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Expanding Linguistic Repertoires:

An Ethnography of Black and Latina/o Youth Transcultural Communication

In Urban English Language Arts Classrooms

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Danny Cortez Martinez

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Expanding Linguistic Repertoires:
An Ethnography of Black and Latina/o Youth Transcultural Communication
In Urban English Language Arts Classrooms

by

Danny Cortez Martinez

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Chair

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of Black and Latina/o youth communication at Willow High School, an urban secondary school in a Southern Californian neighborhood I call Tajuata. Drawing on tools from the Ethnography of Communication tradition I explored how Black and Latina/o youth engaged in *transcultural communicative activities* with one another. That is, I sought to capture the language practices that these youth deployed within and across racial, ethnic, linguistic, and social boundaries in their English Language Arts classrooms. The ways in which these diverse youth *used language* to communicate are highlighted to consider how sociocultural language and literacy researchers can re-imagine what counts as language for Black and Latina/o youth in urban schooling contexts, and how educators can build on the linguistic virtuosity of these youth in school.

Through the 2010-2011 academic year I observed four English Language Arts courses taught by three different teachers. Through participant observation methods and audio recordings of classroom interactions I documented the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth in their English Language Arts classrooms. The following questions guided my study: (1) What are the regularities and variances in the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth at Willow High School? (2) How are the linguistic repertoires of Willow High School youth taken up? Are they taken up in ways that expand or constrict their linguistic repertoires? And (3), What language ideologies are explicitly and implicitly indexed through Black and Latina/o youths' communicative activities?

I used ethnographic research tools to understand the everyday communicative practices, or the expanding linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth in four English Language Arts classrooms at Willow High School. Specifically I drew on the Ethnography of Communication methodological tradition that calls for supplementing traditional ethnographic fieldwork with audio or video recordings of naturally occurring talk of participants. I also drew on Cultural Historical Activity Theoretical (CHAT) perspectives which complement an Ethnography of Communication method, since language is viewed as the premier tool for mediating learning and development.

The dissertation of Danny Cortez Martinez is approved.

Kris D. Gutierrez

Ernest Morrell

H. Samy Alim

Marjorie H. Goodwin

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

DEDICATION PAGE

For *Mami* and *Papi*,
For letting me dream for justice

For Sabrina, Danielle, Marissa, Giselle and Alyssa
For reminding me why we need justice

For Betty
For reminding me of the love required for justice

For the youth at Willow High School

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* * * * *

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2010-12 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Cultivating New Voices Among Scholars of Color Fellowship

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Expanding what counts as language for Black¹ and Latina/o² youth

The tardy bell rang and several youth continued walking into Mr. Esperanza's class making their way to empty seats. Chanel (a Black female youth) sat in a pod of desks situated in the middle-rear section of the class. When in her seat, she began chatting with Jorge (a Latino youth) while organizing papers in her folder. Mr. Esperanza was about to begin speaking when several loud voices from outside of the class were heard through a door that was left ajar. Chanel looked toward the door and said loudly, "that sounds like Black people." Immediately after, three Latina students walked into the classroom. Chanel looked at the girls entering, then at me, raised her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders. She immediately returned to her conversation with Jorge" (fieldnote, 02/09/2011).

When Chanel, a Black immigrant youth from Belize *heard* the voices of her Latina peers she believed these voices *sounded like* "Black people." While Chanel was briefly surprised, she shrugged her shoulders at me and immediately returned to her conversation with Jorge. In this interaction, Chanel participated in *racializing* or *race-ing* the speech of her Latina peers, attributing a racial/ethnic identity based on their language practices (Alim, 2009). At Willow High School, Black and Latina/o youth often recalled moments where they heard Latina/o youth speaking *like* Black people, and while I made these youth perceive this to be an exceptional

¹ Throughout the dissertation I will use the term "Black" instead of African American. The Black youth in my study preferred this term and used it whenever they talked about race or identity labels.

² I will use Latina/o to throughout this study unless speaking about an individual student. On some occasions I will be more specific in my identifying terms, such as Salvadorian or Mexican when talking about Latina/o youth.

practice, most agreed that they were accustomed to Latina/o youth using Black Language³ features in their everyday speech. In the words of these youth, in their neighborhood, you gotta speak ghetto!

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of Black and Latina/o youth communication at Willow High School, an urban secondary school in a Southern Californian neighborhood I call Tajuata⁴. Drawing on tools from the Ethnography of Communication tradition I explored the ways in which Black and Latina/o youth engaged in *transcultural communicative activities* with one another. That is, I sought to capture the language practices that these youth deployed in their multidirectional movements across racial, ethnic, linguistic, and social boundaries in their English Language Arts classrooms. While I came to this study with larger categories like Black and Latina/o, I came to know youth who identified as Black, Latina/o, Mexican, Blaxican, Belizian, *Salvadoreña/o*, *Hondureña/o*, and Brown. These same youth also identified as being hood, ghetto, nerds, magnet kids, *paisa*, emo, jocks and ravers to name a few. The ways in which these diverse youth used language to communicate with their peers, their teachers and me will be highlighted to consider a way of re-imagining notions of what counts as language for Black and Latina/o youth in urban schooling contexts. This will be achieved by understanding the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth in English classrooms, spaces where socialization into dominant ways of speaking are at the heart of instructional goals.

Why Language? During my years as a middle and high school English Language Arts (ELA) and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in two major California cities, I found

³ I will use Black Language throughout this study instead of commonly used terms such as Black English, Black English Vernacular, African American Vernacular English, or term used least by scholars and mostly by the media Ebonics.

⁴ Willow High School (WHS) and Tajuata are pseudonyms.

myself listening very carefully to the languages spoken by my students, most of whom were Black and Latina/o youth. I listened to their utterances as they spoke to me and to their peers, as they walked past my classroom and alongside me in the hallways. I listened to the range of languages spoken by a diverse group of Black and Latina/o youth, many who *I* considered bilingual, bi-dialectical, and expert code-switchers and styleshifters. On several occasions I was surprised when I *saw* the youth that I believed were Black based on how they sounded. Like Chanel, I found myself making assumptions about the race of a student simply based on how they *sounded*. For example, as I walked along a hallway, or heard a voice approaching my classroom, I *heard* what I believed was a Black youth approaching. And on some occasions, the voices I heard belonged to Latina or Latino youth.

As a researcher, I had the privilege of returning to Willow High School where I was a former English and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, and college advisor. At Willow High School, Black and Latina/o youth participated in a range of language practices that I now understand as not being fully captured by notions of bilingualism or bidialectalism. These youth were engaging in code-switching (Zentella, 1997) and styleshifting (Alim, 2004), language crossing (Rampton, 1995a) and language sharing (Paris, 2009, 2011), but were not limited to any or all of these practices. They displayed their ability to move into and out of standard and non-standard linguistic forms (Farr, Seloni, & Song, 2010; García, 2010; Paris, 2011). The language practices of these youth were inclusive of and blurred most language lines. In fact, the youth deployed language practices that might be more fully captured by recent terms such as *linguaging* (García, 2010) or *translinguaging*, (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Jørgensen, 2008) a recent take on language where scholars argue that languages have no boundaries, no lines demarcating the beginnings or ends of a language, what Garica (2009) argued built on Gutierrez,

Baquedano-Lopez and Tejeda's (1999) notion of hybrid language practices. While I believe the youth in this study engaged in *linguaging* and *translinguaging*, this study will continue to use "language" and "language practices" to describe the ways in which youth use language to mediate their everyday communicative interactions. In addition I will make the case for envisioning classrooms where the linguistic repertoires of non-dominant children and youth are treated as a resource for learning and development, where schooling and English Language Arts instruction specifically expands the linguistic repertoires of students, not only by adding more powerful academic varieties, but by socializing youth to more nuanced understandings of what *counts* as a language.

Research Questions. Through the 2010-2011 academic year I observed four English Language Arts courses taught by three individual teachers. In these courses I observed and audio recorded classroom interactions to document the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth in their English Language Arts classrooms. The following questions guided my study:

1. What are the regularities and variances in the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth at Willow High School?
2. How are the linguistic repertoires of Willow High School youth taken up? Are they taken up in ways that expand or constrict their linguistic repertoires?
3. What language ideologies are explicitly and implicitly indexed through Black and Latina/o youths' communicative activities?

In conceptualizing this study, I wanted to first understand *what* the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth were. Previous studies that focused on one racial/ethnic group provided a foundation for understanding specific practices of Black (Alim, 2004; Baugh, 1999; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000) groups, however, I was also interested in understanding both

the regularities and variances across Black and Latina/o youth language practices at WHS, that is their transcultural communicative practices. My second questions seek to understand the processes by which Black and Latina/o youths' transcultural language practices are "taken up" in their English Language Arts classrooms. I wanted to know how diverse language practices might be brought into official classroom spaces and if these ways contribute to an expansion (or not) of youths' linguistic repertoires. And finally, I sought to explore how *youth* displayed their beliefs and ideas, their language ideologies, via their everyday language practices in their ELA classroom.

The Linguistic Realities of Black and Latina/o Schools.

In schools across the United States Black and Latina/o youth are attending schools with one another more than any other ethnic/racial group (Ball, 2009; Paris, 2011; J. Rogers et al., 2009). According to the California Department of Education, over 50% of public elementary, middle and high schools in the state have a Black and Latina/o majority, with high schools coming in at 55.8% (CDE, 2012 from 2008-2009 data). Re-segregation patterns in the United States have made this a reality (Orfield & Lee, 2006) and now more than ever, Black and Latina/o youth are learning next to one another and participating in local cultural and linguistic repertoires of practice (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) that have not been well documented. So what *do* we know about the cultural and linguistic repertoires of practices of Black and Latina/o youth? To begin understanding this, I will first describe how the cultural and linguistic repertoires of practice of Black and Latina/o youth are situated in the Willow High School context.

Willow High School is considered a minority-majority school, where "minority" or non-

dominant students make up more than 50% of the student population. While WHS has experienced a shift from a majority Black to a majority Latina/o population over the last 20 years, it has always been a minority-majority school given that 99% of its population is either Black or Latina/o. Black and Latina/o youth at WHS brought both cultural and linguistic diversity to the campus. While some countries have made attempts to embrace and support the increased diversity brought about by globalization and increased flows of migration (Dicker, 2003; Spolsky, 2004) the United States has failed to build on or treat the cultural and linguistic diversity of non-dominant communities as a resource for learning (Alim, 2004; Dicker, 2003; Gutiérrez, Morales, & Martínez, 2009; Hull & Schultz, 2001, 2002; Lee, 2007; Orellana, 2009). While building on these resources has been the charge of many sociocultural language and literacy researchers, educational practitioners are still not confident in their ability to support the acquisition of “standard” or dominant varieties of English for linguistically diverse students in US schools (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; LeMoine & Hollie, 2007).

Historically, students who were not socialized into dominant varieties of English were thought of as deficient, linguistically different or simply cognitively inferior (Valencia, 2002). Until very recent, labels such as “Limited English Proficient” and “English Language Learner” were regularly used when speaking about students who were learning English as their second language. In some districts there were attempts to categorize students considered “English Only” but who did not exhibit a command of “standard English,” the so called “Standard English Learners” (LeMoine & Hollie, 2007). At a school like Willow High School, these two labels alone might possibly account for a large portion of the Black and Latina/o youth. Orellana and Gutierrez (2006) point out that these labels position students as a problem, instead of placing a value on the linguistic agility and flexibility of these youth. They further argue:

Who, from a linguistic and social perspective, is more limited: those who are monolingual English Learners or speakers of other languages who are also English Learners? Rethinking such conceptual labels may lead us to ask fundamentally different questions about who or what is limited, or at risk, and why. Might we not see monolingual English speakers as unprepared for futures in a rapidly changing, globalized world? (Orellana & Gutiérrez, 2006, p. 119)

Orellana and Gutierrez (2006) remind us that we must reconsider the ways in which we view and treat non-dominant youth who are speakers of marginalized languages. While we label them, in an attempt to provide them services to acquire standard varieties of English, this does not honor and value the languages they do bring to classrooms from their homes and communities. This statement also pushes us to “flip the script,” to consider *who* is more limited? Individuals whose language practices and beliefs about what counts as language are narrower? It is also a push to consider *what counts as language* in our schools, especially since non-dominant youth whose language practices are treated as inferior are too often placed in courses that attempt to rid them of their “nonstandard” languages.

Non-dominant students are often placed in educational programs driven by notions of remediation. Remedial programs tend to treat students themselves as the problem needing to be fixed (Gutiérrez et al., 2009), and the languages of their homes and communities in need of eradication (Zentella, 1997, 2005). This deficit perspective fails to consider the dearth of socio-linguistic research that highlights the linguistic dexterity of non-dominant social groups, especially those whose ways with words have not aligned with varieties of English sanctioned by U.S. schools (MacSwan & Rolstad, 2003). Standard language ideologies are those beliefs and ideas that mediate narrow notions of what counts as language for non-dominant children and

youth in schools.

Standard language ideologies are ideas and beliefs “... supportive of a form of a language ‘imagined’ as ‘standard,’ and adversely critical of the speech of disfavored social groups” (L. Milroy, 2001, p. 63). Although many linguists refute claims that standard English is the only “correct” or “proper” variant of English (Alim, 2005a; Hill, 2008; Smitherman, 2000), Hill (2008) contends that this ideology starkly “contrasts with the view of linguists, that all varieties of human languages are systematic and rule governed” (p. 35). Standard language ideologies in the United States, often positioned the language practices of non-dominant groups as deficient when compared to the varieties of standard English spoken by dominant groups (Alim, 2005a; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Asato, 2000; Zentella, 2005).

Wortham (2008) argues that standard language ideologies are embedded in the sorting and categorizing practices of schooling, and that “educational institutions play central roles in authorizing and circulating ideologies of language through which ‘educated’ and ‘uneducated’ language use are associated with differentially valued types of people” (p. 39). National and state education policies like No Child Left Behind⁵ (NCLB), English only propositions that have attempted to eliminate bilingual education in several states, and the standardization of curriculum all reify standard English ideologies in educational institutions. In classrooms, standard language ideologies are circulated by teacher practices that fail to treat the languages of non-dominant students as a resource for learning (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Razfar, 2005), and instead view their language practices as an impediment to their academic growth (Nocon & Cole, 2009).

There is looming pressure by policies like NCLB to standardize the learning experiences

⁵ NCLB is the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, signed under the Bush administration.

of low performing students, specifically those who are not proficient in the dominant language and literacy practices of schooling (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gándara & Baca, 2008). In California, Language Arts teachers who peruse California's English Language Arts Content Standards will encounter words like "correct" and "grammatical" in introductions that call for students to demonstrate a "command of Standard American English," (CDE, 1998) indexing standard language ideologies. While these standards are on their way out, and the new fashion in accountability are the Common Core standards adopted by the majority of U.S. states, what counts as language in schools is still limited to dominant ways of speaking, or what is called "standard" or "academic" varieties of English. Asking teachers to facilitate students' development of standard English is not problematic; however naturalizing the language practices of the dominant population, as the norm (Godley, Carpenter, & Werner, 2007; Wiley & Lukes, 1996) is a problem. This indicates to non-dominant youth that their language practices are deficient, and not acceptable for the virtue of education and learning (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Lee, 2007; Morrell, 2008). Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2007) contend that while they believe in providing youth with the language and literacy skills tied to the Language of Wider Communication (Smitherman, 2000), or what others call standard or academic varieties of English; they also believe in providing urban youth with the tools and facility to understand the power dynamics embedded in language (p. 50).

So what is this language often referred to as "standard" English? Alim has argued that there is nothing standard about "standard" English. Milroy (2001) also argues that the general public often believes that national languages such as English and Spanish exist in standardized forms, and in turn this belief affects "the way in which speakers think about their own language and about 'language' in general" (p. 530). Standard language ideologies can be particularly

damaging to students who are speakers of marginalized languages since they may perceive that their languages do not mirror what is imagined as standard or “good” English. At the same time teachers are charged with the task of socializing these very youth into academic or standard varieties of English, a task that I believe is necessary for non-dominant youth.

The English Language Arts classroom, at WHS can be considered contact zones, where languages and cultures collide and meet and struggle for power (Pratt, 1991). In schools like Willow High School where Black and Latina/o youth are the majority and/or only racial/ethnic group present, the linguistic and cultural practices (not simply culture in its static notion) of students rarely make their way into curricular practices (Gutiérrez & Lee, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). While absent in the curricula, the cultural and linguistic practices of the youth have gained currency among youth, in particular, the Black Language practices deployed by Black and Latina/o youth. While WHS may look like a school with very little diversity given that only Black and Latina/o youth make up the population, there existed a multiplicity of language practices in the classrooms. Tensions emerged when Black or Latina/o youth used “nonstandard” languages in the White public spaces (Alim, 2005b; Reynolds & Orellana, 2009) of their classrooms. I will argue that “official” or public spaces in the classroom are similar to White public spaces where youth were asked to perform in and were evaluated based on their ability to speak in dominant ways with words⁶. Given this reality, we must work towards an understanding of language that is inclusive of the flexible ways these youth communicate across racial/ethnic groups (Paris, 2011; Reyes, 2010), specifically countering notions that these languages in need of remediation (Gutiérrez et al., 2009).

⁶ I will argue that certain classroom activities like presentations and reading out loud for example are public spaces where the language form and function of youth are monitored for their “correctness” or alignment with dominant ways with words.

A brief introduction to Tajuata and Willow High School narratives.

Master narratives about Willow High School and Tajuata often purport that conflict between Black and Latina/o students is rampant. Montecinos (1995) argues that “the use of a master narrative to represent a group is bound to provide a very narrow depiction of what it means to be Mexican-American, African-American, , and so on” (p. 293). The master narrative about the Tajuata community provides outsiders and insiders with stories of conflict, tension and violence between “Black and Brown” people. This includes a struggle for housing, jobs, medical resources and educational resources (Davis, 1992; Sears, 2000). Even more common at Willow High School and in the larger Tajuata community are master narratives around Black and Brown violence. While violence does occur, there tends to be an erasure of narratives that inform citizens of the long history of social activism, community organizing and transcultural relationships that have emerged both from within Willow High School and the larger Tajuata community (Davis, 1992; Diver-Stamnes, 1995; Sears, 2000).

Understanding difference. Gutierrez, Morales and Martinez (2009) argue that “human difference has been historically addressed as being problematic in society” (p. 217). In the United States, characteristics of difference are measured against and compared to the practices of dominant groups, mostly middle-class practices. This normalizes and naturalizes the cultural practices of dominant groups (Brayboy, Castagno, & Maughan, 2007), and allows deficit explanations about the cultural practices of non-dominant groups to serve as explanations for academic, social and economic shortcomings (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997). Menchaca (1997) traces the origins of deficit thinking to the 1620s when Pilgrims made contact with Native American groups and used their own biblical interpretations to proselytize that they were chosen by their God to spread Christianity. This ideology supported the economic interests of their

financiers, the British crown, who believed that “God had made the Anglo-Saxons a superior race destined to own and to govern America” (Menchaca, 1997, p. 14). This ideological stance is one that the scientific community for centuries forward used to promote research paradigms committed to demonstrate that differences in non-dominant groups were the cause and blame for their inferior placement in U.S.’s stratified society (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997).

Oscar Lewis (2003) introduced the concept of a “culture of poverty” to explain the “shortcomings” of individuals and groups and attributed these to their cultures (see also Foley, 1997; cited from Gutiérrez et al., 2009). Menchaca (1997) cites research by Nott & Gliddon (1854) who claim that “unlike the ‘complex languages’ spoken by Caucasians, non-s spoke primitive languages reflecting simplistic mentality” (p. 27). Linguistic differences continued to be viewed through this deficit perspective a century later. ‘Linguistic deprivation’ theories are an example of this as it was introduced to speak about the “different” language spoken by non-dominant groups, and was viewed as the reason for their poor schooling outcomes (Hess & Shipman, 1965). Other scholars attributed the inferiority of non-dominant social groups to genetic and cognitive differences that ultimately demonstrated the inferiority of Black, Latina/o, Native American and Asian groups that were compared to dominant groups (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997). Valencia (1997) laments the view taken on by deficit theorists who truly believed that “in sum, linguistic difference leads to trouble, conflict and school failure” (p. 1).

Researchers, however, did not always accept this notion of difference. As early as 1889, Franz Boas set out to demolish the use of the terms “alternating sounds” and “primitive language” (Henne, 2009) that were often used to describe the languages of non- groups. Duranti (1997) explains that Boas brought forth in his research “the realization that many of the ideas about “primitive languages” found in the literature were empirically unsound, including the

claim that in American Indian languages sounds were not pronounced as accurately as in European languages” (p. 54). Boas concluded that the sounds that were not recognized by observers were those sounds not common in their own languages (Duranti, 1997, p. 54).

In the 1960s and 1970s researchers set out to understand the language practices of non-dominant social groups with the intention of changing the view of these languages as flawed⁷. This was considered the “sociolinguistic turn” in social and educational research (Urciuoli, 1996) where researchers began attending to the supposed “differences” in the language practices of non- groups in order to truly understand how these languages served as social and cultural tools for speakers. Researchers in Anthropology and Linguistics began to examine the language practices of non-dominant groups by investigating naturally occurring talk in their homes and communities. One of the earliest attempts to do so was conceived by Dell Hymes and John Gumperz who convened a session at the American Anthropology Association’s Annual Meeting (Hymes, 1964). In bringing together scholars from Anthropology and Linguistics, they proposed a new way of conducting research of non-dominant groups, a line of inquiry they called “The Ethnography of Speaking,” later called the Ethnography of Communication” (Duranti, 1997). This paradigm had a theoretical and methodological framework to study the languages of non-dominant groups within their natural communicative sociocultural contexts (Duranti, 1997; Gumperz, 1964; Hymes, 1972; Urciuoli, 1996).

Within the Ethnography of Communication researchers, the language practices of Black and Latina/o youth were of great interest to early researchers. Sociolinguists and Linguistic Anthropologists therefore pioneered early efforts to dispel notions that “non-standard” languages were improper (Hymes, 1964; Tookey, 2008). Research utilizing Hymes Ethnography of

⁷ Of course, prior to this period, anthropological research on Native American groups was prevalent, particularly by students of Boas who were identifying and documenting the languages of diverse indigenous groups (Duranti, 1997).

Communication framework highlighted the linguistic dexterity of non-dominant communities. This included work in African American communities (Alim, 2004; Goodwin, 1990; Heath, 1983; Morgan, 2002; Smitherman, 2000), and Latina/o communities (González, 2001; Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Zentella, 1997).

Understanding Transcultural Communication: Defining key terms

Throughout this dissertation I will refer to the communication between Black and Latina/o youth at WHS as *transcultural communication practices*. Here, I build on the work of Juan Guerra (2008) who uses *transcultural repositioning* rather than intercultural or cross-cultural to better capture the multidirectional movement of non-dominant peoples across social, class, cultural, and artistic boundaries in local contexts (Guerra, 2004). In this sense, the transcultural communication practices of Black and Latina/o youth at WHS highlight their agility to move into and out of these boundaries, where *sounding Black* may be necessary in a specific space and time, while in another, dominant varieties of English may be preferred. In his conceptualization of transcultural positions, Guerra (2008) argued “that members of historically excluded groups are in a position to cultivate adaptive strategies that help them moves across cultural boundaries by negotiating new and different contexts and communicative conventions” (p. 299). In this spirit, I use transcultural communication to explore how youth engage in transcultural communicative activities in ways that highlighted their adaptive strategies via the language resources available to them in their linguistic repertoires.

Black and Latina/o youth at WHS engaged in code-switching and styleshifting as they maneuvered their transcultural settings. The most prominent code-switching that occurred did so among Latina/o youth. However, the ways in which Latina/o youth code-switched varied across

generational status, and as interlocutors varied. When I mention code-switching, I am referring specifically to Spanish-English code-switching among youth.

I will also talk about *styleshifting* as a practice deployed by Black and Latina/o youth. Alim (2004, 2005b) uses the term "styleshifting" to refer to the shift an individual makes in their speech according to contextual and situational factors (p. 188-189). In his study of styleshifting among Black youth from Sunnyside, he noted their ability (contrary to one teacher's belief) to shift their style of speech according to their interlocutor. He found that Black youth were able to communicate using fewer Black Language features when they spoke to interlocutors with no knowledge of Hip Hop compared to the higher presence of Black Language features when speaking to or Black interlocutors with knowledge of Hip Hop in addition to their peers. His findings point to the linguistic flexibility of his Black youth. Styleshifting at Willow High School occurred when Black and Latina/o youth shifted from language features they used with their peers to those they deployed in official classroom contexts.

Code-switching and styleshifting were prominent in this study as youth communicated in their transcultural settings. However, I will remind the reader that these features are not the focus of this study; rather, identifying these linguistic features demonstrate that youth at WHS are capable of communicating in ways that include these features among several other features that sociocultural language researchers have focused on in individual studies. An understanding of these features allowed me to capture the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth.

Organization of dissertation

In chapter one I have outlined the imperative for this study, research questions, context for this study in relation to the conditions for schooling among Black and Latina/o youth. In chapter two I will review the theoretical and related literature that has contributed to my

understanding of the linguistic repertoires of diverse communities and its relationship to theories of learning and development. I will also situate my work in sociocultural language and literacy research that has informed English Language Arts instruction. Chapter three will detail the methodological framework that guides this study. I begin with a reflection on my own subjectivities as a Chicano researcher and former teacher at the WHS site. I then discuss the research site with a brief description of the historical, social and political changes over time and situate my participants in this setting. Finally in this chapter, I discuss the methodological tools used for data collection, and the ways in which I targeted my analysis via discourse analytic tools. In chapter four I describe the regularities and variances in the transcultural communication practice of Black and Latina/o youth at WHS. That is, I detail the agility and linguistic dexterity of these youth as they use language to communicate with varying interlocutors in the ELA context, with their peers, their teacher and in larger “official” spaces of classroom discourse. Chapter five examines how youths’ language practices are taken up in the classroom through an analysis of moment-to-moment interactions and responses to “non-standard” languages in official classroom spaces. I also examine the implicit and explicit ideologies of language of youth themselves through attention to speech where youth index alignment with or resistance to standard language ideologies. This study ends with chapter six where I will explore the implications of the findings in this work for youth, teachers, and teacher education and researchers. I will end with recommendations and connections to work in Critical Literacy and Critical Language Awareness with a call for Critical Language Pedagogy for *all* youth, and ultimately with a call for *language* to return to English Language Arts instruction.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

“I mean it’s a, its a time and place for everything. You gotta learn how when you talk to certain people, you have to talk right... You only talk what-do-you-call-it Black slang when you talking to your friends” (Marylou, Black Female youth in English 10)

In the quote above Marylou was reflecting on the use of what she called “Black slang,” the language that, according to her, she used during classroom interactions with her peers. Marylou’s reflection above (part of a larger discussion that I will enter in chapter 4) reminds me of the recent theoretical discussions about the notion of “linguistic repertoire” that have been on the rise in sociocultural language research (to name a few Benor, 2010; Blommaert & Backus, 2011; Rymes, 2010) following Gumperz’ (1964) original conceptualization of *verbal repertoire*. In her statement, Marylou captures the notion of linguistic repertoire, as she notes how there is a time and place for everything, including the range of languages an individual draws on to communicate meaning in diverse contexts. She pointed to the notion that communicative interactions are co-constructed and dependent on context, time and space. Marylou also captured her belief, and that of many other Willow High School youth when she stated “when you talk to certain people, you have to talk right.” This statement signaled her understanding of communicative competence but also her implicit language ideologies of her own speech practices. Marylou’s statements nicely capture the theoretical and empirical framing of this study steeped in the notion that language mediates learning and development, in addition to cultural and social practices.

Interdisciplinarity

Norma Gonzalez (2010) argues that Educational researchers are at the forefront of traversing diverse disciplines, regardless of how bounded these disciplines may present

themselves. In this sense, she believes we must continue to follow our “noses” as we traverse theoretical boundaries in our commitment to the so-called “applied” or better yet “Engaged” anthropology of education. In this spirit I drew on scholarship from diverse disciplines to understand and make meaning of the everyday transcultural communicative practices of Black and Latina/o youth.

Sociocultural Language and Literacy Research on the Other

Sociocultural researchers have long exhorted schools to recognize and build upon the skills youth display outside of school (Alim, 2004; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1999; Heath, 1983; Hull & Schultz, 2002; R. Rogers, 2001). However, teachers have expressed concern over how to effectively build on the language resources of non-dominant groups (Gandara, Hopkins, & Martínez, 2011; Gándara et al., 2005; LeMoine & Hollie, 2007). This is especially concerning given the pressure on teachers to have their students perform on assessments that only privilege academic varieties of English (Menken, 2008). In addition, the everyday language and literacy practices of students from non-dominant groups, though recognized as complex and sophisticated by researchers (Alim, 2004; González, 2001; Paris, 2011; Rymes, 2001) are often treated by teachers – and youth themselves – as inferior to school language practices (Alim, 2005a; D. C. Martínez, 2012; R. A. Martínez, Orellana, Pacheco, & Carbone, 2008; Paris, 2011). This comes at no surprise given that schools, like other government-regulated institutions, participate in circulating hegemonic ideologies that inculcate citizens into supporting dominant ways of being, that is, their cultural, linguistic and social practices become normalized and naturalized (Kroskrity, 2006; McGroarty, 2010).

This dissertation is framed within a sociocultural perspective on the relationship between home and school practices, a view that treats *language* as the premier tool mediating learning

(Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978), human development (Rogoff, 1995, 2003; Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chavez, & Angelillo, 2003) and socialization to communities of practice (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1979). This study also builds on sociolinguistic research that documents youths' linguistic dexterity (Alim, 2004, 2007; Orellana, Martínez, Lee, & Montaña, forthcoming; Paris, 2009; Zentella, 1997). Like previous sociocultural researchers, this study attempts to move beyond earlier attempts to identify “mismatches” (Au, 1980; Philips, 1983) in learning contexts, and instead, I aim to identify the linguistic skills of youth as a resource for learning in schools, what some have called leveraging non-dominant language practices for the development of academic or standard language practices (Michaels, 1991; Morrell, 2008; Orellana & Reynolds, 2008), and others are building on to speak about *leveling* these practices (personal communication, Paris 2012).

Early sociocultural researchers who attempted to view the language practices of non-dominant communities as “different” and not “deficient” began conducting research with these groups outside of schools. Hull and Schultz (2001, 2002) argue that studies outside of classrooms make clear that *learning* is not limited to “formal” learning contexts, such as schools and their classrooms. They also embrace the notion that the majority of theoretical advances in relation to *learning* and *development* have come about through an examination of the language and literacy practices of non-dominant social groups in homes, communities, and workplaces (for examples see Alim, 2004; Erickson, 2004; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Goodwin, 1990, 2006; Heath, 1983; Moll, 2000; Moll et al., 1992; Orellana, 2009; Rose, 2004; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Zentella, 1997). These studies proved to be useful in countering research findings that proposed deficit explanations for the educational shortcomings of non-dominant groups.

It was common in earlier research to blame children and youth, their families, their communities and their genetic make-up for their educational and linguistic deficiencies (Fought, 2006; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Urciuoli, 1996; Valencia, 1991). However, studies demonstrated that the language demands that non-dominant youth engage in outside of schools were complex and rigorous, demanding knowledge that children and youth were not learning in schools (Orellana, 2009). While “doing school” may require non-dominant youth to learn new languages, the languages they *bring* to formal learning contexts have yet to be treated as a resource for learning (Farr et al., 2010; Hornberger & McKay, 2010)

The methodological shift to document “out-of-school” language and literacy practices of groups led to several studies highlighting the linguistic dexterity of non-dominant social groups (González, 2001; Goodwin, 1990; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1972; Zentella, 1997). These studies highlight how the languages of non-dominant groups, often treated as flawed, are complex and rule governed (Labov, 1972). This included a more thorough understanding of how shifting into and out of, such as the code-switching practices of Puerto Rican youth in New York (Zentella, 1997). Based on these findings researchers began to urge educators to treat the linguistic resources of non-dominant social groups as a resource for learning in schooling contexts. Schultz and Hull (2002) attribute this shift in perspective to scholars from three theoretical traditions. These include the Ethnography of Communication, Vygotskian perspectives and activity theory (Cultural Historical Activity Theory), and New Literacy Studies (p. 11). These three paradigms seek to understand how the everyday language and literacy practices of individuals are shaped by the cultural practices of their respective communities. These include the cultural practices passed along through inter-generational socialization, cultural practices that undergo changes through time, and cultural practices that are developed as members participate

in communities of practice (Gutiérrez, 2002; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991). For this review and project, I will focus on works from both Ethnography of Communication and Cultural Historical Activity Theoretical perspectives.

The Ethnography of Communication

Dell Hymes and John Gumperz developed a tradition of research known as the Ethnography of Communication which contributed to both theoretical and methodological advances in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (Duranti, 2001). In their initial call for an Ethnography of Communication, Hymes and Gumperz hoped to convince Linguists "...to study language in context and Anthropologists to include the study of language in their description of cultures" (Schultz & Hull, 2002, p. 13). Hymes (1964) believed that a study of the communicative practices of a group should "...investigate its communicative habits as a whole" (p. 3) and insisted that when a study using an Ethnography of Communication framework was done well, it brought to the forefront misconceptions about the nonstandard language practices of marginalized communities. The Ethnography of Communication flourished in the field of Sociolinguistics where researchers conducted field research in places distant from the United States. Classic works in this tradition contributed much to what scholars know about the socially and cultural mediated ways in which language practices are used in speech communities.

Scholars also used tenets of the Ethnography of Communication to explore language differences in the United States and to describe the complexity involved in the language practices of non-dominant social groups, including Chicana@ mothers and their children in Arizona (González, 2001), Chicana "homegirls" or gang members in California (Mendoza-Denton, 2008), Black children engaging in play in Philadelphia (Goodwin, 1990), Puerto Rican youth in

New York (Urciuoli, 1996; Zentella, 1997), and comparisons of Black and middle class and working class families in the North Carolina Piedmonts (Heath, 1983), to name a few.

Cultural Historical Activity Theoretical Perspectives

Many of these studies draw from an understanding that culture is mediated by artifacts such as language and other semiotic tools, as outlined by Vygotsky (1978) and those influenced by his work (Cole, 1996, 1998; Gutiérrez et al., 2009; Moll, 2000). Vygotsky considered language the *tool of tools* mediating learning and development (Cole, 1996, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978), and Schultz and Hull (2002) argue that Vygotsky “placed a premium on the role of language as the premier psychological tool” (p. 16). Researchers using tenets of Ethnography of Communication often refer to Vygotsky’s notion of the zone of proximal development when they consider the ways in which children and novices acquire socially and culturally appropriate ways of using language by adults or more experienced others (Duranti, 1997). Language Socialization, as outlined by Elinor Ochs and Bambi Shieffelin (1984) also draws on a Vygotskian perspective of the zone of proximal development to account for the lifelong process of an individual as they are socialized *to* and *through* language within language interactions with more experienced members of the speech communities in which they belong.

Luis Moll, Norma Gonzalez, and colleagues’ groundbreaking work regarding Latina/o families’ funds of knowledge provided a new understanding of the competencies of families whose cultural practices were poorly valued in schools. In this project, teachers worked as anthropologists, using ethnographic research methods to understand the cultural practices of their Latina/o students. Teachers observed their students and families by making home visits and documenting the “cultural resources” of the families (Moll, 2000). Most importantly, teachers were able to understand Latina/o families’ funds of knowledge, “...the bodies of knowledge that

underlie household activities. Their documentation [made] obvious the wealth of resources available within any single household or its social network, resources that may not be obvious to teachers or students” (Moll, 2000, p. 258). One of the major concerns of the funds of knowledge work was to view culture as “dynamic” and “processual,” what Moll, Gonzalez and colleagues referred to as *la cultura vivida*, “how people live culturally” (Moll, 2000, p. 256).

Sociocultural Language and Literacy Research

Research outside of classrooms and schools garnered a wealth of knowledge about non-dominant social groups. However, it is also important to use the methodological and theoretical contributions of the Ethnography of Communication and Cultural Historical Activity Theory inside classroom spaces. Recent studies inside of schools have demonstrated how the language practices of non-dominant children and youth in classrooms and schools serve various purposes and index a variety of identities. For example, Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez and Tejeda (1999) demonstrate how the hybrid language practices of Latina/o youth served as a resource for learning in a classroom especially when these language practices are normalized within official classroom scripts. Carol Lee (2007) reorganizes learning experiences for Black students who are speakers of Black Language who are learning about literacy tropes. Through examining analogues between students’ language practices with subject specific activities within schools, such as *signifying*, an oral genre in Black Language, and figurative language in canonical texts, students were able to demonstrate an understanding of these tropes. Orellana and Reynolds (2008) and Martinez, Orellana, Pacheco & Carbone (2008) also used a cultural modeling framework to find analogous features between the translating children of immigrants do for their parents and other adults and classroom writing tasks. The studies mentioned draw on

Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology in addition to CHAT perspectives inside of classrooms.

My study will describe ethnographically the language practices of Black and Latina/o youth in order to understand their intercultural exchanges. These perspectives, then, serve as a point of departure as I take the knowledge gained to inform my interrogation of an English Language Arts classroom. An examination of Black and Latina/o intercultural, cross cultural, and intergenerational communicative interactions in a classroom has the potential to uncover how these youth add languages to their linguistic toolkits that become useful as they traverse boundaries within schools and outside of schools.

Contact Zones

In her critique of the “utopian” ways in which some linguists viewed, or imagined languages in relation to the speech community, Mary Louise Pratt (1991) writes the following:

A couple of years ago, thinking about the linguistic theories I knew, I tried to make sense of the utopian quality that often seemed to characterize social analyses of language by the academy. Languages were seen as living in “speech communities,” and these tended to be theorized as discrete, self-defined, coherent entities, held together by a homogeneous competence or grammar shared identically and equally among all members (p. 37).

Pratt is concerned with the possible interpretation that a speech community is homogeneous, with its members defined by agreed upon linguistic rules followed and shared by all. Pratt views this as reflective of western ways of imagining speech communities as monolingual to support a unified nation. Further, this interpretation normalizes the language practices of dominant

monolingual communities, and marks the language practices of individuals whose languages diverge from these norms.

Pratt (1999) argues, “This abstract idea of the speech community seemed to reflect, among other things, the utopian way modern nations conceive of themselves as what Benedict Anderson calls “imagined communities” (p. 4). The imagined community that Pratt speaks of suggests that the idea of a speech community being held together by a common set of grammatical rules shared by all community members is reflective of the ways in which most modern nations tend to imagine themselves as united by language, ideologically and politically, a typically western point of reference. Pratt seeks to disrupt the imagined community that represents western ways of elevating the language community of dominant communities. She argues that speech communities are *not* contained within bounded spaces.

In turn, Pratt introduces the concept of the contact zone that she defines as:

“... social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.

Eventually I will use the term to reconsider the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today.” (p.

34).

Contact zones are spaces rife with tension caused by contact made between individuals with diverse cultural and linguistic affiliations.

Patricia Bizzell, (1994) examined contact zones within college level multicultural literature courses and suggests that given the diversity that exists in American schools, classrooms can become theorized as contact zones. Bizzell points out that classrooms are spaces

where groups vie for authority and power over other groups, and that power dynamics tend to shift over time (Bizzell, 1994, p. 166). Bizzell, while speaking about the need to understand contact zones, limits her talk to the literature classroom. She argues that teaching “multicultural” literature can allow discussions to arise around the conflicts and tensions that within contact zones. While her interpretation of the contact zone is useful, a thorough understanding of the cultural and linguistic contact made by individuals is not present.

Django Paris (2009) comments specifically on the need to address classroom spaces he calls *multiethnic youth space*, a phrase he coined citing Pratt’s notion of the contact zone.

I have come to conceptualize multiethnic youth space as a social and cultural space centered on youth communication within and between ethnicities—a space of contact where youth challenge and reinforce notions of difference and division through language choices and attitudes (Paris, 2009, p. 430).

Paris’ (2009) notion of multiethnic youth space takes the contact between ethnically and linguistically diverse individuals as the phenomenon being studied. Paris states: “This research is an attempt to push educational research further into the realm of interethnic youth communication” (430). Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez (2002) also use Pratt’s notion of the contact zone to call for future research, specifically around language socialization, that considers the dynamic and changing nature of socialization processes in situations of language contact. The notion of the contact zone is an important one when we consider the concept of “repertoire” introduced by Gumperz (1964) to account for the ways in which individuals draw from their linguistic repertoires to communicate across contexts in communicatively appropriate ways.

Linguistic Repertoire

In this section I will explore the use of the term *repertoire* as it has been used to describe the various languages individuals can access and deploy to demonstrate communicative competence within and across contexts. I will trace the use of the term *repertoire* as it was first introduced in Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology by John Gumperz (1964). I will then follow its use by Ana Celia Zentella (1997) who called for researchers and educators to assist in *expanding the linguistic repertoires* of non-dominant youth by taking an additive approach to their language learning. Next I will explore Gutierrez & Rogoff's (2003) call for scholars to study the *cultural and linguistic repertoires of practice* of non-dominant communities across contexts to understand the regularities and variances within communities that are often viewed as static. I will then outline Betsy Rymes' (2010) most recent call for an investigation of the *communicative repertoires* of individuals, that is the multi-modal communicate tools available to individuals.

Gumperz (1964) first introduced the notion of *verbal repertoire* to account for "...the totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the course of socially significant interaction" (p. 137). Gumperz coined the term *verbal repertoire* to describe multilingual speakers in India that shifted from one language to another, mixed languages, and spoke different varieties of one language across their daily communicative activities (Gumperz, 1964; Rymes, 2010). Rymes (2010) states that Gumperz, "reconceptualized the object of linguistic study, illustrating that the term linguists traditionally used to demarcate communities of speakers, 'language', was descriptively inadequate in a setting of *societal multilingualism*" (p. 529). The metaphor of a repertoire was a useful one since it described how *all* people draw from a range of linguistic resources available to them in their verbal repertoires. Gumperz (1964) noted that the only

constraint faced by individuals when deciding which repertoire to deploy were grammatical and social constraints. “Grammatical restraints relate to the intelligibility of sentences; social restraints relate to their acceptability” (Gumperz, 1964, p. 138). Social acceptability is dependent on the “...commonly agreed-on conventions” of a speech community (Gumperz, 2001) that is, the languages, varieties, registers and other linguistic features, such as code-switching⁸, that are common and accepted as communicative practices of a respective community (Zentella, 1997).

The notion of *verbal repertoire* complements the construct of communicative competence, a theoretical concept that critiqued the Chomskian notion of linguistic competence (Boas, 1982 [1889]; J. Collins, 2009; Gumperz, 2001; Hymes, 1964, 1972; Zentella, 1997). Hymes (1964) and Gumperz (1964) articulated that linguistic competence did not account for the mostly subconscious performative knowledge of a speaker as they deployed a language from their repertoire that was appropriate for a particular social group. Gumperz noted that “...communicative competence describes [an individual’s] ability to select, from the totality of grammatically correct expressions available to [them], forms which appropriately reflect the social norms governing behaviors in specific encounters” (Gumperz, 1972: 205).

The concept of verbal repertoires has enabled researchers to capture the distinct practices of speakers across communicative activities and contexts (Lucas & Wagner, 2000). For example, researchers have documented styleshifting as one of many prominent features of African American Vernacular English or Black Language (Alim, 2004; Labov, 1972; Smitherman, 2000), code-switching within single utterances among some Chicanas/os and Latinas/os (Fought, 2002; Peñalosa, 1980; Zentella, 1997), and the use of “superstandard

⁸ Code-switching is the ability speakers have to alternate between the languages available to them in their linguistic repertoires (Lucas, 2000; Morales & Aldana, 2010; Zentella, 1997).

English” by some youth in academic interactions (Bucholtz, 2001). We are also reminded that each group is also capable of shifting into other varieties, registers and dialects of languages available to them in their linguistic repertoires (Morgan, 2006; Zentella, 1997). Even when individuals have a language in common, they all differ “...in the fact that in their everyday interaction [speakers] alternate between English and various other local dialects and languages” (Lucas & Wagner, 2000).

Many language researchers have since used the phrase verbal or linguistic repertoire when speaking about the languages an individual has available to them. Ana Celia Zentella’s (1997) *Growing up bilingual: Puerto Rican Children in New York* carefully explores the linguistic repertoires of Puerto Rican children living on “*el bloque*” throughout their daily communicative activities. The languages used by the children in her study included both “standard” and “nonstandard” varieties of English, Spanish and Puerto Rican English. Of utmost importance was Zentella’s detailed analysis of code-switching or *Spanglish* used by the children living on *el bloque*. Through her work, Zentella countered deficit stigmas associated with code-switching by uncovering the complex and rule governed grammars underlying *Spanglish* and other language varieties included in the linguistic repertoires of the children.

While the exploration of Spanglish was most prominent in Zentella’s study, she also described how the Puerto Rican youth participants in her study spoke varieties of English associated with Black youth, languages that have been variously called Black English, African American English Vernacular and Ebonics. Zentella described how the youth navigated several spaces within their community using their full linguistic toolkits to communicate with various interlocutors. Zentella’s describes this as representative of the youth in her study “expanding their linguistic repertoires.” Zentella urged educators and scholars to participate in “expanding”

non-dominant children and youth's linguistic repertoires by adding several important language varieties, including "standard" English as one of the many useful varieties. Zentella added about the children in her study:

Their linguistic repertoire of dialects and ways of speaking was broad and powerful...but it was ignored or dismissed as impoverished by those who demanded that it be limited to standard English, instead of expanded to include standard English, standard Spanish, and all the dialects of the community (Zentella, 1997, p. 265).

Zentella reminds us that many non-dominant groups are too often excluded from learning opportunities where English is a prerequisite (see also Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998). The most crucial point to her argument is that the expansion of linguistic repertoires is an "additive" approach, rather than a "subtractive" one that rids children of useful communicative tools important for their participation in home and community participation. Through this work, Zentella pushed researchers and educators to understand that "the linguistic repertoires of students and teachers must be expanded to avoid potential areas of conflict between the school's ways of taking in or demonstrating knowledge and those of the community it serves" (Zentella, 1997, p. 276).

Zentella's work presented readers with a description of her participants' linguistic repertoires, showing what languages are included, and when specific linguistic features are deployed. In doing so, she urged educators to assist non-dominant youth to *expand* or add powerful languages to their linguistic repertoires while celebrating those that already exist there. Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) take this one step further by urging researchers to fully understand the cultural and linguistic repertoires of the communities they study by documenting regularities

and variances across their practices. This, they argue, will avoid any generalizations that can be inferred by researchers. In the most recent use of the term repertoire, Betsy Rymes (2010) proposed the use of the phrase communicative repertoires, as "...the collection of ways individuals use language and literacy and other means of communication (gestures, dress, posture, or accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate" (p. 528)

While the term repertoire has been utilized to speak about language in a variety of sociolinguistic and Linguistic Anthropological research for some time, only recently has there been widespread uptake of the term. Richard Henne (2009), Betsy Rymes (2010) and Angela Reyes (2010) have recently made calls for scholars to investigate the verbal repertoires, linguistic repertoires, and communicative repertoires of individuals. In all their calls, there is an understanding that there is also a need to understand the repertoires of individuals who engage in linguistic exchanges with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. In using the term *repertoires of linguistic practice* in this study, I will attempt to show the regularities and variances in Black and Latina/o youth's participation in a classroom space that I call a contact zone. By understanding their cultural repertoires of practice, I seek to understand how language mediates those practices, that is, their repertoires of linguistic practice.

Features of Willow High School Youths' Repertoires of Linguistic Practice

Willow High School youth engage in range of communicative activities, each with their own rules for demonstrating communicative competence. In the multi-ethnic space at Willow High School, the youth often use a specific language practice, some of which they have experience with, and some of which they do not. For example, a Black student who is

interacting with a former ESL student may find him/herself approximating Spanish. A U.S. born Latina/o student may code-switch as s/he speaks to a recent immigrant Latina/o student. Finally, a recent immigrant Latina/o youth may attempt to speak Black Language in a context where this language will be supported. The features of language that individuals deploy have been well documented in Sociolinguistic and Linguistic Anthropological research. Here I will highlight key features that I believe are common among Willow High School youth: Language Crossing (Bucholtz, 2002a; Rampton, 1995a, 1995b, 1996) and Language Sharing (Paris, 2008, 2009). because of their presence within intercultural communicative activities.

Language Crossing

Rampton (1995) notes that there are two processes that, in the past, were overlooked by sociolinguistics. These included the process through which individuals adopt another person's ethnicity, or all together created a new one (p. 485), and the process of "learning to like and live with social and ethnic difference" (p. 485). Rampton's ethnographic research attempts to uncover what sociolinguistic researchers overlooked by understanding how youth in England used the language of their peers within their peer networks. He focused on "The ways that youngsters of Asian and Anglo descent used Caribbean based Creole, the ways Anglos and Caribbeans used Punjabi, and the way stylized Indian English ('stylised Asian English'-SAE) was used by all three" (p. 489). In defining language crossing, Rampton (1995) explains,

"Language crossing involves code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language that they are using (code-switching into varieties that are not generally thought to belong to them). This kind of switching involves a distinct sense of movement across social or

ethnic boundaries and it raises issues of legitimacy which, in one way or another, participants need to negotiate in the course of their encounter” (p. 485).

At Willow High School, language crossing occurs in many of the similar ways described by Rampton. This includes Latina/o youth approximating forms of Black Language within their peer groups. Latina/o students can often be heard speaking Black Language, then shifting into Spanglish, Spanish, or varieties of standard English. From my experience as an ESL teacher, I remember beginning ESL students approximating varieties of Black Language. One common saying by my students was “hells:: nah:: mister” approximating the common phrase used by Black and Latina/o students “hell nah.”

In studies about language crossing in the United States, Bucholtz (1999) examines how youth in a San Francisco Bay Area school use Black Language to index their masculinity. Bucholtz demonstrates this via the language practices of her participant named Brand One. Brand One is a male high school student who provides a narrative account of an interaction he had with a Black male near his school. In an analysis of Brand One’s narrative Bucholtz’ demonstrates how he crosses into Black Language. She states “the operative gender ideology links successful masculinity to physical power and especially violence. The operative racial ideology links power and violence primarily to blackness as opposed to whiteness. And the operative language ideology links AAVE both to blackness and to masculinity” (p. 445). Bucholtz admits that the crossing that is described in her study does not promote “new ethnicities” as described by Rampton (1995). Instead, the crossing detailed in her analysis of Brand One is articulated to present his identity as a urban youth who participates in cultural practices that are influenced by Black cultural and linguistic practices. Yet, instead of creating “cross-racial affiliations that may usher in a ‘new ethnic’ identity category (Hall [1989] 1996)” (cf, Bucholtz, 1999, p. 456), Brand

One's crossing suggests racist undertones that does nothing to create racial solidarity, and instead promotes racial ideologies that are promoted by the dominant culture (Bucholtz, 1999).

Rampton (1995) and Bucholtz (1999) both describe moments of language crossing whose endpoint produces different results in regards to ethnic solidarity and affiliation. In his ethnographic work in a California Bay Area high school, Django Paris (2009) calls the language crossing in his study *language sharing*. He describes sharing as the different ways in which youth in the “multiethnic urban high school employed linguistic features of Black Language across ethnic lines” (p. 428). Paris’ study is noteworthy since, like Bucholtz, he is examining how ethnic groups who are not native speakers of Black Language are in fact speaking Black Language. In his case, Paris is examining Latina/o and Pacific Islander students who are speakers of Black Language (p. 430). Paris states, “...demographic shifts coupled with the continued residential segregation of poor communities of color have increased the numbers of Black and Brown students who share the same communities and classrooms (Ball, 2006; Klien, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Massey, 2001). This, coupled with youth who are interacting in classroom creates a situation where non-Black youth are attempting to learn the dominant language among peer groups, which, in Paris’ study, was Black Language.

Paris conceptualizes the notion of *multiethnic youth space* “as a social and cultural space centered on youth communication within and between ethnicities—a space of contact where youth challenge and reinforce notions of difference and division through language choices and attitudes.” (p. 430). Paris recognizes the contributions of Rampton, and in fact states that students in his study *crossed* into Black Language. Yet he departs from Rampton’s use of crossing by examining specific moments where Latina/o and Pacific Islander youths’ use of

Black Language was validated by Black youth, its traditional speakers. This is what Paris terms *language sharing* (p. 431).

In his data Paris shows how Latina/o and Pacific Islander youth use lexical items that are traditionally part of Black Language. Paris' discussion of language sharing sheds light on a phenomenon that has been absent from research about the language practices of non-dominant youth. His data provides a robust view of the dynamic language practices that non-dominant youth are engaging in, particularly in urban spaces where inter-ethnic communication is occurring. The research reviewed by Rampton, Bucholtz and Paris all provide a stepping stone to begin investigating what occurs when language crossing or language sharing becomes a bi-directional process. For example, future work may uncover how he does not consider how variations of Chicano English may be influencing an Black Language speaker's utterances or how Latina/o speakers are now including language features from their own languages into their various linguistic repertoires.

Socialization and Learning

The process of youth expanding their Repertoires of Linguistic Practice is one that occurs through contact with members across their respective communities. That is, individuals, I argue, will add languages to their linguistic toolkits as they move across intercultural contexts where diverse languages and their varieties are used as the dominant language in those communities. These languages include both standard and marginalized languages. In attempting to describe the process by which a novice learns the communicate appropriately given the demands of his/her respective communities, I turn to the work on socialization. Much of this work originated in Sociology and Anthropology where scholars attempted to view children and youth as agents in their socialization (Corsaro, 2005; Cosaro & Eder, 1990). These perspectives lead me to draw

from research in the Peer Socialization and Language Socialization research. In this dissertation I am suggesting that youth at WHS may socialize one another through their transcultural interactions, and that language is the vehicle through which this socialization takes place. Ultimately, I argue, as the youth at Willow High School interact with one another, socializing one another, they are expanding their repertoires of linguistic practice.

Early research on youth culture focused on the biological and psychological development as adolescents transitioned into adulthood (Bucholtz, 2002b; Corsaro, 2005; Corsaro & Eder, 1990) In their review of research on peer cultures, Corsaro and Eder (1990) outline the theoretical trajectory of research on children and adolescent peer socialization. These include behaviorist, constructivist and interpretive theories used to describe how children were socialized into the cultural practices of their communities. Within behaviorist models of socialization children's roles were modeled by adult behaviors, a process that exemplified a unilateral socialization process. Absent in a behaviorist view was the importance of interaction and culture, and a view of adolescents as active agents in the socialization process. Constructivist theories were headed in the right direction since they viewed children as active in their ability to "interpret, organize, and use information from the environment and, in the process, acquire adult skills and knowledge" (Cosaro & Eder, 1990, p. 198). However, this view saw learning as an individual endeavor, and community endeavors were absent from this perspective. Lastly, there is an interpretive view of socialization inspired by Vygotsky's view that "socialization must break free from the individualistic doctrine" and instead be viewed as a collective process (Cosaro & Eder, 1990, p. 198). It is from a Vygotskian perspective of socialization that I will view the language interactions of Black and Latina/o youth at Willow High School. In addition,

I will look towards language socialization research to account for the use of language as a tool for socialization among youth.

Ochs and Schieffelin pioneered the theoretical and methodological concept of language socialization to account for the social and cultural aspects involved in language acquisition. They posited that children acquire language through a process of socialization to the “ways of the society in which they were born” (Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994 [2008], p. 1), in other words, the communicative competence of their communities (Hymes, 1972). Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) defined Language Socialization as the “*socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language* (pp. 163, emphasis in original). They argue that the process of language socialization occurs over a lifespan, where children, adults and elders are socialized into several communities, each with its own set of communicative rules for competence (Baquedano-López & Kattan, 2008; Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Baquedano-Lopez and Kattan (2002) argue that “language socialization has, since its inception, understood schools and other educational institutions as integrated parts within, and thus sites for, these processes of socialization” (p. 161). Language socialization research is therefore useful for thinking about how educators can socialize non-dominant students to acquire powerful academic language and literacy practices, like those connected to standard English (Zentella, 2005).

In their review of research of peer socialization Goodwin & Kyratzis (2007) found that studies focusing on peer talk and interaction have shown how children “become agents of their own socialization...through their talk, children construct their own ideas of valued behaviors and identities in their peer or kin groups” (p. 280). They further argue that research on peer socialization has countered the notion that children are passive agents in their socialization

process who simply reproduced adult culture, supporting the view held by Corsoro and Eder (Kyratzis, 2004; Corsoro, 1995; Gaskins et al.). Instead, peer socialization research has offered a more dynamic view of the socialization process. While research on children socialization patterns have assisted in shifting our view of children from passive individuals to active agents in their socialization, only a few studies have focused on adolescent or youth socialization.

Traditional notions of learning have privileged what some scholars have called vertical forms of learning. That is, learning that occurs along a “vertical dimension, moving, for example, from immaturity and incompetence to maturity and competence” (Engeström, 1996; Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149). Gutierrez argues that a more “expansive view of development also is concerned with the horizontal forms of expertise that develop within and across individual’s practices (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149). Horizontal learning attends to learning and development that a learner utilizes as they cross boundaries of formal and informal learning (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Together, vertical and horizontal forms of learning, Gutierrez (2008) argues, can create expansive forms of learning, “...this includes not only what students learn in formal learning environments such as schools, but also what they learning by participating in a range of practices outside of school” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 198). This study examined how youth at Willow High School participated in language interactions that expanded their linguistic repertoires.

Language Ideologies

The study of language ideologies is a relatively recent approach to understanding the views and beliefs people have about languages. Silverstein (1979) was the first scholar to bring attention to language ideologies in the field of Linguistic Anthropology. He implored other scholars of language to consider the importance of a speakers’ ideas and beliefs about language.

Silverstein defined language ideologies as “any sets or beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (193).

Silverstein urged scholars to investigate the beliefs individuals had about the structures and uses of language. His statements were groundbreaking since key figures in the study of language such as Franz Boas in anthropology and Leonard Bloomfield in linguistics denounced “the importance of attending to indirect and inaccurate secondary rationalizations of members of a language community” (Kroskrity, 2000, p. 6). They believed trained researchers of language were the most reliable in analyzing decontextualized language, free from social or cultural influences. They did not believe the layperson could produce important insights about their everyday language practices. Ultimately, they believed the science of language should never consider these opinions (Kroskrity, 2000).

Since Silverstein first inaugurated the concept, the study of language ideologies has increased in Linguistic Anthropology (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Kroskrity, 2000), and various scholars have built on one another’s definitions as the field has expanded and the research has become elaborated in several interdisciplinary fields. Scholarship on language ideologies has also surfaced in the interdisciplinary field of education, where researchers have investigated how language ideologies mediate curricular decisions, teaching practices, and students’ choice of language, to name a few. The impact of language ideologies as a theoretical tool has aided in revealing how certain language ideologies benefit one group over another, most consistently, it is the dominant groups language ideology that takes the lead in determining what is acceptable when it comes to moral panics about language (Hill, 2008; Lippi-Green, 1997; J. Milroy & Milroy, 1999).

For this study, I will invoke Irvine's (1989) definition of language ideologies, "the cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (255). This definition of language ideologies captures the sociocultural emphasis (Kroskrity, 2000) that validates how utterances can index ideas about individuals and groups in relation to what is considered acceptable in speech. These ideologies can have positive or negative consequences on speakers depending on the variety of language that is spoken. If a speaker's utterances are in accord with accepted dominant language ideologies, they will be viewed positively and may benefit socially and economically because his or her speech is of the privileged variety. Of course, the opposite is true for speakers whose language practices are not in accord with dominant language ideologies, or what is *imagined* (L. Milroy, 2001) to be standard.

Hill (1998, 2008) provides examples of this in her interrogation of public spaces where marginalized varieties of English, accented speech and languages such as Spanish spoken by Mexicans become marked. In these spaces, the English is the unmarked or naturalized language; therefore speakers of marginalized language may feel marginalized in public spaces. The imagined belief that language practices are more accepted is contradicted, according to Hill, when 's speak, or attempt to speak, less prestigious languages, like Spanish spoken by Mexicans. In these examples, Hill demonstrates how 's use other languages as a means of demonstrating they are not racist, while "butchering" the language at the same time. Barrett (2006) also provides an ethnographic account of how 's expect others to speak and understand English, hold other accountable to rules of grammar, etc. At the same time, he explores how Whites who hold others to these rules often fail at speaking other languages "correctly." Hill and Barrett both

argue that public space is dominated by language ideologies that provide a space for “unaccented” English only (Barrett, 2006; Hill, 2008).

Through a process of what Irvine and Gal (2000) call iconization, the language spoken by nondominant people come to index imagined social representations of individuals. “Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature or essence” (37). To return to Barrett’s ethnographic work in an Anglo-owned Mexican restaurant, he describes the process of iconization in the following statement:

Because Spanish is racialized to be an iconic marker of Latino ethnic identity (cf. Urciuoli 1996:15– 40), the presence of any Spanish (even grossly distorted or obscene Spanish) indexes an acknowledgment of the racial difference in an interaction. Although the use of Mock Spanish often does little more than index the race of a Latino interlocutor, Anglos may interpret the use of any Spanish at all as an index of egalitarian attitudes toward Latinos and, by extension, general sympathy with minority groups (Barrett, 2006, p. 165).

Iconization can occur in classrooms as well, when teachers view the language practices of non-dominant students as an index of their intellect and academic abilities. Wolfram, et al, (1999) confronts this possibility. “It is possible that if a teacher underestimates a child’s ability because of dialect differences, perhaps as a direct result, the child will do less well in class” (p. 24). The obvious result can be detrimental to students from nodominant backgrounds. Iconization is also apparent in the training and curriculum teachers use in everyday lessons. In their teaching, teachers may feel morally obliged to repair student speech that does not mirror this accepted variety, and they too are influenced by national, state and local expectations of what language is

acceptable (Godley & Minnici, 2008; Razfar, 2005). This is further evident in the practices in US schools that do not favor bilingualism or bi-dialectalism in non-dominant students since these features mark these students as inferior students (Wiley & Lukes, 1996; Wolfram et al., 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1991).

The iconization that occurs in the daily practices of schooling makes standard English a prerequisite for learning (Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998; Lippi-Green, 1997; Siegel, 2006). These language ideologies are governed by ideas that have elevated English as the prestige language in the US extending far back since World War I when officials called for national unity through the standardization of the English language (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Key to this ideology is that there is only room for one standard form of the English language. Silverstein (1996, cf Hill, 2008) refers to this type of language ideology as the “Monoglot Standard” ideology, and others have called this the “standard English Ideology” (Lippi-Green, 1997; J. Milroy & Milroy, 1999). Hill (2008) explains that standard English ideologies posit the notion that if there exists more than one variety of English, only one can be “correct.” She argues that this contradicts “the view of linguists, that all varieties of human languages are systematic and rule-governed” (p. 35). Many scholars of language argue that the notion that there is one “correct” language is a socially and politically constructed idea. This attribute illuminates Irvine’s (1989) definition of language ideologies having social and political implications. It is no surprise that mostly privileged males were those who were granted access to higher education, since their language practices were naturalized through ideologies (Lippi-Green, 1997; Siegel, 2006; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Having access to standard English was and continues to be viewed as the vehicle toward social, economic and cultural capital (Wiley & Lukes, 1996; Woolard, 1998); therefore, speakers of nondominant languages have minimal access to the social and

cultural capital that one acquires through powerful institutions like colleges and universities. English only and standard English language ideologies have a historical trajectory within the US context and have mediated much of the inequities nondominant communities have experienced. Siegel (2006) argues,

As Sledd (1969, p. 1310) put it many years ago: “No dialect, they keep repeating, is better than any other-yet poor and ignorant children must change theirs unless they want to stay poor and ignorant.” So the message is clearly that varieties of language spoken by some social groups are inferior to those spoken by others.

This history of ranking the language practices of the “poor” and “ignorant” allows privileged individuals to discriminate through the purview of language which has now become a proxy for race (Gutiérrez, 2008; Hill, 2008)

Dominant language ideologies that allow for the iconization of standard English ideologies, also “constitute the ideological context in which language policy is formed and in which language teachers work” (Wiley & Lukes, 1996, p. 512). Therefore teachers are working in non-neutral (Razfar, 2005) political environments where they have the mandated to follow language policies that limit the use of a students’ language practices, therefore passing on the ideological propaganda of standard English ideologies. This is also witnessed by perusing California’s English Language Arts Content Standards, and viewing the use of words such as “correct” “grammatical” and introductions that call for students to demonstrate a “command of Standard American English” (CDE, 1998). Having teachers facilitate students’ development of English is not what is problematic. What is problematic, however, are teaching standards that naturalize the language practices of the dominant population, that of middle class families, as

the norm (Godley et al., 2007; Wiley & Lukes, 1996) while indicating to nondominant youth that their language practices are deficient, and not acceptable for the virtue of education and learning (Gutiérrez et al., 2000; Lee, 2007; Morrell, 2008).

Woolard uses the concept of hegemony to argue that institutions assist in reproducing ideologies and maintaining dominant language ideologies. In exploring the concept of hegemony she states:

Hegemony here refers to the legitimation of the cultural authority of the dominant group, an authority that plays a significant role in social reproduction...by hegemony I mean the ‘deep saturation of the consciousness of a society’” (Woolard, 1985)

Lippi-Green supports this idea in speaking about a standard language ideology—an ideology that has “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 speech of the upper, middle class—promotes “the language subordination process” (Lippi-Green, 1997). This process is taken up by institutions to “valorize the standard language..while devaluing the nonstandard and its associated cultural norms” (Kroskrity, 2004).

“...language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group. A member’s notion of what is “true,” “morally good,” or “aesthetically pleasing” about language and discourse are grounded in social experience and often demonstrably tied to his or her political-economic interests” (Kroskrity, 2000, p. 8)

Researchers have documented how English language ideologies are revealed in everyday classroom activities and discourse. These ideologies are indexed in multiple ways including, but not limited to curriculums adopted by school districts and mandated onto schools (Gutiérrez et al., 2000), editing activities (Godley et al., 2007), and in daily classroom discourse where teachers “repair” or correct the utterances of students (Razfar, 2003, 2005).

Gutierrez and her colleagues argue that “language ideologies may be more implicit and exist as part of literacy programs that do not utilize the children’s complete set of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge to learn and make meaning” (p. 8). Not recognizing that a student’s language is useful for learning sets up an environment where a child is disconnected from schooling practices, leading to a cyclical pattern that informs the iconization of nondominant social groups. Razfar documents how language ideologies are indexed in an ELL classroom where a teacher repairs students’ responses based on measures of what is “correct” or “incorrect” English. He finds that instances of repair constitute dynamics of power where the teacher as an authoritative figure is posing language ideologies onto the class.

CHAPTER 3

Methodological Framework and Research Design

Who is he? He a teacher?
-Marylou, Black WHS sophomore

Miss, is he from la migra?
-Rudy, Latino WHS sophomore

Mister, I don't get it, you do this for free?
Diego, Salvadoreño WHS senior

While conducting research at Willow High school, the youth often asked about my role in their classrooms. During one of my initial visits Marylou asked her peer, “Who is he? He a teacher?” perhaps because I might have looked similar to other Chicano/Latino teachers on the WHS campus. Another student, Rudy, asked his teacher jokingly, “Miss, is he from *la migra*?” making reference to my “military” style shirt that was the same color green as an immigration officer’s attire. Even when I had established that I was not a current teacher, students, like Diego asked, “Mister, I don’t get it, you do this for free?” Diego’s comment revealed what he and other students could not understand. How could I just “kick it” or hang out with them, taking notes and audio recording their discussions, *for free!* My initial introduction to students by their teachers ranged from, ‘Mr. Martinez is an old friend of mine,’ ‘Danny was a teacher and college counselor here several years ago’ to another who spoke to her students about me in my absence saying – as she later told me – ‘Mr. Martinez is from the district and will come to our class to observe *your* behavior.’ I was read and understood in many ways by my “participants” who eventually came to know me as Danny, Mr. Martinez, the dude from UCLA, the college counselor, the teacher, and rarely, the researcher.

While I attempted to re-enter WHS as “a researcher” my own subjectivities affected the relationships I had with Black and Latina/o WHS youth and their teachers. At WHS, I *was* a teacher, a counselor, a UCLA doctoral student, the dude from UCLA, an imposed role model for youth, and researcher. I still had to make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar as I crossed several boundaries in my return to WHS. I had to be aware of my institutional affiliation and how this granted me access to some spaces (such as a meeting with a WHS principal that was new) while it also hindered my access to certain teachers. Some teachers linked me to the constant regime of university researchers and their projects that entered WHS promising dramatic improvements via their interventions.

I had to come to terms with my subjectivities quickly at WHS as I entered this space during a year of heightened teacher bashing by the media, increased attention to failing schools, and in the midst of the current privatization of failing schools. I found myself having to remind myself of my own priorities in this study, the documenting of youth language practices in their ELA classroom. This, however, became difficult as I found myself aligning with teachers who were angry about the conditions of WHS, the coming “take over” (which I will talk about in this chapter), and their impending dismissal from WHS. I also found myself in alignment with Black and Latina/o youth who were similarly angry about the change coming to their school, about being bored in some of their classes, and about their own uncertain futures at WHS. I begin with this brief section on my own subjectivities to put forth how *I* also moved across boundaries through this study, as a participant in the transcultural settings at WHS. I consistently reminded myself to focus on the youth who were ultimately affected by the decisions made by adults. I will return to my researcher position at the end of this chapter, and I weave this position throughout the dissertation.

In this study I utilized ethnographic research tools to understand the everyday communicative practices, or the expanding linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth in four English Language Arts classrooms at Willow High School. Specifically I drew on the Ethnography of Communication methodological tradition that calls for supplementing traditional ethnographic fieldwork with audio or video recordings of naturally occurring talk of participants (Duranti, 1997; Hymes, 1964). This methodological tradition was useful for my study because the goal was to explore the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth at Willow High School, and to understand how the form and function of their language practices mediated everyday classroom activities in both official and unofficial spaces of the classroom. I also drew on Cultural Historical Activity Theoretical (CHAT) perspectives which complement an Ethnography of Communication method, since language is viewed as the premier tool for mediating learning and development (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). In both methodological perspectives studying an activity system over time is purposeful. Cole (1998) suggests, “because cultural mediation is a process occurring over time, a CHAT perspective emphasizes that it must be studied over time” (Cole, 1998, p. 292). Given these theoretical and methodological orientations, I decided to make this study take place over the entire 2010-2011 academic year, from September when the academic year began until mid June when the academic year ended. My aim was to understand how language served as a tool through which youth communicate in everyday transcultural interactions with their peers and teachers.

Tajuata on my mind

Tajuata is a community that I am very familiar with, and as a researcher I was committed to “making the familiar strange” in this environment. Doing so led to a process of reflexivity that required me to return to my own childhood memories, and experiences as a teacher at WHS.

Tajuata is a community intricately laced with my own history. As a child, I remember the synchronicity with which my siblings and I would raise windows to our family car when my father drove into Tajuata from our neighboring city of Home Gardens. We made frequent visits to Tajuata to visit my *tia* Honey (pronounced Ha-nee, as we affectionately called her) and my cousins who lived near the very small “downtown” section of the community. I attended catechism classes on Saturdays and my entire family went to Catholic Church services together on Sunday mornings in Tajuata. I vividly remember driving up and down Uvas Street, a small two way street that was one of few arteries that connected us to the small downtown area. As soon as we entered Tajuata, the WHS façade faced me to the right, a place that I imagined mirrored the schools I saw in Hollywood films like *Stand and Deliver* and *Lean on Me*. As we would pass WHS, the housing projects were the next set of buildings that demanded my attention, symmetrical two storied rectangles with clothing lines neatly set up in front of what I imagined was the front door to a families home. My parents often recounted their own stories of living in the *Colonia* section of Tajuata right before the Tajuata uprisings.

Despite our frequent visits in the 80s and 90s the media attention on Tajuata had many people, including my own family, imagine that we might be the next targets or innocent victims of the violent acts that occurred there. I heard no one in my family talk about the potential CIA involvement in introducing cocaine to communities like Tajuata (Hall, 2006), nor did I hear anyone consider the effects that the 1992 uprisings had on the political economy of Tajuata. My guarded trips to Tajuata were many, but very controlled, leaving me with a sense of calm after crossing over the railroad tracks that separated my own home community in Home Gardens with Tajuata, WHS, and the housing projects.

Returning as a teacher from 2002-2007 I walked the same halls that my mother and father did when they were WHS students decades earlier. My mother was as a high school student pushed out with only a few classes left to earn her high school diploma. My father walked the hallways as a recent immigrant taking courses to learn English in a formal classroom context as a young twenty something year old. I have many *tias, tios*, and cousins who were proud of me becoming a teacher at WHS. Becoming a teacher at WHS also meant that I returned to a place that my mother fought so hard to keep me from. Prior to my own high school education, the district made a decision to curb the overcrowding at Home Gardens High School by sending those of us who lived on the most eastern part of Home Gardens (the poorest side of the city) to Willow High School which was severely under-enrolled at the time. My mother protested, along with other Home Gardens residents to keep us in Home Gardens, away from the other side of the tracks. What sounded reasonable was complex for my mother whose memories of WHS were nothing she wanted any of her own children to experience. Despite the district's decision, my mother found "fake addresses" so that my sister and I could attend Home Gardens High, a school that did not have an impressive academic record, but a place, according to my mother, where she felt was safer for her children, a place where we might not have to relive her own miseducation.

In 2010-2011 many of the same issues that my mother experienced as a student emerged for the youth. But this time, decision makers used the numbers attached to students by their test scores, to make the case to "take over" WHS. The "take over" continued to circulate narratives of troubled and under educated youth. This study is my attempt to describe the skills and creativity displayed by Black and Latina/o young men and women who attend Willow High School. These youth accepted me back and trusted me with their words in my attempt to understand their cultural and linguistic practices in their everyday classroom activities.

So it must be said that I am not an objective researcher. The youth in this dissertation have lived lives that I would never claim to fully understand or say that I experienced during my time at WHS. The youth in this study were continually read by the color of their skin, by the words that left their lips, and by the numbers that were attached to their test scores. WHS faculty and staff, and visitors to WHS and Tajuata, judged these youth and too often the intellectual resources of these youth were not seen or heard. What I did uncover were the ways in which some of the youth at WHS used the stereotypical representations placed upon them as a veil, as their thick skin to protect themselves from the painful words and actions of others.

I still remember Paul, a Black youth in my first English class as a teacher at WHS in 2002. He wrote a poem about Tajuata that started off with the line, “Being from Tajuata means fuck you.” Being from Tajuata meant for many of my youth participants that you had to be ready to deal with the words and actions of others. Some youth at WHS completely rejected everything about WHS and Tajuata. The youth in my study who felt this way could not wait to leave, to never return to the experiences they had in Tajuata, or at WHS. I cannot say that either of these perspectives is right or wrong. However, I returned to WHS and Tajuata because I knew the youth here were doing, saying, and participating in cultural and linguistic practices that needed to be explored. It is my hope that the work I have done in this study will provide a framework for youth to see and hear their cultural and linguistic practices as a resource, as something to be proud of in ways that many are proud of being from Tajuata.

Tajuata. Willow High School (WHS) is located in the Tajuata region of Southern California, part of the sprawling urban center of a major metropolitan city. Tajuata was traditionally known as a Black community. However, since the late 1980s demographic shifts in Tajuata and surrounding communities have led to a majority Latina/o population. The 2000

Census reported that 60.8% of Tajuata residents were Latina/o while the 2010 Census reported an increase to 69.85%. This has meant a decrease in the Black population in Tajuata. The 2000 Census reported a 38.0% African American population with a drop reported in the 2010 Census to 28.61% (L.A. Times, 2010).

Table 3.1 – 2010 Census information for Tajuata

	Total		Black	Indian	Asian	Hawaiian	Other	Two or more	Latino
Tajuata	39,593	343	11,327	292	121	36	16,420	1,614	27,657
		0.87%	28.61%	0.74%	0.31%	0.09%	41.47%	4.08%	69.85%

Together, Black and Latina/o residents of Tajuata are among the lowest paid in Los Angeles and the state with a median family income under \$25,000 a year ("Mapping Los Angeles," 2012). This translates into approximately 49.7% of Tajuata families living below the poverty line. During the 2007-2008 academic years over 50% of Tajuata residents lived in one of four housing projects that surround Willow High School (LAUSD Student Information Systems, 2008). Originally built to accommodate returning World War II soldiers, the housing projects are now a settling ground for the poorest Black and Latina/o families in Tajuata and the state.

Tajuata residents are often featured in local newspapers and newscasts where reporters share stories about the difficult conditions they experience. These include vignettes of unemployed Black and Latino adults, their economic struggles, and the harsh living conditions their families must endure to name a few⁹. Emotional narratives of family members grieving the loss of a loved one to gang violence are also among the many stories shared while highlighting the daily life of a member of one of Tajuata's well-known gangs. Many sensationalized reports

⁹ Newspaper article are not cited to maintain anonymity.

point to ethnic tensions among Black and Brown community members as the cause the grave social, economic and racial issues in Tajuata.

While I can accuse the media of exaggerating their stories about ethnic tension, gang violence and poverty in the Tajuata community, denying its existence would be far from the truth. Rarely, however, do we hear about the rich history of activism in Tajuata (Pulido, 2006). It has been documented that Tajuata residents organized among themselves to combat the neglect and corruption that created the communities most severe social problems (Diver-Stamnes, 1995). Bauman (2007) describes how Tajuata's early Black residents were "Surrounded by the all-communities...[Tajuata] faced economic, social, and spatial isolation. Black activists fought this repression from the outset" (p. 286). Community organizations in Tajuata have fought to provide residents with resources, with some organizing to calm Black and Brown tensions. Yet, we hear very little about these prominent organizations that provide Willow High School youth with resources such as health care, job skills and training and after-school programs. Other organizations from within the community have sought to organize local gang truces some that were successful for some time.

Because of a weakened political economy, Tajuata is reminiscent of what Noguera (2003) cites as a "no zone," a phrase used by economist to refer to inner-city communities that have few services that provide a tax base to support local community needs (Anyon, 1997; Noguera, 2003). There are too few employment opportunities in Tajuata residents find their own ways of providing financial support to their families. These opportunities range from food sales in the community to illegal drug activity. Noguera (2001) argues, that "in the absence of a functional formal economy, many residents generate income through the informal economy where many of the transactions and economic activities are illegal" (Noguera, 2003, p. 17). While news stories

are quick to shine the light on these illegal activities, very few narratives account for the decades of economic, social and racial oppression of Tajuata residents.

Willow High School. Despite cycles of poverty, violence, and ethnic tensions that youth in Tajuata may experience, the majority of high school-aged youth attend in Tajuata attend Willow High School. As a teacher at Willow High School, I would often stop a lesson to discuss local events that kept students from focusing on their classroom tasks. During my study, there were several times when teachers had to stop talking about their lesson plans to discuss issues of violence on and off the WHS campus, the school take over, and on a few occasions, students holding collection cans entered classrooms to ask for donations for a student or former student who was killed. During this study I was part of one “lockdown,” a school-wide emergency where an administrator alerted the entire school via the public announcement system that all classroom doors should be locked, and everyone was supposed to be inside a room. During a lockdown, a teacher was never to open the door if someone knocked, as anyone who needed access to a room would have their own key to do so. As a teacher, I experienced several lockdowns, ranging from twenty minutes to four hours where armed police officers escorted youth in my classrooms and I off campus with our hands up in the air as we made our way across the open grassy field in front of the WHS’s main building. During my study, there were no lockdowns of this kind, but several students had those experiences to recollect from. Whenever WHS had a lockdown, local news reports quickly highlighted the violence that led to a respective lockdown. Very often, the narratives of these reports missed the major details of an event, and instead helped to circulate and instill some of the master narratives that surrounded Tajuata for decades.

Despite the reputation that Willow High School has had in Southern California, parents choose to send their children to be educated at Willow High School. Noguera (2003), in his own research on urban schools across the United States argues:

Despite the severity of the conditions present in many urban schools, and despite the intractability of the problems they face, these deeply flawed institutions continue to serve millions of children through the United States...In a profound demonstration of faith, millions of parents voluntarily take their children each day to the very schools that have been described as ‘desperate hell holes’” (p. 5).

Many parents still have faith that Willow High School will provide their children with the tools to counter years of economic hardships. Although there has been a slow decrease in enrollment at Willow High School caused by students whose families choose to send them to new charter schools that are opening across Tajuata, we still cannot dismiss the fact that Willow High School continues to be a school local families trust to educate their children.

Demographics of Willow High School. According to the most recent data available for the 2010-2011 academic year there were a total of 1, 537 students enrolled at WHS, a number that represents a decline in enrollment that many blame on the opening of several charter schools throughout the Tajuata neighborhood. Of this total, it is reported that 78.5% are “Hispanic” or Latino youth, and 19.8% are “African American” or Black youth. These data distort the diversity that exists within these two racial/ethnic groups. For example, the pan-Latina/o label does not differentiate between the youth at Willow High School who are U.S. born or immigrants. It does not distinguish where a “Latino” student came from, or where their families came from. At Willow High School, students have ties to several Latin American countries including Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Belize among others.

Given this diverse Latina/o student population, a pan-Latino label does not help describe the diverse immigration experiences of these Willow High School youth that have immigration experiences. It also does little to account for the diverse experiences of U.S. born Latina/os, some of whom lived in Tajuata or Los Angeles for some time, and others who arrived from various California or U.S. cities across the country. Lastly, a pan-Latino label does not untangle to complexity behind youth who identify as both Latina/o and Black having origins in Afro-Caribbean countries, and those who are bi-racial, choosing to identify as Black, Latina/o or both within various contexts.

Black students are overwhelmingly viewed as one monolithic group. Yet, the diversity among the Black community must also be considered. Like some Latina/o youth and their families, many Black families have resided in Tajuata for generations and have played a major role in shaping the Tajuata community. Black youth at Willow High School have families who were involved in activist movements in the Tajuata community and have grandparents who can recount many of the historical events taking place in Tajuata. Other Black students are from families that moved into the Tajuata community from neighborhoods in Los Angeles and San Bernardino County, while others have families who moved to Tajuata after living in the Southern United States (Sears, 2000). It is also important to note that some students who are perceived to be Black identify as Latina/o. In my experience at Willow High School, there were always a few Afro Caribbean students who were placed in ESL courses because they were Spanish-speaking youth. Often, other students and teachers labeled these students as Black. In this study, you will be introduced to Chanel, who identifies as Belizean and American, yet not Black or African American while she is read as being, acting and speaking like her Black peers. Like Chanel, many students had identities that were fluid, dynamic and shifting.

Willow High School English language arts classrooms. My attempts to gain entrée into several ELA classrooms at WHS did not come as easily as I had imagined. Early on in the 2010-2011 academic year, teachers caught wind of the possibility of being “taken over.” These threats became real when district officials made frequent visits to the WHS campus. WHS administration also stepped up their classroom visits. Mr. Jimenez, a teacher whose class I planned on observing, reported that one administrator in particular was visiting and observing his class more frequently. On some occasions, administrators would appear in classrooms using their own keys to enter to the surprise of teachers. Like district officials, they would write notes down on paper fixed onto their clipboards. My own presence as a university-sanctioned researcher was often viewed as a possible extension of these officials. I had several former colleagues regretfully tell me that they were not comfortable with my presence in their classrooms. I respected their decisions and eventually found teachers who agreed to my observations without any reservations. Some teachers, like Mr. Jimenez, had agreed to let me observe his class. But days before the school year began he learned that he would be teaching junior and senior level English classes, courses that differed from my initial course selections. A few other teachers would also learn that their schedules had changed, just a few days prior to the start of the school year. Therefore my own recruitment of teachers had to also change.

Eventually, I gained entrée into four classes during the fall and spring semester at WHS. Ms. Luz and Ms. Lyn agreed to have me observe their fall semester classes. Ms. Luz taught a tenth grade English class while Ms. Lyn taught an honors tenth grade English class part of the WHS magnet program. These classes met from September of 2010 till February of 2011. Because WHS was on a four-by-four schedule, after the twenty-week semester, a year’s worth of credit was assigned to each student. During the Spring 2011 semester, I observed Ms. Luz’ class

once again, this time with an entirely new group of students enrolled in her English 10A/B course. I was invited by Mr. Esperanza to observe his senior English class during the Spring semester as well. While I was only seeking tenth grade English courses, Mr. Esperanza's student population reflected the diverse WHS class I was seeking in my original selection of classes.

Table 3.2 below details my observation schedule for the entire 2010-2011 academic year at WHS. I observed during lunch periods, during school wide assemblies, festivals on campus, and on a few occasions participated in after school and weekend college awareness and financial aid workshops. This provided me an opportunity to build relationships with several students, meet the families of others, and most important for me, to provide the students and faculty members with assistance on matters that I had experience with.

Table 3.2-Observation Schedule

	Fall Semester September 13, 2010-February 11, 2011		Spring Semester February 14, 2011-June 24, 2011	
<i>Period</i>	<i>Mester 1</i>	<i>Mester 2</i>	<i>Mester 3</i>	<i>Mester 4</i>
1			English 10A Ms. Luz	English 10B Ms. Luz
2	English 10A Ms. Luz	English 10B Ms. Luz		
Lunch				
3			Expository Comp. Mr. Esperanza	Contemporary Comp. Mr. Esperanza
4	H. English 10A Ms. Lyn	H. English 10B Ms. Lyn		

The four-by-four block schedule. As mentioned earlier, Willow High School had been placed on program improvement status for their inability to meet federal NCLB growth targets.

This created many structural, curricular and instructional changes at Willow High School. The state of California requires schools labeled Program Improvement 5 schools to reorganize themselves by selecting to either a) close and reopen the school as a charter, b) replace all or most of the staff including the principal, c) contract with outside entity to manage school, d) have the state take over the school, or e) provide any other major restructuring (LAUSD, Program Improvement Documents, 2008-2009). In 2005, while I was still a teacher and college advisor at Willow High School, I participated in a school wide vote to decide which reform route take.

A majority “yes” vote meant that as stakeholders, we accepted a proposal by an East Coast University to provide Willow High School with institutional and instructional support. This included a new curriculum intervention project for students, professional development for teachers and institutional support for the administrative team. In addition, financial support from LAUSD and various private non-profit organizations connected to the university would aid the new collaborative. A majority “no” vote meant that stakeholders would not invite the East Coast University as a collaborator in reform efforts, and instead we would create our own reform and restructuring plan. If the stakeholders voted for this option we were *not* guaranteed any financial assistance from outside organizations and very little financial support would come from the district. Since the outcome of the vote would require immediate action, and the school had yet to begin its own plan for restructuring, stakeholders – students, parents, teachers and school leadership – voted to bring on the East Coast University.

The first change that occurred was the implementation of a “four-by-four” block schedule that has survived at Willow High School up to the end of this study, even after the East Coast University left Willow High School. Prior to the implementation of the four-by-four schedule, students followed a traditional schedule where one academic course took one year to complete.

Students attended six classes a day for approximately one hour. For example, a Chemistry class would take two semesters to complete with Chemistry-A being taught in one semester and Chemistry-B being taught during the second semester. Students would attend this class for one hour each instructional day. A final grade would be given for each semester, and these grades count toward graduation and college requirements.

Table 3.3-Traditional Student Schedule Prior to School-wide Reform

Semester 1 September-February	Semester 2 February-June
Per. 1 English 10A	Per. 1 English 10B
Per. 2 World History A	Per. 2 World History B
Per. 3 Geometry A	Per. 3 Geometry B
Per. 4 Chemistry A	Per. 4 Chemistry B
Per. 5 Physical Education	Per. 5 Physical Education
Per. 6 Art A	Per. 6 Art B

Willow High School’s four-by-four schedule is important to mention because it dramatically altered the schedule that students and teachers had become accustomed to. Students would attend only four classes a day, for a ninety-minute period. According to the East Coast University’s reform plan, the four-by-four schedule would grant students the opportunity to take more classes throughout the academic year. This would allow students who were “not academically prepared” an opportunity to enroll into intervention courses during their regular academic program instead of before or afterschool, without eliminating key graduation and university required courses. The four-by-four schedule would also allow students to finish one year of instruction in one academic semester that was broken into two mesters. Proponents

further argued that a four-by-four schedule would allow academically successful students to take additional college preparatory courses that would make them competitive when they applied to colleges.

Some stakeholders were hesitant about accepting the four-by-four schedule proposed by the East Coast University, but ultimately the schedule was approved. While many predicted that a new four-by-four schedule would be a programming nightmare, the East Coast University promised to provide assistance with this new project. Table 3.4 demonstrates an example of the four-by-four academic schedule. It is important to note that while I observed at WHS, the students had new courses beginning Fall 2010 (beginning September) and Spring 2011 (beginning late February) when the semester changed. Even after the East Coast University’s contract ended I noticed that the four-by-four block schedule had become part of the school’s identity.

Table 3.4- WHS 4 x 4 Academic Schedule

Fall Semster September 13, 2010-February 11, 2011		Spring Semester February 14, 2011-June 24, 2011	
Mester 1	Mester 2	Mester 3	Mester 4
English 10A	English 10B	Language Arts Intervention	Language Arts Intervention
World History A	World History B	Geometry A	Geometry B
Chemistry A	Chemistry B	Art A	Art B
Physical Education	Physical Education	CAHSEE Prep	CAHSEE Prep.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study involved various ethnographic tools that supported my documentation of the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth at WHS. The majority of the data for this study come from fieldnotes from participant observation and audio recordings of naturally occurring talk of youth participants in their ELA classrooms. These methods were supplemented with semi-formal interviews conducted with youth in their classrooms or outside of their classrooms. These methodological tools were utilized to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the regularities and variances in the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth at Willow High School?
2. How are the linguistic repertoires of Willow High School youth taken up? Are they taken up in ways that expand or constrict their linguistic repertoires?
3. What language ideologies are explicitly and implicitly indexed through Black and Latina/o youths' communicative activities?

Participant Selection

Teachers. Before meeting any of the WHS youth in this study, I had to find teachers willing to have me observe their classrooms. As I mentioned previously, entrée into a classroom proved more difficult than I imagined. During my first semester at WHS I observed in Ms. Luz and Ms. Lyn's classrooms. In the spring semester, Ms. Luz welcomed me back to her class, and Mr. Esperanza invited me to his senior English class.

Ms. Luz is a Latina tenth grade English teacher with seven years' experience, Ms. Lyn is a teacher in the magnet program with six years teaching experience, and Mr. Esperanza identifies as a and is senior English teacher with nine years of teaching experience. It is

important to note that all three teachers were my colleagues three years prior to this study. While I had a working relationship with these teachers in the past, I did not seek out teachers based on prior knowledge of their teaching.

Students. The classes I observed enrolled a variety of students across the WHS campus. Ms. Luz' English 10A/B students were considered "borderline" students. That is, the Black and Latina/o youth in her class struggled with their grades and already were considered "at risk" of not completing their graduation requirements. There were other English 10A/B students in Ms. Luz' classes who were "average" students, but placed in her classes because of poor performance on state mandated assessments. On the other hand, Ms. Lyn's Magnet or Honors English 10A/B course enrolled *only* students who were in the magnet program. These students were considered the "smartest" according to WHS students, and the youth most likely to attend a four-year college or university after high school according to faculty and staff at WHS. Many of the magnet youth in Ms. Lyn's class had been in a magnet or Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program since elementary school, and many of the youth in this class had been in courses together for several years. The youth in Mr. Esperanza's class were very similar to Ms. Luz' students; however, his students were in their final year of high school enrolled in his senior English class. While these students were in their final year, a bit more than half of his students were expected to graduate. A handful of his students had not passed the California High School Exit Exam, and another small group of these youth were behind several credits towards their high school graduation requirements.

In addition to this general portrait of these students, they were all labeled with a variety of language distinctions. For example, Black and Latina/o youth born in the United States were labeled English Only (EO), while some Latina/o youth who learned English later and

demonstrated proficiency in English became Re-designated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) at a later time in their schooling career.

Data Collection Tools

Ethnographic and language data. The majority of data collected for this study came from ethnographic fieldnotes and audio recorded data of Black and Latina/o youth transcultural communication in their ELA classrooms. These recordings attempted to capture interactions both at the unofficial and official classroom spaces (Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995). I also conducted several semi-structured interviews with students who emerged as focal participants in this study. Throughout this study, I conducted various informal interviews working one-on-one with a youth participant at their desk, with a pair of students, or with their teachers before, during or after official classroom activities.

Methods of data collection. Upon entering classrooms, I jotted raw notes during each visit that were turned into fleshed-out fieldnotes based on the method articulated by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995). My initial observations focused on understanding the routine practices of each classroom that I observed. Hatch (2002) states “the goal of observation is to understand the culture, setting, or social phenomenon being studied from the perspectives of the participants. Observers attempt to see the world through the eyes of those they are studying” (p. 72). In this spirit, I was specifically attempting to understand the range of language youth deployed in their transcultural settings. I understood that I would never fully understand or see the world through the eyes of the Willow High School youth, and that I brought my own experiences into this research site, but my goal was to understand, as Gutierrez and Rogoff (2005) suggest, the regularities and variances in the cultural and linguistic practices within each class.

During my initial visits, I decided to organize my notes into communicative interactions that youth participated in 1) official classroom spaces and 2) unofficial classroom spaces, according to the ways in which Gutierrez, Rymes and Larson (1995) understood classroom script and counterscript in their own study of the third space in classroom discourse practices. I chose to organize my observations using these “spaces” to organize moments when youth spoke about classroom activities in “public” where the teacher sanctioned these practices and with their peers where their teachers might not sanction youth voices as part of the official curriculum. In the official and unofficial spaces, I looked for moments where youth shifted the ways in which they spoke, paying particular attention to styleshifting as a marker of a changing interlocutor or a shift in their participation in classroom spaces. I also noted specific utterances of youth that might be deemed as counter to official ways of speaking in the classroom context, that is, moments where youth deployed “nonstandard” ways of speaking. Lastly, I worked to identify moments when youth indexed their own ideas and beliefs about language, their language ideologies. This could be moments where explicit talk about language was noted, or when youth corrected themselves or their peers. In my raw notes, I attempted to note these phenomenon.

New advances in audio recording technology has allowed researchers to gather sociolinguistic data in creative ways (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008). For this project I used the Livescribe Echo Smartpen to write “raw” ethnographic fieldnotes onto Livescribe’s Dot Paper. The Smartpen allowed me to simultaneously audio record language data in all four classes that I observed. The Echo Smartpen is a medium sized ink pen that synchronized all the information from the dot paper and the audio data captured onto my computer. The use of the Smart Pen and Dot Paper enhanced the process of writing fieldnotes by providing me with 1) audio-recorded data that was synced with raw notes, 2) a replica of my raw fieldnote jottings, and 3) the

capability of audio-recording language data without the intrusion of a traditional audio-recording devices.

I used the Smartpen for every classroom observation after receiving consent from youth youths' parents and assent from the youth themselves to participate in this study. There were a few youth who did not give their permission. These youth voices are not part of any of the data presented in this study. The Smartpen was useful in classrooms as it allowed me to move around the classroom while only holding a pen, and a notebook. In some cases, I only held the Smartpen in my hand or placed it in my shirt pocket. All youth participants were aware that my pen was an audio recording device, and they told students about it whenever someone new was in the classroom. Over time, some of the youth participants reported that they had forgotten about the recordings taking place. However, some of the same youth, like Marylou during my semi-formal interview with her, looked at the pen when I reminded her of something she said in class, saying "I better watch what I say." Two months into my fieldwork, I added an extended microphone to the Echo Pen, an attachment that looked very similar to iPod headphones. While the Echo Pen was a useful tool there were definite limitations to the pen such as the inability of the audio recording capabilities that did not allow for clear recording of utterances in large classroom spaces.

Prior to beginning this study, I secured a video recording camera to use during all classroom observations. Video recordings, according to sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological studies, would allow me to account for what Rymes (2010) has called an individuals' full communicative repertoire, their linguistic, gestural, literate and other semiotic communicative tools. However, WHS youth expressed concern about being video recorded in their classrooms. This was compounded with the school take over that was unfolding at WHS.

For these reasons, I decided that this study would only collect data of “naturally occurring talk” via audio recordings of classroom sessions. While I am aware that using only audio recordings will provide what Erickson (2011) has called a logocentric study, a study that centers mostly on language rather than the full communicative repertoires of individuals (cited from Johnson & Amador, 2011, p. 5), I attempt, where possible to supplement audio recorded data with fieldnotes that document gestural movements by speakers and their interlocutors.

All audio recordings captured during the data collection phase were immediately uploaded onto a computer, and used to write fleshed out fieldnotes of every observation session. Audio logs were written for all recordings gathered at approximately every two and a half to five minute intervals. Audio logs of audio-recorded data allowed me to summarize all audio-recorded data without having to transcribe every single audio file collected. Audio logs along with fieldnotes also triggered weekly analytical memos which served as “thinking pieces” for understanding the data being collected in conjunction with my overall theoretical framework (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 122).

Additional tools that I used during the data collection phase were computer software programs. These included Livescribe’s Echo Pen software that converted all audio data into QuickTime files in addition to converting my raw “jottings” into PDF documents. Throughout the data collection process, I converted audio files into QuickTime files and used InqScribe, a transcription software program, to write audio logs. I also used InqScribe to transcribe selected audio clips using transcription conventions detailed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974).

Data Analysis. During initial observations I paid close attention to language shifts in the discourse practices of Black and Latina/o youth participants, as they interacted with one another and their teachers. Along with observing for and listening to youth communicative interactions,

I observed and took note of the everyday routine practices of each classroom in my study. This allowed me to understand the cultural and linguistic practices that youth were socialized into through these routine practices. For example, in the case of Ms. Luz, I observed two separate classes. While each of her courses followed a similar agenda format, one class had an additional fifteen-minute D.E.A.R. period prior to the beginning of the class. This created a specific mood for the class where students were expected to immediately walk into class, select a book, and sit quietly for this time. On the other hand, her other class was able to walk in, and engage in conversations with their peers and Ms. Luz while working on the “Do Now” activity. Attention to the routine practices, and the language associated with these practices allowed me to note where youth might engage in specific types of talk.

Through the data collection phase, I looked for specific phenomena. Below I detail how I reduced and analyzed my data to capture youth “language shifts” “teacher take up” of youth voices, and moments where youth explicitly or implicitly indexed their “language ideologies.”

Language shifts. To analyze my observations across the classrooms, I read through all fieldnotes written and identified moments in the classroom in which language shifts were deployed by youth. In my initial reading of fieldnotes I identified moments where youth engaged in code-switching or styleshifting as their interlocutors changed, or as they engaged in peer talk in one moment and “official” classroom talk in the next. Examples include moments where a Black youth went from speaking to their peer in what they might call “ghetto” talk to “school” talk in a subsequent manner. Shifts in language practices also included the use of Spanish in one moment, Spanglish in another, then English with features of Black Language in another, all uttered by Latina/o youth. Given the range of shifts, I developed codes specific to each practice. For example, when a Black youth shifted their ways with words to participate in

official classroom spaces after speaking to a Black or Latina/o peer, I coded these moments as “Black youth shift to “Standard” variety.” This followed for Latina/o youth who engaged in similar shifting practices “Latina/o youth shift to “standard” variety.”

These shifts were most noticeable because the youth in my study often projected a more “standard” variety when speaking in official classroom spaces. However, I also coded for moments in official and unofficial classroom spaces where youth shifted the ways in which they spoke with one another in . This was not limited to moments when Black and Latina/o youth spoke to one another. Rather, these shifts sometimes occurred when Latina/o youth who were recent immigrants spoke to other Latina/o youth who were not dominant Spanish speakers. It also occurred when these same recent immigrants had interactions with Black youth.

After reviewing fieldnotes, I listened to each audio-recorded class session (I audio recorded each visit except for the first visit in each class). To reduce the data from these audio recordings, I first listened to the recordings that appeared simultaneously with my raw jottings on my computer screen. While listening, I created audio logs that summarized classroom interactions at approximately 2 and a half to 5 minute intervals. Intervals varied to capture “natural” breaks in classroom discourse. After creating audio logs, again I identified moments where shifts occurred some of which were the same as those I identified in my fieldnotes, as well as additional moments only captured audio taped record. As I did with my fieldnote, I examined audio data for specific shifts in student talk and continued to refine codes to capture who was speaking in the classes, what kind of languages they were using, how they were using these languages, for what purposes. Eventually I began to note how these languages were being “taken up” by their teachers.

Youth voices and teacher take up. Accounting for the linguistic repertoires of Black and Latina/o youth at WHS was guided by my major question in this study. In accounting for these practices, my attention turned to *how* these languages were taken up by their teachers in official classroom spaces. As with prior reduction strategies outlined above, I read through my fieldnotes to identify moments where teachers in my study deployed utterances that marked the languages of youth in official and unofficial spaces. In my fieldnotes, these were moments where youth voices were revoiced, repaired and explicitly taken up in the official space of the classroom for discussion.

As I reviewed audio data for each classroom interaction, I continued to seek out moments where youth voices were taken up in classroom interactions. Listening to audio recorded data, and writing audio logs allowed me to pay closer attention to discourse strategies used by teachers in their take up of youth voices. For example, in many instances teachers used an Initiation Response Evaluation or Feedback (IRE or F) participation framework, and it was in this framework where teachers overwhelmingly revoiced or repaired youth utterances in the official classrooms space. Additionally, youth voices were also taken up during class discussions where the IRE-F participation framework was not being used, during discussions around various topics, during transitions between daily classroom activities, and so forth. Again, during interactions where youth voices were taken up, I accounted for *how* they were being taken up, and overwhelmingly, revoicing and repair practices emerged as the dominant practice.

I summarized each moment where I identified a revoicing or repair practice initiated by a teacher as they took up youth utterances in the official space. From these moments I reduced data to account for diverse revoicing events, for example revoicing during readings activities for pronunciation purposes, revoicing to restate a point made by a student, and revoicing events

where a repair was embedded. This subsequently led to seeking out moments where explicit and implicit repair practices were evident. Explicit repair practices were those where a youth's utterances was taken up via an explicit correction or repair practice for pronunciation purposes or through a teachers re-articulation of their utterance. Implicit repair practices were those embedded in revoicing practices. It was through the revoicing and repair practices where I began to account for implicit and explicit indexes of language ideologies of youth.

Language Ideologies. In examining my data for language ideologies indexed by youth, I looked for indexical relationships between what students uttered to ideas and beliefs about language to which their utterances pointed. I categorized these utterances into “explicit” and “implicit” ideas and beliefs about language. For example, if a student talked about a how someone sounded “ghetto” because of the way they spoke, I classified this as an explicit language ideology. In terms of implicit indexes of language ideologies, I examined by data closely for moments where youth utterances indicated their beliefs about language via coded language or speech events. One major code that emerged, for example, was of *peer-to-peer* repair practices. In examining these data, one class indexed their language ideologies through repairing the languages of their peers. This occurred through revoicing and repair practices enacted on a peer who, according to the revoicer or repairer, uttered something incorrectly

As with other lines of analysis, I attempted to note moments where youth indexed their language ideologies, explicit or implicit, as they occurred in classroom discursive practices. Raw fieldnotes were important for moments for me to take note of specific interactions when I believed a youth participant expressed an idea about language. In the fieldnote write up, I was able to revisit my notes and expand on *why* I believed an utterances was indexing a language

ideology, and to articulate if the ideology expressed was supportive or resistant to standard language ideologies, or anywhere within the continuum.

While fieldnotes were important to understanding moments of interaction where I believed language ideologies were being indexed, writing audio logs *and* transcriptions of classroom discourse became the most fruitful way of exploring the language ideologies of youth. It was in moment-to-moment communicative interactions where youth displayed their beliefs and ideas about language in both the official and unofficial classroom spaces. Again, I examined audio data for moments where youth aligned with and/or resisted “standard” language ideologies circulated by their teachers, or by the youth themselves.

Willow High School Under Siege

For years, Willow High School was considered one of the lowest performing schools in its district, county and state based on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability measures. WHS’s failure to meet NCLB accountability measures placed it under local, state and federal surveillance as the federal government increased its role in failing schools across the country (Noguera, 2003). While test scores at Willow High School did slightly increase, they fell short of Academic Performance Index (API) measures and federal Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks established by No Child Left Behind. For example, during this study WHS did not meet 17 of the 22 Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets set out by federal NCLB requirements. At the beginning of this study, WHS entered its fourteenth year as a PI school.

NCLB requires schools to demonstrate an increase in student participation and proficiency levels on the California Standards Tests (CSTs) across a total of ten possible “subgroups.” At Willow High School, these subgroups are: 1) all students enrolled at the school, 2) students categorized as African American, 3) students categorized as Hispanic or Latino, 4)

students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, 5) students labeled English Learners, and 6) Students with disabilities (SARC, 2009). During the 2010 academic year, WHS only met 5 of 22 federal AYP targets for growth, leading to another year on program improvement status.

The information reported above was made public to WHS youth, families, teachers and administrators after they received news from their district superintendent that WHS would be “taken over” beginning the next academic year (2011-2012). Early in January, when WHS youth returned to school after the holiday break, news spread quickly throughout campus that WHS would be “given away” to outside entities since the superintendent refused the plan of action written by WHS teacher leaders. Below I include the press release in its entirety since this was an abbreviated version of the letter WHS youth, their families and teachers received on this day. I have deleted place names and individual names to maintain anonymity.

With a deep concern for students and a belief that every child deserves a better future, [the] Superintendent informed the [Willow] High School staff on Wednesday that the school will undergo a major reorganization.

“[Willow] has its strengths, its traditions, and has made some improvements over the last few years,” [the Superintendent] said. “The reality is that even with these positive elements, [Willow] is still struggling to educate and graduate most of its students.”

The school graduates a little more than 3 out of every 10 students. Based on the 2010 California Standards Tests (CST), only one student out of 926 tested is advanced in mathematics and only another 13 students (2 percent) are rated proficient in mathematics. In English, only about 13 percent of students are proficient. Proficient means students are able to read, write and compute at grade level.

This is not Public School Choice; this is an emergency situation that requires immediate action,” the Superintendent said. “[Willow] has been in Program Improvement (PI) status for the last 13 years and needs special attention. The time for excuses has expired. The time for action and progress is long overdue.”

[The Superintendent] is going to use the ‘Restart’ model under the federal law provisions of *No Child Left Behind*. Beginning Feb. 1, he will put a trustee in place to see that staff and students understand their roles and responsibilities until the end of the current school year and, in the process, [Willow] High School will undergo restructuring. As part of this restart model, all Willow High employees in the spring—both certificated and classified—will have to reapply for their positions.

“Everyone bears responsibility for Willow’s challenges—District headquarters, administrators, school staff and union leadership,” [the Superintendent] said. “I no longer believe the school

should be operated as a comprehensive high school but rather as three small independent learning academies run by internal and external partners that will work together to create a new Willow.”

[Willow] was unsuccessful in testing enough students last May to receive an Academic Performance Index (API) score given by the State Department of Education. In 2009, [Willow] received an API score of 560. An API score of 800 is recommended by the State Department of Education. The school recently submitted a plan to improve the educational offerings and success of all students at [Willow] but the proposal, while strong in its ideas, was short on how these ideas would be put into action. In response to that plan, [the Superintendent] explained detailed concerns about the rate of academic progress and the chronic low performance. As a result, the superintendent ordered the restructuring and invited partners to join him.

The partners that operate the new Willow High School will be co-located as small schools. Willow will still maintain its identity as one school, sharing one sports team and one ultimate mission: improving student achievement for every child. [The Superintendent] will announce the partners involved in this innovative approach in the coming days.

“During the restructuring we want open and ongoing collaboration around the needs of students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community regarding what is best for the Willow family,” [the Superintendent] said. “I believe Willow can rise to a standard where all students can excel.”

I was in Ms. Luz’ class when news of this “emergency take over” made its way to her and the youth in her class. On this day, she took time from her planned activities to speak with her students about this news, as did Ms. Lyn when I observed her class later this day. It seemed like a burden on Ms. Luz, Ms. Lyn and their students to return to regular class instruction. Students asked their teachers “What are you gonna do?” “Are you being fired?” Some of the youth spoke about being in solidarity with the teachers. “I aint coming here if you aren’t here!” Other youth declared how the school might just get better with new batch of teachers. The anxiety and tension were in full effect for several weeks as news unfolded in and out of school about the future of WHS.

News of this mid January emergency take over was important to this study because it had immeasurable effects on the actions of students and teachers. The youth at WHS agreed that something needed to happen, but were saddened that some of their favorite teachers were not guaranteed a position the following year. Some WHS teachers immediately took action through union organizing, but were too late to successfully reverse any of the decisions. By the time

WHS youth made their way home that evening, news vans were crawling outside WHS, trying to speak to the principal, a teacher, the union organizer, a parent or a student. Teachers met afterschool, crammed in the WHS library where a district official with very little information responded to their questions and concerns. The WHS teachers were stressed, too worried about their jobs for the following year. One teacher, the newest of them all who was a Latina WHS alumna with younger siblings still enrolled at WHS eventually asked, ‘but what will happen to my students?’ This question was not given much thought, and the district official simply stated that the youth and their families would have three schools to choose from. That night across the city, state and eventually across the nation, news rang that WHS would be taken over, that the youth here could not “read, write or compute” at levels needed to compete in the free market. With this news came the unveiling that two charter entities and an educational entity ran by the county’s major would take over the reigns at WHS, three schools co-located on the current WHS campus. A few months later, one of the charter management organizations would pull out of the deal. The following year, none of the teacher participants in this study returned to WHS, the whereabouts of most of my participants is unknown.

More on Positionality

While qualitative researchers in the field of education theorize about their own privilege in relation to their research participants, the “native” ethnographer must deal with her own marginalizing experiences and identities in relation to the dominant society. This “native” ethnographer is potentially both the colonizer, in her university cloak, and the colonized, as a member of the very community that is made “other” in her research (Villenas, 1996, p. 712) .

Villenas (1996) clearly paints a picture of the “native” ethnographer who must straddle dual roles as the colonizing researcher, and the colonized person of color. I enter this community as a colonized Chicano born to a Mexican immigrant father and U.S. born “pocha” mother, herself born at her family home in Tajuata, across the street from Willow High School. By the time I was born, the fifth child, my family was living in Home Gardens, a former suburb of Los Angeles that became part of what we now call urban Los Angeles. The home I grew up is less than one mile away from Willow High School, separated by train tracks that have served as a dividing line between the two communities for decades. My family settled in Home Gardens after previous homeowners and residents there fled to Orange County after the 1965 civil unrest in Tajuata. Since then, Home Gardens has been home to my family and other working class majority Latina/o families.

Despite being born and raised in Home Gardens, Willow High School and Tajuata are also not new spaces for my family or me. After leaving Guanajuato, Mexico in the 1940s, my mother’s family settled in Tajuata. My mother was born in her family home across the street from Willow High School where she attended high school until she was “pushed out” during her senior year, never encouraged to return. My father also attended Willow High School to learn English when he arrived in the United States at the age of 19. After marrying, my mother and father rented a home in Tajuata for several years, raising three of my siblings there, until they moved across the tracks into Home Gardens, by then, a predominately *Mexicano* community where two more children (myself included) were born and raised. As a young child and into my high school years, I was driven to and drove myself into Tajuata frequently to visit family members and to attend Catholic Mass services. From this experience I was socialized to be cautious and alert in Tajuata. This meant I had to roll the car windows up as I entered Tajuata,

and not bring attention to our car as we made our way to our weekly destinations. Discourses flowed all around me about the dangerous and violent climate of Tajuata, and my family members, Black and Mexican, delivered their supporting opinions on this matter.

During the 1990s when I was entering my teenage years, gang violence increased in Tajuata, and too often media reports fed the larger narrative about the dangers of Willow High School and Tajuata. According to these reports Black and Mexican gangs were at war and I was forbidden to wear red or blue colored clothing as they represented various sanctions of the gangs. These narratives of fear crossed over the railroad tracks and into Home Gardens. In 1990, the Home Gardens community received news that the larger school district had just redrawn district boundaries requiring the western most communities of Home Gardens to send their high school aged children to Willow High School because of overcrowding at the local Home Gardens High School. My family feared sending their two youngest children to Willow High School, and quickly used the address of family members living in the approved areas of Home Gardens for my sister and myself. This action by my parents provided my sister and me with access to our local school, but also further contributed to the narrative of danger and violence at Willow HS and the larger Tajuata community within me, further pitting two communities against one another.

This narrative about my family's experience in Tajuata is important since I returned to this "dangerous" community by choice as a teacher in 2002 to teach English as a Second Language and English Language Arts courses after two years teaching in the San Francisco Bay Area. I was also a College Advisor at Willow High School. Even after I left Willow High School to begin my graduate program, I returned there as support staff for first year teachers and also to conduct two short qualitative studies. While my parents' attempts to keep me away from

Tajuata, and Willow High School did not work, there was a sense of pride in the work I was doing, work that centered on the social justice ethics they socialized me into. And, despite the continued rhetoric around Tajuata as a failing school, through this study I was able to witness the agility and ingenuity of the Black and Latina/o youth who occupied and will continue to occupy the learning spaces there.

My own position as a Chicano male researcher also created a social distance between both Black and Latina female youth in some classes. In two classes, I immediately observed how the Latina youth worked together, mostly huddled together during class activities, working together during group work, and rarely speaking out in class or called upon their teachers to participate in class, a pattern consistent with research examining how males are called upon to participate in the classroom more than female students (Jones & Dindia, 2004). In one class, the only Black female youth enrolled worked alone and on few occasions with a Black male youth. Eventually, this student would leave the class and enroll in another English 10 course before I ever had an opportunity to interact with her. Because of this gender imbalance my focal participants in this study are mostly Black and Latino male youth. While this gender imbalance did not render fruitful relationships with female youth (compared to those developed with Marylou, Yesenia, Maritza and female youth in other classes), I recognize this as a limitation of the study. However, the male voices represented in this study, I argue, are those of Black and Latino male youth too often dismissed from the official classroom script; therefore, highlighting these voices is significant to understanding the discourse practices of Black and Latina/o youth in general, and the language ideologies that are explicitly and implicitly communicated through their language practices.

CHAPTER 4

Transcultural communication among Black and Latina/o youth

The youth at Willow High School deployed a *range* of language practices as they engaged in their everyday communicative activities, hanging out during nutrition and lunch breaks, walking to their classes, and most important to this study, as they spoke to one another in their English Language Arts classrooms. Public schools are often in the business of categorizing their students, and language is one way that Black and Latino youth at WHS are divided into smaller “subgroups.” Labels such as English Only (EO), English Learner (EL), or Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) are used to place youth into courses according to their proficiency in English. Some teachers and counselors at WHS spoke of their Black and Latina/o youth as bilingual or bi-dialectical, making sure to account for the “non-standard,” different or divergent practices of these youth. However, I argue in this chapter that all of these labels fail to capture the linguistic flexibility of these youth, who with regularity, shifted into a range of English, Spanish and Black Language varieties including standard varieties these languages (Paris, 2011). These traditional notions of language assume that speakers contain their respective “languages” in separate containers, keeping each language bound, resisting any mixture or contamination (Orellana, Lee, & Martínez, 2011).

In chapter 2, I discussed the notion of linguistic repertoire, its origins in Sociolinguistic and Linguistic Anthropological research, and its take up in language research in education. I outlined the latest scholarly contributions around the construct of linguistic repertoire in providing a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of everyday communication in the lives of non-dominant groups, including new articulations of linguistic repertoire. This chapter will add to this tradition of research by considering the “local” linguistic repertoires of youth who

have been ignored in talks about “the global” (Guerra, 2008). In discussing recent calls by educators to prepare “global citizens” Guerra shares his concern that “...the term global citizen tends to draw our attention away from local, from the very communities of practices that have been long overlooked...” (p. 299). I agree with Guerra’s argument to examine the local “diversity.” Specifically, this study will explore the linguistic diversity that has long been overlooked, and will continue to be overlooked if we concentrate *only* on the global forces that contribute to the shifting and changing landscapes described by Blommaert and Backus (2011). The transcultural communicative practices of Black and Latina/o youth in local contexts have been rarely considered in educational research despite the coexistence of Blacks and Latinas/os in communities and schooling contexts for decades in the United States.

In this chapter I will highlight the local language practices of Black and Latina/o youth in urban ELA classrooms. While most sociolinguistic research on non-dominant groups has focused on linguistic data captured outside of traditional learning contexts, this chapter explores the linguistic repertoire of Black and Latina/o youth in English Language Arts classrooms. This methodological decision will contribute to research that seeks to disrupt false dichotomies that pit home and school languages against one another, dichotomies that suggested that “school” languages were contained to bounded classrooms spaces, while “home” languages only existed outside schooling/classroom contexts (for critique of these dichotomies see Hull & Schultz, 2001, 2002). In line with sociocultural researchers who argued that school “home” and “school” languages were often visible across contexts and influenced one another in these contexts (González, 2001; Vasquez et al., 1994 [2008]), this chapter demonstrates how Black and Latina/o youth used their expansive linguistic repertoires to communicate in their ELA classrooms, with diverse interlocutors, by deploying languages associated with both home and

school. As we will see, the WHS youth seamlessly deployed languages in their linguistic repertoires to communicate with their peers, to add opinions in official classroom discussions, and to deliver their thoughts and opinions on matters of the ELA classroom.

This chapter also seeks to disrupt and challenge the tendency of educational research to neglect the variance in the cultural and linguistic practices of ethnic/racial groups. As discussed in chapter 2, educational research on the language practices of Black and Latina/o youth tend to focus on the non-standard language features of these groups. In addition, drawing on research by linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists, this chapter will support the notion that we can no longer map linguistic features onto specific/ individual racial/ethnic groups. For example, Alim and Reyes (2011) suggest a departure from language research that maps specific language features with one particular ethnic or racial group, or research that begins with a single ethnic/racial group and documents the language practices only of that respective group. Instead, they call for language research “...highlighting how processes of race and racialization are produced between groups and across multiple linguistic and social dimensions” (p. 380).

The following question guides this chapter:

1. What are the regularities and variances in the language practices of Black and Latina/o youth at Willow High School?

This question will seeks to understand the various linguistic repertoires of both Black and Latina/o youth at WHS, including the shared language practices that these two distinct racial/ethnic groups have in common, as well as the variances within and across these groups. In doing so, this chapter will highlight the linguistic virtuosity of these youth, the ways in which they use language in contextually meaningful ways, how the shifts in language made by these

youth are purposeful and reflective of their experiences developing language within transcultural learning spaces.

Linguistic Repertoire and Transcultural Communicative Practices of Latina/o Youth

On a chilly December morning, most students in Ms. Luz' class were occupied reading during the final moments of D.E.A.R., a 15 minute school wide silent reading program where *everyone*, including the principal and school wide staff were asked to **Drop Everything And Read**. The majority of bundled-up students were reading, and a few students whispered to their desk mates, all while an ever smaller group of students were embroiled in conversations with peers seated across the room. Throughout D.E.A.R., Ms. Luz appeared flustered having to remind a handful of students "WE are still:: **read-ing**," as she stared at her cell phone which she used to keep track of time. Her eyes continuously scanned the room for students who were talking as she clicked away at her mouse taking attendance at her desktop computer. Suddenly a loud siren-like noise reverberated throughout the school signaling the end of D.E.A.R. and the official beginning of Ms. Luz' tenth grade ELA class. According to the routine practices of the class, students were now expected to pull out their ELA notebooks and complete a "Do Now" activity. This was a short activity intended to recap a concept from the prior day's instruction, or a writing activity that would lead into the daily activity. On many days, Do Now activities were related to test preparation.

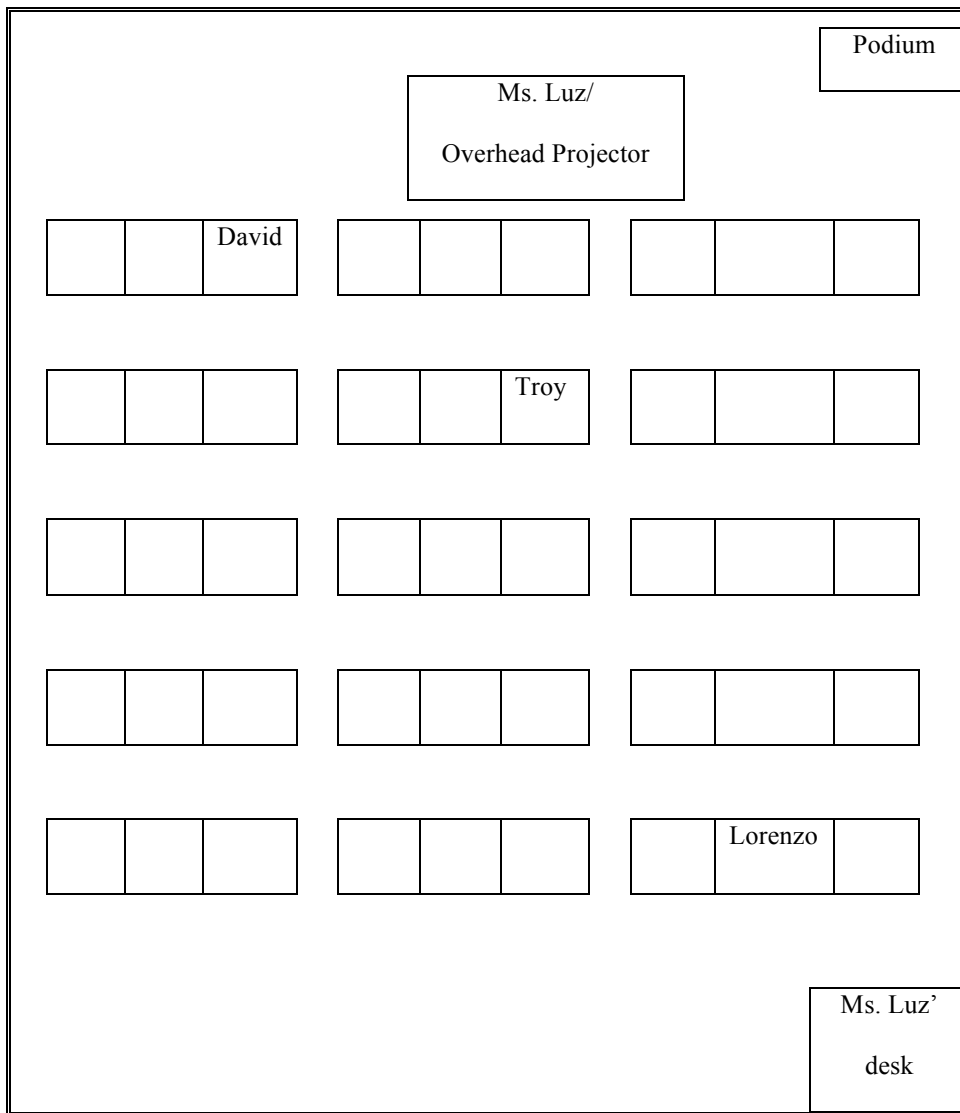
Today, like many other days, Ms. Luz placed a plastic transparency onto an old overhead projector with the names of several characters from William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* hand written vertically down the left side of the film. Each name had a line drawn next to it, indicating to students a task that required them to fill in the blank line with missing information. On this day, students had to write whether each character listed was "anti" or "pro" Caesar.

Prior to this day, students had read up to the end of Act III, scene I of Julius Caesar, just having read the infamous scene where Caesar screams “*Et tu Brute*¹⁰” (Shakespeare, 2001) after learning that Brutus led a conspiracy to kill him “for the good of Rome.” Using their knowledge of the play students had 10 minutes to complete this task.

After ten minutes were up, Ms. Luz stepped up to the overhead projector with a transparency marker in hand eliciting responses from her students following an Initiation-Response- Evaluation (IRE) or (IRF-Feedback) participation interaction model (Cazden, 2001; Mehan, 1979). During this activity Ms. Luz was positioned at a space in the classroom considered the “front” standing directly next to the overhead projector, with the image on the transparency flashing behind her onto a screen pulled down from the ceiling. She faced students who were seated along three columns made up of three desks each, five rows long. A graphic representation of the classroom is provided in figure 4.0. Repeatedly, Ms. Luz read the names of characters out loud, “the Soothsayer?” “Cassius?” “Portia?” “Decius?” After a short pause she would ask “pro Caesar?” Suddenly several students would respond “yeah,” “yes,” “pro,” or “no” if the character was a conspirator to Caesar’s death. Ms. Luz followed up with her evaluation, “good” while writing the correct answer on a blank line next to the character name. While this was happening, most students focused on copying responses to the do now activity onto their notebooks.

¹⁰ It is important to note that in deciding to read Julius Caesar with her students Ms. Luz selected the “modern” version of the book, telling her students that the original version was “too hard.” The series title for the version of Julius Caesar used is *A classic retelling*. While this text kept popular lines such as “Et tu Brute” in tact, it did not offer students exposure to a classic Shakespearean style.

Figure 4.1-Ms. Luz Fall 2011 Classroom



Lorenzo was seated in the last row of the classroom on this day at an angle that did not provide a clear view of the screen. Attempting to copy Ms. Luz' jottings, he squirmed in his chair, stretched his neck, and eventually stood up with his arms reaching down to copy what he saw on the image being projected, his head bobbing up and down, up to look at the screen and back down to write. Lorenzo was not the only student with a limited view. Nayela, a Black female youth, motioned to Ms. Luz to move the image up a bit, later exclaiming "miss I can't

see.” After hearing this, Ms. Luz made a slight adjustment. Still, Lorenzo could not see the image well, and perhaps frustrated with his limited view, attempted to bring this to Ms. Luz’ attention. In the following 23-second interaction Lorenzo found himself competing with a discussion already in progress about Portia, Brutus’ wife in the play being had by Ms. Luz, and Troy and David, both Black male youth.

Transcript 4.1

01 Ms. Luz: Now let’s go back to Portia. = ((to class))
02 Portia’s tricky. [Okay?
03 Troy: [Where she- where she from ((to Ms. Luz))
04 Lorenzo: *Con permiso.* ((to Ms. Luz)) (with your permission)
05 Can you push it up [miss?
06 Ms. Luz: [she’s Brutus’ **wife?** ((to S1 and class))
07 Troy: She a **pro**
08 Lorenzo: (2.0 sec) pa-rriba:: ((to Ms. Luz))
09 Dave: Yeah but she was- she was
10 Troy: She don’t even know wassup
11 Lorenzo: [Hey miss: ((to Ms. Luz))
12 Ms. Luz: [She doesn’t know what’s going on
13 but [she’s worried about her father right? ((to class))
14 Troy: [((stands up blocking more of Lorenzo’s view))
15 Lorenzo: [Stoopid **move** yo’ bald head man:: ((to Black peer))
16 Ms. Luz: So [**maybe** she would be neutral?
17 Lorenzo: [Ms. Luz. (sec)

18 move yo (xx) man:: (to S1)
 19 (sec) pick it up miss-Luz ((to Ms. Luz))
 20 **I can't see::**
 21 Ms. Luz: hold on ((moves the image up))

In lines 1-21 Lorenzo made several attempts to enter the discussion already in progress, or what Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995) call the official space of the classroom where only student utterances ratified by the teacher become part of the official classroom script. In this event, Ms. Luz only takes up comments about Portia's role (whether she is 'pro' or 'anti' Caesar). This is evident by Ms. Luz's utterances in lines 06, 12, and 16 where she responded to Troy, a Black youth's utterances in lines 03, 07, and 10, and Dave, another Black youth in line 09, both of whose comments focus on Portia's role in Caesar's assassination. Lorenzo's utterances on the other hand were not taken up, perhaps because they did not follow the participation structure enacted for this activity, a structure that for this 23-second interaction diverted from the previous IRE interactional sequence. Unlike Gutierrez, Rymes and Larson's (1995) notion of counterscript, potentially robust dialogue occurring in unofficial classroom spaces, Lorenzo's utterances had the potential to divert the ongoing participation framework. However so, Lorenzo's ongoing need was important to his membership in the classroom community.

As we continue through this interaction Ms. Luz' rising intonation indicated a tag question delivered to her students inviting them to comment evident in lines 02 (okay?), 13 (right?), and 16 (maybe she would be neutral?) or her increased pitch in line 6 (she's Brutus' **wife?**). After each of these discursive moves, Troy takes up the prominent role by adding his

thoughts, with Dave (in one instance) providing one comment (an analysis of which I will return to in Chapter 5). While the participation structure of this event is not where my analysis centers, the structure of this interactional event prevented Lorenzo from communicating to Ms. Luz that he *could not* see the material being projected. However, it is within this interactional sequence that Lorenzo displays his ability to code-switch and styleshift to make his speech communicatively appropriate for different interlocutors, evidence, I argue, of his transcultural communicative practices.

Taken together, this 23-second interaction may not seem remarkable. A quick gloss over Lorenzo's utterances only makes visible that he can shift between English and Spanish, a notable skill that many Latina/o youth have available to them at WHS. Yet, a more thorough examination of this interaction highlights Lorenzo's transcultural communication skills as he deployed a range of languages and styles extending beyond narrow conceptions of English and Spanish. Lorenzo's attempts to bring a legitimate concern into the official space of the classroom in lines 04-05, 08, 11, and 19 were up against larger discursive practices already in progress. It was evidently difficult and onerous for Lorenzo to make his way into the official classroom space. Bloome, Power Carter, Morton Christian, Otto, and Shuart-Faris (2005) note that interruptions to an ongoing participation framework of a class tend to be met with verbal rebuffs, denial of a turn at talk or with complete dismissal of the student attempting to enter the official script (p. 174). Lorenzo's interruptions, or utterances *were* ignored and he was denied access to the official script of the class. This was possible since Ms. Luz' controlled the majority of this interaction until the end of the sequence where Lorenzo used his tone and physical features to get her attention.

However, it was in Lorenzo's potential interruptions that his linguistic moves were

highlighted. In lines 01-03 a mostly dyadic interaction was initiated between Ms. Luz and Troy. Ms. Luz stated in lines 01-02, “Now let’s go back to Portia. Portia’s tricky. Okay?” Her rising intonation in “okay?” invited students to respond in varying ways. Troy took up this invitation and asked “Where she- where she from.” The end of Troy’s utterance gave way for Ms. Luz to speak, but here Lorenzo attempted to interject, uttering *to* Ms. Luz “Con permiso. Can you push it up miss?” (Line 04-05). In these lines, Lorenzo displayed what researchers have called an inter-sentential code-switch, where a speaker initiates an utterance in one language and ends in another. His initial words, “con permiso,” signaled his need to have Ms. Luz’ attention where he used a formal variety of Spanish which translates into “with your permission.” Beginning with this honorific also signaled that Lorenzo was aware that he might disrupt the interaction in progress, thus perhaps choosing “con permiso” to mitigate or soften his interruption. Immediately after however, Lorenzo code switched into English when he uttered, “can you push it up” asking Ms. Luz to raise the bulb of the projector to provide him a better view. His use of “can you” supports the notion that Lorenzo was still trying to use terms that index his respect and acknowledgement of his interruption. However, Ms. Luz did not engage Lorenzo, thus not fulfilling his request indicated by the overlap between his final word “miss” in line 05 and the beginning of her next utterance in line 06 where she responded to Troy’s question “where she from” in line 03, “she’s Brutus’ wife.”

Lorenzo then shifted in line 08, to a variety of Spanish that some argue derives from Chicano Spanish features (Anzaldúa, 1999; Garcia, 1979)¹¹ in the Southwest US, but may well be a prominent feature in a variety of Spanish used by a range of Spanish speakers where the clipping of the end of “para” and the beginning of “arriba” occur, especially in everyday speech.

¹¹ Anzaldúa and Garcia argue that Chicano Spanish speakers tend to clip the phrase “*para arriba*” into “*pa-rriba*.” While many other speakers of Spanish may utter “*para arriba*” in this manner.

Ms. Luz still did not take up Lorenzo's request while Troy and David entered the official space in lines 09 and 10. Again, in line 11, Lorenzo entered with "Hey miss:" this time using a common pronoun "miss" used for teachers by some Latina/o students at WHS. "Miss" is often short for "La Maestra" or "La Miss" an endearing term that has made its way into usage among Latina/o children and youth¹². The informal use of "Hey"¹³ however, to get Ms. Luz' attention, is interesting given his previous use of the honorific 'con permiso' suggesting that he may have slowly become less tolerant and more frustrated with his situation. Despite his attempt though, there is yet another overlap in Lorenzo and Ms. Luz' utterances and his request was dismissed as she began her next utterance in line 12 in response to Troy and Dave's comments.

At this point, Lorenzo's frustration was more visible, with his body movement changing erratically to better his view. Instead of directing his attention to Ms. Luz in the utterances that followed, he directed his attention to Troy who stood up obstructing his view even further. This caused Lorenzo to quickly and loudly state "Stoo::pid **move** yo' bald head man:::" shifting styles to use a language he and his peers regularly identified as "urban" or "ghetto" language, and what researchers have called Black English or Black Language (Alim, 2004; Rickford & Rickford, 2000; Smitherman, 2000). Lorenzo delivered a bald directive to Troy, explicitly telling him to move his head. Troy did not appear bothered and simply moved. The conversation between Ms. Luz, Troy and Dave continued despite Lorenzo's utterances that became louder. In lines 16 and 17 Lorenzo tried again to grasp Ms. Luz' attention, yet this attempt was dejected by another overlap in their speech. Here he uttered, "Ms. Luz" but still did not succeed.

¹² Use of the phrase "La miss" or "El mister" are very common in Los Angeles schools that I have visited. Usage of these terms is hybrid in nature bringing together distinct feminine and masculine determiners in Spanish with accented English pronouns. It is usually pronounced "la mIz" or "el mIzter."

¹³ I am also aware that some youth use the term "hey" commonly through social networking sites and texting as an abbreviated way of saying "hello" or "what's up."

This interaction comes to a close beginning on line 18 where Lorenzo stood up from his chair seeming exasperated, yet intent on getting what he needed. Troy once again moved in a way that blocked Lorenzo's entire view causing him to style shift in line 18 "move yo- (xxx) head man:::" to voice his annoyance. He style shifted once more as he spoke to Ms. Luz uttering, "pick it up miss-Luz I **can't see**:::" in lines 19-20, this time uttering another bald directive to Ms. Luz, who responded with "hold on." Finally acknowledging Lorenzo, she moved the bulb to manipulate the image being projected.

I have detailed each of the linguistic moves made by Lorenzo, which includes code-switching and styleshifting, to communicate with each interlocutor in this sequence. Lorenzo may not have been consciously aware of these linguistic moves (Rymes, 2010) yet this sequence highlighted here how Lorenzo drew from a range of languages to communicate. Counting each language is *not* my point here; however my analysis here highlights *how* Lorenzo communicated in this transcultural setting. His language was not uniform throughout this interaction, and even in his shifting, the way he used language shifted with his interlocutors as his frustration levels rose. Here Lorenzo provides readers with a glimpse of the styles of discourse that he can deploy, suggesting he has tools in his linguistic repertoire that allowed him to successfully communicate within this transcultural setting. In considering the language abilities of bilingual Latina/o youth, research tends only to consider English and Spanish varieties as evidence of bilingualism and fails to consider the *variance* in the language practices of Latinas/os neglecting the *hybrid* language varieties or the use of Black Language features in the utterances of Latina/o youth. Therefore, the larger argument I am making is that a view of language through the metaphor of the repertoire can widen what counts as language in schools.

Lorenzo's statement above was one of many communicative interactions where I

witnessed youth shifting into and out of a range of languages as their interlocutors changed. In Lorenzo's interaction above, he shifted languages and varieties of those languages in speaking to his teacher, Ms. Luz, beginning in Spanish, and ending in English. Like Lorenzo, many Latina/o youth shifted into forms of Black Language when they spoke to Black and Latina/o peers. While Lorenzo's interaction with Tony when was very brief, he uttered "move yo' head man," indexing his awareness of a specific language that he and Tony had in common, similar to the youth in Paris (2011) study who used Black Language as a unifying language "across their differences."

Lorenzo's utterances also serves to challenge the prevalent idea that non-dominant youth who are speakers of marginalized and stigmatized languages are inherently monolingual (Ball, Skerrett, & Martínez, 2011) and unable to use standard varieties of English. Instead, in this moment-to-moment classroom interaction, Lorenzo shifted into a variety of English that is more typical of standard English. Lorenzo's interactions, and those of many of his peers that consistently shifted as they communicated with peers in their transcultural settings went unnoticed in the everyday hustle and bustle of classroom interactions. Lorenzo and many of his peers drew from a range of languages to communicate meaning, and often, these linguistic utterances were inclusive of standard varieties of English.

To be sure, there were many Latina/o youth who displayed a range of language practices, and often within subsequent interactions, these youth engaged in styleshifting and code-switching. Like Lorenzo's interaction these "shifts" occurred as youth changed interlocutors and/or as their participation shifted into the official space of the classroom. The simultaneous shifts I captured above with Lorenzo were also prevalent with Maritza, a Latina youth in Ms. Luz' English 10A/B course, as well as with Diego, a Latino youth enrolled in Mr. Esperanza's senior English class among many others.

Language Learning and the Expanding Repertoires of Latina/o Recent Immigrant Youth.

It became evident at WHS that being Latina/o had different meanings for each student. While there was a consensus that Latinas/os were a majority at WHS, and that many Latinas/os (not all) spoke Spanish, observing and engaging in conversations with Latina/o youth at WHS allowed me to complicate the various meanings of “Latina/o”. For example, Lorenzo, Maritza, Diego, and other Latinas/os who had more experience in the United States and in the local Tajuata community saw their Latina/o identity shaped by local cultural and language practices. That is, they were more likely to speak using varieties of English than Spanish, and they were more likely to use features of Black Language in their utterances than Latina/o youth who were recent immigrants. When asked what they were, these youth would often use the pan-ethnic term Latino, preceded by, “but my parents are from,” followed by various countries, regions or village names.

For recent immigrant Latina/o youth at WHS, their identities more closely tied to very recent experiences they had crossing into the United States from countries south of the US border. These youth were usually more connected to their countries of origin, and while they did identify as Latina/o, they were more likely than other Latina/o youth at WHS to call themselves *Mexicana/o*, *Guatemalteca/o*, *Salvadoreña/o*, *Hodureña/o*, etc. These youth were also more likely to claim regional identities from these locations, signaling either urban or rural experiences¹⁴. Many of these youth had transnational ties to their countries of origin. Only a few of these youth were able to visit their home countries to visit extended family and sometimes their own parents at varying points since their departure, while others maintained their ties via

¹⁴ For example, one youth from Honduras claimed Tegucigalpa, Mexican youth claimed Guadalajara, Mexico City or Puebla, while Salvadoran students claimed San Salvador or Santa Ana. Many youth claimed smaller pueblos or ranchos in the countries I have mentioned.

social networking sites, like skype or “eskying,” telephone calls, and texting (a study in and of itself!). It also meant that there were very fresh memories of departure from these places, and current struggles to live as documented and undocumented immigrants in the Tajuata community and the larger US climate where immigrants often experience hostile political climates.

Across all four classes that I observed, Mr. Esperanza’s class had more students that identified as recent immigrants than any other class. For the recent immigrants in his class, that meant they just recently completed the required ESL courses and were concurrently taking Mr. Esperanza’s senior English class and an additional junior level English course. This reality countered my original belief that observing tenth grade English classes would be the most fruitful, having believed that more former EL students would be enrolled in English 10 classes, since it was the first “regular” English class after completing the ESL program. This was also a reality because overall, enrollment numbers were down across the campus, and at the time of this study, English as a Second Language courses were severely under populated with teachers having to teach more than one level of ESL in one class period.

Yesenia and Diego were two recent immigrant youth who identified as *Mexicana* and *Mexicano*. I came to know them both fairly well during this study. I met them together in Mr. Esperanza’s senior English classroom during my second semester at WHS. My relationship with both Yesenia and Diego grew when Mr. Esperanza asked if I could assist them and their peers (who were also recent immigrants) with several of their essay assignments. Having known that I was a former ESL teacher at WHS, Mr. Esperanza saw me as a resource for these former ESL students, a group of students he admitted not feeling very well prepared to teach, a concern many California teachers expressed in a statewide study (Gándara et al., 2005). Both Yesenia and Diego also participated in after school and weekend workshop sessions that I attended around

college applications and financial aid. During early interactions, both students shared their “crossing” stories with me. While they were both recent immigrants, one shared experiences walking through an excruciatingly hot desert in Arizona, while the other spoke of the bureaucratic mess encountered despite proper paperwork. Both discussed issues they encountered when they first entered schools in the US, including problems they had with teachers and students. Our conversations were also filled with stories of the joys and tribulations of being a high school youth.

It was early into the spring semester in March when I walked into Mr. Esperanza’s room a bit after the tardy bell rang. Before entering his class, I knew students would be revising essays that Mr. Esperanza returned to them. During this workshop session students sat at their desks surrounded by their peers talking to one another, waiting for a one-on-one with Mr. Esperanza. My presence in the class assisted Mr. Esperanza since it allowed more students to be seen and his students who were able to get another set of eyes on their essays. On this particular workshop day, I walked in and immediately observed Yesenia cowered over her paper that had just been returned to her by Mr. Esperanza. Yesenia sat with her elbows on her desk and her hands rubbing her head as she stared down at an essay fixed neatly between her arms. I noticed Yesenia, and then all the other youth seated near her reading comments spilled onto their essays. I walked over to the remaining desk in the pod and asked how they were doing.

Yesenia quickly released her hands from her head, pulled up her paper, and revealed to me what she had written her essay, now soaked in red ink from Mr. Escalante’s hand written comments. On this day, almost every student in Mr. Escalante’s class received an essay with his comments, yet the look on students faces were not as dreary as those huddled around Yesenia. I asked Yesenia if I could read her paper, and she handed me her essay. I began to read the neatly

written essay as well as the sincere comments provided by Mr. Escalante. At the end of the essay, Mr. Escalante provided encouraging words, “You are almost there. Great content, we’ll need to work on the grammar.” Before I could finish reading, Mr. Escalante was by my side talking to Yesenia and her peers. He explained to them all that their essays were ‘great,’ and that he enjoyed reading them all. However, he said that they should talk to me about the issues they were having. For Yesenia, and her peers, this wasn’t an easy task since they could not identify what their issues were.

As I asked Yesenia about the problems or issues she believed she was facing in her writing she quickly stated, “*Estoy pensando en español*” (I’m thinking in Spanish). From the words neatly written onto her paper, I gathered that Yesenia *was* thinking in Spanish. Many, but not all of her sentences were constructed using Spanish language syntax. However, the content, Yesenia’s arguments that parents *and* fast food restaurants should be responsible for providing children with nutritious foods, were strong and well developed in the essay. And, she discussed these issues with me, in English, Spanish and Spanglish. Yesenia’s frustration however, points to a problem with the way we think about language, and the ways in which non-dominant youth begin to view their own linguistic resources as a problem. “*Estoy pensando en español*” for Yesenia was the cause of her problems with writing. While Mr. Esperanza was encouraging with in his comments and made sure to let Yesenia know that her arguments were solid, he admittedly stated that he was not sure how to support her development. Mr. Esperanza did feel responsible for preparing his students for community college courses or the workplace.

Yesenia also expressed her frustration speaking English. Throughout my study Yesenia displayed a range of language practices, and while her Latina/o peers born and raised in Tajuata infused features of Black Language in their utterances, she and her recent immigrant peers did

not regularly display these features. Like Lorenzo however, she drew from her knowledge of English and Spanish shifting into “standard” and “nonstandard” varieties of both. While she did not display features of Black Language as prominently as Lorenzo, and other Latina/o youth at WHS, Yesenia deployed a range of languages through her everyday transcultural experiences.

Despite the frustration and anxiety Yesenia expressed, she was committed to doing well on schooling tasks required her to speak English. One task was a school wide senior presentation required of all graduating students. For this task, students were asked to investigate a topic of their choosing to conduct research. This research would be made public through the creation of a Power Point presentation that would be delivered to a panel of teachers and counselors that would evaluate each presenter with a “pass” or “no pass” grade. A “no pass” meant that a student would not have met graduation requirements, therefore, Yesenia and many of her peers believed this to be a high stakes assessment¹⁵.

In mid May, senior students who anticipated graduating¹⁶ scheduled their presentations and Yesenia invited me to attend her senior presentation where she would argue for supporting the Federal Dream Act. She has also agreed to participate in a semi-formal interview after her presentation. On this day as I walked toward Mr. Esperanza’s classroom and several students were standing outside of his classroom, most of whom were dressed “professionally.” Diego was among the students wearing a Black pin stripe suit pacing back and forth looking over index cards he held tightly in his hands. Other Black and Latino male youth wore variations of “professional” wear, slacks or dark jeans with tucked in collared shirts, some with ties, others

¹⁵ I learned, as an ad hoc panel member, that all students were passed. This presentation was more like a tradition that WHS teachers were attempting to establish, in accord with many other schools.

¹⁶ During the month of May, many 12th grade students still did not know if they were graduating. Many did not know until late May when CAHSEE scores were released, or until after their finals during the last week of school when teachers turned in their final grades.

with sweaters with collars peeking out. Many of the Black and Latina female youth wore dresses or slacks with matching tops, flat or high-heeled dress shoes, and many wore makeup on their faces. The students waiting along the narrow corridor where Mr. Esperanza's classroom was located appeared nervous and quickly asked one Black male youth who exited the presentation room "did you pass?" The student had a smile on his face appearing exited with a bright smile on his face telling his peers "I passed!" He also offered his peers encouraging advice.

When I entered Mr. Esperanza's room, I noticed adjustments in the configuration of his room as it was now transformed into the official senior presentation room. An LCD projector was powered up facing a portable screen along a wall. A long table was next to the projector where students would stand facing a panel of teachers and a counselor who served as the panel of evaluators for the presentation. Mr. Esperanza greeted me and immediately asked me if I could sit in on a couple of presentations since one of the teachers could not attend the next set of presentations. I agreed, and became a fourth ad-hoc member of the panel. I was quickly given an overview of the rubric used to evaluate students, and told that all the students should be passed. If there were major problems, we should suggest ways that a student might be able to improve.

As Mr. Esperanza was transitioning to the next presentation, I saw that Yesenia was scheduled as the next presenter. He walked to his classroom door, and peeked outside calling out the name of the next student. "Yesenia" he called, and she entered the room slowly, wearing what she later described as her "*ropa de misa*," her church clothes – long Black slacks, a colored blouse a suit jacket and shiny Black heels. Yesenia appeared nervous, slowly walking toward the long table to insert her flash drive into the computer to project her PowerPoint presentation from the LCD projector. She lay her notes down on the table in front of her and stumbled

through index cards that were now in her hand, perhaps making sure they were in the correct order. Mr. Esperanza walked toward the group of panelists to let us know that Yesenia was a former English Learner so that we would take this fact into consideration in our evaluations. The panel included Mr. Esperanza her current ELA teacher, Ms. Aaron, her former 11th grade ELA teacher, Mr. Malagon, her counselor for the last three years, and me.

Mr. Esperanza began the formal presentation by introducing Yesenia to the entire group, explaining the format of the presentation, and how she would be evaluated. He then offered her the floor, giving her the opportunity to begin whenever she was ready. Yesenia glanced at the panel with a smile, then looked up at the ceiling. She walked toward the computer to click on her PowerPoint presentation that immediately appeared on the screen behind her. A Latino youth sat near the LCD projector and in front of the computer changing the slide whenever Yesenia was ready. Yesenia began her presentation with a quivering voice, uttering the following as she introduced her topic of undocumented students in the United States.

Transcript 4.2

01 Yesenia: My name is Yesenia Hernandez
02 today we are going to present
03 a PowerPoint about *immigra-shun* reform.
04 (2.0) *Immigra-shun* reform.
05 Ah treat people
06 with equal rights to
07 *estop deportashun*
08 (3.0) Don't treat them like criminals

09 for coming to the United *e*States.
10 Young college *est*udents with no citizenship
11 deserve the opportunity to continue
12 with their *educashun*
13 and to become legal
14 in the United *e*States

Lines 1-14 are only the beginning of Yesenia’s nearly 10-minute presentation. In lines 1-3, Yesenia opens her presentation by introducing herself to her evaluation panel, all adults that that she knows, in addition to two students in the classroom that she has known since her freshman year at WHS. She proceeded to share the topic of her presentation, immigration reform. Her introduction signaled the beginning of a formal genre of speaking that she has just entered, the senior presentation. This introduction also points to the artificiality of this event compared to other speech events required of youth at WHS. That is, in the classes I observed youth did not have to introduce themselves to an audience they knew. Nor did I ever observe youth evaluated in front of a full panel of adults beyond the teacher of record and their peers. Despite the remarkably different participation framework required of Yesenia, and other seniors at WHS during their senior presentation this talk, many WHS youth, Black and Latina/o performed in this genre. In doing so, Yesenia demonstrated her ability to style shift into a standard variety of English, a variety of English that she found problematic and troublesome because she still considered herself a learner of her second language.

While I am suggesting that Yesenia is demonstrating her ability to speak a standard variety of English, her “accent” is prevalent via her pronunciation of specific words within her

presentation. For many individuals, specific accents carry more value than others. For example Lippi-Green (1997) argues that individuals perceive the sounds of certain European accents as more aesthetically pleasing than other accents. In our current anti-immigrant, anti-Latina/o climate, the accents of Latina/o immigrants are not typically treated as aesthetically pleasing to the ear. In fact, Latina/o speakers have been found to monitor their own speech and become hyper vigilant about their own accents within public spaces (Urciuoli, 1995, 1996). It can be argued then, that the formal genre of the presentation was for Yesenia, a public space where her English could be judged and her accent made highly visible to the various panel members. Therefore it is important to identify which parts of Yesenia's utterances featured her "accented" speech.

In line 03 and 04, Yesenia uttered the word immigration twice, and pronounced "immigration" as "immigrashun" (ʃʌn), stressing the final syllable "*shun*." This was a common pronunciation for Yesenia and her Spanish dominant peers. She stressed the final syllable several times in words that ended in 'tion' as 'shun' again in line 07 when she uttered "deportashun" and in "educashun" in line 12. Another feature that Yesenia produced, prominent among Spanish dominant speakers, was the insertion of an "e" before English words that begin with an "s." We see this feature in line 07 where she uttered "estop" for "stop," in line 09 and 14 where she uttered "United eStates" for "United States" and finally in line 10 where she uttered "estudents" for "students." I am highlighting this because I am cognizant of how the function of Yesenia's utterances may get lost to an interlocutor because of the form in which she delivered her message, with a potentially unfavorable accent. Fortunately, the panel of evaluators found Yesenia's message a valuable one. Since I was privy to conversations that occurred during the evaluation phase, Mr. Malagon, her counselor who knew Yesenia since she

first entered WHS in the ninth grade, was overwhelmed with emotion when he spoke to Yesenia about her progress, stating how impressed he was by her performance on this task given that she had only been in the country for under four years. The rest of the panel believed her message was clear, and the topic of her presentation timely given the current debate surrounding immigration and undocumented students specifically.

Understanding Yesenia's history with the English language, her utterances in lines 01-14 represent an expansion of her linguistic repertoire of languages, particularly the addition of powerful academic varieties of English. The type of English she deployed in these lines was very different from the English I witnessed her use with her teacher, or with her Black and Latina/o peers. The transcript does not do justice in communicating the intensity and anxiety that Yesenia reported feeling during this event. She later said to me in an interview that I conducted with her following her senior presentation, "Estaba nerviosa que no pude ni dormir, te lo juro." (*I was so nervous that I couldn't even sleep, I swear to you*). Yesenia attributed her anxiety and therefore her inability to sleep the night to the fact that she knew she was going to engage in a task that required a kind of English different from her everyday uses of English.

The senior presentation Yesenia, Diego and other seniors participated in was very different from any other public speaking event I observed during my time at WHS. Presentations that I did observe required students to present to an audience of their peers, in addition to their teacher and myself as the only adults in the room. For senior presentations students stood alone in front of a panel of adults and on some occasions one other youth assisted with PowerPoint slides. Yesenia and her peers also were told that their graduation from high school depended on receiving a passing evaluation. The inexperience students had with this genre of speaking may have caused the anxiety, especially since this project was not part of any explicit classroom

curriculum, leaving students alone in their preparation of their presentations. In Mr. Esperanza's English class, he did devote class time for students to work on their presentations but the development of youths' public speaking skills were never developed. It is no surprise then, that Yesenia, a former EL student, walked into her presentation feeling anxious, nervous, and with a sense of insecurity about her English language skills.

Black Youth Linguistic Repertoires

The linguistic dexterity and flexibility that I observed diverse Latina/o youth at WHS deploy provided implicit evidence that transcultural interactions with Black youth were leading to a process of language socialization among Latina/o youth. This was highlighted from the ways in which Latina/o youth utterances featured Black. While recent Latina/o immigrants did not have features of Black Language in their speech, my interactions with these youth uncovered how they looked towards their Black peers as targets for English language skills. For example, when I spoke to Yesenia about what she believed she learned from her Black peers, she reported:

“...tengo mis amigos y casi todos todos son Latinos. Con ellos (los Afro Americanos) tengo que hablar ingles no, y de que-y sirve porque lo practicas mas. no se, hay aprendes la pronunciación *mas* porque para aprender hay que escuchar *como* lo pronuncian y sabes como como se (xxx) allí aprendo mas, es que creo que aprendo mas palabras con ellos”

“...I have my friends and almost all of them, all of them, are Latinos. With them (Black peers) I have to speak English no, and uhm- and it works because you practice it more, I don't know, there you learn the pronunciation more because to learn you have to listen how to pronounce it and you know, you know, there I

learn more, it's because I believe that I learn more words from them"

Yesenia stated that she did not have any Black peers who were her close friends, but she expressed that she only had positive experiences with Black peers at WHS. According to her statement, she looked towards her Black peers as a target for English language development. Yesenia was not alone in thinking this, as various other recent immigrants had the same reflections. Elena, for example, supported this stating that she would rather work with Black peers in her classes rather than Latinas/os born in the United States because her Black peers did *not* make fun of her accent and would actually help her with classwork, especially with their English development.

Black youth at WHS were treated as monolingual speakers of English, noted most by their designation as English Only (EO) on school records. While designated with the EO label, many Black youth were regarded as speakers non-standard English. Some teachers referred to this as Ebonics, Black slang or simply bad English. However, the linguistic interactions I observed at WHS painted a different picture of Black youth and their language practices. I observed and listened to them deploy a range of language practices that highlighted their expansive linguistic dexterity within the transcultural settings and communities to which they belong. The ELA classroom was one of those settings.

As mentioned in previously, the Black youth population at WHS decreased in numbers every year. As a teacher at WHS myself, Black youth were almost always enrolled in my courses, other than those designated for English Learner students. It was surprising for me to walk into classes at the beginning of both fall and spring mesters at WHS and find very few Black youth enrolled. This surprise turned to anger when I learned that Black youth were

completely absent from the magnet program that I observed.

Alim (2005b) asserts that often, the messages embedded in Black speakers' utterances become lost during intercultural interactions because Black utterances are “‘still interpreted by some’ through the ideological lens of Black inferiority” (p. 181). The ideological lens’ he further argues is what constitutes linguistic supremacy, an ideology that privileges dominant ways of speaking while position the language of non-dominant youth as indexes of intellectual inferiority.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, studies that focus on the language practices of Black youth often tend to only focus on varieties of Black Language that are considered non-standard when compared to standard varieties of English, or are socially constructed as stigmatized in “‘public spaces” (Alim, 2005b). In approaching the language practices of Black youth at WHS, this section attempts to widen our understanding of Black youth language practices by exploring language shifts that Black youth engage in that display their ability to shift into languages considered both “‘standard” or academic and ‘non-standard’ or informal.

Across the four classes I observed, Ms. Luz’ classes had the most Black youth enrolled. Marylou was a student in Ms. Luz’ classroom, one of four Black female students in her class. During the time in which I observed Marylou’s class, she was fairly vocal, speaking what came to her mind both during official and unofficial classroom interactions. She made her disagreements with Ms. Luz and other students well known in the class which led to Ms. Luz’ to carefully navigate her relationship with Marylou. Despite being read as a “‘trouble maker” by Ms. Luz, Marylou *often* contributed meaningful points to classroom discussions, even when her comments were valid critiques of the activities being required of her and her peers. One example

of this occurred late in the fall semester when Ms. Luz asked her students to copy down notes they had previously copied. Marylou quickly recognized this and told Ms. Luz how the activity was a waste of time. Ms. Luz told Marylou that the notes were important so that she should copy them down again, to which Marylou responded, ‘Then make copies for us.’

While Ms. Luz regarded Marylou as disinterested in her learning, and someone whose behavior she needed monitor, Marylou regarded her English class as one of her favorite. My own interactions with Marylou began during my initial visit to her English class. Marylou asked me to read a role in the whole class read aloud of *Julius Caesar* as I sat in the back of the classroom simply observing the youth. Marylou was the first student to bring me into the official classroom space, prior to Ms. Luz even introducing me to her class. Throughout the reading of *Julius Caesar* Ms. Luz reiterated to her students how “lucky” there were because she chose to have them read the “modern” version of the play since the original play was written in a language that was “too hard” for them to understand. Here, instead of making the original language of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* central to the learning activity, Ms. Luz decided that a “modern” version of the play is appropriate for her students.

After reading an Act from the play Ms. Luz, asked her students a series of known answer questions following an IRE participation framework. In the following sequence Marylou answered Ms. Luz’ question first in the unofficial classroom space where she engaged in counterscript and later in the official classroom space where her utterances were sanctioned as part of the official classroom script. It is in the shift between these spaces that Marylou’s expansive linguistic repertoire is highlighted. This section also provides evidence that Marylou, like other Black youth at WHS fluidly move through their transcultural settings. We begin with Ms. Luz asking students if Brutus is a hero or a killer for his conspiracy against Caesar.

Transcript 4.3

01 Ms. Luz: Brutus kills his best friend Caesar
02 For the good of Rome
03 The reason why Brutus participates
04 In the assassination is because
05 He thinks that's the best thing
06 For the people of Rome, right?
07 So, the question is
08 Does that make him a hero
09 Or does that make him a killer
10 A murderer
11 Marylou: ((her head turns to her classmate))
12 He a mutha' fuckin' murderer cuzz::
13 (21.0 seconds)

While Ms. Luz' asked the entire class if they believed Brutus was a hero or a murderer, Marylou, took up this question in the unofficial space of the classroom as she engaged in counterscript (Gutiérrez et al., 1995) with her classmate, a Black male youth. In line 12, Marylou turned to her tablemate and told him "he a mutha' fuckin' murderer cuzz::" strongly expressing her belief Brutus unfairly murdered Caesar. She uttered this statement in a language she would later call "Black slang" or ghetto talk. The use of "mutha' fuckin'" as an adjective here heightens the degree to which she believed Brutus was a murderer rather than a hero. After uttering this, Ms. Luz' attention and gaze shifted to Marylou who continued speaking to her tablemate.

Twenty one seconds later, and after two students shared their opinions in the official

classroom space that Brutus was in fact a murderer, Ms. Luz engaged Marylou in the following interaction:

- 14 Ms. Luz: Marylou, what do *you* think?
- 15 Marylou: *he* a murderer.
- 16 Ms. Luz: why?
- 17 Marylou: *because* he traded
- 18 on his *best* friend
- 19 Ms. Luz: he be:*trayed* his best friend
- 20 Marylou: because of what somebody *told* him
- 21 Ms. Luz: Based on wha-Cassius told him

Ms. Luz called on Marylou in line 14 to ask her “what do you think.” In the proceeding lines (15-20) Marylou answered Ms. Luz’ questions, and in doing so, she style shifted into a standard variety of Black Language (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Marylou responded to Ms. Luz stating, “he a murderer...because he traded on his best friend...because of what somebody told him” in lines 16-20. Interestingly, while Marylou responded to Ms. Luz’ question, “what do you think?” we see in lines 19 and 21 that Ms. Luz revoices Marylou’s statements in ways that attempt to repair the “non-standard” language practices heard in the official classroom space (an analysis I will engage in chapter 5).

What I would like to highlight is how Marylou shifted from talking to her peer to her teacher in the official classroom space. Marylou answered the question posed by Ms. Luz effectively in both these spaces. However, Marylou’s linguistic dexterity is question in this interaction as the teacher consistently attempts to “correct” her utterances. This interaction, could have led to a larger discussion about language explicitly if Ms. Luz brought Marylou’s

statement into the official space of the classroom. However, this interaction presents a missed opportunity for a third space (Gutiérrez et al., 1999), and most importantly missed attempt to build on the local language practices of the Tajuata community.

A few days after the interaction above, Marylou agreed to participate in a semi-formal interview. I asked her to bring a friend, Maritza along so that she might feel more comfortable speaking with me. From Ms. Luz' class, we walked to the WHS library and took up a table in the large regular space that was mostly empty. During our conversation, I described to Marylou and Maritza what I had been noticing in their class, how I was interested in the ways they and their peers talked to one another, particularly in the languages they used to speak to one another. Immediately Marylou and Maritza looked at one another and giggled, later in the interview revealing how they thought I was weird for being interested in language.

As our conversation continued, I asked Marylou if I could read her a transcript based on what she had said in class the previous week. Laughing again, she agreed and stared at Maritza. I explained to her again, as I did during my first visit to her class, that I recorded all classroom observations, and that I was interested in knowing what she had to say about her discussion about Brutus the previous week. I slowly read the transcript to Marylou and Maritza, and they burst into laughter as I read line 12 aloud "he a mutha fucken murderer cuzz." I explained to her how 21.0 seconds had elapsed until Ms. Luz asked for her thoughts. My re-reading of Marylou's statement seemed to embarrassed her, and she placed her head on Maritza's shoulder as we all laughed in unison. When she regained her composure, she looked at the transcript and said the following:

Transcript 4.4 – I better watch what I say

01 Marylou: I better watch what I say (sec)((stares at Echo Pen))

02 I mean its~a, its~a time and place for everything
03 you gotta learn how when you talk to certain people
04 you have to talk right (sec)
05 you only talk what~do~you~call~it
06 Black slang when you talking to your friends

In this statement, Marylou demonstrated her understanding that she used a language that some individuals deem inappropriate in classrooms, or in front of teachers or other adults. This is evident by cues such as her laughter, and possible embarrassment. In line 1 she stated, “I better watch what I say” suggesting her awareness that her choice of words may not be typically sanctioned in schools. It is also important to add that Marylou was looking at my pen when she said this, making eye contact with the audio recording device that captured her words. After a couple of seconds, she added, “I mean its~a, its~a time and place for everything” recognizing how context and an interlocutor can influence language choice. In line 3 and 4 Marylou added that depending on her interlocutor, however, you may have to change or shift the way you speak, “you gotta learn how when you talk to certain people you have to talk right.” She attributes her use of “Black slang” to moments when “you talking to your friends.”

Marylou’s response to my reading of her transcript indicated her ability to engage in a metalinguistic reflection of her language use. On the surface, she began to articulate her reasons for using a certain language, “Black slang” with her friends because this was the language appropriate for communicative interactions with her peers. In her reflection, she believed that this language was often peppered with expletives. She was also keenly aware that in official

classroom talk, when asked by a teacher to speak to the entire class, that “you have to talk right,” using the sanctioned socially accepted language of the classroom.

Using a language ideological lens, Marylou’s statement also indexes a standard language ideology (Lippi-Green, 1997; L. Milroy, 2001) that was prevalent in Ms. Luz’ classroom through my study, and in the larger WHS environment. Standard language ideologies are often circulated in schools to socialize students into an imagined belief that only standard varieties of English are acceptable. This ideology often pits standard varieties of English against other languages, especially marginalized languages spoken by non-dominant groups. Marylou’s supports this ideology in her statement that spaces, like classrooms in front of teachers for example, “you have to talk right.” Marylou points to her understanding that there is a “right” way to speak.

Several language scholars contend that schools and classrooms are premier sites for research on language since all instruction is mediated through language. Thus, research on At WHS, and similar schools throughout the country, it becomes important then, to ask, what does it mean for Black and Latina/o youth to engage in communicative interactions where they are sounding Black or Latina/o? At WHS however, not only did sounding Black have mixed implications; the youth I observed in ELA classrooms, in smaller writing groups, during weekend college application workshops and during school-wide activities made clear that at WHS you can also sound ESL, *paisa*, smart, or simply ghetto, all of which indexed specific racial and ethnic identities and membership.

Discussion

Sounding Black was common for many youth at WHS. Black Language was a prominent feature in both the language practices of Black and Latina/o youth in their everyday transcultural communicative activities, moving across racial/ethnic boundaries, similar to the youth in Paris’

(2011) study. While sounding Black was generally tolerated and expected by Black youth, the fact that Latina/o youth were *sounding* Black was often met with criticism on behalf of faculty at WHS. On one occasion, Ms. Mary, an ESL teacher whose department I was once a part of as a teacher, walked up to me, greeted me with a hug and asked what I was doing on campus. When I explained that I was interested in documenting the shared language practices of Black and Latina/o youth, she exclaimed how wonderful my study was, adding, ‘maybe you can help us figure out how to stop ESL students from saying axing.’ Ms. Mary’s opinion that Black Language was corrupting ESL students’ English language development was an opinion shared by a handful of teachers during informal comments regarding my research. While I did not set out to capture the language ideologies of WHS teachers, Ms. Mary’s comment is a reminder of the greater need for practitioners and researchers to expand their notions of what counts as language. Ms. Mary was not happy that her Latina/o ESL students who were recent immigrants spoke English with features of Black Language. A Latina/o ESL students saying, “axing” instead of the more acceptable “asking” (according to Ms. Mary) was simply not acceptable.

In this chapter, I have made visible the rich linguistic practices of Black and Latina/o youth who are participating in transcultural communicative interactions at WHS. While I am making the claim, with the backing of several sociolinguistic and sociocultural language and literacy scholars, that these youth are participating in complex and systematic linguistic exchanges, our job is still to work with teachers like Ms. Lyz, Mr. Esperanza and Ms. Lyn, teachers who were committed to serving their students, with a more nuanced understanding of their student’s language practices. We must also work with teachers like Ms. Mary rather than straying from them to show her how her ESL students who uttered ‘axing’ instead of ‘asking’ were participating in *expanding* their linguistic repertoire, adding to it the sociolinguistic features

that are important for youth attending WHS and living in the Tajuata neighborhood? How do we get teachers like Ms. Mary to participate in elevating the everyday language practices of *any* WHS youth, leveraging or leveling those resources to provide an additive approach to “standard” or “academic” English language development? Entering WHS for this research endeavor, I was quick to over romanticize the idea that all Latina/o youth were being socialized into Black Language features, yet I was jolted out of this thinking by observing and hearing Latina/o youths’ expansive linguistic resources, some of which included features of Black Language, and other who did not, some which included regional and local varieties of Spanish, and others who did not, and some of whom were flexible in deploying a range of languages, and some who did not.

CHAPTER 5

From Ingles Macheteado to Ghetto English: Speaking right, sounding normal and the language ideologies of Black and Latina/o Urban Youth

“*Ingles macheteado, es el que hablo yo*”-Yesenia, Latina WHS Senior

“When I make fun of them I be talking to them like Salvadorian”- Diego, Latino WHS Senior

“I use my home language a lot!” – Jerome, Black WHS Sophomore

“DCM: So would you say you speak Black English

O: nah actually like formal”—Interview with Omar, Latino WHS Sophomore in Magnet

Yesenia, Diego, Jerome, and Omar represent the diverse Black and Latina/o youth voices at Willow High School. Their words provide a glimpse of the various ways WHS youth describe the languages that mediate their everyday communicative interactions. Yesenia, a Latina youth declared *ingles macheteado* the type of English she spoke, English sliced into tiny pieces by a machete knife, roughly slicing through the harsh tin-like words she pronounced. Diego laughed telling me how much he enjoyed “clowning” or making fun of his Latina/o peers who did not speak Spanish. He called them names like *pasmados* or *dundos*¹⁷ in what he casually and confidently called “Salvadorian.” Diego’s utterances, like those of Latina/o youth presented in the previous chapter, displayed features of Black Language, specifically the use of the habitual ‘be.’ Jerome, had a serious look on his face when he stated, “it’s like the habitat we’re used to” suggesting that everyone in *his* habitat is likely to speak like him, whose home language is often called “ghetto slang” a language he attributed to growing up in Tajuata, a language you will

¹⁷ Diego explained that calling someone a *pasmada(o)* translates into a diminutive form of “silly dummy.” *Dundos* has a similar meaning, and is often the response to someone being called a *pasmada(o)*. For example, “Hey *pasmada(o)!*” would be responded to with, “What’s up *dunda(o)!*”

speak whether you are Black or Latina/o. And finally, we have Omar, who firmly conveys the message that he only speaks “formal” English in his everyday interactions, despite his frequent Spanish English code-switching and Black language features.

The WHS youth voices above are snippets from interviews I was privileged to conduct with youth during my yearlong ethnographic study. These statements speak to the beliefs these youth have about their own languages. In declaring that they speak, *ingles macheteado*, Salvadorian Spanish, their home language, or formal, these youth are positioning their languages against what is viewed as “talking right” or “proper.” In these statements, these youth indexed their understanding and beliefs about their language practices, that is, their language ideologies. In her important work documenting the language and literacy practices of Latina mothers along the Arizona borderlands, Norma Gonzalez’ (2001) argues:

Using the analytical lens of language ideologies rather than culture in the borderlands helps us to connect with the multilayered contested and contesting meanings that connect ideologies to language use. It also moves us away from ideas of culture that have reified cultural traits as evenly distributed within any population. By focusing on language ideologies, we can fracture the “one language, one culture” isomorphism of Spanish-speaking populations, as we become aware of, for instance, the derogation of Chicano Spanish by native Spanish speakers (p. 178).

Here, Gonzalez was considering the varying ideologies through which Mexican mothers were socializing their children in her study, ideologies that she argued disrupted the notion that *all* Latinas/os or *Mexicanas/os* have *one* language to communicate meaning and in effect *one* culture. Through the analytic lens of language ideologies, I will render the range of beliefs and

ideas that Black and Latina/o WHS youth have about their own language practices, those of others, and the sanctioned language of the ELA/schooling context.

Gonzalez sought to understand the ideologies of language that caused for “the derogation of Chicano Spanish by native Spanish speakers,” this chapter seeks to explore the diverse language ideologies of WHS youth, their alignment with or resistance to dominant language practices, in addition to how the everyday transcultural communicative practices of WHS youth are taken up in the ELA context. A focus on language ideologies will also provide an understanding of how instruction in ELA contexts for non-dominant groups must move beyond a *one underachieving group, one standardized curriculum* approach that has gained currency in U.S. schools in attempts to “remediate” youth without re-mediating the learning ecologies in which non-dominant youth are expected to learn (Gutiérrez et al., 2009)

Woven throughout this chapter are accounts of *how* the linguistic dexterity of Black and Latina/o WHS youth was either constrained or expanded when taken up in official classroom interactions by their teachers. While this study looks at youth and their language practices as well as their complex ideologies of language teacher’s voices, their actions and discursive moves mediated the ways in which WHS youth understood the value and role of their language practices in their classroom and perhaps beyond. Examining the discourse moves that mediate language ideologies in classrooms is important for understanding the formation of complex language ideologies in schooling contexts. The questions that guide this chapter are:

1. What are the ranges of ways that youth expand or constrict their linguistic repertoires?
2. What language ideologies are explicitly and implicitly indexed through Black and Latina/o youths’ communicative activities?

In this chapter I will interrogate the language ideologies of the youth themselves. I will focus in particular on how both resistance and alignment to standard language ideologies circulated among youth themselves, and in teachers' take-up of their utterances in official classroom interactions.

The practice of repair: Sounding right in the ELA classroom

In a study of classroom discourse in EL classrooms Razfar (2003, 2005) found that the most pervasive practice indexing language ideologies was that of repair (p. 406), the discursive act of an individual correcting or "repairing" their own utterances (self repair), or that of others (other repair) (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). In his study Razfar demonstrates how teachers use "other repair" to hold students accountable to dominant language practices. Drawing on both Conversational Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, Razfar explains how power dynamics are embedded in "other repair" practices, where an individual with more power or authority in a conversation may impose dominant or standard language practices onto an individual that is viewed as the subordinate or a speaker of a language that is marked because it does not conform to standard language practices (Farr & Song, 2011; Razfar, 2005). Razfar suggests:

Whether teachers, doctors, emergency dispatchers, judges, or native speakers for that matter (i.e. when "non-native" speakers are repaired or initiate repair of others), these practices are necessarily enveloped within the socially constructed epistemic authorities and powers assumed by the speakers who initiate repairs of others. Thus, the social asymmetry and issues of authority inscribed in the practice of repair makes it fertile ground for analyzing language practices from an

ideological (LI) perspective. This is particularly salient in instructional contexts, classroom discourse, and especially second language instruction (p. 407).

Analysis of teachers' discursive moves when in engaging in repairing the utterances of their students can provide useful data for investigating the Language Ideologies that circulate in the ELA learning ecologies at WHS. As reported in Chapter 3, throughout this study, the language ideologies of WHS youth and their teachers were most salient via instances of repair. Repair practices emerged as an important practice for Ms. Luz, more than other teachers in this study. Ms. Luz regularly used repair practices as a discursive tool to "correct" or fix the "non-standard" language practices of her students.

Repairing the sounds of Black Language. I return to the sequence introduced in Chapter 4 where Lorenzo's code-switching and styleshifting practices were highlighted, evidence of his expansive linguistic repertoire and linguistic dexterity which he deployed in his transcultural classroom context. In this section, I will shift my attention to the interaction between Troy and David, both Black male students, and Ms. Luz. As a reminder, Ms. Luz has asked her students to decide whether the characters listed on a transparency film and projected onto a wall were pro- or anti-Caesar. This sequence began when Ms. Luz and her students completed the entire list of characters and returned to discuss Portia's involvement in Caesar's assassination. Since the character of Portia was more complex than that of other characters whose roles in Caesar's assassination were clearer, Ms. Luz decided to leave discussion about Portia to the end of the activity. It is during this interaction that Troy and David asked clarifying questions and commented on Ms. Luz's statements and questions. While I argued in the previous chapter that WHS youth deployed a range of languages to make meaning, here, it is the Black

Language features of Troy and David that undergo a process of being “corrected,” via Ms. Luz’ teacher-student repair event.

This following sequence began as Ms. Luz diverted her student’s attention back to a discussion about Portia.

Transcript 5.1

- 01 Ms. Luz: Now lets go back to Portia.= ((to class))
02 Portia’s tricky. Okay?
03 Troy: Where she- where Ø she from ((to Ms. Luz))
04 Lorenzo: Con permiso. ((to Ms. Luz))
05 Can you push it up[miss?
06 Ms. Luz: [she’s Brutus’ *wife* ((to Troy))

In line 03, Troy asked Ms. Luz a clarifying question “Where she- where Ø she from,” attempting to understand or remember who Portia is and where she is from in relation to the text, *Julius Caesar*. Throughout my observations and audio recordings, there were many examples where youth could have been repaired, however, not every possible repair was taken up. For example, Ms. Luz did not repair or revoice Troy’s question, “Where she- where Ø she from?” which featured a zero copula, or the absence of “is” or “are,” in dominant varieties of English such as “where is she from?” Instead, Ms. Luz answered Troy’s question in line 06 with “she’s Brutus’ wife” without bringing attention to his Black Language feature.

Troy continued:

- 07 Troy: she~Ø~a~**pro**?
08 Lorenzo: (2.0 sec) pa-**rriba**:: ((to Ms. Luz))
09 Dave: yeah but she was- she was [(xxx)

- 10 Troy: [she don't even know wassup
- 11 Lorenzo: [Hey miss: ((to Ms. Luz)
- 12 Ms. Luz: [She doesn't know what's going on
- 13 but [she's worried about her father right? ((to class))
- 14 Troy: [((stands up blocking more of Lorenzo's view))

In line 07, after hearing that Portia was Brutus' wife, Troy declared, “she~Ø~a~**pro**?” to which Dave replied in line 09, “yeah but she was- she was (xxx),” attempting to explain that her marriage to Brutus did not immediately implicate her as a “pro” Caesar character. Again, Ms. Luz did not repair Troy whose utterance, “she~Ø~a~**pro**?” again featured a zero copula. In line 10, Troy's utterance overlapped with Dave's final utterance. He calmly but rapidly and confidently stated, “she don't even know wassup.” Here, Troy's utterance featured the omission of the third-person singular present tense *s*, common in Black Language when he stated, “she don't” as opposed to the dominant English inclusion of *-s* or *-es* as in “she doesn't” (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Troy also uttered the popular word “wassup” to stand in for “what is up” or “what is going on.” The meaning behind Troy's utterance is clear, “Portia does not even know what is going on.” Ms. Luz, however, revoiced¹⁸ Troy's statement in lines 12-13, and stated, “She doesn't know what's going on.”

Ms. Luz revoiced Troy's utterance bringing attention to the form of his statement. In revoicing, she engaged in what Jefferson (1987) called an embedded correction (or repair), a form of “other repair” where ongoing conversation does not stop to attend to the “correction.” Instead, the repair is embedded in the natural flow of conversation, and in this case, within the

¹⁸ Revoicing has been defined as “the reuttering of another person's speech through repetition, expansion, rephrasing, and reporting” (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993).

revoicing practices controlled by Ms. Luz. This type of participation framework, however, did not provide Troy the ability to align himself with her “correction” of his phrase, or to agree or disagree with her “translation.” Ms. Luz quickly moved into her next utterance “but she’s worried about her father right?” with a rising intonation at the end of “right” which only provided a space for Troy, David and all her students to either show or not show alignment with this statement. Troy or Dave did not contribute any further by speaking on the topic, rather they nodded their heads along with other students in the class, displaying their alignment or agreement with Ms. Luz’ final statement potentially accommodating to the procedural display expected of them (Bloome, Puro, & Theodorou, 1989), or the expected ways of responding in classroom routines.

An additional example of Ms. Luz’ repair of Black Language was also evident in the interaction between Ms. Luz and Marylou in chapter 4. The following sequence occurred after Ms. Luz asked several students to consider whether Brutus was a hero or a murderer. Marylou was called on after Ms. Luz’ gaze turned to Marylou after she overheard her use an expletive in speaking to her peer seated directly next to her. Twenty-three seconds later, Ms. Luz called on Marylou.

Transcript 5.2

- 01 Ms. Luz: Marylou, what do you think?
- 02 Marylou: **he** Ø a murderer.
- 03 Ms. Luz: why?
- 04 Marylou: **because** he traded
- 05 on his **best** friend
- 06 Ms. Luz: he be:**trayed** his best friend

07 Marylou: because of what somebody **told** him

08 Ms. Luz: Based on wha-Cassius told him

Ms. Luz asked Marylou in line 01 "...what do you think?" Marylou's response "**he** Ø a murderer" in line 02 did not get revoiced or repaired by Ms. Luz, even with the presence of a zero copula. In response to Ms. Luz' question "why," Marylou responded in line 04-05, "**because** he traded on his **best** friend." Here, Marylou's utterance functions to share her understanding that Brutus has "traded on his best friend," shifting his allegiance when he conspired against Caesar and ultimately murdered him. Ms. Luz followed Marylou's statement by revoicing her utterance in line 06, "he be:**trayed** his best friend" with emphasis on the word "be:**trayed**," elongating the first syllable "be:" and emphasizing and rising her pitch in the second syllable "**trayed**." In doing so, Ms. Luz replaced Marylou's use of the phrase "traded on" with "betrayed" a word that may, from Ms. Luz' perspective, be a more appropriate. The revoicing of Marylou's utterances *may* have worked to position her words as a contribution to the classroom discussion (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993), yet the embedded repair in Ms. Luz' revoicing also served to "correct" a non-standard form of saying "betrayed." This repair event was therefore one of many that indexed and circulated standard language ideologies in the class. Black and Latina/o youths' ways with words were often reconfigured or translated to more closely represent the ways with words of dominant groups. Ms. Luz did this once again when Marylou followed up in line 07 "because of what somebody **told** him" which was revoiced, an in effect repaired into "because of wha- Cassius told him" in line 08. In the final revoicing in this sequence, Ms. Luz provided Marylou (and the rest of the class) with background information from the actual textbook, in this case, the name "Cassius" who encouraged Brutus' actions.

While I am interrogating the previous sequences for the imbedded correction or repair practices that Ms. Luz' initiated in revoicing Troy's and Marylou's utterance, it is important to note that "revoicing" is considered an effective teaching strategy. In their study of revoicing practices among teachers, O'Connor and Michaels (1993) found that teacher revoicing served three functions. These were, 1) to assist students in staking a position, 2) to credit student voice, and 3) to "scaffold and recast problem-solution strategies of non-native-language students" (p. 318). In my own experience as a teacher education student, an ELA and ESL teacher and university methods instructor, I have often 'revoiced' students' utterances for the three purposes outlined above. In fact, researchers and practitioners consider "revoicing" a "best practice" to encourage students, especially non-dominant students, to participate in classroom discussions in the language arts (Dyson, 2002) science (K. M. Collins, Palinscar, & Magnusson, 2008), and mathematics (Moschkovich, 1999) instruction. Revoicing as a strategy is also believed to counter the IRF (Initiation-Response-Feedback [or sometimes "E" for evaluation]) sequence prevalent in classrooms (Mehan, 1979). Through revoicing, the "feedback" or evaluation part of the sequence is replaced with a teacher's retelling of a students' utterance giving student's a place in the official classroom space (Herbel-Eisenmann, Drake, & Cirillo, 2009).

Ms. Luz did use revoicing for the purposes outlined above throughout my observations. However, she frequently revoiced (with embedded repairs) more frequently when Black youth used Black Language practices in official classroom spaces. In both of her classes, it was Black youth who were repaired more than their Latina/o counterparts. While revoicing occurred with Latina/o students, it was mostly done at the phonetic level when they were reading publicly.

While few studies have attended to teacher revoicing where "other repair" practices are embedded, my observations and audio recordings at WHS captured teachers using this strategy

to align students' voices to standard language practices. I did not have an opportunity to interview Troy to ask for his reflection on the matter. However, in interviews with Black youth, it was interesting how each youth I spoke to remembered specific experiences when a teacher "corrected" their speech. When I asked Chris, a Black youth in Ms. Luz' first semester English class (and Troy's peer in the class), if he had ever been corrected by a teacher in front of class he quickly confirmed having this experience and when I asked for an example, he stated:

Transcript 5.3

01 Chris: Like, When I say
02 We was goin to the store
03 and and they be like
04 We were going to the store

During this interview Chris shared both his memory of being repaired, in addition to his understanding of the "correct" or more "appropriate" way, according to schooling demands, of communicating, "we was goin to the store." His reflection also captured his ability to style shift from Black Language to a dominant variety of English. Chris also revealed that he did not mind being "corrected" because "it helps me get my English better" even though he displayed his ability to "shift" into this so called "better" English.

When I asked Marylou about her experiences being corrected, she responded "they (teachers) just uhh was telling me how to talk and stuff...it's whatever to me, like kids gonna be kids" suggesting that being corrected simply didn't phase her since "kids gonna be kids" and they will speak as they please. Jerome's reaction to this question pointed to his belief that it was not necessary to be corrected or that teachers demand the he speak in what he called "school" language. "Well I tell them like, cause they see I could take English tests and I take 'em

perfect... there's no point it's just for test.” Jerome believed that speaking “school” language was not important since he only found it useful to “school” language during exams and assessments. Interviews with youth, coupled with moment-to-moment analysis of classroom discourse practice revealed how standard language ideologies circulate in classrooms, how *who* is speaking and *how* they speak is sometimes more important for teachers than the message they are communicating. Yet, for the youth at WHS, they did not immediately subscribe to moments when their language practices were being “corrected,” or repaired in official classroom contexts. In the following section, I provide a look at how youth negotiate and resist standard language ideologies in official classroom spaces.

Youth Negotiation of Standard Language Ideologies

During Ms. Luz’ second semester English class male youth were the majority of students enrolled, to the point where the five female youth in the class were rarely heard speaking. The gender imbalance created a learning ecology where the majority of voices heard in the official space of the classroom was that of Black and Latina/o male youth, female voices were severely absent. Throughout my visits the majority of students called on to answer and comment on a topic by Ms. Luz were Black and Latina/o male youth. While the female youth in the class sat near each other, and worked close to each other towards the front of the classroom, they were neither bringing too much attention to themselves or demanding attention from Ms. Luz. On very few occasions the female youth were asked to quiet down, to read aloud in class, to answer a question or simply asked a logistical question. Given this, there were also very few moments where the female youth raised their own hands to read aloud, answer a question, or to interact with the male youth in the class.

Because of this gender imbalance my focal participants in this class were all Black and Latino male youth. While this gender imbalance did not render fruitful relationships with female youth (compared to those developed with Marylou, Yesenia, Maritza and female youth in other classes), I recognize this as a limitation of the data collected in Ms. Luz' second semester course. However, the male voices represented in this data, I argue, are those of Black and Latino male youth too often dismissed from the official classroom script, therefore highlighting these voices is significant to understanding the discourse practices of Black and Latina/o youth in general, and the language ideologies that are explicitly and implicitly communicated through their language practices.

In Ms. Luz' and Ms. Lyn's class, talk about testing was prominent. Since my early visits, both teachers spoke to their students about test scores, what scores WHS needed overall to meet state and federal benchmarks, and how everyday classroom activities were directly related to the several exams the youth would be taking. Through my observations, youth in the 10th grade classes rarely talked about exams amongst each other, yet they often listened intently when talk about testing came up. This was particularly evident in their classes because these youth would have their first opportunity to take the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Talk about testing did occur in Mr. Esperanza's class, particularly about seniors who were waiting for the results, or from those who had one last chance to pass one or both sections of the exam before their graduation.

As the testing season began, between March and May, talk about testing was heightened in the tenth grade classes, and "Do Now" activities in Ms. Luz' class were consistently taken from California state released test questions, or from resource books made specifically for students to practice their test taking skills on the CAHSEE or California Standards Tests (CSTs).

Ms. Luz would announce, “on the test, sometimes you’ll have to make an educated guess,” “on the CAHSEE you only have to get a little more than half the questions correct,¹⁹” “don’t become like some seniors who still haven’t passed the CAHSEE.” The proceeding sequence is of interest given the constant attention to testing in Ms. Luz’ class. On the very next day after a series of CST exams, students returned to their “regular” schedules after two entire weeks of “special” schedules they were required to report to special “testing” rooms. For the tenth grade students in Ms. Luz’ class, this meant reporting to the large building simply called the “Boys Gym,” also known as the basketball court where WHS’s basketball teams played their games. Every tenth grade student in the school would be taking CST exams in the presence of several hundred peers, a fact that Miguel and Christian, both Latino male youth in Ms. Luz’ class complained about to a district director about when she visited students in the WHS library days prior to exams.

Talk about testing across the US has grown since the implementation of No Child Left Behind, where schools and districts are held accountable for meeting state and federal benchmarks, or risk penalties. This high stakes environment has created, what some researchers have called the “narrowing” of the curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gutiérrez et al., 2009; Menken, 2008) where teaching decontextualized rote activities is normalized as best practices for teaching and learning. Ms. Luz’ talk about testing therefore was a reflection of the pressures teachers may feel from their administrators to raise students scores, an articulation of the larger testing policies being made manifest in her classroom.

Approximately 20 minutes into class, Miguel made his frustration with Ms. Luz very clear since she had not asked about their testing experiences in the previous days. In the following sequence Miguel makes a discursive move to enter the official space of the classroom

¹⁹ Passing the California High School Exit Exam requires two passing scores on a Mathematics and English section of the exam. Students must receive higher than 55% on the Mathematics portion, and more than 60% on the English language arts portion of the exam that includes a writing evaluation.

to “call out” Ms. Luz for not asking. This sequence begins with Ms. Luz transitioning from a “Do Now” activity to their next activity.

Transcript 5.4

01 Luz: Alright, so (1.0) here's what~we're~gonna do.

02 We're gonna quickly or briefly re:view::

03 The three ter:ms

04 We talked about

05 And discussed on:: Monday.

06 (sec)

07 I didn't see you guys yesterday

08 Cause yesterday was CST

09 It was the last CST test okay

10 Miguel: ((*Staring intently at Ms. Luz*)) It went well

11 Thank you for asking

12 Luz: Thank you:: for: us:ing the word well::

13 [good job

14 Enrique: [*That* shit was: *tigh::t*

15 Class: ((laughter throughout class))

16 Luz: yeah, I- I- I prefer it went well

17 (sec)

18 that was your history test right

In lines 07-09 we hear Ms. Luz talking about how she did not see her students yesterday since they were completing their CST exams. Immediately after, in lines 10-11, Miguel entered the official space voicing his concern, “It went well, than you for asking.” Here Miguel brings up his concern, or “calls out” Ms. Luz. Perhaps she should have apologized for not asking sooner or explain to Miguel and the rest of her students that she was about to ask. I will add that Miguel sat at his desk with his two hands folded on top of his desk staring intently at Ms. Luz as he stated these words. While Miguel was usually a jokester, he was visibly upset and later told me that he was disappointed, but could explain.

Interestingly, instead of apologizing for the oversight, Ms. Luz focused on the form of Miguel’s statement, despite his use of what sounded like a dominant variety of English. In line 12 and 13 she responded, “Thank you:: for: us:ing the word well:: good job.” Here Ms. Luz highlighted Miguel’s use of “proper” language, specifically noting that he uttered the word “well,” correctly. She followed up with an evaluative statement, “good job.” Lines 12 and 13 by Ms. Luz indexed a language ideological stance that positioned her as an authority and/or monitor of language. In pointing out Miguel’s proper use of the word “well” she also indexed her belief that his utterance (and the properness of this utterance) countered his everyday communicative practices, suggesting that he did not always do a “good job” in speaking. We see here, that Ms. Luz did not apologize, but instead chose to focus on Miguel’s “proper” use of language. In doing so, she opened the participation framework for another student, Enrique, to provide an alternative way of saying that testing went well.

In line 14, Enrique overlapped with Ms. Luz and entered the official classroom space with, “*That* shit was: *tigh::t*.” Enrique’s words could be seen as an attempt to translate or rephrase Miguel’s statement that “it (testing) went well.” Enrique introduced a language variety

that many youth in Ms. Luz' class understood, witnessed by the alignment from other students who laughed. More powerfully, Enrique's statement, "*That* shit was: *tigh::t*" was potentially a comment in resistance to Ms. Luz' focus on Miguel's language choice rather than his larger statement. Here, I read Enrique's move as his resistance to the standard language ideologies that Ms. Luz and many other teachers circulate in classrooms. While I believe *all* youth would agree that they want to learn "good" or the "right" English, this sequence points to how youth *can* recognize when their ways with words are being monitored, even when they are using dominant varieties of English, as was the case with Miguel. Therefore, the moment Enrique stepped into this interaction with an alternative to Ms. Luz' "proper" way of using language can be treated as a rupture in the participant structure that was ongoing at the moment. This rupture demonstrated Enrique's ability to counter the larger standard ideology that was being circulated by Ms. Luz in that moment.

Youth rupturing standard language ideological discourse. In the following sequence, I will examine another *rupture* in classroom discourse where standard language ideologies are being circulated. I am drawing on data from Ms. Luz' second semester English 10A/B course, again, in the middle of the reading of *Julius Caesar*. On this day, she was reviewing the "Do Now" activity of the day where she was feting responses from the youth in her class about the relationship Julius Caesar had with Brutus. Specifically, she asked her students to reflect on and compare Caesar's reaction to both the individual wounds he received from the various men who participated in his assassination with the final wound he received from Brutus, his supposed best friend. While Ms. Luz spoke to the entire class, only a few of her students responded, and like many other classroom interactions during her second semester course, the male youth dominated the official classroom discussion space.

Below I introduce Enrique and William, two Latino youth who were raised in the Tajuata neighborhood since birth. Both these youth displayed a range of language practices, including the ability to shift into and out of dominant varieties of English. Enrique seemed fairly comfortable contributing to classroom discussions. His sarcasm in speaking to his peers and Ms. Luz were on display whenever he disagreed with a point made by anyone in class. William spoke a range of languages, and fluidly moved into and out of diverse English(es) and prominently deployed of Black Language features. In the following interaction, we get a glimpse of the discursive moves made by their teacher, Ms. Luz, when Enrique and Jorday attempted to bring language possibly understood as their “home,” “slang” or “ghetto language” to describe incidents that occurred in *Julius Caesar*, such as the scene when Caesar is stabbed. Specifically, Enrique and William speak to the universal theme of betrayal, or in Marylou’s words, the theme of “being traded on.”

This sequence began as Enrique and Ms. Luz were discussing *why* Caesar was shocked when he saw Brutus among the men who had conspired against him. Ms. Luz’ asked Enrique how we (the reader) can know that Caesar was shocked and saddened:

Transcript 5.5

- 01 Ms. Luz: How do we know this: Enrique?
 02 Enrique: Because he trusted [him
 03 Miguel: [cause he told ‘em
 04 Ms. Luz: shh:: (to Miguel). *Enrique?*
 05 *Thanks:* Miguel?

Again, as in earlier discussions, the participant framework followed an IRF sequence. In line 01, Ms. Luz asked Enrique “how do we know this: Enrique” (a known answer question) to which

Enrique replied, “Because he trusted him.” Enrique’s utterance was mostly complete when Miguel, another Latino male youth in the class chimed in, overlapping the end of Enrique’s statement in line 03 with “cause he told ‘em.” In line 04 Ms. Luz attempted to quiet Miguel for speaking out of turn, thus interrupting her feedback or evaluation to complete the sequence. Since Miguel was not called upon to participate in the official classroom space, even though both Enrique and Miguel are conveying the same message, or “answer” to her question, only Enrique’s response was sanctioned and therefore invited into the official classroom script. This was evident in line 04-05 where Ms. Luz deployed a “shh: *Enrique:: Thanks* Miguel?” Here Ms. Luz made clear to Miguel that he was talking out of turn, and sarcastically thanked Miguel, admonishing him for speaking out of turn. By not welcoming both Enrique and Miguel’s points into the official script in the classroom, Ms. Luz supported the notion that only students allowed into the space can contribute.

Enrique continued to support his initial notion that Caesar trusted Brutus and was therefore shocked by his actions.

- 06 Enrique: Because Caesar trusted-
- 07 Ms. Luz: Cesar trusted.
- 08 Enrique: Bruno- I- I mean Brutus-
- 09 Peers: ((laughter because Enrique said Bruno rather than Brutus))
- 10 Ms. Luz: Caesar trusted Bru:tus:: ((writing on transparency))

In line 06 Enrique picked up where he was cut off by Miguel and Ms. Luz, and stated “because Caesar trusted.” In line 07, midway through Enrique’s utterance, Ms. Luz began to revoice his statement, “Caesar trusted.” This revoicing, while potentially bringing Enrique’s opinion to the rest of the class, interrupted his complete comment similar to the way Miguel chimed in for

Enrique previously. As soon as Ms. Luz' revoicing was complete, Enrique continued in line 08 with "Bruno- I- I mean Brutus-" where once again, his utterance was revoiced by Ms. Luz. The revoicing that is apparent here resembles what Gutierrez and Stone (2002) called *hypermediation* in scaffolding practices. They identified moments in instruction where teachers provided their students with too much assistance, inhibiting students' ability to demonstrate competence or expertise on their own. This sequence is representative a moment where hypermediation occurred through revoicing practices. The consistent revoicing in this sequence could potentially stifle the ideas and contributions of youth as they were working through their thoughts before they spoke. Noting the turn taking for speaking above, Ms. Luz' revoicing led to Enrique taking three turns to respond to her known answer question. Revoicing then, in Ms. Luz' class, served to index standard language ideologies that she promoted in her instruction. Revoicing was a tool used to monitor students' voices, managing the linguistic form of their utterances. In the rest of this stretch of talk, it became evident that Ms. Luz did not revoice non-standard language practices, similar to the case of Troy and Dave. Ms. Luz was only revoiced the form of their messages.

Ms. Luz continued from her previous utterance where she revoiced Enrique's utterances by following up with additional information about the incidents in the play. The rest of this transcript demonstrates what happened when youth provided alternatives or translations of standard ways with words in this class:

- 11 Ms. Luz: And in fact when he's stabbed
12 By all these men: right.
13 He's jumped right.

- 14 William: He [wa-
15 Ms. Luz [he stabbed by all these men
16 Girls [shh::: ((to group of girls in class))
17 William: [*he* was *shanked*?
18 Ms. Luz: Alright so when he's *stabbed* by all these men

In line 13 of this sequence, Ms. Luz uttered the phrase “he’s jumped right” to describe the events leading up to of Caesar’s assassination. The word “jumped” referred to the act of an individual being physically assaulted by one or more people (this usually occurs with several individuals “jumping” or physically attacking one person). Here Ms. Luz invoked a phrase often uttered by youth. To be sure, in my fieldnotes and audio recorded data, I have captured moments when Diego talked about the process of being “*jumped* in” to a gang, and Chanel told me about her friend who was “*jumped* while walking home.” In line 14, William attempted to chime in with a statement with “he wa-” but he was quickly overtaken by Ms. Luz’ who continued with, “he was stabbed by all these men” a statement that was potentially a self repair of her previous statement. Consistent throughout the data, Ms. Luz’ often invoked self repair practices whenever she used phrases *she* may have considered “non-standard.” Her revoicing also provided additional information about the act of being stabbed, “he was stabbed by all these men.” Interestingly, in line 17 William quickly provided another way of saying this, “*he* was *shanked*?” William’s utterance had the potential of adding to the *communicative repertoire of the class*, that is, contributing to the languages honored in classrooms and in classroom discourse. However, William’s interpretation of the incident was *not* taken up into the official classroom script. Instead, Ms. Luz revoiced William’s addition to the discussion in line 18 with “alright so when he’s *stabbed* by all these men,” making a discursive move to revoice in a way that did not

acknowledge the word 'shanked' yet highlighted the word "**stabbed**" granting preference to the more standard way of stating this point.

Again, Ms. Luz continued presenting more information to her students

- 19 Ms. Luz: Isn't it a fact that he only reacts
20 To his best friend the last guy to stab him?
21 The rest- he's more in shock?
22 And just like trying to control his pain
23 Or bleeding or something.
24 But when his best friend **stabbed** him
25 What does he say to him?
26 Enrique: I'm from the projects?
27 Peers: ((*laughter*))
28 Ms. Luz: He does not say I'm from the projects **Enrique**?
29 students: ((*laughter*))

In this sequence, Ms. Luz spoke to the entire class, but here her gaze returned to Enrique once again. In line 25 she asked Enrique, "what does he say to him," and Enrique replied, "I'm from the projects" in line 26. Here Enrique created a rupture in the ongoing participation framework, by not replying "correctly" or "appropriately" to the known answer question posed by Ms. Luz. In fact, his response had the potential to detract the entire discussion as it caused laughter among his peers, but Ms. Luz was quick to take up his statement in line 28 where she uttered, "He does not say I'm from the projects Enrique." While Enrique's statement was not fully considered he did receive several laughs from his peers. These laughs could have been alignments to his comment but this argument cannot be supported simply by their laughter. However, I do believe

Ms. Luz missed an opportunity to connect the universal theme of betrayal to the lived experiences of the youth in her class.

Enrique's utterance "I'm from the projects" had several potential meanings. In this class specifically, references to the "projects" were often made, and it was known that some youth lived in the adjacent housing projects while other youth had experiences with the projects as they walked to and from school passing the projects on a daily basis. "Being" from the projects, or living near the projects indexed a whole set of beliefs for youth that I did not capture in this study. However, there were moments where youth expressed the complexities of being *from* the projects. Some youth believed that everyone should be scared of the potential danger of those living in or near the projects, while other youth saw the projects as a symbol of defiance against outsiders and solidarity with those you align yourself with. In addition, stories of betrayal from violence, family conflicts and peer misunderstanding were universal themes not limited to youth at WHS or urban neighborhoods. Ms. Luz herself shared a story about being betrayed by a family member. Enrique's response "I'm from the projects" indexed several possible experiences, lending his voice to Julius Caesar. Enrique's statement that Caesar's response would have been "I'm from the projects" points to a potential connection to his own lived experiences and the theme of betrayal in *Julius Caesar*. However, Enrique's potentially fruitful rupture of the participation framework did not lead to strong connections with the lives of youth mediated by their transcultural ways of communicating.

Inviting youth repertoires into the official script:

In the previous section I discussed missed opportunities to talk about language or to bring the language practices of youth into official classroom spaces in Ms. Luz' classroom. Next I will present a sequence from Mr. Esperanza's class where he does take up youths' language practices,

even if they are “transgressive” in nature. However, I will discuss how bringing the transcultural language practice of youth into the classroom did not translate into effective ways of utilizing youth language practices as a resource.

Despite his last name, Mr. Esperanza made it clear to students that he was a man, “a gringo” and not a Latino. He said this almost apologetically on his first day of class hoping students would not feel upset for not having a Latino teacher in front of them despite the “Latino” surname printed on their program cards. His name, he told his students, came from his great grandfather who was half Mexican. During my observations in Mr. Esperanza’s class, I noticed how he would often style shift himself, when he spoke to Black or Latina/o youth. The youth in Mr. Esperanza’s class grew accustomed to him asking “what does that mean” or hearing him “revoice” a phrase with a rising intonation as the end to signal to his students that he needed approval of pronunciation or an explanation of the meaning. And on some occasions Mr. Esperanza would engage in mock language practices attempting to mirror the language practices of his students. He would purposefully attempt to say something in Spanish or make his students laugh at him when he would say something like “fo sho” instead of “for sure.” The youth in his class laughed at Mr. Esperanza’s attempts, some becoming the more expert others in providing him with pronunciation cues or examples of how to use a word in context.

On one of my visits, Mr. Esperanza was explaining to his students their next essay topic, which was on racial profiling. Prior to giving students the essay prompt, he engaged them in a discussion of racial profiling and had them relate this topic to their own experiences, an experience many students reported experiencing, particularly the young men in the class. In discussing racial profiling, Raul, a Latino youth who had recently shared his experience being stopped by cops in Tajuata, revealed his opinion that cops will always look “at you” as if you are

going to do something wrong. In this discussion, Elias, another Latino youth described a specific move that the police would do in their cars if they saw someone “suspicious,” a characteristic, which youth believed, would characterize each Black and Brown student in their class.

In discussing racial profiling, Mr. Esperanza revoiced the phrase “bust a bitch” uttered by Elias to 1) understand what this meant from youth perspectives, and 2) to bring the language practices of his youth into the classroom.

Transcript 5.6

- 01 Raul: Nah, a’ m~just saying?
02 Like you know how
03 Well the cops see you walking down the street?
04 And then they already look at you
05 And they’re always gonna do something bad?
06 Esperanza: So so would you say its the the police?
07 Raul: They just racial profile **always**?
08 (xxx) like you’re gonna do something?
09 Elias: How you dress?
10 Raul: Yeah.
11 Esperanza: So police are judging you on how you look?
12 Students: [**Yeah**
13 Elias: [How you dress.
14 Esperanza: And then what do they do?
15 Raul: And if they find out you don't have nothing-
16 Elias: And if you ak like you have something

17 (xxx) They'll stop you.
18 They'll like they'll bust a bitch.
19 They like ((makes siren sound))
20 Esperanza: Bust a bitch?
21 Students: ((*laugh*))
22 Esperanza: What does that mean?
23 Take out a gun?
24 Students: No::
25 Raphael: Turn around.
26 Elias: U turn.
27 Cristina: A hard u turn.
28 Elias: U turn.

Initially Raul and Mr. Esperanza were going back and forth, making meaning behind what racial profiling means. While Raul was providing examples, Elias entered the official space in lines 13 and 16. In line 13 he only added, “How you dress” to describe how the police might racially profile you *if* you are wearing clothes they deem worthy of suspicion. But in line 16 he states more specifically “And if you ak like you have something (xxx), they'll stop you. They'll like they'll bust a bitch, they like.” Here Elias described a situation where police will “bust a bitch” if they think you potentially “have something,” perhaps look suspicious. After saying, “bust a bitch,” Mr. Esperanza revoiced this phrase, “bust a bitch...what does that mean? Take out a gun?” In between this utterance the youth in his class laughed perhaps because Mr. Esperanza uttered a phrase that would not typically come out of his mouth in front of his students. Several

youth responded to his question letting him know that “busting a bitch” was a “u turn” or a “hard U-turn” as described by one Latina youth, Christina.

While Mr. Esperanza brought in youth ways of speaking into his classroom, and unlike in Ms. Luz’ experience, made youth feel like potential experts in their knowledge, I argue that moments like this are simply not enough, nor are they representative of “honoring” or “respecting” youth language practices. Mr. Esperanza *did* bring in youth language practices to the official classroom discourse, and third space could have emerged. However, if we take a critical approach to this interaction, it would have been appropriate for Mr. Esperanza to discuss the ways in which a phrase like “bust a bitch” might be read by diverse audiences, particularly in public spaces. This discussion could have positioned youth as experts given that *all* students in the class reported having experienced racial profiling. There could have been a discussion of the ways in which police talked to the youth, and how they responded. This sequence was a ripe space for a discussion *about* language and how some languages *count* more than others, especially in moments where police or authorities figures are monitoring the moves, linguistic and physical of non-dominant groups.

Alignment to Standard Language Ideologies

The magnet kids. On paper, Ms. Lyn’s Honors English 10A/B was scheduled to enroll a student population that mirrored WHS’s demographics, approximately 80% Latina/o youth and 20% Black youth. Ms. Lyn also expected a class with both Black and Latina/o youth. When I made arrangements to observe her class she was happy that Black youth were enrolled in her honors class since they were often underrepresented in the overall magnet program at WHS. It became clear after a few days in her class that Black youth would not, and would not be enrolled

in her class. The only Black youth in Ms. Lyn's class during the semester was her student assistant, a Black male youth who was her former student.

In a school like WHS, where outsiders stereotypically glossed the campus as a "Black school," the absence of Black youth in a magnet class was problematic to Ms. Lyn, even if WHS had a Latina/o majority. However, the Latino magnet students in the class, who were enrolled in the magnet programs since elementary school, found it "normal" or "pretty usual" to have courses where Latina/o youth were the majority of the population represented. In an interview with one Latino male youth in the magnet class, Omar, I asked him what he thought about the absence of Black youth in his Honors English course.

Transcript 5.7

01 DM: From all the classes I'm observing I notice that there
02 Are no Black students in that class (Ms. Lyns' Honors
03 English 10A/B class). What do you think about that?
04 O: Like I don't know what to say. Like they- its like
05 Whatever. I don't know.
06 DM: You don't think its anything out of the ordinary?
07 O: No.
08 DM: There is a decreasing Black student [population
09 O: [I've been
10 used to dat. Like I was in magnet in middle school
11 and only like three Black kids the whole time so. ((shrugs shoulders))

Omar's response signaled his understanding that it was "ordinary" for Black youth *not* to be enrolled in the magnet program. In line 04 he begins "I don't know what to say. Like they- it's like whatever. I don't know." Omar began to utter "they" to refer to Black youth, positioning himself against "them," but he abruptly shifted to soften his message, "its like whatever. I don't know." I began to talk about a decreasing Black youth population at WHS when Omar interjected in line 09-11 stating, "I've been used to dat." He recalled his experience in the magnet program in middle school where only three Black youth were in the program. It was therefore nothing out of the ordinary for him to see no Black youth in his current magnet class.

Monitoring language: Peer-to-peer correction in the magnet classroom. Ms. Lyn's classroom was always bustling whether class was in session or during nutrition or lunch breaks. During lunch many students in Ms. Lyn's Honors English class filed into her classroom, tucked away in a deserted section of bungalows on the WHS campus. I often made my way to her class with students who walked across campus holding red plaid cardboard containers filled with their lunch. On some occasions, students simply ate their lunch seated among one of several pods, that had six desks joined together. Other students made their way to Ms. Lyn's class to conduct and attend "Magnet Club" meetings where they organized fundraisers, field trips, and other school activities. Mrs. Sally, the magnet counselor, who for years battled many budget cuts and threats to end the magnet program was the advisor for the magnet club, and sat in on these meetings, eating her own lunch, keeping her distance from the magnet youth. Mrs. Sally had over thirty years of experience at WHS, first as a teacher and for over twenty years as a counselor and later head of the Magnet Program at WHS. Whether students were simply eating their lunch and chatting, or hosting a magnet club meeting, Ms. Lyn typically sat behind her desk

during lunch periods, grading papers, quickly eating her own lunch, meeting with students or allowing students to take make-up exams or receive assistance on an essay.

Walking to Ms. Lyn's class *always* meant you had to dodge a small blue handball that zoomed back and forth, bouncing off the large auditorium wall that served as the official handball court and onto the open hands of the Latino youth who ran around attempting not to lose sight of the ball. The area right outside of her classroom was one of many handball courts that emerged over the 2010-2011 academic year, spaces where boundaries were set based on grade level, immigration status, and expertise in the game. Mostly Latino male youth played at the designated court outside of Ms. Lyn's classroom, with very few Latina youth hanging out on the outskirts of the makeshift courts²⁰. As I made sweeping observations of this area, WHS seemed to be a school with a 100% Latina/o population since Black youth did not play handball at this court (or any other court for that matter), and when I walked past the handball courts and into Ms. Lyn's classroom, all of the students in Ms. Lyn's classroom were Latina/o.

Interestingly the majority of the youth in this classroom were born and raised in Tajuata and attended many of the schools that their peers across the WHS attended, with the exception of a few students who were previously in the ESL program in elementary and middle school. Across the board, students in Ms. Lyn's class and in the other classes I observed often reminisced about the seemingly unimaginable experiences they had at their middle school, a school the youth in this class believed was unorganized, and in their own words "ghetto." However, the youth in Ms. Lyn's class, known at WHS as the "Magnet kids" connected with one another based on their experiences in the gifted programs at their middle school. They were a select group of students who, because of grades and scores on state assessments were tracked into the magnet program when they arrived at WHS as ninth graders. As a former teacher at

²⁰ I never witnessed a female student who played handball with the Latino youth.

WHS, I never taught in the magnet program, but as a college advisor, these were the students who were applying to top tier colleges and universities across the country.

The “magnet” students in Ms. Lyn’s class were a lively group, and Ms. Lyn enjoyed this of her students. She planned most activities in her class to ensure that students worked collaboratively, talking to one another, producing various projects together, or assisting one another on individually graded tasks, like essays and presentations to the larger class. Ms. Lyn organized learning in this way, and created seating arrangements where each pod had up to six students to engage in discussions about any task at hand. Students were encouraged to talk to one another in class, to discuss their “do now” activities, to write their own individual essays while speaking to one another, and very often asked to work on projects together and prepare presentations together. It was in these everyday conversations that the “magnet” students, all of whom were Latina/o youth, indexed their beliefs and ideas about language, those they spoke, as well as the language of their peers. Similar to Razfar’s (2005) study of the repair practice of ELL classroom practices, “the most pervasive discursive practice that index[ed] language ideologies” (p.406) among student in Ms. Lyn’s classroom were the repair practices between peers, what I will call *peer-to-peer repair or correction practices*.

Throughout my semester observing in this class, I observed youth in Ms. Lyns’ class engage in “repair” or correcting the language practice of their peers. Research on repair and correction practices in interaction began with the seminal work of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1977) who distinguished between the ways in which speakers either engaged in “fixing” or “correcting” their own language through the process of self-correction. In other instances, they argued that speakers were “repaired” by their interlocutors who offer the “correct” word/phrase, repairing the problematic utterance of a speaker. Few studies have

focused on repair practices in classroom contexts. In one of the few studies, Razfar (2003, 2005) attended to the repair practices of teachers *and* students in English Learner classroom contexts. However, few have considered the repair practices that occur between youth in high school classroom settings, especially the high school ELA classroom that may promote an environment where hyper awareness of language use and form perpetuate standard language ideologies.

Peer to peer repair occurred in Ms. Lyn's classroom during everyday classroom activities, during moments where youth were told to discuss a topic or issue presented to them, or simply during mundane moments where the youth in Ms. Lyn's class hung out together before the beginning of instruction as they packed up to leave her class for the day. For example, during one of my first visits to Ms. Lyn's honors English class, I observed Omar, the same Latino male youth I mentioned above, telling his peers about a recent experience where he received a Black eye. During his telling of the story his attention also turned to Ms. Lyn who approached his group. He was in the middle of telling his peers (and Ms. Lyn) that he could have stayed home, with a perfect excuse since he had a Black eye. He continue with the following:

Transcript 5.8

- 01 Omar: °I could of had a *perfect* excuse ((unintelligible))
- 02 Marco: °wa~da~ya~mean
- 03 Omar: Well wh- I had a Black eye over the: a- vacation?
- 04 Omar: ((unintelligible))
- 05 °That wasn't funny miss ((to Ms. Lyn)
- 06 It *kinda* hurted.
- 07 Kind of=it's true.
- 08 Liz: *It* kinda hurt[ed.

- 09 Omar: [having to be like this.
10 (hand on his right eye)
11 [for a couple of days
12 Liz: [(laughter)
13 Peers: [(laughter)

In this short sequence, Omar told a few of his peers that he had a Black eye during the Thanksgiving break from which they had just returned from. In explaining that he was still experiencing some pain, he uttered to his peers, and Ms. Lyn, “it kinda hurted miss.” Ms. Lyn laughed *with* Omar then quickly walked away from him and his group, continuing to pass out papers. However, Elizabeth, a Latina female seated nearest to Omar quickly re-voiced Omar’s statement, “It kinda hurted” followed by a low pitched laugh. Elizabeth’s discursive move is an example of the many peer-to-peer repair practices I observed magnet students deploy in Ms. Lyn’s class. By re-voicing Omar’s utterance, Elizabeth brought attention to Omar’s “incorrect” placement of an ‘-ed’ to a word already marking past tense. That is, he engaged in hyper-correcting the past tense irregular verb “hurt” by adding an “ed” (Bayley & Bonnici, 2009; Zentella, 1997).

Interestingly Elizabeth only revoiced “it kinda hurted” and she did not repair his “error” with the correct form, perhaps with “it kind of hurt” or “it hurt.” While Ms. Lyn, the sanctioned instructor, and in some sense, the monitor of language use in her class, seemed to appreciate the humor in Omar’s story, she did not bring attention to Omar’s use of “hurted.” On the other hand Elizabeth’s revoicing (with an embedded repair) indexed her belief that Omar’s utterance was incorrect, positioning herself as the monitor of language in this context, and at the same time indexing her identity as a “magnet kid,” a student at WHS who is academically more advanced,

therefore more proficient in “standard” English. Elizabeth’s reaction to Omar was typical *only* in the magnet class. While I observed and audio-recorded repair practices across all four classes that I observed, the Latina/o youth enrolled in the Honors English class regularly engaged in peer-to-peer repair practices. The typical event in which peer-to-peer repair practices occurred by “capping” or “clowning” on a peer for an “incorrect” utterance.

In early December I joined a pod where only Latino male youth were seated. These youth had completed their “Sustained Silent Reading” assignment and were waiting for the next task to begin. Since most students were wrapping up their assignments and chatting with one another, the noise level was pretty loud. Marco, a Latino male youth known for his soccer skills and long curly hair listened intently to Aurelio, a Latino youth who made a name for himself on the handball courts. Marco and Aurelio had two other Latino male youth engaged in interaction and in the midst of the conversation between the four youth Aurelio interjected to let his friends know that his eye was twitching. Bothered by his twitching eye, Aurelio’s twitching eye became the subject of the following peer-to-peer repair event:

Transcript 5.9

- 01 Aurelio: °Damn man my eye is jumping?
02 Marco: (2.1) twitching **stupid**.
03 *it's* jumping. (laugh)
04 Peers: ((laughter))
05 Aurelio: °no:: it's cause it's just [that
06 Marco: [twitching::
07 LM1: twitching:
08 Marco: that's cause you tweak too much. (laughter)

This short interaction detailed Marco's repair of Aurelio's "misuse" of the word "jumping" instead of what he believed was the more appropriate word "twitching." Interestingly, within the repair event, Marco took the opportunity to make fun, or cap, on Aurelio. Two seconds after Aurelio's utterance in line 01, Marco came in with his correction or verbal attack on Aurelio in lines 02-03, "twitching stupid:: jumping (h::)" followed by a laugh. Marco found alignment for his correction of Aurelio's statement from his surrounding peers, all of who joined in the laughter. In line 04, Aurelio tried to explain himself, "no:: it's cause it's just that," but was cut off by Marco who in line 05 repeated "twitching::." A Latino peer seated in the pod showed his alignment with Marco by repeating, "twitching" in 06. Marco seized the opportunity to deploy a final cap on Aurelio by playing on the word "tweaking" by stating in line 07 "that's cause you tweak too much." Marco jokingly stated to Aurelio that his eye was twitching because he is "tweaking," a word used to describe the effects of using speed, a methamphetamine.

On the surface level, this repair was witty and created some laughable moments for the male youth, as well as a few of their Latina peers listened to this interaction. Aurelio gave in to his peers and eventually joined in the laughter. However, these types of peer-to-peer repair events, where students openly laughed at each others' "mistakes" occurred regularly in the Honors English class. Both examples that I have provided occurred during the "unofficial" classroom interactions, where youth were simply speaking to one another about topics unrelated to the class. The regularity with which this practice occurred in Ms. Lyns' class speaks to how these youth monitor one another's speech, creating a playful, yet highly vigilant environment where standard varieties of English mediated classroom interactions, even those not part of the official classroom script.

It is important to note that Ms. Lyn herself attempted to provide her students with a nuanced understanding of language and in one particular class activity tried to convince some of the youth in her class that the use of double negatives in speech should not be seen as erroneous. What made the youth in her class different from all the other students at WHS was the fact that they were enrolled in the “Magnet” program, a small academic tracked program that was intended to focus on Math and Science. Throughout my time as a teacher at WHS, and during the time of this study, the Magnet school youth were viewed as the smartest at the school filling the honor roll lists, debate teams and reading club roster. These youth *were* tracked into the Advanced Placement and Honors courses at WHS. Youth outside of the magnet program saw these youth as the nerds of the school, while some of the Magnet youth at WHS saw themselves as the cool nerds, intelligent and in the process of preparing themselves to attend the best colleges.

In categorizing the magnet school youth as the “nerds” at WHS, I am reminded of Bucholtz’ (2001, 2011) study of nerds at Bay City High School in California. In defining nerds she states, “nerds are members of a stigmatized social category who are stereotypically cast as intellectual overachievers and social underachievers” (p. 85). WHS Youth outside of the magnet program often cast WHS nerds as intellectual overachievers; however, these youth were not treated as social outcasts. In fact, WHS nerds often talked about hanging out after school with peers from outside the magnet program; they participated in athletic teams, and often talked about attending parties that many youth across racial and ethnic groups attended. In fact, within this group of nerds, they referred to themselves as jocks, ravers (youth who attended dance parties and engaged in the popular dance called shuffling), Emo’s (for emotional youth who listen to dreary indie music), and *paisas* (individuals attuned to the cultural and stylistic dress

and dance practices of northern Mexico where Banda music is popular) to name a few. Although a few youth did fit typical descriptions of nerd, these youth were not stigmatized by their peers and did not isolate themselves from other students.

The WHS nerds may use language to index themselves as atypical students compared to the majority of youth at the school since WHS had a reputation marred by dismal performance on state and national assessments, Black and Brown tension, and poor academic achievement. In their repair of one another, WHS “nerds” mark the languages associated with non-Magnet youth, distancing themselves and their magnet peers who make up the magnet program from “incorrect” forms of language use. While the Magnet kids did not speak a “superstandard” variety of English detailed by Bucholtz, they monitored the language practices of their peers in ways that made their language practices contextually superstandard, given that the variety of English(es) spoken by other WHS youth were not monitored as they were in the context Ms. Lyn’s magnet classroom.

I chose to interview Omar because his interactions were prominent throughout my fieldnotes and audio recordings. Although Elizabeth corrected him in the example above, Omar regularly engaged in peer-to-peer repair practices calling out “mistakes” he heard his peers make. In addition, he often commented on certain grammatical and speech patterns that he viewed as unacceptable according to English language conventions in official classroom discussions, such as his disagreement with Ms. Lyn when she expressed how double negatives were appropriate during conversations. Omar’s peers often agreed with his comments and shared his beliefs about how students in a magnet class should be speaking. In an interview with Omar, I asked to tell me which languages he speaks. A snippet of our interview is detailed below:

Transcript 5.10

- 01 DM: Oh okay so uhm: what are the th- the languages that your:
02 Family speaks: or that you speak with your family.
03 Omar: Ah: my: my family: speaks Spanish: and that's it?
04 °And my older brothers English.
05 DM: And and you speak?
06 Omar: English (1.5) mostly.
07 DM: Do you speak any Spanish at all?
08 Omar: I speak Spanish but not fluent.
09 DM: uh huh.
10 So: when do you uhm: find yourself speaking Spanish?
11 Omar: Usually when I gotta talk to ma parents?
12 ((both DM and Omar Laugh))

In naming the languages that he speaks, Omar mentioned that he spoke Spanish to his “family” which we later learn expressed meant his mother and father, and English to his brothers. When I ask what *he* spoke he responded in line 06 “English (sec) mostly” making clear that it is the language that he speaks the majority of time. I continued asking Omar if he spoke “any Spanish at all” and he stated in line 08 “I speak Spanish but not fluent” and later in line 11 states that he speaks Spanish “usually when I gotta talk to ma parents.”

Later in the interview I asked Omar if he has ever spoken Spanish at WHS, to which he responded:

- 13 DCM: So do you find yourself speaking like **any** kind

14 Of Spanish to your peers here or friends?

15 Omar: **no.**

16 DCM: not at [all:

17 Omar: [no

18 DCM: No Spanish.

19 Uhm:: have you ever: encountered a student **here**

20 Who uhm only? Speaks? Spanish?

21 Omar: Yeah.

22 DCM: And have you-

23 What have the situations been like?

24 Omar: Awkward but (1.0) then again I sort of know Spanish.

Here, Omar stated that he did not speak Spanish to any of his peers, quickly responding and raising his voice stating “**no**” in line 03. However, Omar later admitted to once encountering and assisting a student who *only* spoke Spanish at WHS but reported in line 12 that he felt “awkward but then again I sort of know[s] Spanish.” Omar insinuated that his exchange with a Spanish-speaking peer was awkward because he only “sort of” spoke Spanish. Here, it is important to consider Omar’s cultural historical past in my analysis. As the youngest child of four in his family, it is important to consider research that has found the youngest child in an immigrant family is most likely to lose the family language, and more likely to speak English (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Omar admitted to only speaking Spanish, a language he does not feel comfortable speaking, with his parents, while mostly speaking English throughout his daily communicative activities with his peers in school and brothers at home.

Perhaps Omar's experience as the youngest in his family compounded with his socialization as an 'honors' or 'gifted' student may have led to feelings of "linguistic insecurity" (González, 2001, p. 176) in engaging Spanish dominant speakers. Linguistic insecurity, González argues, results as schools participate in a process of "...erasure of native language skills in schools" (p. 176). González (2001, 2005b) and several other researchers have argued that a legacy of language purism mediates schooling practices that contribute to stigmatizing languages that do not mirror the imagined standard (J. Milroy & Milroy, 1999). In addition, Omar stated that he was enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Program since elementary school. Within the Tajuata and WHS context, the gifted program was housed in the magnet school, and as previously mentioned, these youth were socialized into believing they were the highest achieving and on track for college compared to WHS youth across the campus.

While this study alone cannot determine the extent to which the magnet program has a role in circulating standard language ideologies, I can deduce from my observational, audio recordings and interviews with youth that magnet youth in Ms. Lyn's classroom subscribed to beliefs and ideas about language that indexed their uptake and circulation of standard language ideologies. It is important then to consider how the magnet program at WHS, a specialized system within the school that attracts and actively recruits the most academically prepared WHS students before entering high school or once they are enrolled, has in circulating standard language ideologies.

Discussion

This chapter has demonstrated how youth language practices are taken up in diverse ways across the classrooms I observed. While Ms. Luz displayed a much narrower approach to language, and Mr. Esperanza and Ms. Lyn a wider understandings of language, I believe that the

youth and teachers at WHS could participate in expanding their linguistic repertoires. As I argue in chapter 4, the youth are demonstrating their expansive linguistic repertoires through their ability to communicate in their transcultural settings. However, Black and Latina/o youths' linguistic resources are not being built on or leveraged in their classes. Instead, these practices are being subjected to a process of "correction" or repair, even when the youth were communicating in ways that were communicatively appropriate given the peer relationships established in their ELA classrooms. This chapter points to the need for teachers to understand their students' language practices and to become involved in the process of expanding their own linguistic repertoires. In doing so, teachers might be able to understand the linguistic features of their students, and interrogate their own ways of communicating in transcultural settings.

The language ideologies of youth were also important to consider. While some youth displayed their linguistic dexterity in their transcultural settings, the youth still understood their language practices as deficient, or in their words, "not right." If we hope for students themselves to have an wider understanding of language, we must have youth consider the various languages they speak across settings.

CHAPTER 6

Welcome to our habitat: The language of Tajuata and reflections for expansive Black and Brown language pedagogy

“It’s like the habitat that we we’re used to...all this (raises both hands up and turns around sweeping across the views before us) ... if we’re used to seeing something or hearing something we know you’re a regular”

(Jerome, Black youth in 10th grade)

I interviewed Jerome on one of my final days at Willow High School. The youth in Ms. Luz’ class were finalizing their culminating projects, and Jerome had already completed his work for the day. With only a few minutes left in the class, he agreed that it was a good time for me to *finally* interview him after several weeks putting it off. We exited Ms. Luz’ class and sat at the bottom of a stairwell for about five minutes before a loud siren buzzed signaling the end of first period. Jerome and I stood up to let the trail of youth marching down from the second and third floors above to the quad area where “nutrition” food was being served. At this time, Jerome returned to Ms. Luz’ classroom to pick up his backpack and books from class, telling me that he did not want to eat on this day, and agreed to continue our conversation. After returning, Jerome walked me out of the building through two doors that led to the back of campus, near the oldest bungalows in the school and directly next to the football field. From this view, we could see the neighboring metal scrap yard that butted up against the WHS gym area, various sections of the WHS campus, and the neighboring housing projects. We could see all of this as we stood along the back wall of the “science” building chatting about language, Tajuata, and Willow High School.

As with all of my interviews, I asked Jerome what he thought about Latinas/os at WHS who spoke *like* Black people. His response was illuminating for me as he confidently explained that Latinas/os at Willow High School learned to speak “like us” because “It’s like the habitat that we we’re used to.” Jerome raised his hands up in the air stretched beyond shoulder length and moved his torso so that only his upper body made a semi-circle. We gazed across the horizon, starting from the metal factory, the gym, the football field and finally the housing projects and beyond. “All this, ” he said. The Tajuata “habitat” made the language practices of all WHS youth what they were according to Jerome. The notion of the “habitat” made sense for Jerome. Living in Tajuata required its inhabitants to become socialized into the culturally and linguistically appropriate practices. These practices were in effect normalized in Tajuata and WHS. It was of no surprise to Jerome, as with other Black and Latina/o youth in my study, that their languages shifted when their interlocutors changed. Statements from other youth I spoke to confirmed this notion. “We gotta do what we gotta do,” explained Marylou. Diego looked at me reflectively as when he recounted how his language practices changed as he moved across racial, ethnic and social boundaries at WHS, “sometimes I just get up and just go.”

Summary of findings and future implications

In chapters four and five I demonstrated that; (1) Black and Latina/o youth at WHS deployed a range of languages to communicate in their transcultural settings thus highlighting their *expansive* linguistic repertoires; (2) Black *and* Latina/o youth displayed regularities in their language practices suggesting that a process of language socialization is occurring, to varying degrees, in different ways; (3) this linguistic dexterity was taken up by teachers to very different degrees, with some holding very narrow and others more expansive views of language; and (4) Black and Latin/o youth, through everyday transcultural communicative activities in their ELA

classes indexed both implicit and explicit ideas and beliefs about language, that is their language ideologies, that both aligned with and resisted standard language ideologies.

These findings point to the need for educational researchers, sociocultural language scholars and school practitioners to 1) to recognize that these youth are *already* engaging in language practices that are sophisticated, purposeful and potentially powerful resources for learning and development, 2) to consider ways to *leverage* and *level* these language practices to expand the linguistic repertoires of all students – and teachers, and 3) ultimately, to bring a focus on *language* back to English Language Arts instruction.

Listen to what they are doing!

Listen to what the youth at Willow High School are doing! Lorenzo provided us with a glimpse of how Latinas/os in transcultural settings use language to communicate across racial/ethnic boundaries, or what I have called throughout, their transcultural settings. Lorenzo, and many other Latina/o youth I observed were keen at moving fluidly into and out of languages that in the past have been described as dialects and/or non-standard language forms. These youth were agile in their styleshifting and code-switching, and purposeful (even if not always consciously) in these moves.

We could argue that these Latina/o youth were participating in language crossing (Rampton, 1995a) or language sharing (Paris, 2009, 2011). But is this really crossing? What exactly is being shared, when, and by whom? Surely, some kids are sharing and crossing. But I am forced to consider Latina/o youth who were born and raised in these transcultural settings where movement across boundaries of communication was naturalized. When you are socialized into the language of transcultural settings *to* and *through* transcultural communicative practices are you really crossing? I agree that some Latina/o youth at WHS participated in language

sharing practices, particularly those who were recent immigrants or newer to the Tajuata or WHS context. Yet, I am cognizant again, of Latina/o youth who did not look to their Black peers to ratify their Black Language practices.

There are also the transcultural practices of Latina/o youth who were recent immigrants. Yesenia provided us with a look into how she shifted into dominant ways with words. Despite the nerves she described, she utilized “standard” language practices in her senior presentation, even as teachers commented on her accent. She adequately described how the English she spoke during her presentation was “different” from other English(es) used in her everyday communicative practices. Youth like Yesenia are treated as not being effective communicators, often because of the markedness of their accented speech. Students often seem to internalize this, as evident by Yesenia’s nervousness in this setting. Yesenia’s transcultural practices were visible in her language shifting and code-switching practices. She also recalled learning *what* English should “sound” like, and *how* words “should” be pronounced based on her interactions with Black peers. If Black peers were target language speakers for youth like Yesenia and other recent immigrants it is important to investigate interactions between these subgroups at WHS. While the settings I observed did not provide evidence of extensive interactions between these groups, several recent immigrants described positive learning experiences with their Black peers. Yesenia, Elena and Jorge described positive experiences with their Black peers and believed them to be more acceptable of their “accents” and “mispronunciations” than their US born Latina/o counterparts.

But what about the youths’ *own* views of their practices? I have stated how the youth in this study did not consider their linguistic skills appropriate. They expressed this by always positioning “standard” language varieties as the “right” way to speak. English Language Arts

classrooms are vital spaces to show youth the powerful languages they already possess. This means that we must give *all* youth the language to talk about their languages. That is, we must give youth the ability to name their tacit understandings about everyday communication. In the spirit of Carol Lee's cultural modeling project, I envision English language arts instruction where Black and Latina/o youths' shared language practices can be leveraged, treated as a language, and used to develop "standard" varieties of languages that do not compete with their home languages, but that engage with these practices to become available to these youth as they continue their movement across boundaries which will require these linguistic forms. Lee (2008) engaged her Black youth participants to, "see the functional relationships between everyday knowledge they possess and school-based tasks. Cultural Modeling repositions what might be historically viewed as vernacular practices as intellectually rich" (Lee, 2007, p. 27). For Lee, the languages that formed her students' linguistic repertoires became tools for everyday academic learning experiences, and assisted students in developing academic English language and literacy skills.

So what do we call these language practices? I have argued that categories such as bilingualism and bidialectalism do not fully capture what it is these youth do with language. I have also mentioned that while youth may participate in language crossing and sharing, for some youth, their practices suggest that they have been socialized into the language practices of another racial/ethnic group simply by existing and being socialized into the transcultural communities to which they belong. This is most evident in the language practices of Latina/o youth who shift into and out of Black Language in their communicative interactions.

Recent scholars have argued that the term "language" is a social construction based on European "romanticist" ideology that proposed that one language would lead to one unified

nation (Blommaert & Backus, 2011; García, 2009; Jørgensen, 2008; Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen, & Møller, 2011). Makoni and Pennycook (2006) furthered this argument stating that the notion of “*a language*” was an invention that Europeans have imposed onto people they have colonized across the globe. These scholars, like some sociocultural language scholars, share in their understanding that languages are not bounded discrete systems. García (2009) agrees that “languages are not fixed codes by themselves; they are fluid codes framed within social practices” (p. 32). Ultimately, these fluid codes, when deployed by speakers in interaction, are what scholars call *linguaging*. Jørgensen (2008) defines linguaging as the process by which “language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal with the intention of achieving their communicative aims” (p. 39). Linguaging can be best used to describe the practices of Black and Latina/o youth at WHS who may not be considered bilingual, but who engage in styleshifting and code-switching in their transcultural settings.

Translinguaging is another term recently used to capture the practices of individuals who are considered bilingual. García (2009) states:

For us, translinguagings are *multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage in order to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*. Translinguaging therefore goes beyond what has been termed code-switching, although it includes it, as well as other kinds of bilingual language use and bilingual contact.

Translinguaging for us extends what Gutiérrez and her colleagues have called “hybrid language use” (p. 45, emphasis in original).

Translinguaging captures the language practices of individuals who are speakers of two languages who draw on their full linguistic repertoires to communicate meaning in their multilingual settings. I argue that many recent immigrant Latinas/os and those who have

maintained their bilingual abilities at WHS display translanguaging skills. Like Yesenia, she displayed her ability to shift into standard language practices during her formal senior presentation, then immediately after engaged in a conversation with me in Spanish.

Languaging and *translanguaging* are only recently making their way into educational research communities in the United States. Sociocultural researchers have begun to take up these terms (Razfar & Rumenapp, forthcoming) in addition to similar terms like Polylingual (Gutiérrez, Bien, Selland, & Pierce, 2011) to critique narrow notions of language and to more fully capture how individuals participate in deploying a range of languages to communicate meaning. And while I also look forward to more research by scholars who will take up these terms (as I hope to do myself), I am concerned that these terms will not make their way into lexicon of teachers and educators, and most importantly the youth that I believe must be engaged in conversations about the language, how they use it, how they witness it being used in literature, in their lives and in the lives of others.

Therefore, to bring language back into the language arts classroom, I believe it is important to share the power that lies in languages, the powerlessness that can emerge in youth voices when they use specific kinds or types of languages in public spaces. In other words, I don't believe that we can press educators and their students to use these terms or can we expect them to want to engage in theoretical conversations around terms like *languaging* or *translanguaging* (simply because these are the terms in fashion). But we also cannot expect them to be rid the word "language" from their lexicon. I am reminded of the dilemma Norma Gonzalez (2005a) posed to Anthropologists of Education when the larger field of Anthropology was at odds about the notion of "culture." While setting up the arguments for and against culture, she reminded the field that in schools, culture is a "central organizing concept" for

teachers and school communities, therefore how could we ask that they forget about notions of culture based on “theoretical abuse and misuse of the term” (p. 39). In this spirit, while I am excited about the critiques to language, I am wary of calls to rid “language” from our lexicon, as “language” is a central organizing system for our teachers, students and families. We must, however, participate in encouraging teachers and youth to talk about language and what counts as language in schools, communities, in our homes and across contexts that are important in everyday communicative contexts.

The findings in this study reveal how the language practices of Black and Latina/o youth at WHS cannot be placed into rigid categories. While schools attempt to reduce the language practices of Black and Latina/o youth to include only dominant varieties of English, the youth in this study displayed how they were capable of much more than anyone has ever given them credit. These youth displayed their flexibility, their agility, and creativity in their language practices. I was initially concerned that observations in English Language Arts classrooms might not render the most dynamic practices I believed the youth were capable of. However, observing, participating in class discussions with youth and having conversations with youth in the ELA context demonstrated, as many studies have, that language crosses boundaries. Home languages, school languages, community and regional languages made their way into and out of the porous and imagined boundaries of the ELA classroom. But why can’t anyone else hear?

Why the ELA classroom? Admittedly, this is a narrow space to have observed the language practices of these youth. However, it is in the ELA context that non-dominant youth language practices are regularly and overtly assessed and monitored. They are evaluated via tools that do not recognize or validate their linguistic repertoires (Henne, 2009). These very youth whose performance on assessments suggests that they are “basic,” “below basic” or “far

below basic” displayed their expansive linguistic repertoires in the very spaces that are intended to add “powerful” academic varieties of English.

The labels placed on youth and their teachers are not neutral. In fact, decision makers at the district, state and federal level made this clear at WHS when declared an “emergency” at WHS based on youths’ performance on an assessment that privileges only standard varieties of English. I am in agreement with several sociocultural language and literacy scholars who declare that we *must* provide non-dominant youth with powerful academic varieties of English in ways that do not attempt to eradicate, devalue or simply romanticize these “non-standard” discourses for purposes of inclusion

Jerome illuminated the tacit, well-accepted knowledge that he and many youth at WHS conveyed. There was nothing special about the language they used to communicate with one another, it was simply their learned way of communicating having lived in Tajuata, having attended schools like WHS, and having had an understanding of the diverse ways in which they are expected to communicate while “doing school.” The youth in this study have demonstrated how the ways in which they use language *are* everyday practices, and like Marylou many reported how “there’s a time a place for everything” suggesting that language was dependent on who you were speaking to, and the context of the exchange. And, while the youth in this study did not seem very impressed with my documenting of their language practices, they reported an understanding of language that we, as a field

Bringing Language Back to the Language Arts

Let’s bring *language* back to English Language Arts instruction. In the ELA courses I observed, there was an overall focus on providing youth with academic language development. Simply through my participant observation, I can deduce that for all three teachers, this meant

providing their students with English language skills that mirrored what youth would encounter on standardized assessments. The teachers most often engaged in this development by providing their students with worksheets and having discussions on how to strategically these exams. This was most evident in the English 10A/B courses where the youth in these classes would take the California High School Exit Exam for the first time during the academic year. In the senior ELA class, there was an explicit focus on writing appropriately in English. Weekly, the youth in this class would receive an essay and weekly previous drafts of essays would be returned with grammatical and structural errors pointed out in ink.

The *artistry* of language was never present in any class discussions nor were there any attempts to bring *language* into the forefront. The *language* of literature was left out of discussions, the *language* behind technical documents required of youth to understand was left untouched, and even the *language* of the superintendent who wrote a lengthy letter to students and teachers about the looming take over was never interrogated (this letter could have been used to document how, even someone at his level could have used several revisions before publishing). And most important to this study, the *language* of the youth was rarely brought into the official space of the classroom.

There were several spaces of opportunity where the youth were ready to bring in their own experiences in their ELA classrooms, and most often these opportunities were being mediated via languages that youth found most appropriate to describe the betrayal, love, anger and excitement expressed by narrators and characters from their books. Moments that stand out the most were in Ms. Luz' class when students began making connections to the universal theme of betrayal in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. While reading *Julius Caesar*, students connected with the language of anger expressed by Caesar, the language of conspiracy voiced by Brutus.

Although I critiqued Ms. Luz' decision to use the "modern" version of the play because she believed the original might be "too hard" for the students, there were still opportune moments where her students attempted to bring their voices, *their language* to official classroom spaces. Other than an agreement that the characters in the film version of *Julius Caesar* sounded funny, the language of Shakespeare was left untouched.

The larger problem in English Language Arts instruction is the existence of a very narrow notion of what counts as language. California teachers who peruse the content standards for the English Language Arts will encounter words like "correct" and "grammatical" in introductions that call for students to demonstrate a "command of Standard American English," (CDE, 1998).

The youth in my study were capable of engaging in an English Language Arts curriculum in ways where their linguistic repertoires could be built upon, their multimodal literacy skills developed. Morrell (2011) argues:

The children now passing through our school doors will daily engage in literacy practices that would have been incomprehensible to us only a few years ago.

With all of these changes, one of the few things remaining the same is secondary English instruction (Applebee, 1993), and that is not a good thing (p. 158).

I agree with Morrell in that English instruction has lagged in redefining what is and what skills will be essential for non-dominant youth beyond the ELA classroom.

I am arguing that the youth in this study are capable of shifting and switching depending on their interlocutors and the contexts in which they are speaking. I view this practice as one that needs to be considered in the educational lives of these youth. Several other scholars have documented the linguistic dexterity of youth such as Alim's (2004) study of styleshifting among Black youth in a Northern Californian community, Paris' (2011) study of *language sharing*

among Black, Latina/o and Pacific Islander youth in a Northern Californian charter school, Zentella's (1997) study of Spanish English code-switching among Puerto Rican youth in New York City, and R. Martinez' (2011) study of Latina/o *Spanglish* speakers in an East Los Angeles school and Orellana's (2009) decade long study of child language brokers in Los Angeles and Chicago. In these studies non-dominant youth are highlighted participating in sophisticated practices that, as each author argues, are not valued in schooling contexts, and overall public spaces.

Currently we are in the midst of a national call for standards across the content areas that will align the nation in providing students across the United States with a rigorous curriculum. The Common Core standards will provide most teachers across the nation (minus those in states who did not adopt the standards). The language arts standards once again make the call to provide all students with access to standard or academic varieties, specifically to develop their abilities to read, write, speak and listen to a range of texts of various genres in "standard English." Again, we are witnessing how educational policy makers are making it a policy to treat only standard varieties of English the sanctioned language for learning and indexical of success in U.S. schools.

Towards an Expansive Language Education: Expanding the Linguistic Repertoires in English Language Arts Classrooms. Through this dissertation I have argued that as a field, educational researchers and sociocultural language researchers must be at the forefront of illuminating the agility, flexibility and dexterity of the non-dominant youth whose linguistic repertoires continue to be treated as a hindrance to academic achievement. This task is a difficult one, a task that will require the re-mediation of narrow language ideologies and the socialization of large communities into robust ways of believing and thinking about what counts as language.

In classrooms, we must work towards expanding the linguistic repertoires of children and youth, and of their teachers to expand the linguistic repertoires of classrooms. In every class I observed, there was a space designated to new words, important words that the youth were being pressed to learn, internalize and demonstrate competence in. If we imagine the possibilities, we can imagine an English Language Arts classroom where language is truly considered an art form, where teachers add “academic” or standard varieties of language to an already artistic and creative repertoire of languages the youth possess.

I am calling for a pedagogy of language that does more than simply celebrate the transcultural communicative practices of non-dominant youth who engage in transcultural communicative activities. In his study of *Spanglish* code-switching among Latina/o middle school youth, R. A. Martínez (2010) argued

I am *not* suggesting that it is sufficient to simply recognize and celebrate what these students are already doing well through their everyday use of *Spanglish*. We certainly need to *begin* by acknowledging the skill and intelligence embedded and displayed in their use of *Spanglish*. However, if we only recognize and celebrate students’ everyday language practices without providing them access to *dominant* language and literacy practices, then we do them a fundamental disservice (p. 140).

I am in agreement with R. Martinez that we must go beyond simply acknowledging these practices. Instead I am calling for a language pedagogy that makes clear to youth the intelligence of their language practices, and the power embedded in these practices across contexts.

Black and Brown Transcultural Relationships

Finally, I have resisted making general claims about the relationships between Black and Latina/o youth at WHS. Admittedly, these relationships were complex, multilayered and steeped in the social and historical past and present. Many of the youth I came to know were not aware of the history of activism and solidarity movements between Black and Latina/o community members in Tajuata and across the U.S. On the other hand, these youth were aware of the narratives of conflict, tension, and violence that existed between a small group of Black and Brown community members in Tajuata. While the narratives of conflict are often catapulted into larger media outlets, throughout my time at WHS I did not witness *any* interactions between youth where racial tension was apparent between Black and Latina/o youth. I did overhear Black youth talk about “the essays” (*ese*), the “Mexicans” in school or in the neighborhood, or expressing concern about Latinas/os speaking Spanish. I also heard individual Latina/o youth using derogatory terms for Black people, and consistent use of the term *nigga* during interactions with both Black and Latina/o youth. While we must engage in meaningful, genuine conversations about the use racially charged words with Black and Latina/o youth, we must also consider their own insider perspectives around the use of these terms and what they mean through emic perspectives. Overall, it was fairly clear that Black and Latina/o youth at WHS cultivated their transcultural relationships in their ELA classrooms in ways that counter overhyped narratives of Black and Brown conflict.

Take for instance Yesenia who was a former EL student who I introduced in chapter 4. According to her own perspective, she learned most from her Black peers. She argued that with her Black peers she *had* to speak English, and she reported listening to her Black peers for proper pronunciation and phrasing of words. Several former EL students supported this claim,

including Elena, another recent immigrant youth at WHS. We heard from Diego who I observed in Mr. Esperanza's classroom rove around his classroom participating in conversation with both Latina/o youth who were recent immigrants, those who were born and raised in the U.S., as well as Black youth. Diego reported feeling proud that he could be a part of diverse groups at WHS. His reflected on the diverse ways that he changed the way he spoke to different people at WHS, including his teacher, diverse Latinas/os and Black youth. What I am getting at here is the fact that Black and Latina/o youth are too frequently positioned to be in conflict with one another. This study, however, paints a different portrait in highlighting how Black and Latina/o youth are learning together and sharing (Paris, 2011) language practices with one another in ways that schools and the research community has not interrogated. Whether these practices are ratified by the "other" group or not, practitioners and researchers must be prepared to treat these linguistic practices as a resource.

Returning to Willow High School was painful. I entered graduate school in 2007 knowing exactly what I wanted research. I knew there was much to say about WHS youth, who they were and how they were using language together to become members of the larger Tajuata community and social actors beyond. I immersed myself in reading about urban education, the miseducation of non-dominant youth in public schools across the United States. Theories of language, literacy, learning and development equipped me with a sense of urgency to return, but I was reminded to be patient. When I finally returned, it was painful because the conditions I returned to at WHS had not improved for the new Black and Brown faces I met during my yearlong ethnographic project. Initially, it was difficult to write fieldnotes, to listen to audio recorded data, even to drive into the parking lot. On some mornings, I felt the heavy weight of sadness inside me knowing that I was going to WHS. Students were bored, sometimes with very

little energy to complete their assignments. Teachers were worried, and eventually their fears came true when WHS was taken over. After this, teachers could hardly focus themselves.

Overall, morale was low, for students and teachers.

Through the dark cloud however, it was the youth themselves that made me see that despite the situation at WHS, they would still attend school. Most of the time, they walked into classes laughing, and on a few occasions in tears. Over time, teachers and myself looked to the students to remember to smile and laugh. I had the privilege of leaving WHS everyday I was there knowing that I was not tied to that space.

APPENDIX I

Transcription conventions

Data are transcribed according to the system developed by Jefferson and described in Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 731-733). The following are the features most relevant to the present analysis.

- Low Volume: ° A degree sign indicates that talk it precedes is low in volume.
- Bold Italics: *Italics* indicate some form of emphasis, which may be signaled by changes in pitch and/or amplitude.
- Overlap Bracket: A left [bracket marks the point at which the current talk is overlapped by other talk.
- Lengthening: Colons :: indicate that the sound immediately preceding has been noticeably lengthened.
- Punctuation: A period (.) indicates a falling contour. A question mark (?) indicates a raising contour. A comma (,) indicates a falling-rising contour.
- Latching: The equal sign (=) indicates “latching” there is no interval between the end of a prior turn and the start of a next piece of talk.
- Rapid Speech: Tildes indicate that speech is slurred together because it is spoken rapidly.
- Comments: Double parentheses enclose material that is not part of the talk being transcribed, for example, a comment by the transcriber if the talk was spoken in some special way.
- Silence: Numbers in parentheses mark silences in seconds and tenths of seconds.
- Increased Volume: Capitals indicate increased volume.

Problematic Hearing: Material in parentheses indicates a hearing that the transcriber was uncertain about.

Aside from transcripts of naturally occurring talk that are bracketed off with subtitles throughout the dissertation, I use “double quote” symbols to identify quotes that come directly from participants. Whenever I have written approximations of participant’s utterances, I use a ‘single quote’ to distinguish this.

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