slang accidently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Words used by little kids</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above chart highlights a possible confusion between a conceptual understanding of slang and its relationship to non-standardized dialects (AAE, Chicano English). However, I believe that these amorphous perceptions of slang contribute to deficit attitudes mentioned by
participants as they were challenged to situate themselves as a user of multiple, and marginalized, language varieties.

In one illustrative example, Cameron used the term “slang” in conjunction with a location (Lake City) to describe a wide variety of linguistic terminologies. During this excerpt from a VCI, I asked him to describe slang. His response elicited not only his understanding of the term but also some values regarding those who speak slang. In this example, he refers to the languaging practices he uses with his extended family who live in Lake City:

So slang—((tips onto back two legs of his chair)) so it’s not—it’s not like a language that you would study ((lets chair fall forward-chair legs hit ground)). It’s not like somethin’ that you would study, it’s just something that people use, you know. So like if they—so like, um, ((looks up at ceiling and then quickly back down)) abbreviations, THAT can be slang. (VCI, 11/27/18)

Lippi-Green’s (2011) research speaks to ways language varieties are stigmatized and relegated to a hierarchy where non-standardized, informal registers and dialects are perceived as less than (intelligence, status). Cameron’s assertion that slang isn’t worthy of study reifies this common trope. This was a theme across several of my conversations with Cameron (11/27/2017, 12/5/2017) as well as in conversations with Anika (VCI, 12/5/17, 12/20/17), and Lew (VCI, 12/18/17), each of whom held strong beliefs regarding the value (or lack thereof) of slang in school settings. From our first conversation when Cameron surfaced the term slang (11/27/18), he went on to reference it in each interview over the course of the study. For Cameron, slang was a lazy way of talking, something that you do when you are developing and/or ignorant of another, better way.

Clare: Why would people use slang?
**Cameron:** To get away from big words that they can not pronounce. Little kids, they use slang, because they’re developing. So you might use slang accidentally...

In the exchange above, Cameron is conceptualizing slang as an accidental style of communication used by developing people, signaling a strong deficit ideology. Cameron enacts a linguistic hierarchy (Alim, 2005) to linguistic variations he describes as slang. This type of deficit orientations delegitimatizes the rich linguistic potential of non-dominant languages. Rosa and Flores (2015) point to linguistic stigmas associated with race and ethnicity as particularly dangerous in the way they create “powerful allegiances to imagined linguistic norms persist regardless of whether anyone actually adheres to those norms in practice.” (2015, p. 151). This move to envelope other English language variations as slang that therefore lack legitimacy was illustrative of a resistance to language variations.

**Ubiquitization of English as lingua franca.** Another way that students resisted language variation was by describing Standard English as ubiquitous. For example, during our first video-cued interview (12/5/2017), Anika and I looked at a list of language variations or subcategories of languages that I created based on languages I knew to be spoken by students in her class, and school, as well as language labels consistent with the district mission and vision for equity including African American English, American English, Spanish, slang, Haitian-Creole, Standard English, etc.. To better understand how the students positioned varieties of languages, I was careful to design a list inclusive of English variations (Black English, American English) as well as non-English languages (Spanish, Tagalog). It should be stated here that listing languages in this way, as dichotomous, is problematic. However, in this context, void of specific instruction in linguistic variation, it felt important to surface awareness regarding language varieties.
Clare: I was wondering if you had ever, um,((passed .5 sheet of language terminology to Anika)) heard of any of these terms or feel that you like use or say any of them.

Anika: ((scans document with eyes//corner of her lip tilts upward with slight kickback of her head & neck)) American English? ((sucks teeth)) No, I just—you just say English.

Clare: Yeah?

Anika: Spanish? ((scans eyes across page)) I don’t say slang (with feet, pushes chair back from table)). I say like, um((eyes on feet))... I don’t really talk about stuff like that.

This exchange was particularly memorable because of Anika’s embodied resistance toward engaging in a dialogue with me regarding the terms from the list. Anika spent less than one second scanning the document before responding in a way the signified a strong resistance to the line of discussion. Interesting here is Anika’s assertion that it’s not necessary to give qualifiers (American, Black, etc.) to English. In fact, her survey response to whether or not she felt that she needed to improve any aspects of her language, she responded “No.” When asked to elaborate be explaining why or why not, in the short answer section, she replied “Don’t speak a language” (see Figure 6).

![Figure 6. Anika’s Language Survey Response.](image-url)
Anika’s proclamation on the survey that she is void of language implies alignment with a dominant social standing afforded to certain languages/varieties. Is Anika saying that she doesn’t speak a language because she considers herself so aligned to standard English that it doesn’t count? Does she not have a language because Standard English practices are so misaligned to her positionality? After our interview, but prior to the end of the day, Anika and I were both in the library area together and I had a chance to follow up with her:

Clare: Hey when you mentioned about not ever saying “American English” it reminded me of your comment on the language survey. I wanted to ask you more about what you meant when you mentioned that you didn’t speak a language?


Anika’s reaction to a list of established language labels, including several English language variations, is one example of a resistance to engaging in conversation about linguistic diversity in a school setting. For her, we don’t say American English because that can be assumed as the *lingua franca*. Anika is aligning to English not as *a* language but as *the* language. Although this linguistic viewpoint is not nuanced, it does provide insight into the value Anika has placed/has learned to place on varieties of English (Lippi-Green, 2011). Across the array of observed social situations, Anika was observed engaging a diverse *communicative repertoire* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) using both standard-English, AAE, and skillful translanguaging of the two within text-oriented discourse structures such as book clubs. Although she resisted the established linguistic labels a White, outside researcher, presented to her, she was aware that these linguistic tools are in her toolbox and she pulled them as she chooses based on audience
and her situational comfort. As Rymes (2016) and other researchers have argued, discourse functions differently across different contexts.

For Anika, the various forms of English are just English—thus not requiring additional attention. Put another way, the English she speaks is so ubiquitous it isn’t a language at all. A somewhat ironic parallel can be made to research on White males who see themselves as devoid of culture because their culture is so normed as standard to the greater society it doesn’t warrant study (McIntosh, 2004). As Anika makes sense of the possibility of potential English subcategories, she is resisting the existence of these subcategories, “American English? No, I just—you just say English.” With this quick shift in pronouns Anika positions herself from reporting what she does to teaching me what is done. It’s possible, with specific instruction on linguistic varieties her thinking might shift toward a more inclusive view of language varieties but even with an ever increasing polylilingual society, Standard English remains at the top of the hierarchical, linguistic, heap for most people.

**Opposing heteroglossic notions.** Bourdieu (1977) argues that “discourse is a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered.” (p. 651) This is especially true over the past two decades as we have become a more polylingual nation. Few places show this linguistic hierarchy as well as the American school setting. Traditionally, DAE has been equated to that language of power and the appropriate discourse norm of school settings (Gutiérrez, 2008). However, due to changing demographics and an increased in exposure to linguistic diversity both in a out of schools, cracks in the veneer of DAE are revealing opportunities for alternative power dynamics. This shift has been explored by scholars in notable ways. One frequently cited example of the power inherent with linguistic flexibility is at the national level, when President Obama stirred national attention with fluid code switching
between DAE and AAE; a skill not shared by his monolingual competitor, Mitt Romney. Obama’s ability to speak many different language varieties with many different groups of people proved a powerful tool, which some say led to his election (Smitherman & Alim, 2012). Studies have also illuminated the important ways teacher-student relationships can be supported by honoring linguistic diversity in the classroom (Paris & Alim, 2014). Amidst all this research, however, students and teachers often remain stuck perpetuating dominant language practices.

Over the course of this study, Lew and I continued to return to the ways language diversity could or should fit into school. The following excerpt is part of a longer conversation during our second video-cued interview (VCI, 12/18/2017), where I had just asked Lew why he thinks that he should be using “more formal words”:

1. Because I feel like formal words—uh, well, people usually use formal words because it's—it's usually something that nowadays we learn in school and how this works. So 2 if you're using all these, like, different slang, not everybody may use those or know 3 those, so it's like—like, if you—we all write the same way, it's a lot easier to really 4 understand it rather than, like, if you wrote a letter to somebody using, like, uh, a type 5 of, like shortened word or, like, slang that they didn't really know—

Here, Lew seems to be aligning with Anglonormative ideologies (McKinney, 2017) which privilege “formal words” as “appropriate” simply because that’s “how it works” because it is taught in school (line 1 and 2). Interestingly, Lew aligns himself with dominant language ideologies in the name of equity. For Lew, it’s not fair for school to let people use slang because “not everybody may use” it or “know” it so conforming to one language practice makes school more manageable (line 3 and 4). Lew signals an awareness that he could use a variety of

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3 Anglonormativity draws from “heteronormativity” by expecting that people “should be proficient in English, and are deficient, even deviant, if they are not.” (McKinney, 2017 p. 37)
linguistic tools, (line 3) but he chooses a formal repertoire because it is easier for “them to understand it” (line 6). Them for Lew, are teachers, those people grading the work who don’t know those “type of words...or slang” (line 6). In this act of resistance to linguistic variation, Lew’s places other language varieties outside of appropriate school use. Lew is aware that other language varieties are available but he resists their inclusion to favor more dominant structures spoken by the people in charge. This example speaks to what Bourdieu’s marketplace looks like in this classroom. Students participate in the classroom marketplace surfacing the Freirean conscientização but do not always see "the ability to analyze the social and economic situation in which they live and to view themselves as efficacious" (Bloome et al. 2004, p. 4). Lew’s assertion echoes that of traditional schooling and shows his understanding of a linguistic hierarchy. Providing space and value for other language varieties in school makes for a less controlled linguistic economy which, for Lew, should be avoided for the sake of the dominant language speakers.

**Becoming perfect: a vote for Standard American English.** Another example of resistance to linguistic variation was visible in an interview with Cameron, where he reflected on why educational institutions focus students on a singular dominant, White, American-English.

1 So like if they-they want us to be like-like, um—like you’re not supposed to say like, 2 uh—you’re not supposed to say—like Spanish kids, they—uh, Hispanic kids they’ll be 3 like—they’ll say like, uh, something wrong, and they’ll be like, “No, it’s pronounced 4 this way.” So that’s why—and then like that’s how they wanna make us perfect. Well 5 they-they say that there’s no such thing as perfect ((hands up to air in a shrug)), but 6 I know they’re trying to make you succeed (hand falls into and is clasped by other 7 hand)) and like make us be successful in life ((shaking with final three words in 8
His reflection denotes a resistance to non-dominant language varieties because they are imperfect and unsuccessful (line 4 and 6). In his example, a situation where a Spanish/Hispanic kid would speak and be told by his/her teacher that s/he were incorrect (line 2-3), as a way to make them perfect, he resists a more linguistically tolerant learning environment. For Cameron, resisting a more linguistic diverse school environment is wrapped up in an effort to achieve success. The concepts of linguistic perfection leading to success are indicative of a monoglot ideology which work against linguistic diversity.

Cameron’s resistance to non-dominant language varieties in this example is interesting in that he has not stated that this “Hispanic kid” would be a non-English speaker, simply that s/he was ethnically Spanish/Hispanic. Scholars working in raciolinguistics point to the how language ideologies are racialized and users of those languages are subsequently excluded from a categorization of “appropriate” for academic setting (Flores & Rosa, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014).

**Distancing to uphold dominant language ideologies**

In addition to students feeling, at times, ambivalent towards linguistic variation as well as acting in resistance to linguistic variation, students worked to distance themselves from linguistic variation, meaning they worked to put space between themselves and nonstandard forms of English. Students distances themselves in two noticeable ways (1) through strict adherence to code-switching within academically-oriented text talk, and (2) using place-based languaging norms.

Over the course of this study, students spent a substantial amount of time within the discursive structure of a book club. Students were paired by interest and situated in groups of 3-4 where they were responsible to discussing a single title for about 15-20 minutes per session.
Often, the conversations during our VCI’s were centered in what occurred during this time of the ELA block. During these conversations with Anika, she would often describe her position as a default leader in the group. She felt that it was important to keep the conversation moving and was comfortable driving the discussion. Anika also expressed an awareness of the need to move between two different ways of talking dependent on her group or who she thought was listening; she didn’t use the term *code-switch*, meaning separating use of languages according to context or audience (Young, 2014), but that is what I will use as a reference point for much of her communication during this analysis. She was especially open about how she navigated these types of discussions (both in ELA and other subjects, namely, science) when her friends were in the group.

Anika continuously communicated the importance of her friendships both in and out of school, but she regularly downplayed the rich ways she and her friends leveraged their diverse discourses within and outside of academically-oriented settings. An example of this distancing came about during one of our VCIs. Anika and I were reviewing a book club observation recorded a few days prior where Anika and her group were unpacking moments of internal and external conflict within their novel, *A Long Walk to Water*. This novel centers around two children struggling to survive during different time periods in Sudan.

In the video, Anika moved among text-based content and off-topic conversations. During these content shifts, she adjusted her physicality and language to match the task. When Anika was engaged in text-based issues, she used the language prompted in the graphic organizer created by her teacher. When she addressed issues that were not directly text related she shifted into a different register and embodied way of being. Her ability to effortlessly move among discourse topics and leverage her linguistic repertoire was something I wanted to learn more
about. I pulled this section to discuss her fluid toggling along a spectrum of topics (both related and unrelated to the assignment). In responding to the video segment, Anika took a decidedly deficit lens to the conversations she valued most, those with her friends and trusted peers.

**Clare:** I’m really interested in hearing more about what leads you to changing how you talk in school—more about when you said you have to think about who you talk to and what you say and why you think it’s easier to talk with your friends...

**Anika:** Cuz like, we usually don’t learn anything, really. And like, once you learn something, you answer like—it’s already questions you have to learn about it.

**Clare:** mmm-mmm

**Anika:** So you have two different—(inaudible)...With me and my friends, we would just tell each other almost everything. We don’t switch the language or anything. (VCI, 12/5/2017)

Anika characterized her discussions with her core group of friends, all African American girls, as “not saying anything” and “not (for) learning” on more than one occasion. This practice distanced the important relational work done during sidebar conversations and outside of the classroom. Anika’s emerging understanding of the power in language is working to school her against the potential of a meaningful, discursive format ripe with academic potential within her core group of friends. What if Anika were to shift her thinking, instead seeing the social dynamic of her circle of friends as well-suited for academic work? This is the notion put forth by Flores and Rosa (2015) to problematize the types of language deemed appropriate for academic settings. By distancing the work she does with her friends as non-academic and meaningless, she is narrowing the potential to see friendships (both people and spaces) as potential places for learning. Nelson (2016) reminds us that dichotomous view of language perpetuates a dangerous
hierarchy where both nondominant linguistic registers are rendered inappropriate as are those who claim them as speakers. The following is another example that illustrates Anika’s distancing from the skillful code meshing and translanguaging she does while in and out of a school context (VCI, 12/20/2017).

**Clare:** Is it okay if we go back to the language survey? You mentioned that you thought a lot about how you spoke with different people...can you think of a specific example of when that comes up for you in school?

**Anika:** It was like, it’s more what you—like, you—some classes you have to use big words. Like, in science, we can’t say weight ((twists face)). We gotta go in saying *mass*.

**Anika:** when I talk with, um, friends, it’s usually easier cuz we don’t have no expression. We’re not saying anything, usually.

**Clare** Well, what about if you are talking about something that you learned in school, when you aren’t in school. Does that ever happen?

**Anika:** Like, they don’t understand. I’d probably break it down for them—

**Clare:** Mm-hmm.

**Anika:** ...and tell them what teacher saying—What I’m saying, I can do both.

**Clare:** When you say bot—do you feel like there are times when you can sort of—explain what is happening in school in a different way? Like in terms of language?

**Anika:** yeah, I can just get it how you learn it—how he says it...and and how you can say it.

**Clare:** Do you think that that changes like-the learning environment for you? Like how you feel in the class, depending on how you talk?
Anika: No, I feel like it stayed the same. Cuz you’re still learning. It just not as much open as you wanna be.

Anika is making an argument here that quality learning can occur without deep levels of comfort and sharing between teacher and student. This assertion counters research that suggest students need an environment supported by authentic care (termed by Valenzuela (1999) as cariño) and trust for optimal learning (Duncan-Andrade, 2006; Lewis, Ream, Bocian, Cardullo, Hammond, & Fast, 2012). Likewise, this suggestion differs from her responses on the language survey regarding a need for safety and trust in her group working environments. Anika’s notions of the potential of school learning are perhaps limited by the experiences offered by her experiences in school. At this point, the potential for the school’s capacity to be both a place of comfort and a place of learning stand in conflict to one another. Her strict adherence to code-switching is something she take pride in and doesn’t seem to incumber her at this point. However, like Flores (2013) and other critical theorists, I argue that the onus for disrupting this hierarchy doesn’t belong to the sixth grade students in this study but with the district, curriculum, community, and individual teachers who can support more linguistic flexibility in classrooms.

**Linguistic variation doesn’t live here: Lake City slang.** For some focal students, the act of distancing from linguistic variation was more than a metaphor. When Cameron and I met to talk about ways he experienced languaging practices in ELA he regularly made juxtapositions between his “school talking” and how he spoke with his family member on the weekends; specifically, in Lake City, which is directly on the south border less than one mile from the school. Smith (1993) referred to the ways location is indexed to aspects of social norming as the “racialization of residential space” (p. 133) which was taken up by Leander (2002) in his study of how conceptions of identity are based in interactions and as such socially situated. When
Cameron talks about when and how he uses AAE—what he refers to as slang—he is situating that language in nearby Lake City, similar to what Leander describes as the process of “fixing or mapping of particular behaviors, attitudes, and values onto residential location” to “essentialize racial identities” (Leander, 2002 p. 235). Although he referred to the way he spoke with his Lake City-relations as slang, during a VCI on 12/5/2017, he also expressed a sense of pride in his ability to speak the way they did and then also come to school and speak a different way.

**Clare:** Okay so then tell me about what the slang in Lake City, what’s used by your family in Lake City—what does that mean to you?

**Cameron:** Slang—okay, so there’s different ways of slang, because you can say slang in many different ways…like in Lake City…

**Clare:** Okay so then say more about this particular way-

**Cameron:** So like I can—I can make a whole entire sentence just with slang—because slang is a different sentence. ((adjusts body as if falling into character—footing away from CDS and gaze to hallway)) Like, “Huh? he ain’t nutin” Like I’ll speak around like that because I’m used to speaking like that sometimes.

**Clare:** ((holding for processing))

**Cameron:** So like—so like they be like “ain’t nutin’—she ratchet’—so like…((shifting positioning back to face me)) that’s that Lake City talk….I’m not say that—like that’s their—that’s their, you know, that’s how they—that’s how they say things. It’s—((waving hands in front of his body)) I’m not saying it’s wrong, (hand up in exaggerated shrug)) I’m not saying it’s right.

In the excerpt above, Cameron easily moves within his communicative repertoire, pulling from hallmarks of Standard English, AAE, and situated “Lake City slang.” His reflection, that
this language, “how they say things” isn’t wrong, but also isn’t right is an evaluative stance with a distinctly etic viewpoint in that he positioned himself as an outsider looking in on this language taking place. Across each of the focal students, Cameron articulated the strongest and most
differentiated views of his robust communicative repertoire. There were times when he showed pride in ability to speak with his family members using AAE while “staying in Lake City” and also instances when he kept that part of his linguistic repertoire at arm’s length by suggesting that “people don’t really talk that way.” Cameron felt connected to language and was very interested in the powerful ways language is connected to identity. He spoke of practicing dialects in from of the mirror at home to watch the way his facial expressions changed as he get better at, for example, British dialect. He understood how language produces and/or reinforces power both in and out of the classroom (Delpit, 1988).

This section highlighted how students upheld dominant linguistic ideologies (DLI) even when those vary beliefs did not serve them as linguistically diverse speakers. Students reinforced DLI through feeling an ambivalence toward linguistic diversity, through active resistance of linguistic diversity, and by distancing themselves from linguistic diversity. Lew’s assertion that SE is simply the way learning gets done in schools sidelines his diverse linguistic tools although he doesn’t seem agitated by this perceived reality. His ambivalent resignation is reinforced by other students who were willing to sideline their rich repertoires for the sake of “American” educational norms and grading purposes. Anika’s disinterest in engaging with linguistic labels, intended to validate various forms of English varieties, is interesting in that she is either demonstrating a sense of resistance to the terms themselves or resistance to a broadening the terms of English varieties when she suggests that, “you just say English.”. In his study of adolescents working in linguistically matched dyads, VanHofwegan (2014) suggests that,
“Adolescents are most likely than speakers of other age groups to orient toward (extremely) locally defined vernaculars” (p. 30). The distancing of linguistic diversity to functions that may occur outside of this school (e.g. Lew’s example), or may be found outside of the city (e.g. Cameron’s example) or even may not exist at all (e.g. Anika’s example), act as cautionary markers for the strength of dominant language ideologies and their impact on the role of learning and identity within a linguistically diverse community. In the next section, I further analyze the complex ways students in room 204 negotiated dominant language ideologies through employing a critical lens to what and who counts in linguistic diversity.

**Critiquing Dominant Language Ideologies**

Critique is a somewhat tacit skill of most residents of this mid-sized city directly adjacent to a large metropolis. This is a community with traditions of activism, scholarly inclinations, and strong opinions. It is perhaps surprising, then, that the move towards addressing long-standing opportunity gaps has been slow to gain momentum in such a seemingly progressive environment. For decades, this city has missed important opportunities to address opportunity gaps for students of color; specifically for black boys (Berfield, 2016). That being said, community members, scholars, and district stakeholders have begun to take a critical lens to the ways this community perpetuates dominant practices which work to marginalize students of color. Over the past two years, teachers have received hours of professional development on how to make their curricular choices more culturally responsive. This criticality within an already active community also showed up in some of the ways the students in this study acted in critical ways toward dominant linguistic ideologies they observed both in and outside of the classroom. Therefore, this study draws knowledge that schooling in this community offers a Bakhtinian-style cultural and historical embodiment of social positioning at play in classroom communication (Bakhtin, 1984).
In other words, the social history of racial inequities the school district is currently working to remediate lives like molecules in the oxygen of each building, hallway, classroom, teacher, and student. The air we breathe to engage in oral discourse is infused with injustice; both historical and current.

The instances of critique of dominant language ideologies (DLI) were subtle but evident. Students’ demonstrations of criticality related to language practices in school (see table 7) acted as an interesting juxtaposition to the ways they invoked dominant language ideologies. Although each focal student aligned themselves to aspects of dominant language ideologies, they also demonstrated a more critical awareness of—and sometimes opposition towards—dominant school literacy practices. In this section, I will look at instantiations of this criticality within classroom observations and interviews. As Cameron said in the opening quote, language is strongly embedded in identity—to change it would be “like a change in your religion.” And like religion, language is evolving, complex, and highly personal.

Table 7
Ways Focal Students Showed Criticality Toward DLI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes for Critiquing Dominant Language Ideologies</th>
<th>Sample comments/embodied moves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocacy</strong></td>
<td>“If they don’t understand I’ll break if down for them. Shouldn’t be forced to speak a certain way” -Anika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Honoring classmates culture(s)</td>
<td>“Forced to be regular citizens” -Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Supporting friends through translation/intervention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Opposing linguistic status quo</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation</strong></td>
<td>“it’s fun to change things up-it doesn’t always need to be that exit slip…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interrupting</td>
<td>“we could do this paper different..”</td>
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<td>- Reimagining</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Disrupting</td>
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</table>
In this section, I pivot my argument to make a claim that students sometimes worked to critique dominant language ideologies. In the previous section, I outlined ways students aligned to dominant language ideologies through resistance to, distancing from, and ambivalence toward linguistic diversity. To describe the ways the students simultaneously enacted linguistic criticality, I explore data that positions students as resistant to the ways dominant language ideologies play out in their school settings. Here, I dig into video-cued interviews (VCI) from the focal students to surface the reasons that linguistically nondominant students acted critically toward dominant language ideologies—through both 1) advocacy, by surfacing how deficit ideologies inhibit learning and 2) innovation, regarding the ways students made changes to established ideas, methods, or products to better align to linguistically diverse meaning making.

**Advocating For A More Linguistically Diverse Learning Environment**

Students described a range of instances of linguistic variation within their school community. Across interview reflections, focal students demonstrated awareness of the importance non-dominant language varieties hold as well as a need to provide space for linguistic differences within academic settings. Each focal student articulated a desire to advocate for students’ language rights and the importance of being able to speak in ways that are comfortable and, as Lew put it, “true to you-your true self” in the classroom (VCI, 12/18/2017). That said, students differed in their beliefs regarding how and to what extent these differences should be honored in school. I begin this section with Anika reflecting on a need to advocate for friends who are less able or willing to engage in dominant language norms in school. Then, I analyze a conversation between Anika and Jackie as they collaborated on ways to reimagine an assignment they see as sociolinguistically limited. Finally, I close with analysis of a powerful
exchange between Cameron and another study participant in which he defended actions of students who disrupt a monoglot approach to learning in schools. Each of these instances are included to illustrate ways focal students acted—often subtly—to advocate for a more inclusive linguistic learning environment.

**Linguistic judgments happen here.** Across interviews and observations, Anika held a strong commitment to her friendships. In her language survey she responded that working with her friends was the most important component to her feeling comfortable in group settings. She mentioned her friends in each of our interviews, often to explain ways she helped them navigate conflicting communication styles between them and their teachers as well as how she interacted differently outside of school settings. Anika often articulated a sensitivity to people judging one another based on language (speaking Espanola {Spanish}, and “more comfortable ways”) as well as judgments made regarding physical appearance. Here she mentioned how those judgments are made both laterally (peer-to-peer) and also hierarchically (teacher-peer).

**Anika:** Like, dressing like this,((waves had up and down her body)) like how I dress, or dressing like in really like relaxed clothes and like wear like a lotta expensive things, that you’re just all about that and don’t take outta—time outta your day to learn like a different language.

**Clare:** How have those judgments impacted your learning?

**Anika:** *[Clears throat]* Like, some, and what I seen this year, one of my friends could speak Español because of their grandma’s husband...So, she will like—if she knows when somebody’s talkin’ about her, cuz she un—kinda understands what they’re saying—and, um, people were saying stuff about her, but she responded back in Español, and they felt real, I guess, salty...not knowin’ cause of her skin that she could speak it.
Clare: That they were salty because they were surprised? Hmmm does that makes sense?

Anika: Cause her skin was dark-she’s Black so...they didn’t think she could up and speak it. Anyway—Teacher got real upset. Yeah—like, some people judge you on how you look. Like, they’ll think that, cuz you look a certain way, you don’t understand what they’re saying, or speak a certain language.

Clare: Wait-you’re saying the teacher was judging?

Anika: Nah-everybody say that about her. Nobody know she would wanna talk in Española. Yeah, people think like the way you look, the way you dress, you don’t know anything about speaking other languages. So they’ll feel some type of way about you based on how you look. They don’t ever expect all that from you. It ain’t right to judge like that but it’s for real the way-it’s what happens here.

Alvermann’s research on discourse identity points to how a person can be recognized or indexed in a certain way depending on the group doing the “reading” (2011). Leander’s (2002) study on identity artifacts in discourse also makes this connection and cautions of the ways this can perpetuate deficit narratives, similarly to how Anika is describing the situation with her friend in example above example. In her description of how people judge one another based on how they physical appearance, dress, and social association, Anika is elucidating important factors embedded in unfounded deficit language ideologies. She is acutely aware that people are constantly making judgments based on stereotypes (something that Cameron also points to as both ubiquitous and morally repugnant during a VCI on 12/5/2017) and that, although these actions are incongruous with the right thing to do, they happen in her school. This social “reading” is enacted by factors of membership, what Gee (2008) refers to as a identity kit and Anika seems fully aware of the power a diverse kit can have for social situations.
**Advocating for regular citizens.** Other focal students also surfaced a criticality towards school-supported linguistic norming. Cameron presented a strong defense of linguistic diversity before we ever sat down for our first interview. As he and I were walked toward hallway nook designated for our VCIs, I was reminding him of my study and why I was interested in hanging out with his class and learning about how they “do talking and learning.” (VCI, 11/2/2017) As I fumbled to get my audio recorder out to record his animated responses during this transitional talk, I asked him what he thought about expectations of spoken discourse in school settings. He told me:

1 Like, um, they forced, like us to—they wanna force us to like be like you know, like a regular citizen. Like, so like people sometimes say, like, this is America, you should speak American, you know. But it’s like you have to—if people speak a certain way then it’s like that’s how they speak, because that’s how they grew up with and so, they are American. (VCI, 12/5/2017)

For Cameron, the complexities inherent in who the “they” are, how and when he feels “forced” to speak a certain way to become a “regular citizen” drive power dynamics inherent to life in schools. Like Anika, he is speaking to how this linguistic governing disenfranchises people. In this example, he is specifically addressing Americans who are not standard-English speakers. Cameron’s response is demonstrative a critical stance toward the imposition of dominant language ideology. He reflects on an important aspect of the embedded nature of language and identity by suggesting that language something that you grow up with rather than learn (line 3 and 4). He nods to the established norms of dominant language ideologies (line 1 and 2) as well as the current political move toward a monolingual Americanization (line 2 and 3). Cameron critique of the unnamed enforcers of American English parrots familiar outcries of
dominant language advocates who paint nondominant language heritage as deficit (Hart & Risley, 1995). More importantly, Cameron’s assertion that being American is more than speaking one language. He advocated for a more inclusive understanding of language and culture which supports a growing body of research working to counter deficit claims by highlighting the detrimental effects of those claims and the rich resources missed by such backward perspectives (Flores & Rosa, 2015, Giroux, 2015; Lippi-Green, 1997; Smitherman, 2000; Zentella, 2014).

**Innovating Text-Oriented Discourse: Whose Norms Shall Prevail?**

The ushering in of Common Core Curriculum was widely fueled by an argument that American students need to compete with international counterparts. Specifically, students are expected to acquire innate skills and flexibilities for critical thinking, problem-solving, and executive functioning skills often referred to as “21st century skills” (Darling-Hammond, 2010; National Research Council, 2011). In response to these goals, teachers and students are spending more time re-envisioning traditional ways of collaborating and communicating knowledge. Students in Ms. Limerick’s sixth grade class were often presented with collaborative work structures (e.g., small groups and partnerships); within these structures, students sometimes exhibited instances of innovation. Because dominant language ideologies are not limited to spoken discourse, our ideas about language become intermingled in all that we do. In this classroom, dominant language ideologies colored how learning played throughout school discourse structures—both spoken and written.

Thus far, I have primarily analyzed ways students negotiated spoken discourse. Now, I broaden the scope to a more comprehensive collection of school discourse structures, including text-based experiences and assignments. For example, during book club sessions, focal students were observed problematizing traditional assignments, reconfiguring ways of presenting
knowledge, and discussing changes to established methods of producing and sharing their knowledge. This shift in the type of discourse I am analyzing also requires broadening of the tools for analysis. Therefore, I draw from multimodal discourse analysis to describe instances of innovative moves within discourse-in-acton. In this section, I highlight two instances of collaborative work where students suggested innovations to dominant discourse structures. The first, a discussion between Anika and Jackie surfaced a desire to disrupt what they saw as a limited approach to understanding traits of a character. The second demonstrates a more forceful interruption of a status quo assignment in favor of a more discursive activity.

**Innovating assignment tasks and roles: discussing disruption.** Across their book club session, Anika and Jackie engaged in instances of innovation as they reimagined assignments and their roles within the learning environment. These instances surfaced as brief glimpses into the potential for each student to innovate a more traditional assignment, but do indicate that the focal students were sometimes angling toward a more critical lens to school discourse structures. In this instance, Anika and Jackie were working together in their book club (along with another non-participant-student) to complete a T-chart graphic organizer related to identification of internal and external character traits. As they worked through the assignment, the students pivoted into possibilities for reimagining their assigned task to include problematizing a dichotomous view of internal and external conflicts. In reimagining the task, they considered how a character, a Sudanese child, would sound as he spoke to himself while walking through his village in Africa. They struggled with the limitations with only two choices for conflict.

*Jackie:* it’s like what if internal and external aren’t the only conflict…put it on the back?

*Anika:* Nah-skip it. Or….we should ask? Or just put it under both…

*Jackie:* Both.
Anika: Ha! ((flips pencil on table))-we could do this paper different ((lifts paper flips back and forth)) like we could say—do it a different way with how they sound to they’selves.

Jackie: I mean….yeah like-like that’s not how he sounds but it’s what he feels...I guess so it’s internal? Like-there should be an internal “cuz of external part ((lifts the internal/external definition sheet and looks at both sides-sets it down and jots on internal side of graphic organizer))…that’s the cool part though-maybe next time we ask and change it?

Anika: I’m sayin’—okay. We done?

(Observation, 12/18/2017)

For Jackie and Anika, the binary choice of a character-conflict being internal OR external wasn’t an authentic choice. Anika pointed to limitations regarding a dichotomous conflict and suggested that they could reimagine this assignment to include the ways the character would sound to themselves, “we could do this paper different...”. When I asked her why she and Jackie struggled with the two column approach during a transitional talk, she explained that she didn’t think that characters “sit around saying, “did this happen on the outside?” that they were themselves and talked to themselves about conflict “like it was attached to inside and outside because it’s all really happening to that character—like if they were real.” (field notes, 12/20/2017). Here she was calling for this character/conflict comprehension assignment to be reinvisioned in ways that are more authentic to the way people deal with conflicts as they arise.

As they began to verbally design a new assignment, each girl contributed notions of a more holistic approach to evaluating the complex nature of conflict. Anika suggested an innovation to the assignment by adding information to capture the way Salva, a Sudanese boy, would actually sound. This change would give greater authenticity to the linguistic repertoire of
a Sudanese character is something I will discuss further in Chapter 5. Jackie extended Anika’s desire to make the assignment more complex. She named the binary of internal and external conflict as problematic and went on to note that those complexities were worthy of additional insight as they were “cool.” This brief conversation allowed both girls to reimagine a more innovative method for complexities of conflict; seeing a character as more than what’s presented through traditional discourse structures like a T-chart. Jackie and Anika problematized the assignment to include aspects of language and identity. Although they did not formally act to reconstruct the assignment on paper for a grade, they worked together to create space for critique and productive dialogue.

**Would-you-rather: positioning the status quo.** A second example of innovating to interrupt dominant language practices is taken from a partnership comprised of two study participants, one a focal student (Cameron) and one a non-focal participant (Philip). It was a norm in room 204 that groups and partnerships were configured and reconfigured over the course of the survival unit for various reasons. On this day, Cameron was partnered with another study participant, a White, monolingual English-speaker named Phillip. As I later found out, Cameron and Phillip were grouped together because they had both struggled in the larger group to grasp key concepts of the text and complete the assigned exit slip regarding basic comprehension questions about the text. Ms. Limerick partnered them for the purpose of finishing-up an exit slip assignment given the previous day. They selected to meet in the hallway outside of the classroom and I observed them from across the hall with a camera on a portable tripod.

The exchange between Cameron and Phillip, like all others, is situated in a sociohistorical context (González, Neff, Amanti, & Moll, 2006) and therefore is steeped in both in and out of school identity sets (Gee, 2008). During their collaboration, the pair struggled to come to
consensus around the key ideas from the text. After several minutes of back and forth regarding misconceptions of plot and character, Cameron switched trajectory and suggested a complete alternative to the assignment. This innovative move veered the conversation off of the traditional exit slip format onto a new path; the creation of a “would-you-rather” type game presented to the class for engagement. The exit slip asked the boys to recall key ideas from the text and provide options for why these were critical to the storyline. However, in Cameron’s new assignment, the boys pulled information from the text, as well as information from other slave narratives to create an experience for their peers. This self-assigned task positioned him and his partner at the head of the class, surveying his peers in a discursive format. This act of resistance was not directly abrasive and allowed him to maintain autonomy with the blessing of his teacher. Conversely, his partner, Philip was not interested in resisting the assigned activity and demonstrated his own opposition to Cameron’s move toward innovation. The analysis below highlights the embodied way the two boys physical positioning seemed to reflect their level of power across the conversation. This explication begins at the start of their partnership time and spans just less than ten minutes of discourse activity.

**Philip:** Wait so what are you working on now?

**Cameron:** I’m working on cannibalism ((hands tucked in hoodie, sweeping side-to-side against the floor)) writing all this stuff down—

[ ]

**Philip:** Cannibalism?! ((eyebrows raised toward Cameron))

**Cameron:** Yeah, you know, ((sucks teeth raises hand to head-rubs hair quick-back-forth)) you know-they took him into the wo::ods…

[ ]
Philip: In the story?! ((points down at tablet in his lap)) no.

Cameron: Yeah-

Philip: They did that? I don’t remember...show me.

((Cameron scrolls through short story on tablet)) (observation, 11/16/2017)

Philip, due to his confidence regarding the literal understanding of the text, seemed to be positioned as having more power at the start of their conversation (driving the direction of the discourse by answering questions regarding the plot structure and asking pointed questions regarding Cameron’s understanding of the text). He displayed a hyperbolically relaxed positioning, with both legs splayed forward and slumped posture. In contrast, Cameron’s physical positioning was upright, tense, and busy (see Figure 7). The most noticeable way Cameron’s uneasy played out was a consistent strapping and unstrapping the Velcro strap on his shoe which started after Philip asked him to prove his claim in the text.

Figure 7. Philip power-positioning in the discourse activity.

The screenshot in Figure 7 signifies a shift in the trajectory of the conversation. First, Philip attempted to return to the exit slip by posing a question regarding the amount of camel blood a human can ingest over the course of one day; as he posed the question aloud
he began to use the tablet to research the answer to his own question on the internet.

Cameron used this shift away from the plot-based line of questioning Philip had initiated to employ an authoritative response to Philip’s question.

**Philip:** I thought that if you drink too much blood—Since they were drinking the camel’s blood after they killed it—I thought that since they were drinking so much...that it would affect the people drinking it...because I mean, it says they were like gulping it—

[C]

**Cameron:** I mean, the camel...okay so the camel—it’s like...so it the CAMEL had something wrong—a disease—like if you were donating blood you would have to match—if not you would get sick and that’s like how this is... 

((Ms. Limerick comes into the hallway and addresses the partnership))

What’s interesting in this moment is that Philip’s question was not necessarily posed to Cameron as much as it was posed aloud as he employed the tablet as a collaborator. In response, Cameron’s answer came not from the text or the tablet, rather from prior knowledge he had regarding consequences of human blood transfusions. The figure below (figure 8) is a screenshot captured during Cameron’s response to Philip’s question regarding camel blood. During this message unit in which Cameron is the arbiter of information, the two boys embodied engagement have reversed from the start of the conversation.
Directly after this line of questioning, Ms. Limerick joined the group to check-in on their progress. Upon Ms. Limerick’s arrival, Cameron suggested the take-a-stand activity. Cameron’s proposal for the new activity was pitched not to his peer but directly to the teacher. When I asked him to reflect on this exchange (Transitional Talk, 12/5/2017) he said that he thought Ms. Limerick would be more open to his idea than his partner, “She just kinda gets me when I have these ideas…” Interestingly, through the suggestion and creation of this “take a stand” activity, Cameron and Philip seemed to reverse physical positioning.

Ms. Limerick: Okay so why don’t we do this, we will pause on this ((points to exit ticket)) and you two create the questions, give me five,

[  

Cameron: Can we, can we like, announce it to the class so—

[  

Philip: Five like (>>>>>>>)

Cameron: We can go back and forth?
Ms. Limerick: Yeah, why don’t we...we can do it tomorrow…

Philip: W::ait...five researchable questions?

Ms. Limerick:((orienting gaze and hand gestures directly at Cameron))okay ...will you explain to this guy ((flicks fingers in direction of Philip)) what you are talking about?

Philip: ((gaze and truck oriented toward Ms. Limerick))Five researchable questions?

Ms. Limerick: ((gets up from hallway floor to leave)) okay, so I’m going to go back in there and check in; do you know what you are doing?

Cameron: Yeah. ((redirects gaze toward Philip)) I’ll show you. It’s not—it’s not researchable bro. It’s just like—a question.

Philip: (inaudible mumbling)

Ms. Limerick: ((off camera)) Phillip, relax.

Cameron: ((quick laughter)) ((scrolling through tablet))

Ms. Limerick: It’s like you give me one more question and that’s it! You’re good.

((Ms. Limerick moves away from group—toward the classroom door))

*Multimodal Transcription Key:

((embodied communication))

…: extended pause

-: word cut/dropped off

[: latched phrases

lengthened syllable:: :, e.g. d::ude

Toward the conclusion of the partnership time, Philip was becoming visibly agitated with their lack of progress completing the assigned exit ticket. In an embodied plea to his teacher (figure 9), with eyebrows raised and waving his exit ticket back and forth, he verbalized his concerns:

*Figure 9: Philip’s appeal to Ms. Limerick*

**Philip:** I don’t know how we do this...it’s like we have (glances at tablet) TEN more minutes and I HA::VE to do this and it’s SO annoying ((slams exit slip down onto floor with sheepish smile))

**Ms. Limerick:** ((hand on classroom door knob))Philip…((slight laughter)) listen to me Philip, you’re *ALL GOOD* (said through laughter))

**Ms. Limerick:** ….no, just. Just listen to his idea because it might be a fun way to get class started tomorrow and you...just relax
Philip: ((takes an audible deep breath with chin tilted to ceiling))

Ms. Limerick: that the two of you could run this, take-a-stand or…

Cameron: Okay….would you rather eat your own flesh or be a cannibal?

Philip: Be a cannibal.

Cameron: I need that pencil, bro ((reaching for Philip’s pencil in his hand))

Philip: ((hands Cameron pencil))

Cameron: Okay…((writing on back of exit slip)) eat-flesh….or-be-cannibal…

Philip: Wait, eat your own flesh or someone else’s cause I don’t wanna, like, I don’t wanna chomp by perfect skin off ((nervous laughter))

Cameron and Philip, with Cameron as the scribe and gatekeeper of the document, worked together to come up with a list of six options based on what they considered text-based issues (see Figure 10).

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 10. Cameron’s list for the would-you-rather experience.*

The list consists of the following choices:

- 1 eat [own]flesh or be a cannibal
- 2 [eat] camel or [drink] camel blood
- 3 pick cotton or get whipped
- 4 got skin burned off or get beat
Through the creation of this take-a-stand/would-you-rather game, Cameron, the scribe and driver of the new learning experience, engaged in a few agentic actions of innovation. First, he “flips the script” (Smitherman, p. 1986) of the dominant academic artifact (the exit-slip) by reenvisioning the terms of this assignment at the behest of his White partner. Second, he includes details of the Black American slave narrative as a juxtaposition to the White slave narrative present in the assigned reading. This second finding will be further unpacked in chapter 5.

By reimagining the original assignment in favor of a more interactive product, Cameron created a leadership role for himself which shifted the power dynamic from the more traditional assignment structure where he was asked to respond to teacher-created prompts. Cameron’s work during this partnership exemplifies his capacity to re-imagine dominant school discourse structures and facility to create on-the-spot innovative leadership opportunities. As his partner’s buy-in waned, he was undeterred, becoming more self-reliant (to use a term from the survival unit) to generate the comparisons for the would-you-rather assignment.

The following week, I circled-back to Cameron about the would-you-rather game. Shrugging, he said that they never actually presented it to the class. He went on to tell me that they completed the prep for the assignment, but that he didn’t think they were going to get to it for the class, “I mean it might [be presented to the class] but right now, I am really giving up hope on it.” Cameron went on to say that he had been excited about the alternative assignment; “it’s fun to change things up—it doesn’t always need to be that exit slip…” His reflection that the original assignment need to be changed-up and that he had the agency to do that, appealing to Ms. Limerick directly, speaks to his innovative stance. In chapter five I will continue to explore the important ways text and text-based activities, both enacted and unrealized, make a powerful
impact on students’ navigating dominant linguistic practices in the ELA classroom setting.

**Conclusion**

Bacon (2018) reminds us that, “language ideologies should not be understood as fixed characteristics reflective of an individual’s core being. Rather, language ideologies are performative, with individuals drawing on different ideological orientations at different times based on a range of individual, contextual, and historical factors (Rosa & Burdick, 2017)” (p. 3). Lew, Anika, Cameron, and Jackie exemplified the fluid nature of language ideologies as they engaged in conversations together, with linguistically dominant classmates and teachers. In these spaces, focal students were enacting Bourdieu’s (1977) marketplace metaphor of language-as-symbolic-asset. Focal students understood the changing value of languages and communicative repertoires (Rymes, 2010) and navigated moments of text-oriented discourse according to both their own values as well as those of their audience. Traditionally, DAE has been equated to the language of power and the appropriate discourse norm of school settings (Gutiérrez, 2008). In this chapter I have shown how students’ awareness of the established value for standard English causes them to respond to dominant language ideologies in multiple, sometimes contrasting, ways. Researchers have already proven that acquisition of SE does not result in equitable treatment for linguistically diverse speakers (Ashanti Young, Lippi-Green, 2011; Smitherman & Alim, 2015). However, studies show that changing demographics and an increased exposure to linguistic diversity both in and out of schools, are working to crack the veneer of DAE and give way to opportunities for alternative power dynamics (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Returning to the research questions driving this study, students’ evolving languaging practices and ideologies stood both in alignment with and in opposition to dominant language values. Delpit and Dowdy (2008) name language as the chief lever for reflection and
transmission of culture. Through the language survey, VCIs, and within book clubs, students reflected on language and ways they engaged, resisted, and reimagined their relationship with a range of linguistic varieties. Tensions between adopting dominant language ideologies and embodying a critical stance toward dominant language practices proved challenging in the absence of curricular support—a claim I will explore further in chapter 5. Across the datasets, focal students reported that “standard and appropriate” language practices were both problematic and important for success. In practice, focal students largely employed dominant language practices in whole group, small group, and partnership work in ELA. Within VCI, those same students struggled to articulate the impact of languaging practices; feeling both drawn to and resistant of dominant language ideologies. Together, the observations, survey data, and VCIs show that the focal students were thinking about how traditional, schoolish language norms impact participation, identity, and learning. They were aware of the hierarchical rules that overlay their participation even in the absence of direct curricular guidance regarding the sociolinguistic history of the languages they employ in the classroom. This chapter points to the complex relationship students have with both dominant and critical language ideologies, and how those ideologies may expressed in the ELA classroom—for example, in classroom discourse norms, beliefs about language diversity, and interactions around texts and assignments. Although the critical ways each focal student engaged in practices that disrupted dominant language norms in spoken discourse (through discussions) and/or through written artifacts (text-based assignments) were subtle, such work showcases the potential for students and teachers to renorm their learning spaces towards greater linguistic inclusivity.
CHAPTER V
LINGUISTICALLY MARGINALIZED STUDENTS’ INTERACTION WITH TEXT AND TEXT-RELATED TASKS

This chapter will analyze the varied ways texts influenced academically-oriented discourse. It will examine how texts and text-based participation structures (e.g., whole group, book clubs, text-based partnerships) work to support and suppress students’ repertoires of linguistic practice across the curriculum (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2013), which includes goals, methods, materials, and assessments. Although this is not a study of curriculum, I use that term because it embodies complex layers both “intended” and “hidden” literacies in daily classroom life (Anyon, 1980; Giroux, 1983, Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). As this study is focused on addressing questions of student experiences as they engaged in text-oriented discourse, analysis will draw specifically from curricular texts, discourse structures, and selected student tasks such as text-based graphic organizers. These major aspects of dialogic learning are highlighted due to their impact as both a curricular tool and amplifier of linguistic ideologies. I understand that cross-cutting aspects of curriculum in this way excludes important elements of curriculum studies (specifically, teachers’ instructional moves), but this is a choice consistent with the scope of intention and data collection for this project.

Through this analysis, I examine not only students’ facility and “dexterity in determining which approach from their repertoire is appropriate under which circumstances” (Rogoff, 2003), but also their disruptions of traditional notions of appropriateness to forward more authentic ways of learning through discourse. Reader response theorists, such as Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1995, 1978) argue that, as readers work through a text, they actively construct meaning. This meaning is representative of the connection between the reader and the text and, as such,
Bogdan (1992) points out, “things happen to people when they read, some of them negative” (p. 132, emphasis in the original). Much of what happens to readers and learners in school can be traced back to curricular choices and the ideologies associated with such moves. This has been studied through teachers’ beliefs related to ELA curriculum (e.g., McCarthey, Woodard, & Kang, 2014), and in this chapter will focus on how linguistically nondominant students navigate curricular texts as well as the influence those texts have within multimodal discourse structures.

In support of more positive experiences for people who are traditionally marginalized by single-story, anglo-centered, texts, teachers often cultivate libraries that aim to serve the needs of a more diverse community. Text choice can play a large role as a lever for critical conversations. There is a need for further study on the experiences of linguistically diverse students with texts meant to represent characters who employ linguistic diversity. This chapter will launch with a brief analysis of linguistic diversity in the texts the focal students were given for curricular use (chosen by the teacher) as well as student-selected texts (for independent reading in and out of school). Next, I discuss instances where students were given access to linguistically diverse texts, how they interacted with and around those texts, and their perceptions of those instances relative to learning in school.

This chapter will close with findings on how the focal students processed linguistic diversity as they engaged with texts and each other. Through interpreting the varied ways students interact with text and one another, I explore one of this study’s research questions: How do students perceive these text-oriented discussions? What tools do they use, and how do they connect this work to the larger work of learning in schools?
The Context

Each year, Ms. Limerick looked forward to the Survival Unit. She felt that it was a time when her students began to hone a more critical lens toward societal injustices and “tended to dig deeper into their identity.” Primarily, she felt that the unit topic was engaging and the students would become wrapped up in the texts. The unit was built around a list of seven survival terms (self-reliant, innovative, adaptable, resilient, perseverant, incisive, resourceful) as well as three essential questions curated by Ms. Limerick: *How does reading fiction and nonfiction help us understand other people’s perspectives and cultures? How can we learn more about ourselves when we read? When faced with adversity, what causes some people to prevail?*

During the weeks I spent conducting informal observations (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p.21) in this middle school classroom, I noticed that Ms. Limerick had hundreds of books, many of which reflected urban environments and centered around young people of color, especially Black youth. I also observed students comfortably navigating the classroom library, often selecting texts I knew to have linguistically diverse representations (for example, see Table 8).

Table 8
*Focal Student Self-Selected Texts Sample 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Author</th>
<th>Setting/Primary Character</th>
<th>Sample of Linguistic Diversity within the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Book Thief</em></td>
<td>Germany (WW2) German White girl</td>
<td>“Was ist los mit dem Kind?” Rosa Hubermann' inquired (p. 28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Markus Zusak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Crossover</em></td>
<td>American South (family home) American Black boy</td>
<td>“Yeah I wear it, when I wanna floss.” dad smiles (p. 18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Kwame Alexander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>One Crazy Summer</em></td>
<td>Oakland, CA. (1968)</td>
<td>“Can’t nobody knock down a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4 One of several German words, phrases embedded in English text; “‘What’s wrong with this child?’”

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I came to this study suspecting that if students had access to texts that exemplify linguistically diversity, I would see students linking the linguistic diversity found within those texts to their own use of non-dominant language use in the classroom. Research supports the importance of diverse classroom libraries related to race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. (Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, & Koehler, 2009; McNair, 2008). However, my analysis of these students’ text-based discourse concerning these texts shows low frequency of meaningful conversations related to language diversity. This encouraged me to engage in a deeper analysis of the texts, which revealed some interesting insights about linguistic diversity in popular YA texts.

Ms. Limerick’s experiences as a teacher lead her to understand the importance of building the literacies (Street, 1984) of students, meaning her ELA course content involved experiences not only with socially diverse texts but also with a broad range of tools and structures meant to surface meaning making. Along with extensive access to classroom libraries and knowledgeable teachers, each student at this middle school was assigned an iPad to support their learning. Ms. Limerick tried to “integrate technology as often as it makes sense,” stating that she thinks about three major modalities—the discursive structure, the paper scaffold, and the digital connection. These three supports are utilized in relationship to their purpose and the mood of the classroom with the intention of high-quality instruction and authentic learning. The second, what I will refer to as the written artifacts, relates to the paper-based components which
often anchored text-based discourse. Ms. Limerick used written artifacts most days and often, these written artifacts were prompts for discussions or graphic organizers to scaffold students through their discursive learning activities. The third modality was the digital learning through use of an iPad. Students used these tablets in a variety of ways to document, research, and collaborate with one another. Students carried their tablets piled right alongside their books. This technology was deeply embedded into the daily school-life of each student. At the start of my time observing in the classroom, I became more and more aware that their use of technology was going to factor into my research questions in a way I hadn’t anticipated. Students’ multimodal classroom experiences seemed to influence the ways they engaged in academically oriented discourse activities (research question one) and how they reflected on those experiences (research question 2).

The ways in which students’ everyday use of multimodal tools build relationships and create meaning in collaborative groups seemed worthy of analysis. In this classroom, students navigated their assignments and the discourse structure (book club, partnership, whole group, etc.) through a multimodal approach. Therefore, the last section of this findings chapter will analyze how students navigate participation structures as they work through multimodal discourses. I will start by analyzing more traditional, spoken text-based discourse activities, then move toward multimodal collaborations intended to enrich the text-oriented learning. Specifically, I explore the ways these adolescents bring multiple modes—such as embodied communication, language, physical text, and technology—into play during their text-based discourse activities in school. Through this analysis I will surface the barriers and access points to centering discussions, use, and understandings of linguistic diversity.
Text as a Critical Dialogic Tool: 

Representation, Linguistic Diversity, and Boundary Expansion

There is a wide body of research supporting the notion that all children need access to text that represent traditionally marginalized groups (Bishop, 1990; Gay, 2002; Styles, 1998; Tatum, 2008). These scholars have often written about the importance of texts representing corresponding ages, races, ethnicities, sexualities, and situations of their intended audiences. The metaphor of providing “windows and mirrors” is often used in schools (Bishop, 1990; Styles, 1998) to illustrate the need to provide students access to books that allow them to look (windows) at other people, places, problems and learn from the unfamiliar; as well as to gaze (mirror) at the people, places, and problems reflective of their own situations. Researchers have studied the importance of access to these types of representative texts as a lever for building an authentic reading life, specifically, to cultivating students’ capacity for and interest in critical, text-oriented discussions (Tatum, 2006, Brown et. al, 2017). One under-explored way to build students capacity through representation is by being mindful of the rich linguistic repertoires represented in contemporary American classrooms, and in popular texts. Studies have also shown the importance of students exploring their diverse languaging skills with teachers in schools (De’Warte, 2012). The following section will focus analysis of diverse linguistic representation in text and its relationship to students’ linguistic ideologies.

Teacher-Driven Text choices: Books that Will Grab Their Attention

Ms. Limerick often spoke about the importance of texts as both windows and mirrors (Bishop, 1990; Styles, 1998), and wanting to provide her students with opportunities to see a “wider perspective on the world…” When asked about her goals for supporting her students as
they developed a critical eye toward representative text she explained what she saw as a
contextualized complexity specific to the town where this school is situated:

We are in a very special place, [city name]…. and I'm not quite sure that the kids are
really as aware of what it's like in other places in the world. I really don't think that they
get it. Um, you know, having conversations with colleagues, they'll [students] read a piece
of text, and it'll have something in there about the minority, uh, of people targeted—and
they don't see themselves as a minority—they can't identify what that really means. Um, I
don't know that kids can articulate why they talk differently in different situations. It's
interesting. It’s important to explore.

Ms. Limerick’s reflection regarding the ways her minority students might not identify
with experiences of other minorities or be able to understand what it means to be targeted,
echoes some of the complicated ways all students are working both within and outside of
dominant ideologies regarding race, and language. Beyond helping them to better see
experiences outside of their classroom and neighborhoods, she used her library to bolster
students’ sense of membership within her classroom. It was her goal for each of her students to
be able to easily find books that were representative of their lives. She worked hard to provide
access to these types of text and get them in front of her students in a wide variety of ways.
During whole group instruction and discussion, she drew upon diverse titles as mentors, read-
alouds, and material for lessons on “close reading.” In small group formats when she clustered
two, three, or four students together for collaborative work, the text-oriented discussions were
overwhelmingly situated in books with characters of color.

Titles for the Survival Book Club Unit were selected “a few years ago” to showcase
characters who are both working to survive an external conflict and challenged by internal
struggles. Ms. Limerick felt good about the text choices and when I asked her about the process for texts selection

Each of the books Ms. Limerick chose for book club in the observation unit centered around a person of color experiencing peril: *Homeless Bird* by Gloria Whelan, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park, *Crossing the Wire* by Will Hobbs, *Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere* by Julie Lamana, etc. (see Table 9). Each of these titles are set in non-English speaking countries (except for *Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere*, which takes place in the Ninth Ward in New Orleans, a location with its own strong dialectical norms, often referred to as Langinappe or “Yap,” Sheidlower, 2005). Given the setting and primary conflict of each story, it would be reasonable to infer that these books would be rich with examples of linguistic diversity and translinguaging practices. In most instances, the authors of the curricular text, although set in non-English speaking countries with entirely non-English speaking characters chose not to include examples of diverse languaging practices aligned to the characters authentic linguistic repertoire (See Table 9).

However, in the few cases where non-dominant English words or phrases were used, they most often fell into the following categories: (1) proper nouns (names of characters and settings), (2) dialogue, or (3) derogatory descriptions. For example, in the book *Crossing the Wire*, a story following a young Mexican boy from his village, across the shared border between Mexico and the United States. The main character, Victor, is in conversation with native Spanish speakers who are either traveling the same journey or in conflict with his safe passage along the road. However, of the minimal examples of Spanish language included in this book, the majority of them are demonstrative of discriminatory labels (*mojado* which, when directly translated, means “wet” but can often be used as a racial slur *wetback*, referring to an undocumented immigrant
coming from Mexico, etc.). In *Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere*, characters move into translanguaging most often when they are giving a directive, “You need to tell your sister to stop bein’ so triflin’ and weird!” (p.4), or insulting another character, “I ain’t never seen no one look so pitiful.” (p. 2). In *Crossing the Border*, Spanish words are used for labeling groups, with embedded negativity (“I’ve been a cholo, a ratero, and a bajadero, but I have graduated,” p. 146). Below is a chart with the titles ordered by frequency of linguistic diversity in ascending order. I have included a more extensive text analysis in the appendix (see Appendix E).

Table 9
*Book Club Texts Selected by the Teacher for the Survival Unit*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Author</th>
<th>Setting/Primary Character</th>
<th>Level of Linguistic Diversity (L-M-H)</th>
<th>Linguistic Diversity Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Bird By: Gloria Whelan</td>
<td>India Indian girl</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Long Walk To Water By: Linda Sue Park</td>
<td>Sudan/America Sudanese Girl Sudanese Boy</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing the Wire By: Will Hobbs</td>
<td>Mexico/America (Southwestern border) Mexican Boy</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>“…crimes against innocent mojados…”(p. 152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere By: Julie Lamana</td>
<td>New Orleans (Ninth Ward) Black Girl</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>“I ain’t never seen no one look so pitiful.” (p. 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When trying to better understand the seemingly missed opportunity in these texts to represent linguistic diversity in rich and deep ways, I began to look more closely at the individual authors of each novel. All but one of these texts, *A Long Walk to Water*, were written
by White authors and each title was written by someone not of the same racial or ethnic group as their primary character. This analysis speaks to the research showing the importance, not only of books with representational characters and situations, but also of the power of those stories written by authors who are of the same race, ethnicity, and/or gender as a lever for authenticity (Gangi, 2008; Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, Koehler, 2009; McNair, 2008). Unfortunately, publishing companies have been slow to put forth texts written by people of color. One study analyzed samples from a collection of over 32,000 books suggested by a team of popular curriculum authors for transitional readers and found that, of the 151 authors, only 12 titles (2.2%) were written by people of color (Hugh-Hassell et al., 2009). The text that were selected for the work of the Survival Book Club unit represented only one author of color, echoing the findings from the Hugh-Hassell, et al. (2009) study.

There is no piece of literature which stands as ideologically neutral. Each text selected by teachers for curricular purposes is particularly important as it pulls on world views, values, and linguistic repertoires held as valuable to the author; and de facto by the teachers/institution who uses the text. Taken together, these anglo-authored titles, with only cosmetic—and often negative—use of representative language interpolate a false sense of honoring diversity when in this case they did not serve as high-leverage tools for discussions regarding the power of linguistic diversity.

**Student-driven Text Choice: Books that Fly off the Shelves**

Comparatively, the texts selected by students for independent reading were more representative of authors of color and/or authors who are writing about characters from their own racial or ethnic group: *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia, *Crossover* by Kwame Alexander, *Watson’s Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis, etc. (see table 10). Ms.
Limerick’s classroom library was visited daily by students and books were exchanged regularly. Students knew how to browse for texts and regularly exchanged books between one another.

When analyzed, two themes surfaced across the student selected text which differed from the text chosen for the curriculum: (1) Student-selected texts had a higher frequency of linguistic diversity, (2) instances of linguistic diversity were used to convey both positive and negative connotations. I will unpack this further in a later section, but below I outline a truncated list of such titles with setting, character, and a sample of the type of linguistic diversity found within the text.

Table 10
*Focal Students’ Self-Selected Books Over the Course of the Study: Sample 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-Selected Titles</th>
<th>Setting/Primary Character</th>
<th>Level of Linguistic Diversity (L-M-H)</th>
<th>Linguistic Diversity Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Crazy Summer</strong></td>
<td>Oakland, CA. USA (1968)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>“Can’t nobody knock down a mountain.” (p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Rita Williams-Garcia</td>
<td>American Black girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind</strong></td>
<td>Malawi, Africa Malawian Black boy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>“Eh, bambo-”Which is like saying, “Hey man,”— “so sorry for you!” p.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: William Kamkwamba, Brian Mealer,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Esperanza Rising</strong></td>
<td>Aguascalientes, Mexico/Southern California USA</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Aquel que hoy se cae, se levantará mañana (prologue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Pam Munoz Ryan</td>
<td>Mexican Latina girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Street</strong></td>
<td>Detroit, MI. USA</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>I searched my brain for this word, trying to find the Creole word for it, or the French one-détener (p.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Ibi Zoboi</td>
<td>Haitian Black girl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Translated into English: He who falls today may rise tomorrow
Opportunities to Talk About Language and Race Through Text-Based Discussions

For the students in this study, text were interesting representations of the dichotomy between dominant and non-dominant language practices. Students sometimes used books to engage in conversations of inequity related to race and language practices. During conversations about the function of diverse languages (including dialects and registers of English) in text, students held conflicted views regarding the appropriateness of such tools within texts. Even students who employed differentiated dialects and languaging skills, such as AAE, did not always support the use of these language practices within texts used for school settings. Geneva Smitherman (1986) describes the linguistic push-pull felt by African-Americans as a conflicted existence between feeling pushed toward a White “Americanizing of language” (p. 11) while at the same time pulled away from it. Lippi-Green (2011) argues that the push-pull sensation is especially prominent in school settings where code-switching is often the most progressive approach to language diversity. In these partner/peer, text-centered discussions, students were prone to engage in conversations about the linguistic diversity presented in their books. They were engaged, entertained, confused, and at times even frustrated by examples of translanguaging in literature. Below are a few examples of the conflicted ways text-based language practices were discussed in small groups and during reflection interviews (see table 11).
### Voiced Ideologies on Linguistic Diversity in Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset-Based Opinions</th>
<th>Deficit-Based Opinions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The languages are interesting….they help” - Jackie</td>
<td>“Stupid Spanish!!” - Eva (non-focal participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s not jacked...you just can’t speak it-I’ll show you” -Rudolpho (non-focal participant)</td>
<td>“It’s hard to understand because her English is so bad” -Lew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You want to know how they sound-not how they are heard” -Jackie</td>
<td>“That’s not how real people talk” -Cameron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“By your looks they don’t think you have the time to speak their language.” -Anika</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When students spoke of linguistic diversity in texts in an asset-based way, they pointed to ways linguistic diversity supported a deeper understanding of character emotions, the ways they felt more connected to the story, and how linguistically non-dominant language use in texts drew them to the text. Students also referred to challenges they had when encountering linguistic diversity in text. Often these challenges were aligned to gaps in linguistic understanding which lead to frustration while reading.

Because Ms. Limerick filled her classroom library with high-interest books, protected daily independent reading time in class, and supported their independent reading through one-on-one conferences and check-in’s, the students we comfortable talking about books with one another and with me as an outside researcher. These text-based conversations elucidated many interesting observations regarding power, privilege, self-marginalization, and bias. Students spoke of hierarchical power structures centered around when linguistic diversity is used and whose diversity counted as academic in nature. In these instances, students are relating the notion of “academic” to grading and school-centered discourse “appropriateness.”
One such example of the type of reflection students engaged in regarding texts and linguistic power can come in a conversation with Lew. An avid reader, Lew’s learning space was always piled high with a wide variety of YA texts. Dystopian-fiction, graphic novels, and urban verse were among his favorites. He was very comfortable talking about individual texts as well as across genres. He also held powerful insight into common uses of language diversity in texts. The passage below is taken from a conversation he and I had regarding how authors use language diversity and the role of non-dominant language in schools. Lew’s astute insight is critical to understanding the implicit and long-standing messages given in books; even those rich with instances of non-dominant language practices.

1 Clare: have you read books that have used-like you said, shortened words, what
2 you would call slang?
4 Normally, it’s when the two characters are talking rather than, like, a narrator or something.
5 Clare: Oh, okay. That’s a real interesting observation...
6 Lew: So, like, it’ll be like the two—two characters maybe talking—like,
7 uh—like, talking about where to go somewhere—or when they wanna—like,
8 meet up somewhere or somethin’ like that. So, like, if you do see it in the book,
9 it’s mainly gonna be more dialogue rather than, like, the narrator or the
10 storyteller, the one who knows—who we follow in the story.
11 Clare: Okay. Do you think that works for—for books when they—
12 Lew: Yeah. Cuz it’s like, uh, for—when books do it, like, uh, sometimes, like,
13 it really can, uh, like, connect dialogue. Like, it’s—if they talked in, like, uh, in
books in perfect grammar, which not everybody does, I guess, so people will,
like, talk in, like, shortened phrases—more real, straight talk.

16 Clare: mmm-yeah.

17 Lew: - rather than, like, just talking in completely just formal grammar. Like,
we'll use catch phrases—

19 Clare: okay, interesting…

20 Lew: —and, like, all that, and, like, uh, a phrase, like, how—there are, like,
phrases like, uh, uh—[finger snapping around in a circle]—I'm trying to think
of one, like—once in a blue moon….or like, we straight—so like; idioms and
also like just straight up talking—you know?

24 Clare: so, like—the straight up talking; can you say more about that?

25 Lew: Yeah-like...talking how we would talk to our friends; like the most
enjoyable way—it's real but like in school, it's really just how the characters
talk to each other.

28 Clare: Mm-hmm. Do—and do you think there's a place for that in school?

29 That “straight up talking”?

30 Lew: Yeah.

31 Clare: Yeah?

32 Lew: Yeah. Like—cuz I feel like you—you should be able to talk how it feels
most enjoyable—or, like, easiest. Like, I feel like you shouldn't always have
to talk in, like, most formal, but if you are going to talk, like, in these
shortened words, I would say use it, like, in talking to other people rather than
using it for an essay, cuz, like, essays, they want to, uh, like, measure your
Lew articulates important thinking related to text-embedded language diversity. He concedes that many of the books he has access to in schools may include language diversity, but stipulates that these languaging practices are not often employed by the omnipotent narrator. Here he is making a connection between linguistic diversity and power dynamics exemplified within texts. For example, when he points to authors using linguistic diversity for the characters as they speak but not for the narrator/storyteller, he is cuing into the subversive ways dominant language ideologies are reflected and reified in literature and in schools. According to Lew, the primary narrator—the ultimate “authority” in the text—isn’t speaking in linguistically non-dominant ways. The narrator, the standard English speaker, is the one that the readers should follow; with this rationale, the linguistic diversity within the text is used for entertainment and not as powerful communication.

This dynamic can work to exacerbate the marginalization of linguistically non-dominant speakers. Scholars have problematized this phenomena for the past twenty years. In 1998, Silverstein wrote about the “a culture of monoglot standardization” (p. 284), in which he pointed to strong dominant and often assumed linguistic norms which persist, regardless of audience. Said another way, “people embrace notions such as “Standard English” even if they cannot locate them empirically” (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 151). Lew elucidates this blind adherence in the above exchange; the culture of monoglot standardization continues to keep a tight hold on books used in schools and reverberates in the lessons learned by the readers of those texts.

Mid-way through our conversation about books and linguistic tools used by authors, Lew adjusted his stance. He moved from an evaluative lens in the form of a literary analysis of sorts
(lines 6-15) to a personal and peer reflection about his own language use, “we'll use catchphrases—” and, “talking how we would talk to our friends” (starting on line 18).

Throughout this conversation, he positioned himself from both emic and etic perspectives, which exemplifies his complex view of linguistic variation in texts.

It is important to note the connection Lew draws between linguistic appropriateness and knowledge measurement (line 36). Across the study, Lew engaged in discussions about the importance of linguistic diversity. He used both AAE and SE in conversation with me and more so, in conversation with his peers. Lew spoke about feeling insecure when communicating with his Polish grandparents and how important it was for him to “learn their language so he could learn more about their past,” and he reflected with pride when he was able to “try out some words and phrases,” they didn’t know he knew. As discussed in chapter 4, Lew evokes multiple linguistic memberships, however he continues to reconstitute exclusive dominant language ideologies associated with the language of learning. As a savvy reader, Lew was able to surface subtle ways in which the texts he had been reading work to reify dominant language ideologies. Lew has growing up in school system committed, at least by mission statement, to closing the opportunity gap for Black boys; however, Lew’s subconscious lessons learned in school are misaligned to the official district goals.

Dominant language ideologies continued to surface in conversations with each of the focal students in relation to texts. For example, Anika asserted that, although she speaks with her friends in powerful ways using what she terms as a more comfortable language and what linguists would refer to as, AAE, they “usually didn’t learn anything” together (VCI, 12/20/2017). When discussing the use of AAE in Money Hungry, a YA novel by Sharon Flake, Cameron also dismissed the dialect choice, explaining, “nobody talks that way,” undermining
potential lessons to be learned from the storyline associated with the speaker. Each of these assertions uphold linguistically dominant cultural modeling (Holland & Quinn, 1987)—those “taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it” (p. 4). Unfortunately, the argument that Lew, Anika, and Cameron are making here isn’t nuanced; it suggests that there is one right or “appropriate” way to talk in school. In fact, research regarding use of “appropriate” English language dialects to measure learning in schools, has been problematized by critical sociolinguists in a variety of ways over the past decade (Brown et al. 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Alim & Smitherman, 2012; Kinloch, 2009.).

Another example of the complex ways students see potential benefits of linguistic diversity, yet remain marginalized by texts, occurred during a semi-structured interview with Jackie, who spoke about why she likes to read books that include language variation. This conversation thread started in an unlikely place, the fiction-fantasy series, *Harry Potter*. She was reading *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* during independent reading, which she had brought it to the interview space. When I asked her about it, she mentioned that this was an example of a book that she really liked and that it had characters using other languages. The *Harry Potter* series is full of British dialect, but, when I asked Jackie to show me an example of the type of linguistic variation she was referring to she pointed to a few places in the book where the villain, Lord Voldemort was speaking the protagonist, Harry Potter, in “Parseltongue,” a snake language (invented by the author for the series). When I asked her about instances where authentic languages were used in books, she pointed to the *Harry Potter* series and specifically to this as an example for including “different languages” as important in literature because, “Even
through the languages were made up for the book, it really helped the reader get into the story.”  
When I asked her more about this concept of language helping to authenticate text, she expanded her examples to include Spanish (student example text: *Esperanza Rising*), and “sort of slang…” (Student example text: *Money Hungry*).

Jackie held up the language use of native Spanish speakers, dialects of African Americans, and even snake-like, fantasy villains such as Lord Voldemort, as appropriate and enriching for texts used in school settings. However, she struggled to envision languaging practices present in her own home as viable for use in schools.

**Clare:** Have you read books that move throughout languages. For example, they might have Spanish-language words, or—

**Jackie:** They are really cool because they usually explain about what they mean and they like...I don’t know how to say it ((laughter)) but they, um….

**Clare:** What about books that aren’t foreign languages but rather books that have other ways of saying English...have you read any of those kind of books?

**Jackie:** Yeah, lots of us choose books like that. Ms. Limerick has tons of those right here ((motions to the classroom)). Those fly off the shelves.

**Clare:** Can you talk a little bit about why you think those books are so popular?

**Jackie:** Those books ((begins to spin her pen)) I like how they have different ways of saying things, it makes me more interested in how they say them, more interested than just what they mean...the languages are interesting.

**Clare:** Why do you think authors make the choice to include different languages or different ways of saying something?
Jackie: They do it when characters are talking, like to help us see the character-like from their point of view. It helps to know what they sound like...not just what the narrator hears.

Clare: I know that you speak Tagalog and some Kapampangan have you ever come across books that are written with Filipino characters or characters that speak in either of those languages?

Jackie: ((laughing and shaking her head)) No...no—no ((puts pen down on top of *Harry Potter*)) I don’t think they even...I don’t((looks up to ceiling and then shakes head back down))—no. We don’t have that.

Clare: Did you ever wonder why? Like, would you want that option?

Jackie: I mean, kids in my class don’t know my language, I don’t know if they would be interested... (VCI, 12/20/2017)

Jackie’s reaction to the question about whether she had seen the language of her home in written text at school stands in stark contrast to the everyday experiences of her White, linguistically-dominant peers. When asked if she would want texts that contained either of the dialects of her home, she referred to the comfort of her peers rather than answering for her own preference. Here Jackie is reinforcing the importance of linguistic windows and mirrors in books but not as much as it would relate to all languages, even one of her own.

Not all students felt uneasy, the way Jackie did, about representations of their home language in texts. Mid-way through my study, Ms. Limerick stopped me as I entered the room in early December to tell me about an exchange that occurred just before I had arrived in which one student, a monolingual English speaker and another, a bilingual Spanish/English student. Ms. Limerick was very excited to let me know that they, “got into it about language!” (Transitional
Talk, 12/18/2017). Eva, a study participant who was White and monolingual, was reading a passage from a predominantly English-language text with instances of Spanish translanguage. She was struggling with the Spanish words and after a few minutes of reading the passage she tossed the book away from her and remarked, “Stupid Spanish!” Rodolfo, a native Spanish speaker sitting at the same table, glared at her, reaching over to see the text and then picking up the book from where it lay on the table to read the passage. “It’s not stupid—you just don’t know it. Here, I can help you…” he went on to educate her by translating the words she didn’t know. The two quickly fell back into reading their texts independently. Ms. Limerick was taken aback by Eva’s negative perspective and quick dismissal of the book based on the language. But she held Rodolfo’s response as typical of the kind of environment she was trying to build, one of compassion and learning. This example is illustrative of dialect that can happen between peers when linguistically non-dominant students feel empowered to advocate for their language. Ms. Limerick did not intercede and Rudolfo and Eva engaged in a brief text-based exchange which challenged some overt deficit ideologies.

**A myth of linguistic diversity.** Even students who claimed nondominant languages and were observed communicating in powerful ways through heritage languages such as AAE, struggled to rectify the use of these languages in school-based texts. For example, in one instance Cameron and Lew—both users of AAE—were reading partners discussing an excerpt from the novel, *Money Hungry*, which is rich with AAE. In this text, the main character, Rasberry Hill, a thirteen year old, African American girl, is consumed with getting money through all legal ways available to her. This book is written from a first person perspective and thus Rasberry’s dialect, AAE is the medium of the storyline. Below is a brief excerpt from the text:
Lew looked up from the book and commented, “This is so hard to read because her English is so bad!” Cameron, grabbing the text from Lew, quickly skimming to himself remarked, “Dude, nobody even talks like that!” They two boys seemed content to dismiss the dialectical choice of this author, dismissing the AAE as a whole and relegating the texts as simply hard to read. When we consider who might be the implied audience for a book like *Money Hungry*, speakers of AAE, such as Cameron and Lew might come to mind. However, the imagined linguistic norms of a school-sanctioned text seemed to overpower their membership within this dialectical group. The work that Lew and Cameron did here to negatively position Black English has been documents in research for years. For example, Jordan (1985), in her role as a highschool teacher-researcher, explored how students “Black English was positioned negatively in relationship to academic english” as they worked through the AAE within Alice Walker’s, *The Color Purple* (as described by Kinloch, 2010).

**Text-oriented Talk as a Critical Dialogic Tool: Initiating Conversations about Race**

Ms. Limerick described her aim for discourse structures for this class with the goal of trying to keep a ratio of 70% student talk and 30% teacher talk. She described this ratio as important in that she was continually trying to provide a space for authentic discussion:

*Figure 11. Excerpt from Money Hungry by Sharon Flake (p. 2).*

Momma. She and me is usually tight. But this morning, I ain’t even speaking to her. Yesterday, I seen her getting out of that Lexus, kissing Dr. Mitchell, my girlfriend’s divorced dad, on the cheek. Laughing, like he was sooo funny.

I don’t ever remember Momma dating nobody. Not since she and Daddy got divorced a few years back. It ain’t so bad she’s dating somebody, but she could at least be straight up with me about it, especially since it’s Zora’s dad she’s hanging with.
Um, you know, depending on what it is and, you know, whether things are going the way that I want them to, the more I can have them up—especially this group, cuz they just have to move to think—up and talking. Um, I—I really try to—to put those structures into the learning where it's "Okay, get up and talk about these words," "Get up and—and talk about this," "Turn and talk to your partner." So, um, I can hear them—and they can hear one another. Really want to have this classroom be a place for authentic discussions—takes trust and time and lots of trying, right? (Interview, 1/19/2018)

The flow of academically-oriented discussions in room 204 primarily centered around whole group instruction, quick episodes of whole group IRE, and small group format such as book clubs and table group collaborations. Ms. Limerick organized her seventy-eight minutes of English Language Arts (ELA) to forward opportunities for discussion on a daily basis, during which, students evoked traditional discourse norms with ease (e.g., Initiate-Respond-Evaluate, “IRE,” Cazden, 2001). She worked the room through constantly moving and looking to lift children into a learning space by arranging the learning in whole group, small group and partnerships. It was common for students to be in each type of collaboration within one ELA session. Students were responsive to being publicly redirected, called upon without volunteering participation, and actively engaging in small groups. Within the normed discourse structures (described in greater detail in chapter 4), students navigated back and forth between assigned text-oriented discussions, and non-academic social exchanges with ease. Opportunities to “talk about text” offer two potentials opportunities critical for learning: (1) opportunities to navigate linguistic and racial boundaries, and (2) opportunities to engage in dialogue mediated by modalities and tasks.
Opportunities to Navigate Linguistic & Racial Boundaries

In this section, I will unpack instances where students negotiated linguistic and racial boundaries across the following, varied discourse activities: (1) a book club discussion based on race and identity; (2) a partnership discussion involving the policing of deficit language ideologies enacted through two distinct discourse strategies, one of *ignorance* and one *implicature* (Anagnostopoulou, Everett, & Carey, 2013).

**Example 1: Cameron Attempts to Initiate a Conversation about Race in *Crossing a Wire*.** During the book club unit, students met in groups of four to assign reading, read, and engage in discussion oriented around their text. Book clubs proved to be a generative place for some critical conversations regarding power dynamics, connections to lived experiences, and critiques of society. A tension not often explored was the way each text positioned the readers, meaning none of the groups engaged in conversations about the linguistic variations present or lacking within each text. However, there were several instances when students did engage a critical lens toward power dynamics and race relations during their text-oriented discussions. In one example, from the group discussing *Crossing the Wire*, Cameron challenged his group by insisting that the main character, Victor, who had been picked up by border police for lack of official papers, was being treated unfairly based on his race and country of origin. The student went further to make parallels to racialized discrimination in Lake City with African American teens.

1 **Cameron:** Dude doesn’t have an identity. They don’t know he Mexican and not from that other place. He’s a nobody—just brown. They don’t know his name or nothin’

3 ’bout him but they still took him in. That’s how they do. That’s how they do in Lake City too.
4 Lew: You say you know somebody?

5 Cameron: Huh? He was a suspect...suspects always get treated with something wrong.

7 (White female student disrupts turn by diverting conversation to another section of the text)

This exchange was one of the few times students engaged in conversations where race was directly named in conversation. Cameron’s reflection surfaces issues of identity and race as he draws connections between the behaviors of the border police from the realistic fiction text, to the life, in this case, the Lake City Police Department (line 1-3). Lew continues this discussion turn, by asking Cameron to say more about his example. Cameron continues by making a generalization backed by both the text (Victor hasn’t done anything to be criminalized) and in life (people with brown skin being assumed guilty until proven innocent). Cameron’s response echoes the findings from Bolgatz (2006) where students used text as a lever to go “beyond factual understanding to make connections between ideas and events” (p. 263). The limited scope of the conversation echoes the warning given by Collins (1990), “Oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group.” (p. xiii) In this instance, Cameron’s provocative prompt was taken up by Lew, another Black student but rejected by the White members of their group in favor of content that was more closely related to a direct read of the text.

During our reflection conversation I asked Cameron about this moment during book club (12/12/18) because I wanted to know more about what he was thinking while he pursued his argument even when his group seemed to dismiss his point. Showing him a play-back of his
monologue, Cameron explained that he needed to “come with the facts,” and “stand up for his side” in order to be heard. He went on to explain that some kids in the group wouldn’t understand how Victor would feel because they never have been stopped and questioned. Adding to that, he felt that the conversation went in a different direction at that point because “people don’t want to talk about the stuff—they don’t know about life” (field notes, 12/12/18).

Cameron’s claim that people don’t want to talk about what they don’t know is important to understanding how anglonormativity works to silence non-dominant experiences. Cameron took a risk by opening up a critical line of discourse to address issues of race and power during this text-based discussion. He went further to draw a parallel to those same issues in real life and close to home. His text-based risk was not taken up in his group nor did fight for continuing to discuss his topic. The conversation flow, in which Cameron, a Black child, prompts a multi-raced peer group (four students—two White and two Black) with a text-based comparison between unjust treatment of a children of color in the book and in “Lake City” represents a trend across the study in which race-based observations, comments, and questions tended to be raised by the students of color. This exchange is representative of the findings of several studies regarding race-based conversations in schools within a heterogeneously racial group; these studies have shown that students of color often raise issues of equity and White students choose to not participate or extend the conversation in productive, equitable ways (Pixley & VanDerPloeg, 2000; Schaffer & Skinner, 2009). The example of Cameron, Lew and their book club group is just one of multiple examples of possible critical discourse points followed by a lack of uptake within this group and observed other book clubs groups. Over the course of the study, instances of critical text-based discourse such as this did happen, but were often short-
lived. Moreover, conversations where race is named and problematized were most often set into motion by students of color and dismissed by White students.

In our first conversation, Cameron’s assertion that school, and by proxy the people in school, “wanna force us to be regular citizens” (discussed in chapter four), seemed to color the way he approached his role in text-oriented talk. Cameron continued to explore how school forces him and his linguistically non-dominant peers to be “like a regular citizen” as he was aware of the ways his White peers choose to stay within their realm of experience and how many curricular texts supported this dominant hierarchy. Throughout his reflections, he evoked a hierarchical ethos of schooling, referring to an adversarial “us and them” narrative that can be aligned with an end goal of assimilation.

Examples 2 & 3: Cameron & Phillip Negotiate Racial Counter-Narratives in *Sahara Shipwreck*. When students were given the opportunity to work together in partnerships, their conversations tended to stay close to surface facts regarding the texts. However, there were some instances of critical text-oriented conversations. Research has shown the importance of holding space in the curricula for counternarratives that work against dominant racial narratives (Brown, et al, 2017). Presenting students with disrupted dominant ideologies is the type of critical work intended by the district’s Commitment to Equity, discussed in Chapter 3. Ms. Limerick’s choice to use *Sahara Shipwreck* as the mentor text for the Survival Unit presented just such an opportunity. This particular texts presented challenges regarding its surface content (set off the northern coast of African the mid-nineteenth century), and text complexity (Fountas and Pinnell level Z), as well as the more subconscious content challenges (nonfiction-narrative focused on a White American enslaved by Africans—James Riley, enslaved by a tribe of Bedouins off the coast of West Africa in 1815). This story acts as a racial and ethnically based counter-narrative
central to this story. In their review of research on classroom conversations of race and educational inequities, Brown, Bloome, Morris, Power-Carter, and Willis (2017) point to research that advocates, “it is not the surface level participation structure itself that matters but rather incorporation of the students in problematizing taken-for-granted notions of race and language” (p. 463). When I asked Ms. Limerick how she set the students up for this element of the story she explained that she wanted to “Just see where they would go with it.” and therefore did not specifically mention the dynamic (Transitional Talk, 11/27/17).

Although there was no direct instruction or elucidation regarding roles of race and/or slavery within this true story in the framing of Sahara Shipwreck, Ms. Limerick did provide information about the physical location of West Africa and the time period. Absent here is the type of critical framing Brown et al. (2017) suggest support “exploration of language, race, power, and notions of self.” In the absence of critical text-oriented framing, students focused on the more salacious, surface facts of the survival story (third-degree sunburns, eating excrement, etc.). Many of the conversations about this text thus seemed to exhibit missed opportunities for critical and racially-oriented conversation.

However, one example of students navigating both the text and established race narratives occurred between Cameron and Philip when they were assigned to work together as partners to debrief Sahara Shipwreck. During this discussion, the boys struggled to come to a consensus on how to complete the assignment, which was an exit slip prompting them to articulate important and interesting aspects of the story. Each time Phillip attempted to center their conversation on a prompt related to the exit slip assignment, Cameron would suggest an alternative line of discussion related to the text. In this except from longer conversation, they are reviewing a section of the texts describing the perilous conditions in which Captain Riley and his
crew resorted to drinking their urine to stay alive.

1 Philip: wha-? Well, I’m working on the exit slip...reading about how they drank their
own pee to stay hydrated...ôdisgustingô ((tosses exit slip onto tablet)).

3 Cameron: Well, I mean, ((gaze on shoe//adjusting his shoe))...nah. I wanna talk about 4
the Captain. I mean, what did that captain drink-what did he drink?

5 Phillip: the captain who was a slave?

6 Cameron: NA::H-((repeatedly opening and closing the hook and loop strap of his shoe 7
at a faster rate))the captain wasn’t no slave...ôthe f(inaudible)ô. What did the captain 8

\textit{DRINK}?

* Transcription Key:
  
  (((embodied communication)))
  
  -: word cut/dropped off
  
  ôword/phraseô: said softly
  
  :: lengthened syllable, e.g. d::ude


The boys went back and forth about this fact but the most interesting aspect of their
exchange is Cameron’s dismissal of the text-based fact that the White, American captain was a
slave. As both boys stuck to their positions, each of their physical positioning was indicative of
their challenging text-based discussion (Harre, 2012). Although he didn’t articulate his
discomfort verbally, Cameron’s body language and positioning was closed off to his partner and
he signified a sense of unrest by repeatedly opening and closing the Velcro on his shoe through
the majority of the exchange.

In another instance, Cameron and Phillip actively engaged with the counter narrative
presented in this story as they struggled to situate the facts of this story with the more frequently
studied nonfiction slavery facts explored in American schools centered around Black-African slaves and White captures. Students had been asked to meet in partnerships to discuss the text and complete an exit slip: *How does the character in the text respond to the important conflict they face?*

Cameron and Phillip spent a significant amount of time talking *around* some of the key counter-narrative issues presented in this text; namely a white-skinned, American men enslaved by brown-skinned African men. Although the boys never expressly discuss this story element while they were having a text-based discussion, Cameron surfaced this issue twice during the co-creation of the Would-You-Rather game. Here is an excerpt from their conversation, which was also discussed in chapter 4 as an example of resistance.

**Cameron:** I need that pencil, bro ((reaching for Philip’s pencil in his hand))

**Philip:** ((hands Cameron pencil))

**Cameron:** Okay…((writing on back of exit slip)) eat-flesh….or-be-cannibal…

[  

**Philip:** Wait, eat your own flesh or someone else’s cause I don’t wanna, like, I don’t wanna chomp by perfect skin off ((nervous laughter))

**Cameron:** Okay so…would you rather pick cotton or get whipped?

**Philip:** Wait—((covering head with hands)) where are you getting pick cotton now?

**Cameron:** Dude—come on now; slaves? So which-pick cotton or get beat?

**Philip:** Huh? Aren’t we supposed to keep in this story? (waves paper back and forth-points down to tablet))You’re all over the place now…((head drops in hands and shakes back and forth))...I can’t…

[  

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**Cameron:** Yo—you’re not bringing anything interesting—just let’s keep going...

*Multimodal Transcription Key:*

((embodied communication))

- : word cut/dropped off

[ : latched phrases

: lengthened syllable:: ; e.g. d::ude


The conversation between Philip and Cameron evokes the findings from a study by Anagnostopoulos, Everett, and Carey (2013) in which participants employ two distinct discourse strategies, one of *ignorance* and one *implicature*, while engaging in race talk in school. The strategy of ignorance, employed here by Philip, the White student, works to distance him from the narrative that Cameron, the Black student, is trying to pursue. Philip’s comments suggest an ease with conceptual instantiations of slavery, “anybody can be a slave” he remarks in a casual manner. Likewise, he shows a level of ignorance when he is confused by Cameron’s connection between picking cotton to the text-based slave narrative that doesn’t include that example. In contrast, Cameron positions himself along the lines of the strategy of implicature, described by Anagnostopoulos et al. (2013) as a tool to “suppress or confront, respectively, the relationship between past racial injustice and present-day inequalities…” (p. 163) when he connected his slavery schema with the text-based slave narrative. First, Cameron upholds the more dominant US national slave-narrative by rejecting the notion of a White slave. When Philip insists that Captain Reilly was a slave, Cameron outright rejects this notion, “the Captain isn’t a SLAVE!” This brief exchange is illustrative of how Cameron, as a Black youth, works to surface race-talk and in turn is silenced by Philip, his White counterpart. This instance echoes the earlier example
where both Cameron and Lew, Black youths, unsuccessfully attempted to surface race-talk in a mixed-race group.

The negotiation between Cameron, a Black student, and Philip, a White student regarding the role of White Captain Reilly enslaved by a tribe of African nomads, speaks to research on conversations of race in classrooms. Brown et al. (2017) remind us of how conversations on race in the classroom are situated within local and macro contexts. Cameron worked both his local and macro angles as he brought a historical perspective to this text-based conversation.

**Text-oriented (Multimodal) Writing as a Critical Dialogic Tool**

Thus far analysis has revolved around text selection and spoken-discourse practices as they act in complex ways to lever the potential for powerful discourse and growth for the middle school students in this study. Additionally, students employed several multimodal mediators to engage in critical text-based dialogue. Multimodality situates two or more modes for learning in collaboration with one another—namely, linguistic and written words, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial to better represent the literacies available for meaning making in and out of schools (New London Group, 1996). In this study, students had consistent access to multiple modalities on a daily basis. Most often, students were expected to work across spoken discourse, digital texts (through the use of their tablets), and unimodal, print-centric texts (such as books). Technology in the form of tablets and streaming internet were in place to support high-quality discourse. Across the scope of this study, these multimodal tools functioned to both suppressed and support critical discourse among students. By functioning as distraction to face-to-face discussion or as a vessel for task for completion, the tool worked as a discourse depressor. However, students engagement in digital literacies also supported critical discourse by affording
opportunities to expand knowledge as a quick-reference as well as broaden the venues for collaboration.

**Missed Opportunities: Proximity as Collaboration.** Ms. Limerick often used ipads to elevate levels of student engagement by hooking the learning outcomes to authentic texts. During my time observing in room 204, I saw a few lessons specific to navigating research using technology. However, there was no instruction outlining how to employ decision-making processes using the various multimodal tools in the collaborative learning space. Students were given great autonomy when it came to how and when to use the various modalities during book clubs and within partnerships. There were times when this autonomy worked as a mismatch between process and product; for example, when students were sent to engage in text-based discussions through book clubs, but spent most of their time working independently on their tablets. Mills (2010) talks about the danger in assumptions regarding adolescents as digital “natives” and a need to support their ability to navigate a multimodal landscape to maximize meaning making across modalities.

Across this study, as students employed the iPads and graphic organizers, collaboration through spontaneous, authentic spoken discourse decreased. One example of a missed potential for rich discourse throughout the unit came during a text preview experience planned by Ms. Limerick. She arranged a gallery walk of the survival novels selected for the unit by curating a collection of primary-source photographs representative of the characters, conflict, and setting for each text. The images were clustered together on the walls of the hallway outside of her classroom. Students were then asked to visit the gallery, stopping at each book installation to make predictions, ask questions, and reflect on the images (see Figure 12). Students used their iPads and Google Documents to record their thinking.
These images functioned as text for students to read and to make predictions regarding the conflict within each story. The text images selected for this introduction to the book were provocative and engaging. Primary source photos of harsh landscapes, challenges (e.g., severe sun damage meant to relate to overexposure to harsh conditions in the Sudanese desert, as described in *A Long Walk to Water*), and children detained by U.S. Border patrol (as discussed in *Crossing the Wire*) were among some of the provocative images selected for this assignment.

During our reflection interview, I asked Ms. Limerick about her choice of introducing books through this method, she responded that she “really needed something that was compelling to pull them into books they might not normally be interested in…” She also mentioned that she “needed an engagement lesson for that month and didn’t feel like watching a bunch of [movie] trailers” (interview 1/22/2018). Ms. Limerick knew that some of the context might be intimidating to the students; thus, she planned to move away from a traditional graphic organizers in packets of paper to a more engaging format with photographs and to work on the tablets.
Given the clusters of students self-selecting their path through each gallery exhibit, and the riveting images and controversial themes this activity set would have seemed to be ripe for rich discussion. However, face-to-face discussion was limited, perhaps because it was not expressed as the objective for the learning. As discussed in chapter 4, students focused on the completion of the graphic organizer with minimal interactive discourse. Below is an overhead image of three of the four focal students working independently, but in close proximity to one another—what I liken to the parallel play young children engage in as each engages in their own play near one another. In this example, the inclusion of engaging text and self-regulation through a task isn’t enough to spur spoken discourse; the technology-embedded literacy task proves to motivate students beyond the potential for real-time discussion. During video cued interviews with each focal participant they pointed to the need to be sure they completed the assignment within the allotted time frame. Below is Lew’s take on the video clip, in which he and his group members are sitting in a line, working through prompts on a Google document related to the text-based images, reflects on the challenges of logistics and practice:

In an ideal scenario it’d be best to share your ideas with others—give them your thoughts and then get theirs too. But sometimes then you have to put the iPad down and then you get logged out—logging back in takes extra time so...I’d say that’s why sometimes we just work to get the job done. But to really get a chance to learn together—not only to sit together-that'd maybe be also really good at times to, like, put down the technology for, like, five minutes, talk, and then get back to the real work. Like. We’d ne::ed to practice this but like this: make your changes, and then, like, stop, like, think about it some more, talk—add your own ideas, stop, talk back over it, and, like, keep doing that and switching off and on....to me, that’d be a really good idea. (VCI, 12/18/2017)
In this scenario, the iPads were used to support engagement during the text-based work. However, completion of the assignment, and by proxi the tool used to complete the assignment seemed to unintentionally limit dialogue. As Lew suggests, perhaps if the students had more practice with negotiating their multimodal tools in strategic ways then this type of rich learning experience could have more of an impact.

**Learning to collaborate: Navigating parties, hair, and life.** Although multimodal platforms were often challenging for students as explicated in the example above, students also used these tools in agentic ways to open up their learning potential beyond text-based discourse. It was often the case that students would begin a collaborative assignment during class and need to continue that work outside of school hours. The need to work together both in and out of school zones brought a multimodal perspective to home-school boundaries; meaning, students
brought texts, technology, and out-of-school social priorities into play as they planned their collaborative work done in off-school zones-of-learning. The iPads allowed for continued collaboration and something more, a chance for students to engage with each other as whole-children, beyond their school-zone-student-personas. In opening up the boundaries between home and school, they begin to interact more fluidly and with care than in situations where they were assigning components of a project for work inside the classroom. This was evident through an increase in clarifying statements and wait time as they choose their assignments within the group project. During one such experience, Anika, Cameron, Jakie, and Freddie, another non-focal participant assigned to the same book club, worked in fluid, productive collaboration to determine equitable roles for their weekend assignment.

*Figure 14. Division of labor*
**Ms. Limerick:** ((to the entire class)) Okay I’m calling a five minute warning here. If you need to wrap up then do so—if not then make some assignments.

*Following discourse occurs within the group:*

**Cameron:** Okay yo we are not gonna finish this—((pointing to each group member as he talks)) Two-Four-Six…wait—someone’s going to have more

**Freddie:** No—less…okay, who can’t—like who can’t work over the weekend? What does everyone’s weekend look like? ((scrolling through the shared document)) I may have already made my assignment—my bad…

**Anika:** I’m getting my hair done on Saturday so…

**Cameron:** Oh my god—you can do this while you sit…don’t need to be talkin’ all that time. Anyway—okay so tomorrow I have a birthday party and then Sunday church—so that’ll be all day…

**Jackie:** Freddie?

**Freddie:** I have a birthday party…

**Cameron:** Wait—whose? Bro-whose party?

**Anika:** So I’m out for like seven hours on Saturday…

**Jackie:** Okay—Let’s go around and say what we have and that will help us make the assignments…

**Cameron:** Fred—whose party?

**Freddie:** It’s Trey—so,

**Anika:** ((holding the graphic organizer/paper for the assignment))I don’t get the point—
**Cameron:** Me neither…how many group projects do we have!?  

**Anika:** A LOT! ((passes the graphic organizer to Jackie))  

**Cameron:** EXCALTLY! Some people ain’t even finish one and now we on to another—two at the same time…can’t keep these slides straight up in here!  

**Anika:** right?  

**Jackie:** So Cameron, are you doing adaptable and self-reliant?  

**Cameron:** huh? No-I’m just doing one.  

**Jackie:** Wait-I thought Freddie was only doing one since he has two parties? ((Jackie holds paper and looks back and forth between the two boys—pausing for clarity))  

**Freddie:** ((looking at iPad screen while he responds)) No-only one. Two kids mixed into one party…  

**Jackie:** Okay then…Cameron, you should only do one since now you seem like you are the busiest.  

**Cameron:** oh…well. Really?  

(Observation, 12/18/2017)  

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During the above exchange, the group tackled several topics germaine to in and out of school literacies including social, religious, and cultural elements which came into play for this text-based tasks to be done out-of-school (Heath, 1983; Alvermann, 2002; Hull & Schultz, 2002). After Ms. Limerick suggested that each group make a plan for assignment completion, the group took up a multimodal discourse thread consistent with productive hybridity (Lee, 2017) meaning that each participant was able to access several roles simultaneously. Freddie opened a
parallel in-school//out-of-school line of discussion by asking, “-like who can’t work this weekend? What’s everyone’s weekend look like?” This appeal lead the group toward a productive conversation where each of the focal students surfaced a holistic picture of their lives embedded in this larger, text-based conversation. To continue their work over the weekend, they negotiated executive functioning skills (planning and organizing, initiating tasks, self-monitoring) relevant to the equitable distribution of labor as this multimodal assignment moved from in-school for this out of school assignment.

![Figure 15. Multimodal negotiation of group assignment.](image)

Relevant to linguistic diversity, students were able to operate within this exchange by drawing on their literate lives both in and out of school. By utilizing their multimodal tools (spoken discourse, texts, and iPads) they collaboratively planned for work in and out of school. For example, Cameron, Anika and Freddie presented their weekend plans for consideration in relationship to the amount of work each member should be assigned. Jackie, using the graphic organizer, acted as a moderator and assigned the tasks while keeping everyone’s priorities in mind. This conversation worked to honor the hybrid way this group moved within their school space to account for a negotiation of work outside of school. By assigning tasks on a shared
document while being attuned to competing priorities of life outside of school, this group demonstrated a potential for heightened collaboration. Clear assignments (given verbally as well as typed into the document combined with the option to continue the discourse through a shared document, demonstrated the potential for multimodal text-based discussion to live beyond the walls and hours of a school setting. This example acts as one instance of the positive potential for expanding discourse parameters on student discourse.

**Like It The Most But Counts The Least: Ranking Modalities.** As noted in the examples above, technology held strong influence for the students independent of whether or not they were given specific direction on how to employ it during the learning. After the first three weeks of data collection, I reflected on the corpus of recorded data, a collection of field notes, and long video stretches of students deeply engaged in work on their tablets during time allocated for book club. To better understand how students perceived these multimodal learning experiences, I asked each focal student to rank the three major modalities; the discussion, the artifact, and the tablet. Interestingly, each student ranked spoken discussion the highest of the three. Anika reported that talking in small groups with “people she trusted” was of highest importance to her followed by the iPad and then paper/pencil. During a brief Transitional Talk (11/2/2017) Jackie explained, “it’s cool to work with iPads but talking with her table group helped her learn the most about the book” and Cameron was quick to state that using technology in groups presented additional complexities to the learning. When I asked him to rank the three modalities he explained them this way:

iPad’s straight—it works because we can multitask and get more information

((picks up tablet and pretends to scroll through it)). Like, if I think somebody is wrong, I can check right away…let “em know. Like we also can talk online—like
using the Google Docs and in comments like—but—but on second thought, doing that is like…like it’s just causing problems. Like if we are all in the document and someone is like-“what are you doing?”—So it might come out as ↓“What are you doing?” rather than ↑“Hey, what are you doing, bro?” and then folks be salty and like the work stops. So like—that’s why I’m for talking in person and then just writing and turning it in in regular language to the teacher...then like—it’s not an issue.

Multimodal Transcription key:

((embodied communication))

↓: Deep, formal tone

↑: Relaxed tone

Cameron is surfacing a complexity regarding collaborative communication during multimodal, group work. Specifically, he held concerns for the way their written communications were misunderstood. This concern caused him to reconsider this stance on this modality all together. Cameron’s opinion supports the importance of structures and norms for collaborative online learning. Norming not only the product coming out of a multimodal discourse activity but the process and value with and across each mode. Leander (2007) conducted a three year research project in a one-to-one laptop school and found a prevalence of “dueling discourses” between on and offline ways of learning in schools. Specifically, he pointed to conflicts in what counts as quality school product. Cameron assertion that talking, although preferable for learning, needs to be turned into writing to be given to the teacher. Over ten years later, Kevin (Leander) and Cameron have still not been able to reconcile these dueling discourses.
Other focal students used the ranking system to show complexities between the importance of a modality for understanding and learning as opposed to its utility in classroom life. In this next example, Lew, explained the three modalities in this way:

**Lew:** I would probably rank the talking person-to-person first, maybe the tablet second, and then the paper the last.

**Clare:** Can you say a little bit more about why?

**Lew:** Uh, I feel like—well, like, the talking person-to-person is *really mandatory*. Like, you really need that and, to me, that's the *most* important ((taps pencil on ground for emphasis))—for understanding each other and sharing. But the tablet's also very useful. I feel like that can really change it a lot because you're able to look up things—and being able to, uh, get more information on one subject.

**Clare:** yeah.

**Lew:** And, to me, the paper is still *as* important, but maybe not as the other two because the paper—you can use it to, like, express or, like, show how, like, you wanna set something up—but in talking it’s way less formal and it’s like you learn more but you can’t turn that learning in—like for a grade. You have to write it or have it on the tablet. So I guess—I like that most but it counts the least.

Lew highlighted the strong need for spoken discourse to foster understanding; he hasn’t a doubt— it’s “the *most* important.” However, moments later, he argues that because you can’t “turn that learning in” to a teacher, there isn’t a way to grade it and therefore he doesn’t cosign the overall importance of spoken discourse as a currency for learning in relationship to the written artifacts and tablet learning. Lew’s conundrum is reinforced by research regarding the
disconnect between the importance of students’ oral discourse and beliefs about its viability as mode for learning and assessment (Alvermann et al., 1996; Leander, 2007; Nystrand, 2006). While each of the focal students connected to the ways spoken discourse allows them more comfort and versatility with communication, they also pointed to a notion of authority of voice evident in both the written artifact and the tablet that doesn’t transfer to spoken word. This echoes the intentions of their teacher, Ms. Limerick, who views paper/pencil as the way she supports her students to, “really focus in on themselves and focus in on what they've learned,” (interview, 1/22/2018). In this situation, the teacher and her students are in agreement that written discourse, via paper/pencil is still king. The quandary then is this, if both teacher and students agree that spoken discourse is most authentic and brings people closer to understanding, but paper/pencil is the commodity for school learning—what will bridge the awareness/artifact gap? Opportunities for rich dialogue exist across modalities. The type of multimodal experiences afforded the students in room 204 to honor how learning—and critically oriented textual discussion in particular—can be strengthened by diversity in modes. Correspondingly, linguistic diversity across multiple modes (written discourse such as texts, and text-based assignments as well as spoken discourse-in-action), affords more rich, equitable, responsible learning.

**Conclusion**

I designed this study to better understand the perceptions and reflections of linguistically non-dominant students as they engaged in academically-oriented text-based discussion. This line of research is grounded in an understanding that learning is socially situated and language stands as a critical lever to identity and membership within and across communities of practice (Rymes, 2016; Gee, 1996; Smitherman & Alim, 2015). The findings discussed in this chapter speak to the important ways students, even without exposure to curriculum designed to problematize
dominant language ideologies, understand linguistic power. The focal students in this study navigated curricular texts lacking authentic language diversity and sought both texts and conversations fortified with the type of linguistic diversity they valued in their out-of-school literacy practices. However, when they encountered instances of rich linguistic diversity in text and discourse branded as academic, they tended to reject the appropriateness of these languaging practices.

During small group and partnership discourse structures, these students engaged in rich, sometimes critically-oriented, conversation about text. At times they challenged one another to reconsider deficit ideologies. Other times, they avoided openings for potentially meaningful confrontation regarding linguistic diversity and race. In an era rich with multimodal opportunities, the children in this study sought out opportunities to read more linguistically diverse books but tended not to push for text-based conversations regarding linguistic diversity as represented in curricular texts. Throughout the study, students used text in a variety of ways. They sometimes employed text as a critical dialogic tool to explore representation, linguistic diversity, and race—potentially expanding understandings of what and who “counts” in schooled spaces. They explored critical dialogue through text-oriented talk and they used multimodal approaches to discourse activity.
CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

If educators hope to cultivate more inclusive communities where linguistically-marginalized students are able to thrive along with their DAE-speaking peers, we need to critically address dominant language ideologies—and their intersections with racism, sexism, and classism—in a broad manner. This study aims to position participation structures and texts, alongside spoken discourse and written composition, as important levers for addressing linguistically diverse school spaces. The inspirational roots for this study were planted more than ten years ago during my time as a middle school teacher in a large urban public school district. As a classroom teacher, a commitment to follow the voices of my sixth-grade students grew by way of collaborative classroom discourse (e.g. book clubs, partnerships, and round-table discussions). As we worked together to prioritize opportunities to build our capacity for learning from one another, we regularly come up against schooled language patterns limiting free and authentic discourse (Cazden, 2001; Flores & Rosa, 2015). Later when I worked as a school administrator, with the capacity to rewrite school rules, I still struggled to find a path toward inclusivity and the sacred ground needed to honor the skills and positionality brought by children with rich linguistic and cultural toolboxes. As for many educators, opportunities to increase my ability to effectively support learning in my linguistically diverse classroom by way of professional development, readings, study groups, or seminars were largely unavailable to me and my colleagues (Bacon, 2018). Over the course of years of missed opportunities for formal professional development, my students became my greatest teachers.

This line of research has grown through a career working with linguistically and culturally marginalized communities. Originally, I wanted to design a study that would better
understand the messages teachers received about teaching dominant linguistic practices and how these messages were then translated to students. As I spent more time with students engaged in text-oriented discourse, I began to think that I was getting ahead of myself; first, I needed to learn more about how students perceived these experiences. As I began to look at the literature, I learned that although there is a growing body of research regarding the support needed for teachers of linguistically nondominant students (Bucholtz, 2018; Lewis, 2018; Paris & Alim, 2017), there is far less research on how these students perceive their experiences in school. With this in mind, this research focused on students themselves, and the following questions guided my work:

1) What ways are language-minoritized students engaging in text-oriented discourse experiences in an ELA classroom?
   a) How do they navigate peer-to-peer relationships within these structures?

2) How do language-minoritized adolescents perceive their experiences with text-oriented discourse?
   a) What linguistic ideologies do language-minoritized adolescents express in and related to text-oriented discourse?

In order to address these questions, I situated this instrumental case study in a school within a district that was leading an initiative towards problematizing the educational practices which have historically disadvantaged people of color, and more specifically, Black boys (Reardon, et al., 2016).

In launching this case study, I planned to observe and videotape linguistically nondominant students as they navigated text-oriented discourse and then interview them about their experiences and perceptions of these practices. During the course of this study, additional
questions arose regarding the role of text and multimodal discourse structures to support a more linguistically inclusive, learning community. I followed those lines of interest, as they certainly applied to my research questions regarding participation structures and peer-collaboration. I employed critical discourse analysis framework (Fairclough & Wodak, 2013) to the data, which included text-oriented work during the ELA block, focal student video-cued reflection, unplanned transitional talks, and artifacts created as a result of these interactions. Through analyses of these data, I was able to take a closer look into ways students upheld, disrupted, and engaged with dominant language ideologies during text-oriented work in an ELA classroom.

Discussion of Findings and Implications

This study evokes the complexity and importance for educators to support an inclusive view of language(s), literacy(ies), and mode(s) for learning. Situated within a critical sociocultural perspective, (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007) the study’s aim was to achieve a deeper understanding of how students perceived and negotiated these discursive, school experiences. Data analysis demonstrates two major findings, (1) linguistically marginalized students expressed both dominant and critical language ideologies, and (2) text and text-related tasks can support and suppress linguistically diverse students’ participation in academically oriented discourse activities. In this section, I will summarize these findings and then move on to discuss how these findings fit together.

This case study examined the role of linguistic ideologies and the role those beliefs and representations play in texts (e.g. novels and short stories), and text-oriented work (e.g. spoken and embodied discourse, as well as written structures used during that work). In Chapter 4, I described how the focal students often upheld dominant language ideologies even when those beliefs worked against their preferred methods of communication and learning. While students
reinforced some dominant language practices, they also voiced a need to be critical of a universal acceptance of those same practices. Focal students thus demonstrated a lamination of what are often opposing practices—as they upheld DAE by being ambivalent to, resisting, and distancing themselves from linguistic diversity, while simultaneously advocating against DAE and its role in some text-based learning tools and participation structures. Specifically, these sixth graders critiqued treatment of nondominant language speakers who are “forced to be regular citizens”—Cameron (p. 126) and considered ways to “change things up”—Anika (p. 126) to innovate toward a more inclusive language practices for text-based learning. These findings support a need for more racially and linguistically inclusive learning opportunities in school settings.

The Laminating Practices of Linguistically Diverse Students

Cameron, Anika, Lew, Jackie, and their classmates approached the complexities of language ideologies not from a place of ignorance, but rather by astutely mirroring the greater society in which they live. This study is situated within a community deeply entrenched in work to address generations of inequities while all the while leaving intact much of what needs dismantling to achieve racial equity. It is also situated in the lived histories of each focal students—as a racialized, gendered, “othered” being who lives in the world. Students’ perceptions of language diversity were evoked and reworked both in the classroom and in these personal and societal contexts.

Scholars have begun to research students’ perspectives on language ideologies and linguistic diversity. For example, Kirkland and Jackson, (2009) researched ways Black males in middle school perceived their own language practices in deficit ways after specific instruction on AAE. More recently, Metz (2016) has worked to better understand what high school students know and believe about language variation to support what teachers need to consider in teaching
about language diversity in schools. Therefore, one implication to extend this study is to follow both in- and out-of-school connections to better understand the ways language ideologies thread together across those spaces. For example, what role do parent expectations play in upholding dominant language ideologies? How are language ideologies expressed with different audiences in varying situations? Across race and gender, how are language ideologies consistent—or not, and in what ways? These questions matter because so many of us are likely to espouse and uphold dominant ideologies as a result of living in a national context that so strongly upholds these ideas as “standard” and practices.

Text and Text-Oriented Work

In Chapter 5, I unpacked the texts used to promote learning as well as the text-oriented discourse practices used by the focal students as they engaged in literacy learning in their ELA classroom. Text analysis was not part of the original design of this study but throughout the course of this study, texts became a critical component to understanding how these linguistically diverse students perceived the value of their language practices in school spaces. Teachers who work towards culturally responsive instructional practices know the importance of text choice (Allington, 2002; Guthrie & Davis, 2003) and representative texts (Bishop, 1990; Styles, 1998). This study extends this focus on texts by critically considering the role authors play in creating texts that not only look like the children in the room, but sound like them through use of authentic languaging patterns (e.g. translanguaging and use of diverse dialects) to match character demographics. This finding was surfaced not by me as the researcher, but by the focal students who pointed out the implicit messages sent to them by omnipotent narrators who speak only in dominant registers. As Lew told us in Chapter 5, “the narrator or the storyteller, the one who knows—who we follow in the story” (p. 159) is not the entity who moves in and out of dialects.
The “one who knows” tends to stick with Standard English while the “other” speaks marginalized varieties. Taking a critical look at how students navigate the messages they receive from texts regarding linguistic diversity is another potential next step for this type of research.

**Text representation, multimodal possibilities.** As stated in Chapter 5, analysis of text and multimodal technology integration were not components of my original study design; however, their impact on how these students perceived their learning in ELA were profound. Research involving student and teacher perceptions of text commonly described as “representative” might be an important addition to a growing body of studies looking at the importance of texts that act as mirrors and windows for young people. Specifically, given that American schools continue to serve an increasingly racially and linguistically diverse student populations, a deeper understanding of the intersections of race and languaging in relationship to representative texts is critical to culturally sustaining pedagogy.

In recent years, the landscape of a typical middle school classroom has also come to reflect the overwhelming importance technology plays in the world beyond the classroom walls (Alvermann, 2010; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010). This was certainly true of the context in my study, as both teacher and students engaged with technology throughout the ELA block. The multimodal components of my study were the most challenging for deep consideration because as a researcher and a teacher, I am not naturally drawn to utilizing and better understanding the role of technology. Studies, such as the Pacheco and Smith (2015), who look at ways multimodal and digital literacies to support diversity in learning are expanding my own notions of what’s possible in this work of forwarding a more linguistically representative learning agenda in schools.
This study acknowledges that linguistic ideologies are instantiated in diverse ways including through embodied, verbal discourse (e.g., discussions), through composition (e.g., prompted writing), and through collaborative structures (e.g., book clubs, partner work, etc.). Each of these structures were employed both with and without technology as a support. Focal students used multimodal tools daily in the form of discourse structures, graphic organizers, tablets, and texts. Often the teacher’s expectation, either articulated or implied, was to seamlessly combine and collaborate across modes. Several times throughout the study, students employed a multimodal approach as they advocated for a more linguistically inclusive ideologies as represented through collaborative text based work. They also worked to norm a more balanced approach to school-based collaboration in “out-of-school” places (e.g., Google Documents and Google Slides). This type of collaboration demonstrated students’ ability to work along multiple registers to negotiate school-centered work across out-of-school places and schedules (Alvermann, 2010).

However, without specific instruction on how to negotiate the modes available, students tended to rely heavily on whichever mode was most directly related to an evaluation marker—in this study that marker was most often a recorded grade in response to a written artifact. In fact, even though students reported that they were most comfortable engaging and learning through spoken discourse, they tended to focus on the graphic organizers and tablets which pushed them toward more siloed and independent, parallel learning. For linguistically diverse students, the default of written-over-spoken discourse can add an increased level of complexity; there is a wide body of research demonstrative of increased dominant ideologies in the practice of written composition (Durán, 2017; Dyson, 2005; Velasco & Garcia, 2014). Therefore, when given access to various modalities, students may benefit from specific support regarding effective ways
to employ their linguistic assets. Without empowering students to use all linguistic tools across varying modes, they are missing opportunities to employ their complete funds of knowledge (González, Neff, Amanti, & Moll, 2006). A growing body of research demonstrates a need to engage student around the role of language and power (Brown et al. 2017; Metz, 2018).

Implications for Research:

Preservice Education and Professional Development

Tradition stipulates that research, preservice education, and professional development indicate separate trailheads within the realm of education. However, throughout my own journey, these paths have regularly converged in important and meaningful ways. As I consider the continuation of my dissertation research, I believe there is a need to more strongly weave aspects of continued research, burgeoning work in teacher education, and professional development as each has much to learn from the other regarding the work of honoring linguistic diversity. Therefore, I begin by identifying implications for each (research, pre-service teacher education, and in-service education) as they exist separately, and then close this section considering their hybridity as a collaborative mix.

Inservice Professional Development

By centering this study on student perceptions (rather than teacher perceptions or teaching moves, like lesson planning), I have deemphasized the role of the classroom teacher, her lived experiences, and ongoing professional development. Therefore, recommendations for professional development may be limited by the scope of this study. That said, focusing on student perception affords important insight into implications for the type of professional development teachers may benefit from as they work toward a more linguistically inclusive learning environment.
Currently, the American teaching force is predominantly monolingual-English speaking, White, and female. There is research to show the overwhelming prevalence of dominant linguistic ideologies and teacher practice (Bacon, 2018). Students most underserved by schools—including Black and Latinx students—are most harmed by these ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Young, 2014). However, much of the professional development for educators to better support multicultural (including multilingual) work in classrooms centers around strategies to use with their students, rather than the deeper work of exploring linguistic ideologies held by teachers, students, and institutions; the ways these ideologies intersect with race, gender, and class; as well as the way they are typical instantiated in curriculum/discourse structures (Bacon, 2018/7; Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Macedo, 2000; Wiley, 2014).

Anne Dyson (1993) reminds us that this is critical work, “If we as educators do not work to “widen the boundaries of possible discourse” in school (Rosen & Rosen, 1973, p. 1), we risk setting up unnecessary choices among home, peer, and school ways with words” (p. 228). There were several occasions over the course of this study where Anika, Cameron, Lew, and Jackie engaged in taking linguistic sides, and often these choices worked to perpetuate the marginalization of their linguistic diversity. Focal students often foregrounded dominant linguistic practices to the detriment of their preferred linguistic modes. Examples from this study were Lew’s assertion that nondominant dialectical choices belonged outside of academic language, and Jackie’s suggestion that her home language, Tagalog, wouldn’t be appropriate for the classroom library because “kids wouldn’t be interested.” School discourse structures have not traditionally been open to the type of necessary widening Dyson refers to; therefore, inservice professional development on the role of linguistic diversity in education—and the relationship
between our views of linguistic and cultural diversity-- is critical in conjunction with preservice education.

Similarly, when considering the implications for professionally developing classroom teachers, we must also include site administrators. Without support from building and district leadership, teachers do not often have the institutional strength to do the work of culturally sustaining pedagogy in sustainable ways. For the same reasons that teachers need to develop their awareness of bias related dominant language ideologies, this is work for all stakeholders in schools.

**Preservice Teacher Education**

Research shows that often, preservice teachers report feeling ill-prepared to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse student populations and, therefore, would benefit from a more strategic support during their teacher education programs (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; hooks, 2008; Jones, 2002; Short & Echevarria, 2004). More than that, supporting preservice teachers to develop asset orientations toward a more linguistically diverse pedagogical perspective requires effort in the areas of policy, programming, and partnerships. This is specifically true when the language assets students employ are coded as deficit by transitional school practices.

Policies of standardization, such as accountability testing based on learning standards, often perpetuate dominant linguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Woodard & Kline, 2016). Now more than ever there continues to be “great urgency for rethinking our understandings and practices of diversity in the current climate of standardization, test scores, and scientifically based research set against the backdrop of social inequities” (Goodwin et al., 2008, p. 6).
Supporting teachers and school leaders to see and hear ethnoracial and linguistic diversity as an asset to the learning community may support their advocacy for policy designed around more equitable school experiences. As Martinez, Morales, and Aldana (2017) remind us, “access to dominant practices does not guarantee upward mobility or economic advancement as often promised by scholars, teachers, policymakers, and parents (Morrell, 2008)” (p. 495). With this in mind, policy must more specifically and strategically create space for linguistic diversity to exist, survive, and thrive. Some of this work will need to be done outside of the realm of educational policies, but there are strides to be made locally to name policy practices which have and are working to marginalize linguistically diverse students, such as those that strip funding from culturally sustaining programs (e.g., banning ethnic studies programming in Arizona).

Additionally, providing funding and time for teachers to engage in professional development to address deficit ideologies could be an important complement to curriculum in support of multicultural studies.

Programming follows policy both literally and figuratively. In terms of programming, course syllabi can shine a light on what is institutionally valued and covered in preservice teacher education. Faltis & Valdéz (2016), suggest that addressing the complexities inherent to promoting and honoring linguistic diversity in classrooms “involves knowledge, skills, and inclinations toward language and language diversity that may not only differ from the cultural scripts that students bring to teacher education but also conflict with them” (p. 552) in classroom practice. It is critical that future teachers be taught the importance of linguistically diverse teaching practices regardless of curriculum, content area, or district mandate. One way to mitigate some of the potential cultural conflicts mentioned above could be through more intentional moves to recruit a more linguistically diverse teaching force. It is easier to see what is
of personal value and therefore, when more teachers, administrators, and policymakers are people who employ a diverse linguistic repertoire, students might have easier access to linguistically equitable experiences.

Mary Bucholtz (2018) calls for a need to address White affects—meaning the “social, material, political, and racialized phenomena that can uphold or challenge white supremacy (Ahmed 2004; Berg & Ramos-Zayas 2015; Ioanide 2015)” (p. 352) when planning to engage both the research community and wider citizenry. This call is important and speaks specifically to a need across all avenues of impact for linguistic diversity in education. In this dissertation I surface the role text plays in affecting dominant language ideologies. For change to be realized, preservice education programs need to carefully examine the ways they indoctrinate their teacher candidates since they, luckily, are not arriving as empty vessels.

Partnerships with universities, authors, and organizations whose mission and vision is to support advocacy can create new pathways for learning through localizing and globalizing the work of supporting future teachers to be reflective of linguistic ideologies at play in society and in their own histories. Such partnerships can act as a catalyst to teacher activism, which is often needed in this work to change hearts and minds about whose language counts in school learning.

Partnering holds potential to support preservice teachers to engage with school districts, community stakeholders, and one another to address ways dominant language ideologies negatively impact our society. Looking beyond the faculty of an educational institution to learn from citizen scholars can create pathways for reciprocal learning and widen the scope of experience for preservice teachers as well as act as a model for their own practice. For example, as a White, monolingual teacher of racially and linguistically diverse students, it was important that I looked beyond what I could offer on my own. Bringing in representative languages,
cultures, and experiences was important to provide more appropriate learning experiences for all students, but especially students traditionally marginalized by the White experiences of American schooling.

Another strategy might be to protect time for preservice teachers to engage in critical reflection of their own linguistic histories prior to being expected to provide space for that type of work for their students. University professors are doing some of this now with preservice teachers (e.g., Dr. Morales at University of Illinois at Chicago, Dr. Emily Machado at Northwestern University), and research has even been conducted on the effects of this type of work on preservice education (Coffey, 2015; Lewis, 2018). Inspired by Dr. Morales’ work with linguistic autobiographies, where students explored their linguistic histories and backgrounds, I designed the language survey used in this study (see Appendix A). This type of survey has several powerful applications, namely it could act as a first step to open up meta-linguistic learning. By asking pre-service teachers to think about the ways in which language affects their daily life and the ways they use language to impact spaces and places, they can begin to problematize established, monoglot perspectives in school and beyond.

Implications for Research

The complex feelings related to dominant and critical linguistic ideologies expressed by each of the focal students in this study echo the genealogy of linguistic ideologies through the annals of literacy research communities. One example of shifting ideologies is found throughout the history of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Smitherman (1998) points to ubiquitous school practices throughout history which have overtly marginalized non-dominant English practices. As a concrete example, she points to a pledge commonly recited in many American schools in the 1920’s and co-signed by the 1918 NCTE conference. The pledge was
emblematic of entrenched Standard English ideologies which actively oppressed, shamed, and marginalized students misaligned to White middle-class norms. An excerpt reads:

I love the United States of America. I love my country’s flag. I love my country’s language. I promise:

1. That I will not dishonor my country’s speech by leaving off the last syllable of words.
2. That I will say a good American “yes” and “no” in place of an Indian grunt “um-hum” and “nup-um” or a foreign “ya” or “yeh”; and “nope”
3. That I will do my best to improve American speech by avoiding loud rough tones, by enunciating distinctly, and by speaking pleasantly, clearly, and sincerely.
4. That I will learn to articulate correctly as many words as possible during the year

(McDavid 1965, quoted in Daniels 1990, p. 9)

Over fifty years later, NCTE shifted to employ a radically different position in the drafting a resolution called “Students Rights to Their Own Language” (SRTOL). This acted as a call to action for researchers to elucidate the ways the linguistically minoritized students were being denied full potential in school settings. This act, written in 1972 reads as such:

We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language — the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its
diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.

In drafting this as an organization and putting it out to their readership—k-16 English educators and researchers, NCTE took a bold stand to recognize the connections between language and power. When the policy was passed in 1974, it was meant to “promote classroom practices to expose students to the variety of dialects that occur in our multi-regional, multiethnic, and multicultural society, so that they too will understand the nature of American English and come to respect all its dialects.” (NCTE Resolution #74.2, 1974, quoted in Smitherman, 1995, p.23). This statement by NCTE provides a suggestion for exposure to linguistically diverse texts, but the inference that this would result in an understanding of the “nature of American English” and somehow garner respect for “all its dialects” simplified the work needed for this aim to be realized. For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, students in this study took note of dialectical differences in text, but without specific instruction on the ideological implications of these choices made by the authors, they did not tend to discuss or gain an increased respect for linguistic diversity.

I reference these two extremes to show how research and policy can swing with the times and also how shifts in allegiances—in this case the framing of monoglot ideologies of the anti-indigenous pledge of the 1920’s to the SRTOL of the 1970s—can contribute to the distrust of research communities. This is important for all of us to keep in mind as we design research projects centered around historically (and currently) marginalized languaging practices.
Moving beyond error correction. This study draws from theoretical framing built on social change. Critical sociocultural researchers, like sociolinguists, are drawn toward questions that aim to improve conditions for humanity and dignity. With that said, it is important to be mindful to continue to evolve the nimbleness of research for affecting social change. For example, Lewis (2018) critiques the long standing notion of error correction—which “assumes that social change can be accomplished by the dissemination of knowledge produced by researchers” (p.327). The notion that social change can flow, in a unilateral direction, from the research community down to schools can have a widespread and negative impact on the ways that language ideologies get enacted into classroom pedagogy. For example, Cazden’s (2001) research to surface limitations of discourse styles in classrooms, commonly referred to as initiate-response-evaluation (IRE), was a very important discourse structure to surface for the educational community. Scholars have pointed to IRE as a potentially problematic communication lever for decades (Cazden, 2001; Mehan, 1979; Rymes, 2009) However, it has not necessarily led to a change in the nature of classroom conversations. Specific to this study, I analyzed participation structures which forwarded dominant language ideologies, such as popsicle stick pulls aligned to IRE (Cazden, 2001), and other restrictive discussion rubrics. Such practices are fairly common in classrooms today. However, attempting to abolish these behaviors bysurfacing the “error” of the practice alone has yet to remediate dominant language structures. Therefore, research must continue to shine a light on literacy work that supports learning while surfacing the errors in current practices. On its own, the latter will likely have little influence on practice.

The very encouraging news is that critical scholars are working to take on a more instrumental, grassroots way of impacting social change. For example, Kinloch and San Pedro
(2014) point to Projects in Humanism (PiH) work where they conceive of inquiry to engage with communities for the sake of the questions verses for the sake of research. What makes this work particularly exciting is that there is a whole cohort of young people coming through American schools today who have had the opportunity to act as advocates for their own experiences, and been able to amplify their voices through collaborating with university researchers to publish their experiences.

**A Call for Improved Hybridity Across Preservice, Inservice, and Participatory Research**

In the introduction of this chapter, I pointed to the complex way teachers bring their lived experiences, embodied ideologies, experiences in preservice education, and opportunities afforded during inservice education (and other variables) to bear when building an educational landscape for their students. Now that I have discussed the separate buckets of research, preservice, and inservice implications, I will talk briefly about the importance of viewing these also through a lens of hybridity. This is key in that teachers’ linguistic ideologies—and ultimately, the instructional context they create for their students—are impacted by all of these experiences working together simultaneously (see Figure 16).
Although the three spheres represented here are not designed to be exhaustive they create a visual of how research is threaded through our experiences and the way our surroundings and institutions are structured both during preservice and as active practitioners.

**A Space for Linguistically Liberatory Learning Practices**

This is not a study to advocate for the abolition of Standard English; although I take issue with this label and its implications, I am a proponent of all languages and language-in-use. It is important that each student to be aware of the power of language and to have access to diverse embodied linguistic tools to support meaning-making and collaboration. This study highlights the complexities for all stakeholders, especially linguistically- and racially-marginalized students, inherent in attempting to challenge dominant languaging in schools. As a case study, it was not my intention to organize an intervention or collaborate with the classroom teacher as she planned for a discursively rich classroom experiences. In schools, the work of disruption of the status quo is resource-intensive. There were days during this study where students were eager to engage in conversations about how they negotiated their languaging practices; alternatively, there were times when they seemed frustrated by imagining the possibilities of a more linguistically diverse school experience. This aligns to research that has shown the engagement in critical reflection of language varieties is complex work. Wheeler and Swords (2006) point to code-switching as a way to support students to learn Standard-English. Widening the linguistic repertoires of these diverse students is important, but this work becomes problematic when viewed as a one way street, “No, we are not teaching children the language of the home—they already know it. We are teaching them Standard English” (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Kirkland and Jackson (2009) studied attitudes of African American boys after they engaged in code-
switching lessons taught by the researchers. Their findings showed that participants’ negative feelings toward AAE and African American identity persisted even after the lessons. Additionally, they found that students articulated negative attitudes and descriptions of speakers of AAE and were associated with negative stereotypes and “the images shared striking resemblances to the students themselves—their clothing and language styles” (p.145). These findings echoed reflections from the focal students in my study; specifically their use of and ideologies around the term “slang.” Another example of this was Cameron’s assertion that the type of AAE found in books like *Money Hungry* were not true representation of language, stating—“nobody really talks that way…” The takeaway here is that the importance of teaching linguistic diversity lies in the potential for inclusivity—which can support a healthy learning environment.

Bucholtz (2018) suggests that “There’s no question that language is a key basis for the perpetuation of social injustice, and particularly racial injustice, given that race and language are inextricably bound together (Flores & Rosa 2015; Alim, Rickford, & Ball 2016; Rosa & Flores 2017)” (p. 351). Creating bandwidth for this type of work takes time, policy space, institutional support, and most of all the political courage. Across several of our conversations and in our more formal reflections, the classroom teacher, Ms. Limerick, expressed strong feelings that students should have the right to be themselves in the learning space she created. She said that she would be willing to change her curriculum to support this work, but when I asked her what she would want/need to start down the path of linguistic meta-awareness with her students she paused, suggesting that confronting established linguistic deficit norms and ideologies would not be something she could do alone. Ms. Limerick said she needed “an expert, like—a class or
book, or better yet—someone to come to her class and show her how.” Without that level of support, she felt that it would be “too messy and people could get hurt.” (field notes, 11/2/2017).

At the close of this study, she and her colleagues were about to test the waters of more critical discourse through adapting Restorative Justice tools such as a Justice Circle (Karp & Breslin, 2001). As she reflected on her excitement and concerns with launching a Restorative Justice model of collaborative discourse she remarked:

So I feel like there needs to be a place for that kind of, um, really potentially conflict crosstalk…there needs to be I-statements, people need to feel comfortable, no judgment, free conversation for kids to have, but I think that it has to—I don't know. For me, I guess it needs to be where it's contained, where this is—uh, "We're gonna try this out. We're gonna see what this feels like, what this looks like?" Um, it's complex and can be dangerous—and it's partly, too, because I'm kind of a control freak that way. You know? I just wanna make sure that things are good and comfortable, and then having them explore how—how did we get here? We are in [city name] and that can get messy. That's what I mean about needing some support here for that. With the kids and the parents—and everyone really.

Audre Lorde (1984) cautions that marginalized people are often further subordinated through the use of “outlaw emotions”—meaning anger and resentment seen as inappropriate to groups who do not have experiences with this type of bias. In classrooms, outlaw emotions are actively suppressed through various avenues of redirection, punishment, and instructional moves meant to avoid the potential for the type of authentic discourse which can surface negative
emotions. This avoidance of potentially emotional work is important to note as a missed opportunity for teachers and learning communities to use tools such as outlaw emotions for addressing marginalizing school practices. Creating space to surface and respond to outlaw emotions could “challenge cultural hegemony and open avenues for social change” (Jaggar, as cited in Steinberg, 2011). Teachers and school leaders would benefit from professional development to help them better navigate tensions associated with trepidations for launching this type of work as well as the in-the-moment facilitation needed to create opportunities for productive engagement.

Limitations of this Study

The Researcher

As I have discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, a limitation of this study was my positionality as an outside researcher. Middle school is a time of heightened membership and criticality both inward regarding identity and outward regarding community and society. Adolescents are hypersensitive to affiliations and notions of insiders and outsiders (Alvermann, 2002; Moje, 2007). Although I grew up in the town and attended school in the same district where I conducted the study, and I spent weeks observing and hanging within the learning community in room 204 prior to the official start to my study, my positionality as an outside researcher remained my primary association with students in room 204.

Additionally, my social location as a White, middle class, cisgender heterosexual, able-bodied adult female influenced the interactions I had with both students and teachers at the school. Although the content of many of our conversations centered around diverse linguistic practices, mostly our dialogue sustained dominant discourse structures in which I asked
questions—they responded—and I followed up with affirmations reminiscent of classic IRE format (Cazden, 2001).

Paris and Winn’s (2014) book *Humanizing Research* holds a standard for the type of research I aim to participate in as I move forward in this work. It describes research that builds “relationships with dignity and care...interactions between youth participants and researchers are shaped by their willingness to share life experiences uncommon in traditional research” (p.105). As a novice researcher, this project provided the opportunity to pave my own path by authoring an IRB, negotiating a research site in an district traditionally closed to graduate-level research, building quick relationships with classroom teachers, and engaging with students over a very brief period of time. The design of the project, as mentioned in Chapter 3 was a nod to Yin’s (2014) suggestion that instrumental case-study work supports the concept that each stakeholder becomes more and as a researcher, I have become more mindful, reflective, and careful of my positioning in work aligned to criticality. I am proud of what I have been able to learn during the scope of this research and eager to design future work that uptakes a more micro-ethnographic and participatory lens.

**The Design**

This study was purposefully designed as a case study; therefore, it did not employ an intervention regarding designing ways to enact a more linguistically diverse learning environment. The methodology aimed to explore the embodied ways linguistically diverse students communicate their positions (Gee, 2001, 2014; Goffman, 1981) and how they perceived text-oriented discourse. The transcription, field notes, and memos to the best of my ability accurately reflected what was said and the physicality of the messages sent. However, analysis did not always take into account what was not being said which is a key component for deeper
comprehension. “Strong bonds build trust and foster open conversations with research participants about areas ordinarily left unspoken” (Charmaz, 2006 p. 113). Part of the work of a responsive classroom teacher is careful observation. In fact, most phenomenal teachers will point to the insight into potential allegiances, values, gaps in understanding, emerging thinking, and trust lines that they glean through what isn’t said. I continue to think about instances when focal students chose not to share or limited their responses to questions about dominant language practices. For example, Anika’s continued resistance to unpacking the labeling of other varieties of English, clarifying that “We just say English” (p.113). Also, Jackie’s tendency to qualify her responses to my questions with, “I’m not sure…”. These unsteady sentence stems (e.g., I’m not sure, I don’t know for sure, I guess…) tended to precede a solid insight which belied the lead assertion.

One example of this came toward the middle of the study when Jackie was reflecting on a reading shared by their dynamic school librarian, Ms. Jordan, a Black woman whose engaging texts choices and dynamic teaching style often lead students to think critically about sociocultural issues. It was early November and the class had just finished listening to her read aloud the short story 11:59 by Patricia C. McKissack, a dark story about a ghost train run during the time of the Pullman Porters (the 1920’s). Ms. Jordan and the students engaged in a long discussion about the parallels between traditional Black narratives, such as the ghost train stories, and stories told during the Mexican holiday of remembrance, Dia de Los Muertos. During our debrief, I asked Jackie why she thought Ms. Jordan chose to read the story aloud instead of give it to them as independent reading task. Her response elucidates a strong understanding of raciolinguistic power, but is preceded by the type of disclaimer she tended to use often when discussing race and language in school settings:
I don’t know, Ms. Jordan has a really strong voice and can get into characters really well. Also she is Black and the characters are Black. Maybe? Like, I don’t know—I think she wanted us to hear the voices of the characters-like with their tones and such...but like I don’t know...maybe not. (Transitional Talk, 11/2)

Jackie’s response supports that she understands the effect that spoken word can have to heighten the power of language. She also notes the power of a person of the same race voicing words written for a character of that same race. But each of the stems of uncertainty act as insights into the potential of what more Jackie didn’t say about her understanding of linguistic diversity. Why did she feel the need to lead with a qualification that puts off her understanding of the situation? What was happening during those extended pauses, where was she positioning her thinking within our conversation? This is an example of a limitation in design in that Jackie, and likely other participants, were not specifically positioned to act as critical collaborator in the analysis.

Lastly, non-focal students who seemed to become interested in the project along the way contributed important ideas regarding linguistic diversity and equitable education, but were not included in this work. Future work will focus on how to widen the scope of research and empower young people along their paths. This study’s limited scope and time in the classroom required a focused participant population; in future research, I am interested in designing studies that “engage with and not on or about youth participants as a way to learn from, collaborate with, and center the narratives of young people” (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014, p. 22)

Future Research
Beyond preservice education, professional development for instruction, and educational research, additional research must be done to uncover and understand how students uphold and challenge these White affects, too. In this case study, the middle schoolers shed light on the complexities inherent to language ideologies when everyone is trying to, as Ms. Limerick put it, “do right by one another” (interview, 1/21/2018). However, this study surfaces a need to widen the project scope and include the perspectives of linguistically marginalized students.

This study is demonstrative of complex and nuanced beliefs held by linguistically nondominant middle school students about language and text-oriented discourse practices. Research on linguistically responsive teaching practices is on the rise and there is a parallel need to deepen our understanding of how students experience these practices. Teaching students how they can begin to advocate for a more nuanced educational experiences while national policy, personal bias, and district mandates are often working against what they and teachers deem appropriate for learning is a next step supported by the findings of this study. Curricular choices and discourse structures inclusive of linguistic diversity in support of conversation centered around the role of language and power would be one example of a next step. Although it is not the job of students to change instructional methods, there is power in being able to question and problematize exclusionary practices. Through participatory action research (Paris & Winn, 2014), students can begin to take more of an active role in how linguistic diversity can be positioned in their school spaces. The findings of this study suggest that students should be given access to additional opportunities to engage with one another to navigate complexities inherent in expressing their conflicting views on language ideologies.
Conclusion

This is a time of great threat for people living in America who are not aligned to linguistically dominant ideals privileged in schools. Our country is deeply divided, and current national leadership continues to embolden deficit ideologies that work to perpetuate monoglot practices and marginalize linguistic diversity. At our southern border, children are being severed from their families, their identities, and their languages. There is a deep history of attempts to separate people from their languages, often through separation from their families and communities in our country: forced familial separations during slavery, the removal of Native American children to boarding schools in the name of education, and countless, less overt ways of government-sanctioned linguistic and cultural separations. Now and for years to come, schools will continue to act as primary contact sites for the mission of American schooling in both theory and practice. Currently, schools are not representative—in terms of teaching staff, curriculum, and other supportive structures—of the linguistically diverse students who are meant to be learning there (Bacon, 2018; Martínez, Morales, and Aldana, 2017). As Django Paris reminds us, we must “reclaim, revitalize, reimagine schooling as a space that sustains our communities, keeps us whole” (Twitter, 6/19/2018)). Critical sociocultural researchers are working to have greater impact on policy and classroom practice. Parents, educators, researchers, and policy-makers can collaborate in support of linguistically diverse students in several ways: by looking for ways to integrate texts (novels, short stories, online forums) and text-oriented discourse structures (book clubs, whole group discussions, multimodal groups) that support and honor linguistic diversity, and by expanding notions of linguistic appropriateness as it relates to authentic audience and standards-based learning. This work has been taken up in different ways over decades. Through formal ways such as the Students’ Rights to Their Own Language (CCC,
1974), which worked to reframe languaging for research and policy communities, to the more contemporary work of scholar/activists who take to Twitter with the aim of motivating a wider community by distilling their research to 280 characters. As an educational community, we need to continue to think creatively and in “nonstandard” ways. Even when students are raised in seemingly progressive, critical communities, nondominant ideologies are not a given.

In his work to further disrupt dominant values in educational systems, Paris (2012) reminds us, “In the face of current policies and practices that have the explicit goal of creating a monocultural and monolingual society, research and practice need equally explicit resistances that embrace cultural pluralism and cultural equality” (p. 93). Echoing the call of Martínez, Morales, and Aldana’s (2017) to “amplify narratives that position racialized and minoritized children and youth as producers of knowledge mediated by diverse, flexible, and robust communicative repertoires” (p. 496), this dissertation was positioned at the intersection of theory, research, practice, and praxis to forward authentic student voice/language in schools in order to open up spaces which are known to be exclusive. Let the teachers of today and those of tomorrow learn new lessons of linguistic “appropriateness” from their students. Let it be the children who fill the air with languages rich with experience, identity, hope, and promise. It’s time.
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APPENDIX A:
Student Language Survey

Language Survey

1. How often do you think about the language/words that you use to communicate with people around you?

   ex: “If I am talking with my friends at the library and then switch to ask the librarian a question, I talk differently”

   “I never think about how I talk—I just say what I say.”

   Not at all   Sometimes   Often

   (I don’t think about how I talk)   (around certain people)   (with most people/in most situations)

   Use this space to say more about how you feel about how often you think about how you communicate:

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

   For this set of questions circle YES or NO and then share more detail in the lines below:

2. Do you think the language(s) you speak have given you opportunities?

   YES    NO

   ex: Because I speak more than one language/dialect I am able to communicate with a wide range of people

   Please use this space to say more_________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________________

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3. Do you think that you need to improve any aspects of your language?  YES  NO
   If yes, which aspects? If no, why not? ____________________________________________

4. Has there ever been a time when you felt that the language(s) you speak limited your opportunities?
   YES  NO
   ex: people have dismissed my ideas/opinion because I spoke differently—used different language
   Please use this space to say more____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

For this set of questions think about your typical day inside of school:

1. What are you best/favorite moments during the day and why?
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

2. Are there parts of the school day when you wish you could be somewhere else? Which parts and why?
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

3. Consider the ways you prefer to communicate your ideas during class?

   **Writing**  I don’t like doing this-------------------I am fine with this-----------------I really like to do this

   **Speaking**  I don’t like doing this-------------------I am fine with this-----------------I really like to do this

   **Whole Group**  I don’t like doing this-------------------I am fine with this-----------------I really like to do this
Small Group  I don't like doing this------------------I am fine with this------------------I really like to do this

Partnerships  I don't like doing this------------------I am fine with this------------------I really like to do this

3. Using the options below, circle some of your favorite ways to learn?

   reading to myself
   talking to a peer (partnership)
   writing independently
   class discussion with teacher/peers
   book club with peers
   small group with teacher

For the next questions circle either YES or NO:

1. Are there times when you don't feel comfortable participating in class?
   YES NO
   If yes, can you describe those times? ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. Are there times when it seems like others in the class are uncomfortable participating?
   YES NO
   If yes, can you describe those times? ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
These questions have all about how you feel about language in and out of school. Please use the space below to share anything you want about how you use language and how language has impacted your life. For example, are there times when you feel the way you talk (your language(s)) have improved your life or made it more difficult?

Some examples:

- A time your language (the way you talk/how you communicated) made an impact on someone
- A time when someone’s language the way they spoke/how they communicated) had an impact on you

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts; I’m excited to learn from you!
APPENDIX B:

Project-at-a-Glance:

Shared with Principal Actions Within Academic Discourse:

Experiences of Language-Minoritized Adolescents Engaging in Academic Discourse

Project Overview: This dissertation study will document how language-minoritized students experience academic discourse in one middle school classroom. Using qualitative methods, I plan to conduct a single-case study, documenting the discourse-in-action, as well as, student perceptions of these experiences throughout an instructional ELA unit.

Background:

- Linguistic and cultural diversity are increasing in U.S. public schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). Despite diversity growth, literacy curricula and national standards often continue to privilege appropriateness of Standard American English (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

- There are many studies that support the importance of a discourse-rich classroom, but relatively few address discourse through student perception.

Methods: This is a qualitative case study that uses traditional methods of data collection, including:

- Language survey (teacher/student)
- Observations of discourse activity with audio-video recording
- Semi-structured interviews with audio recording
- Researcher field notes
Frequency & Duration of Data Collection:

- Study duration is 6-10 weeks, starting in the fall of 2017.
- Observation frequency is between 1 and 3 times per week.
- Interview with the teacher will last no more than 30 minutes, and will be conducted outside of the school day (based on teacher availability).
- Interviews with focal students will last no more than 15 minutes, and will be conducted no more than four times per student.

IRB/District Approval: This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Rebecca Woodard, Assistant Professor in Curriculum & Instruction at UIC, supervises all work related to this project. The proposal has also been approved by the Research, Accountability, and Data Department at District 65.

School, District & Student Animinity: All school and student names will be replaced with pseudonyms in reports about this study. Teachers may choose to be identified using their names or to be identified with a pseudonym.

Benefits: The key benefit of this research is to gain deeper understanding of student experiences engaging in academic discourse which supports learning in a linguistic and cultural diverse public school. Academic discourse is a critical component of the Common Core State Standards and has
the potential to help students develop skills in reasoning, advocacy, and empowerment. This research may improve the ongoing teaching and learning within linguistically diverse, discourse communities.

Risks: This study is low risk. However, there is a risk of a loss of privacy or confidentiality. It is possible that participants may feel uncomfortable answering a question during an interview; however, as an experience middle school educator, the interviewer will strive to put the student at ease. Also, audio-video recording may be mildly distracting. Participants may choose to leave this study at any time.

Researcher: Clare is a doctoral student in Literacy, Language, and Culture at University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research centers around language and learning practices in an effort to open equitable learning spaces related to linguistic diversity. Previously, Clare has worked as a classroom teacher, instructional coach, and school administrator. Currently, Clare works as an educational consultant and mother to two young children.
APPENDIX C:

Teacher Interview Protocol

This interview will take place with the participant teacher prior to the student information session. This interview will take place at a time and location chosen by the participant teacher. Researcher will send this survey to the participating teacher via email prior to the conversation so that the teacher has an opportunity to think through the questions if they so choose.

1. What made you want to become a teacher?
2. What are some of your favorite aspects of teaching?
3. How did you come to prioritizing discourse in your classroom?
4. What are some challenging aspects of prioritizing discourse in the classroom?
5. What have you learned about your students through classroom discussion?
6. How do you plan for classroom discussions?
7. What are your goals concerning classroom discussion with this group of students?
APPENDIX D:

University of Illinois at Chicago

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
[An Exploratory Study of Academic Discourse.]

1. My name is Clare Donovan-Scane.

2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about how middle school students like you learn and choose to participate in the classroom. I am particularly interested in learning more about how you are developing as people who think and talk about literacy.

3. If you agree to be in this study I will be videotaping your participation in all kinds of class discussion. Your participation in these discussions is part of class whether you choose to participate in the study or not. However, if you choose not to be part of the study you will not appear on any video footage. Likewise, if you want to participate in the study but you do not want to appear on video you have the choice to have you image blurred on the footage. I will do my best to keep your participation in this research project private. In presentations and reports, I will also keep your identity a secret by giving you a fake name. However, there is a chance that people might figure out you are participating in this research, or that they will figure out who you are in presentations and reports.

I am interested in whole group and small group discussion and over next 6-8 weeks I will be observing this type of learning in your classroom. If you choose to participate in the study, I may also ask you to participate in a conversation with me (an interview lasting about 20 minutes) where I ask you questions about your experiences during classroom discussions. You may be randomly selected as a focus student in which case the researcher will interview you about your participation in classroom discourse. If you are selected you will be asked to sit for 2-4 15-minute interviews during non-instructional time over the duration of the study. Lastly, you may be asked to write short written reflections about your experience with classroom discussions which will take about 10 minutes to complete. These are already part of your course content.

4. There is very little risk to your participation in this study. You will be participating in learning just as you would if you do not participate in this study. You may be asked to have a 1:1 conversation or a conversations with me about your participation in classroom discussions. You may be pulled from the classroom to have these discussions so others may become aware that you are being interviewed for the study. You may also participate in these discussions within the classroom setting. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with your participation and/or there is something that you don’t want to do regarding the study you may opt out of participating.

5. Although there are no direct benefits to participating in my study. It is possible that you will feel that reflecting on your learning helps you to better understand yourself as a learner. As
we talk through your experiences with classroom discussions you might learn more about yourself as a learner.

6. Please talk this over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate. We will also ask your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study. It is important to know that by choosing to not participate in the study you will still be responsible for participating in the learning of your classroom.

7. If you don’t want to be in this study, you don’t have to participate. Remember, being in this study is up to you and no one will be upset if you don’t want to participate or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. Also, your choice to participate in the study will not, in any way, alter your grade in this class.

8. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn’t think of now, you can email me at cdonov3@uic.edu or ask me next time I am here on campus. If you don’t yet feel comfortable asking me; please talk with your teacher and she can answer your questions or ask me if she doesn’t know the answer to your question.

9. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

________________________________________  __________________
Name of Subject                      Date

________________________________________  ______   ______
Signature

Please choose one of the following two options with regard to your image being included in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ My image may be used in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ Please mask my image (e.g., by blurring or cropping) in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.
APPENDIX E:

Parent/Legal Guardian Consent Form

Research Project: An exploratory Study of Academic Discourse

Principal Investigator
Clare Donovan-Scane
Graduate Student, Literacy, Language, and Culture
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education
773-343-8355 | cdonov3@uic.edu

Overview
You child’s teacher is using methods of instruction within her classroom that promote students’ ability to communicate and think aloud with peers. This type of instruction and learning promotes academic discourse. Your child is being asked to participate in a research study about this method of learning. This form describes the study and your child’s involvement. Please read this document carefully, and sign the form if you and your child agree to participate.

Purpose and Background of the Study
I am interested in learning more about how students talk with one another about literature and how they feel about participating in discussion while in school. My goal is to describe discourse (different ways of communication, including talk) in a middle school setting as well as to better understand what students think about this type of classroom practice.

Voluntary Participation
Your child can withdraw from the study or refuse to participate at any time without consequence. If you withdraw permission, I will stop all data collection from your child. The typical amount of participation outside of already scheduled academic learning will be about 1 hour over the course of the 6-10 week study.

Study Procedures
This study will take place during the 2017-2018 academic year. If you agree, your child will:

May participate in completion of written reflections 3-4 times throughout the study. These written reflections are also part of their regular class responsibilities and do not represent additional work for your student.

Participate in photographed and/or audio and/or videotaped observations of his/her interactions in regularly scheduled classroom discussions (whole group, small group, and 1:1 conferences) 5 times throughout the study. The video work will not interfere with children’s learning as it is already embedded in the curricula for the class.
May be randomly selected as a student of focus to participate in short (15 min) interview with me regarding their participation in class discussions. The purpose of these interviews is to get a deeper understanding of student thinking and motivation during class discussions. These interviews may take place within the classroom while other students are in the room. These interviews will be scheduled in collaboration with the classroom teacher and will not interfere with instructional time.

Potential Risks

This study is low risk. If students are asked to participate in a follow-up interview their participation will be identifiable to their peers and it is possible that a student may feel uncomfortable answering questions during 1:1 interviews. At any time, your child can choose not to respond or leave the study entirely. This study is largely captures instruction and learning that is already happening within the classroom setting.

I will do our best to keep your child's participation in this research project private. In presentations and reports, I will also keep his/her identity a secret by giving him/her a pseudonym. However, there is a chance that people might figure out your child is participating in this research, or that they will figure out who they are in presentations and reports.

Potential Benefits

There are likely no significant and/or direct benefits. However, through engaging in reflection interviews and surveys, students can gain some additional insights into their participation in academic discourse. Also, I hope to learn more about how this type of student communication can lead to empowerment and a stronger sense of personal, academic, identity.

Privacy and Confidentiality

I will keep the identities of student participants confidential. No names will be shared in any reports. Segments of audio and video recordings, still images, or images of documents may be used with larger research audiences for analysis, teaching, or reporting purposes. If your child appears in research footage used in this way, you can request that his/her face is masked (blurring or cropping out his/her images). All data will be kept secure with passwords and in locked files indefinitely for analysis. Please remember that you or your child reserve the right to exit the study at any time. Participation is voluntary and will not impact your student’s grade in any way. Additionally, know that that your decision to participate will not impact any relationship with UIC or the school.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me, Clare Donovan-Scane at (773) 343-8355, or my advisor; Rebecca Woodard, PhD, Assistant Professor at UIC at 312-996-5499.

Please be aware that under the Protection of Pupil Rights Act 20 U.S.C. Section 1232(c)(1)(A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked or of materials that will be used with your student. If you would like to do so, you should contact Dr. Rebecca Woodard at: 312-996-5499 (or by email at:rwoodard@uic.edu).
Parent/Guardian Consent to Participate

Research Project: An exploratory Study of Academic Discourse

Directions: Your student's name will not be included in any research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations. Please decide how your student's image can be being included in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ My child’s image (participant’s face) may be used in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ Please mask (e.g., by blurring or cropping) my child’s image (participant’s face) in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

I understand this study and I have had the chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research or my child’s rights, I can ask the contact listed above. I understand that my child or I may withdraw from the study or refuse to participate at any time without penalty, and that participation will not affect my child’s grades. I have kept a copy of this document for my records and future reference. I freely choose to allow my child to participate.

_______________________________
Student’s Name

_______________________________  ________________________________
Parent/Guardian Name          Parent/Guardian Signature

_______________
Date
Teacher Consent Form

Research Project: An exploratory Study of Academic Discourse

Principal Investigator
Clare Donovan-Scane
Graduate Student, Literacy, Language, and Culture
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education
(773) 343-8355 | cdonov3@uic.edu

Overview
I am asking that you participate in a study of academic discourse. The project involves a deep look into the discursive acts that occur with your students as they learn more and participate in acts of discursive learning. The aim is to describe discourse-in-action and better understand how participating in these types of interactions impacts your students.

Study Procedures
The study will take place over the course of one-two units in ELA (6-8 weeks). If you agree, you, as the only participant-instructor, will be asked to:

• Participate in one audio-recorded interview about your philosophy of teaching, your training, and planning for and the instruction of learning in your classroom. We will schedule these interviews at a time that is convenient for you. (approximately 15 mins)
• Share student written reflections and/or your activity within your classroom as they are connected to discursive learning and use of academic discourse among your students. (approximately 10-15 minutes after each observation)
• Participate in photographed and/or audio or videotaped observations of your regularly scheduled teaching and learning as related to academic discourse. (no additional time needed for the study)

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can end your participation at any time. If you feel uncomfortable during a particular interview or observation, you may choose not to participate at that time. There are no foreseen penalties or loss of benefits associated with your withdrawal or decision not to participate. Your participation or non-participation is NOT to be related to your employment, or the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Potential Risks
Anticipated risks associated with the study are minimal. During observations and audio/video/photographic recording of your activities, you may be more aware than usual of your interactions with others. Video and audio recording may also be inconvenient or mildly distracting. You may choose to be identified with your name in research reports and publications (see options below). If you choose not to be identified with your name, there is still a risk you may be identified. I will do my best to protect confidentiality to minimize this risk. For example, we will assign you a pseudonym. For photography, video, and audio recordings, we can mask...
your identity if you desire (see options below). Participation in this study will not affect your employment in District 65.

**Potential Benefits**
While there are possibly no direct benefits from your participation in this study, you may become more aware of the impact of your planning and instruction as it relates to academic discourse. There may be additional indirect benefits related to your contribution to the knowledge base about practices that improve learning and engagement for teachers and students.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**
All the information you disclose will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. The corpus of data (including video recordings and documents), as a whole, will be viewable only by research team members. Segments of audio and video recordings, still images, or images of documents may be used with larger research audiences for analysis, teaching, or reporting purposes. If you appear in research footage used in this way, you can request that your identity be masked (e.g., by blurring or cropping out your image). All raw data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in researcher’s residence, and will be stored until the publication of this research. This raw data will be identifiable until it is blurred according to the consent/assent form preferences within 48 hours of footage being collected.

**Contact Information**
If you have more questions about this project, you may contact the principal investigator Clare Donovan-Scane (cdonov3@uic.edu). Again, remember that your participation is completely voluntary. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may call the University of Illinois at Chicago Review Board staff (IRB) at 312.996.1711 or the research sponsor, Dr. Rebecca Woodard, Assistant Professor at UIC at 312-996-5499. UIC Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at uicirb@uic.edu
Adult Consent to Participate

Research Project: An exploratory Study of Academic Discourse

Directions: There are two aspects of participation to decide on: (1) use of your name, and (2) use of your image.

1. Please choose one of the following two options with regard to your name being used in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ My name may be used in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ Please use a pseudonym when referring to me in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

2. Please choose one of the following two options with regard to your image being included in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ My image may be used in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

☐ Please mask my image (e.g., by blurring or cropping) in research or teaching reports, publications, or presentations.

I have read the informed consent document and I have kept a copy of it for my records and future reference. I freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this study.

__________________________________________________
Participant’s Name

__________________________________________________
Participant’s Signature

_______________
Date
APPENDIX F

Sample of Video Cued Interview Questions

CDS Introduction:

I just want to start by refreshing your memory about why I am spending so much time in your classroom and what I am interested in learning from you and your class; do you remember? So-I’m really wanting to learn more about how student participate in classroom discussions (like the book clubs, partnership, and even during whole-group). I am interested in finding out more about how students participate in these kind of learning activities and what they think about the activity and their role in the activity. So, really, I want to hear from you more about what it’s like to be part of that sort of learning when you are talking together.

If it’s cool with you, the conversation that we will have today will involve me asking you some questions about what it’s like to be part of the discussion (like your role, what you say and don’t say, and how you say it) and also looking at some of the video that I took during the observation. Does that work for you?

I also want to remind you that this is totally voluntary and we can stop whenever you are ready to go back to class. If there is a question that you don’t want to answer you can just say, “I pass”...just like you do during class! Also, I don’t have to share anything you say with your teacher so let me know if you want your answers, or any part of your answers to be confidential in terms of my talking with your teacher about what you say. Okay, are you ready to start our conversation?

Language specific questions:
1. When you filled out the language survey—you reflected a lot about different ways of talking both during school as well as outside of school (like at home or around town). Can you take a look at this list and tell me which languages you feel comfortable talking? (show list)
   a. Which are spoken where you live?
   b. Anything else you want to share or are interested in regarding this list of languages?

2. I am really interested in the way that languages work to connect us and the ways that sometimes language makes us feel distance. Does that sound familiar to you? Can you talk about how you have felt connected or disconnected through language?

Class/Curriculum specific questions:

3. Can you talk a little bit about how the class is structured? I know that you guys do a lot of talking and meeting in groups—I wonder what parts of class you like the most/least—would you mind sharing a bit about that?

4. Tell me about the books you are reading during independent reading—what do you like? What’s happening in the books you are currently reading?
   a. Can you tell me more about why you picked the books you do?
   b. As you read, do you think about the ways the characters speak?

5. So you are reading ________ for the survival book club unit—how are you liking that book?
   a. Note any linguistically diverse aspects of the book
      i. Character language(s)
      ii. Setting influence on character
      iii. Affect it may have on story/on reader
### APPENDIX G:

**Curriculum-Based List of Texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title, author</th>
<th>Cover</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Language features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Bird</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amani Curtis is a ten year old girl who’s entire life changes when Hurricane Katrina hits her neighborhood in the lower nines. She learns about death, bravery, and strength all too quickly as she and her family struggle to survive their harsh circumstances.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upside Down in the Middle of Nowhere</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I ain’t never seen no one look so pitiful.” (p. 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Julie Lamana</td>
<td></td>
<td>“You best tell your brother to leave Sealy alone,” (p.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“You need to tell your sister to stop bein’ so triflin’ and weird!” (p.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I was fixin’ to tear into my second pork chop…” (p.12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Long Walk To Water</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>This survival story follows two Sudanese children living in different time periods. One, a young girl named Nya walks from her village to the nearest watering hole, a two hour journey. The other child is a boy named Salva, who lived during the Sudanese uprising and</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By: Linda Sue Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
subsequent war. Salva was a “lost boy” and encounters immense struggle in an effort to find his family.

**Crossing the Wire**  
By: Will Hobbs

This story follows a teenage boy, Victor Flores as he journeys from his small town in Mexico across the U.S. border. Victor’s survival is threatened throughout this passage.

“Right on “Mono, stand up for your rights…”(p.146)  
“I’ve been a cholo, a ratero, and a bajadero, but I have graduated.” (p. 146)  
“…crimes against innocent mojados…”(p. 152)

---

**Student-Selected Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title, author</th>
<th>Cover</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Language features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| One Crazy Summer  
By: Rita Williams-Garcia | ![One Crazy Summer Cover](image) | During the summer of 1968, three little girls are sent from their home in Brooklyn, NY to live with their estranged mother, a leader of the Black Panther movement in Oakland, CA. | “Can’t nobody knock down a mountain.” (p.3) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</th>
<th>Third book in the series, Harry and his friends return to their previously safe, school under fear of potential villains.</th>
<th>“Bill said it’s rubbish sold to wizard tourists and isn’t reliable” (p. 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crossover</td>
<td>Brothers Josh and Jordan learn a lot about themselves and their father through growing up and a mutual love of basketball. Author uses stylized poetic format throughout.</td>
<td>“Yeah I wear it, when I wanna floss.” dad smiles (p. 18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Thief</td>
<td>Told from the perspective of Death—this story follows a young girl through 1930’s Nazi Germany.</td>
<td>“Was ist los mit dem Kind?” Rosa Hubermann inquired (p. 28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Girl Dreaming</td>
<td>Jacqueline Woodson</td>
<td>Free verse poetry format of a childhood biography. The author travels from South Carolina to New York during the 1960s and 1970s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“In South Carolina, we became The Grandchildren Gunnar’s Three Little Ones Sister Irby’s Grands MaryAnn’s Babies” p. 45
APPENDIX H:
Multimodal Transcription Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multimodal Code</th>
<th>Multimodal Cue/Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>((embodied</td>
<td>Embodied communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication))</td>
<td>ex: picks up ipad and begins to scroll while talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
<td>Extended pause (for thinking or emphasis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ex: I mean….I don’t know…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Word cut off or dropped off from sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ex: It was just like I-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>Latched Phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex: two people talking at the same time or one person talking over another person’s sentence by way of interruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>::</td>
<td>Lengthened Syllable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex: du::de that’s do::pe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
<td>Words following downward arrow said with a deeper, more articulated register/tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex: What are you doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Words following the upward arrow said with a quicker, more relaxed register/tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex: Yo! What are you doing, dude?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○word/phrase○</td>
<td>Word or phrase said softly/at low volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex: whisper, something said under one’s breath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clare Donovan Scane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational History</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>University of Illinois at Chicago</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chicago, IL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD in Curriculum and Instruction</td>
<td>Expected 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration: Literacy, Language, and Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Louis University</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chicago, IL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters of Education, Curriculum and Instruction, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northeastern University</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chicago, IL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Grade Endorsement, 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University of Iowa</strong></td>
<td><strong>Iowa City, IA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Science, Elementary Education, 2001</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>K-12 CLASSROOMS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 – 2007 Oscar Mayer Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Grades Teacher</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2002 – 2003 Walt Disney Magnet School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Grade Teacher</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2015 Lake Forest College</td>
<td>Lake Forest, IL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor of Record</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUC 303: Reading Methods in the Elementary School</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADUATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013 University of Illinois at Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>CI535: Studies in Literacy Research and Teacher Inquiry</td>
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</table>
Educational Leadership Experience

2016-Present Independent Education Consultant
Selected Consultantships: Oak Park District 97, Oak Park, IL; Eberhart Elementary, Chicago, IL; Peterson Elementary, Chicago IL; Sears Elementary, Kenilworth, IL; Catherine Cook School, Chicago, IL; LEARN Charter School Network; Chicago, IL; Oak Hills Public Schools, Oak Hills, OH; Eastwood Local Schools; Pemberville, OH; Grace Educational Resources; Chicago, IL

2017 Northwestern University Evanston, IL
Student Teaching Supervisor

2012-2016 READ Worldwide Chicago, IL
Director of Literacy

2012-2014 Urban Teacher Education Program: University of Chicago Chicago, IL
Induction/Mentor Coach

2010 – 2012 Namaste Charter School Chicago, IL
Middle School Instructional Leader

2007 – 2010 Chicago New Teacher Center Chicago, IL
Lead Induction Coach

Notable Professional Development
Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity – Evanston Cradle to Career Cohort
Teachers College Reading and Writing Project-Coaching Institute
North Dakota Study Group - Collaborated with group of progressive educators around problem solving issues in urban education.
Charlotte Danielson - Trained in the Danielson framework and worked with a national team to develop the framework with mentoring expectations.
Everyday Mathematics - Attended Everyday Mathematics training for grades K-3
Having Hard Conversations - Trained in Jen Abrams model of generational coaching and conducting complex conversations.
New Teacher Center Symposium - Attended and presented at the national conference for teacher induction.
Golden Teacher Mentor - Mentored three new teachers and planned the training for the induction of these teachers into the learning community.

The Rochelle Lee Fund Award - Awarded over $1000 to enhance classroom library and engaged in over 30 hours of literacy-based professional development

Rochelle Lee Reading for Deeper Meaning levels 1 & 2 - Participated in an educational think-tank of middle-grade planning

**Invited Presentations & Conferences**

- Literacy Research Association Annual Conference
  - November 2018
- Literacy Research Association Annual Conference
  - December 2017
- UIC College of Education Research Day Symposium
  - January 2017
- NCTEAR Midwinter Conference: Workshop Study Group
  - February 2016
- New Teacher Center Symposium
- Mentor Academy: Coaching Towards Equity
  - 2009-2010
- Mentor Academy: Induction Coaching
  - 2008-2010
- Secondary Reading League: 33rd Day of Reading Conference
  - November 2009