Second Language Acquisition for All: Understanding the Interactional Dynamics of Classrooms in Which Spanish and AAE Are Spoken

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Understandings of the ways home and school languages shape classroom dynamics and influence development, identity, and subsequent school success are important for teachers of both bilingual and African American students. This article builds a link between these complementary bodies of research by analyzing interactions in a second grade mainstream classroom in which the language development of bilingual and African American children were simultaneously relevant. We focus on two qualitatively different kinds of classroom language use: when instruction was solely in English, and when Spanish became a tool for instruction. Our findings suggest that the latter language practice subsequently marginalized the participation of English monolingual students; this especially affected the African American students in the classroom, who were interactionally delegitimized as participants in bilingual interaction despite their desire to participate in both languages. This study suggests the need to ensure that multilingualism is brought into the classroom as a resource for all students. Recognizing this need, however, necessitates interdisciplinary research that crosses the fields of second language acquisition, bilingual education, and sociolinguistics. Such disciplinary boundary crossing can usefully inform teachers and researchers looking for new understandings of language learning in contemporary classrooms.

In bilingual classrooms across the United States, it is generally assumed that *Quién habla dos lenguas vale por dos.* It is clear to those in the midst of multilingual populations that speaking two languages is valuable in the schools. This attitude honors both the history of the United States and its projected future, which includes a large Spanish-speaking population, already estimated to be 33% of U.S. residents (National Council on English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2003).
In many schools across the United States, Spanish is increasingly seen as a way to access and build on the funds of knowledge that English-language-learning children bring from home (Moll & Véllez-Ibañez, 1992). In Georgia, where this study took place, a bilingual parent liaison was recently given a school system’s 2004 award for Excellence in Education and was also featured on the front page of the local newspaper reading an English/Spanish bilingual book with a group of children (DeMao, 2003). This positive publicity reflects the generally new (or at least gradually changing) public stance toward bilingualism in the South, where the rate of growth in English Language Learning population has, in some states, reached over 600% in the last ten years (NCELA, 2003).

Until recently, however, Spanish has been minimally relevant in this region. This is not to say that classrooms have not been full of language variety; across the southern U.S., the presence of African American English (AAE)² in classrooms is commonly understood as a historical given (Beck, 1999). However, in stark contrast to Spanish use, there have been only limited attempts by teachers in Georgia to reach out to African American students and their families through use or acceptance of this language variety (for an example of one of these attempts, see Cumming, 1997). Even as the use of Spanish by students and teachers becomes more prevalent in Georgia, the marginalization of those children who come to school speaking AAE remains a continuing challenge.

However, while many teachers may lament their own inability to speak Spanish more proficiently, teachers’ relationships to AAE are not so clear. As teachers identify with Spanish-speaking children, there is the possibility that they may further disaffiliate from those children who speak African American English at home and in the classroom (see Cahnmann, 2003). The goal of this paper is to examine how the growing recognition of the value of Spanish in the classroom can simultaneously lead to more opportunities for speakers of African American English. Ideally, by drawing on the combined linguistic resources of all members of the classroom community, teachers can create more linguistically inclusive, equitable, and academically successful learning environments.

In this paper, we illustrate the touchy relationship between Spanish and AAE by analyzing classroom interactions in which a teacher’s recognition of Spanish among English Language Learners simultaneously highlighted the marginalized role of certain English language varieties in the classroom. We hope to show that this simultaneous validation of Spanish and marginalization of AAE need not be inevitable. It is possible that classrooms can become not just bilingual, but multilingual—and that the increasing presence of Spanish in Georgia can become a tool for recognizing the importance of the multiple varieties of English spoken in any classroom. In other words, our research supports a future in which multiple ways with words can be part of the classroom experience for students of all language backgrounds.
Background: Multilingualism and Multiple Language Varieties in the Classroom

**Discussing and Doing Difference**

Despite the embrace of Spanish in some areas, language diversity of any kind in public-school classrooms has been under intense scrutiny in recent years. In the mainstream media, any vernacular language brought to the classroom, be it variations of Spanish or English, has been portrayed as damaging to school achievement and success (Ryan, 1999). Not only is linguistic diversity often screened out of the classroom by “English Only” policies, but discussions about linguistic diversity can also be censored (Gonzalez & Arnot-Hopffer, 2003). Meanwhile, research on both bilingual education (Cummins, 1994; Cummins & Corson, 1997; Gutiérrez et al., 2002) and on other kinds of classroom language variation (Baugh, 2001; Heath, 1983; Richardson, 2003; Wyatt, 2001) suggests that discussing linguistic and cultural diversity as well as doing linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom (e.g., speaking in or about students’ home languages, enacting their cultural practices and norms) can have positive effects on the experiences and academic achievement of bilingual Spanish learners as well as AAE speakers.

While similar sentiments, concerns, and strategies are voiced in the literature on AAE in schools and bilingual education for Spanish-speakers, these bodies of literature rarely intersect. The following review illustrates how closely these lines of inquiry converge without meeting, and attempts to pull them together by focusing on the interconnected activities of discussing and doing linguistic difference.

**Discussing Difference**

When faced with multiple languages and cultures in a classroom, students are usually driven to talk about one another’s differences. For students of any language background, teachers play a large part in shaping learning environments that provide students with opportunities for developing positive self-images. Allowing students to discuss issues of language, cultural identity, and race can be an important step toward creating such opportunities (Tatum, 1997). Where teachers foster development of critical consciousness of these issues, students are not only more likely to recognize possible solutions, but also to recognize that their identities need not be formed in opposition to successful academic identities (Tatum, 1997). Steele (1997) and Oyserman and Harrison (1998) have researched variables that play into African American students’ sense of self-efficacy, finding that where individuality is superceded by membership in a group (racial, ethnic, linguistic, etc.), disaffiliation from school can result. When students’ achievement, regardless of level, is consistently linked to group membership, individuals can lose their sense of agency. African American students, for example, may be seen as all...
being one way based on their perceived racial characteristics. Allowing for group discussion without imposing restrictive stereotypes allows minority students a safe zone in which to mold their own school-based identities (Oyserman & Harrison, 1998). Effective teaching, then, might create opportunities to develop these students’ own ethnic identities without boxing them into pre-determined stereotypes.

The literature on English Language Learners also addresses the need to create classroom opportunities for the sharing of these students’ cultural affiliations and to avoid stereotypical and superficial assumptions about group traits. Moll and Véllez-Ibañez and their colleagues (1992) have repeatedly emphasized the need to understand the particularities of students’ lives outside the classroom by visiting their homes, talking with parents and other family members, and learning about the varied funds of knowledge that are available to students. Just as Steele emphasizes the need to allow African American students space to develop their own non-stereotyped ethnic identities within the classroom, Moll & Véllez-Ibañez stress that Latino students’ funds of knowledge can allow them to form classroom identities that are not built on stereotyped (and often low) expectations. One important feature of this perspective is that teachers are repositioned as learners of students’ home cultures—not “instructors” of a new cultural order or re-enforcers of stereotypes (Romo, 1999). Spanish speakers, like English speakers, speak multiple varieties, many considered “non-standard.” Teachers whose students speak not only multiple languages, but also multiple “Englishes” and “Spanishes” need to be aware of such distinctions to avoid stereotyping based on language variety (Cahnmann, Rymes, & Manning, 2004). Discussing cultural and linguistic difference can be an important component of a multilingual classroom in which students of multiple linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or racial backgrounds feel welcome and comfortable enough to develop as individuals while achieving school success.

Using Linguistic Difference (Doing Difference)
The actual use of the multiple languages increasingly present in classrooms can help develop diverse, active, and successful student membership. The literature on African American and immigrant students also emphasizes that a home language—whether a variety of English, or a “foreign” language with a national border—influences the roles students become socialized into in classrooms. Since “Standard” English has a historically powerful and privileged position in the educational system, teachers can subconsciously wield this power by determining which linguistic exchanges and discourses are valuable and, by association, which students have worth and value (Ryan, 1999). Children who speak Spanish at home, just like children who speak AAE at home, must be able to see themselves as speakers of a language which is legitimate and acceptable in the classroom. Legitimizing the home language and culture of African American students can
facilitate their development of successful school identities. For speakers of AAE, as for all students, school success can best be built on a foundation of the language they bring to the classroom. As Ryan (1999) states, “language is also an important vehicle for voice” (p. 167). Without access to a collective voice and identity, students cannot bring their own thoughts to the learning process (Walsh, 1991), and language is inextricably tied to the formation of these voices and identities. Accepting home language and culture while making links between multiple languages and school language is one way to allow both Spanish bilingual students and African American English-speaking students a place in the classroom as learners and experts in their home languages. Along with teacher and student attitude, the type of communication promoted in the classroom, or the doing of language, can affect school success.

Carrigo (2000) finds that sharing Spanish with a classroom comprised of Latino, African American, and Caucasian students results in a higher usage of Spanish, more racial integration, and greater feelings of self-efficacy than in classrooms in which students are segregated based on language usage skills. This suggests that sharing multiple home languages with the entire classroom benefits all students in various capacities. Carrigo shows that mutual respect for and sharing of multiple languages, including AAE and Spanish, actually promotes both learning and personal development of an effective school-based identity.

In day-to-day practice, the discussing and doing of language occur simultaneously; as Richardson (2003) argues, “effective language education deals with the total linguistic, cultural, and historical background of the learner” (p. 19). The current study’s aim is to promote the acceptance of home language and culture while also allowing for the instructional use of home language for every type of student in the classroom. Highlighting one group’s language at the alienation of another serves no one well, whereas the sharing of multiple cultures and linguistic backgrounds can promote learning, better school attitudes, and social harmony (Carrigo, 2000).

Conflicts in the Language Classroom: Managing It All

While researchers have consistently argued the need to honor linguistic and cultural diversity in classrooms, aligning this work with the realities of policy and practice has proven somewhat problematic. The 1996 Ebonics controversy, for example, which aimed to garner ESOL funds to teach AAE-speaking students, resulted in a media war portraying Ebonics as a joke (Lippi-Green, 1997). While the framers of the Ebonics resolution argued that similar issues apply to learners of English as a second language and speakers of AAE, the practical and egalitarian intent of the Ebonics proposal was lost once the public misinterpreted the plan as focused only on teachers instructing in and about AAE (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Even publicly acclaimed African American icons such as Bill Cosby and
Oprah Winfrey—describing AAE as a type of “non-English”—spoke out against the idea of anything but school English being used or discussed in public school (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Similar debates regarding the use and discussion of Spanish as an instructional medium and cultural topic are often just as contentious as the Ebonics controversy. While the public is to some extent aware of the needs of second language learners, English-only battles across the U.S. (Crawford, 2000) suggest uncertainty concerning how those needs might be most appropriately met. Although the authors of the Ebonics resolution hoped to join forces with and reap some of the benefits of the wider public support for English Language Learners, some of the most vociferous opponents of the Ebonics resolution framed their opinion within larger complaints against bilingual education, affirmative action, and educational support programs of any kind (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). As an indicator of this more general ideological climate in California, in the midst of the heated debates on the Oakland Ebonics resolution, the state’s voters passed Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action in public education and in hiring; and Proposition 227, which outlawed most bilingual education programs (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). There seemed to be common foes in the political war against both AAE and bilingualism in the classroom. Much less apparent, however, was the ideological commonality among proponents of these two issues.

While debates are waged in the public forum, the practical responsibilities—to accept and build on children’s home languages and to examine critically issues of race and linguistic diversity—fall on teachers and teacher educators (Ball & Lardner, 1997). Even those teachers who feel comfortable discussing the language and cultural differences of Spanish-bilingual students may lack training or cultural resources to manage similar discussions of differences between school English and culture (i.e. middle-class White culture) and other varieties within English (Cahnmann, 2003). In this paper, we seek to unearth the working assumptions and actualization of such double standards and the effects such a dichotomy can have on members of a multi-lingual classroom. Viewing non-standard dialects and languages as deficit forms is an educational method of the past. However, making the link across the multiple home languages and varieties present in most contemporary classrooms is a complicated endeavor, and one that has not been researched in classroom discourse studies. No one has yet studied the interactional dynamics of classrooms in which both Spanish and AAE are spoken, and in which school English is the goal for all.

To understand more fully how links across home languages and classroom English can be made, this study examines how interactions among Spanish speakers, AAE speakers, and their teacher unfolded in one second-grade reading group that included both Spanish speakers and AAE speakers. Our research questions reflect the need to align the bodies of research on AAE and bilingualism—to avoid
the contentious division of the past, and to more accurately and inclusively approach the demographics of classrooms in Georgia. These guiding questions were as follows:

1. In a reading group composed of both AAE and Spanish speaking students, how are attitudes about language and culture talked about? That is, what is the content of students’ talk?
2. In a reading group composed of both AAE and Spanish-speaking students, which languages are used? That is, how are language and cultural attitudes enacted?
3. Within this context, what, if any, are the interactional effects of the content and kind of language used?

**Methods**

*Background: Setting and Participants*

This paper represents a small portion of a two-year case study that focused initially on the educational development of one English Language Learner, René, who was placed in a mainstream second grade classroom in a rural school system in northeastern Georgia. During the first year of that study, one of the authors, Betsy Rymes, spent one day a week at the school—as a participant-observer in the classroom, as an after-school reading tutor for René, and as a friend and confidant to the teacher of the class. After the first semester, the teacher, Ms. Spring, agreed to have one 40-minute reading group session video- and audio-recorded weekly. She planned and taught these reading sessions herself as a way to examine her own practice and to learn how best to meet the language learning needs of René.

There were 22 students in the class, and the demographics approximated the demographics in the county school system as a whole. When our study began, there were 6 African American students, 14 White students, and 2 Latinos. Before the end of the first year (mirroring the rapid increase in Latino population in this area more generally), there were 3 Latinos. The emergence of a Spanish-speaking population in this area and school system was a relatively new phenomenon, and during the first year, no ESOL services were available for ELLs in this school. This was precisely the reason Ms. Spring recruited Betsy Rymes to come observe and to explore teaching options that would support the English Language Learners in her classroom.

Ms. Spring’s second grade classroom was in many ways typical of rural school classrooms in Northeast Georgia. It was orderly and well-decorated, including a word wall and areas for student work. The centers and displays were always changing (at least monthly), and centers always included topic-related books. In addition, there was a prominent reading corner with rotating book selections. This prevalence of children’s literature reflected Ms. Spring’s own understanding of the
importance of quality children’s literature across the curriculum, and her teacher training and graduate study, which included numerous classes in children’s literature at the state’s flagship university.

The layout of the desks in the room also changed frequently, facilitating multiple varieties of participation. At times the desks were arranged in a large horseshoe shape facing the front of the room. Students would sit in this configuration for direct instruction from Ms. Spring and for student presentations, splintering off to small tables outside the horseshoe for small-group work. Other times, the desks were arranged in clumps of four where students would sit facing one another for group activities, thus affording sharing of materials and expertise. Overall, Ms. Spring’s classroom reflected her own stated conviction that students be allowed to interact and participate in hands-on ways in all classroom learning activities, and that literature infuse all the content areas. She was opposed to many of the skills-based tests that were used to assess and categorize students, although when students were having trouble academically, she noticed immediately.

Student Participants

As noted earlier, the initial focus of this study was a student named René, who had moved from Costa Rica to Georgia with his family when he was in kindergarten. When this study began, he was repeating second grade. Although his oral English was fluent and he seemed well adapted to the social life of second grade, his schoolwork, particularly his reading, was not improving. For this reason, his teacher, Ms. Spring, called on Betsy Rymes, as a professor for her Second Language Acquisition and Development class at the University of Georgia, to participate in her classroom and in problem-solving for René. Because of his reading difficulties, Ms. Spring chose to pull René out of the mainstream classroom during reading time with several other struggling readers (none of whom spoke Spanish) for remedial study of reading. This “pull-out” group comprises the more immediate context of this discourse analysis. From the beginning, René was a friendly face in the classroom, and despite his reading difficulties, an eager participant in discussions. Initially the only Spanish-speaking student, René had not yet spoken his native language in class, even when encouraged to “teach the class some Spanish” by Ms. Spring. When Betsy would bring Spanish picture books to read together, he was reluctant; and when Betsy brought René home after school, she noted that his mother spoke in Spanish, but René responded exclusively in English. René’s school language seemed to be becoming his dominant language—even at home, and despite the fact that his parents were both monolingual Spanish speakers.

During the final two reading sessions recorded during the first year of the study, a new student named José joined the classroom. Newly arrived from Mexico, José was a fluent Spanish speaker who spoke very little English. Until José’s arrival,
René would rarely utter even a word of Spanish, but with the appearance of this new friend, René began to use Spanish to translate and explain directions and classroom practices, as well as to socialize with José. While René’s family came to the U.S. from Costa Rica and José’s family from Mexico, both families had been drawn to Georgia for economic reasons, joining the growing number of Latinos working in the poultry, carpet, and home-building industries there.

Our analysis is based primarily on the final pull-out group sessions in which René and José were both participating, and which included speakers of European-American (Sally) and African American English (Tiffany and Danny). Sally’s mother was a teacher’s aide at the school, and Tiffany and Danny both came from single-parent, working-class homes. Sally was gregarious and cheery. She often sat next to Ms. Spring, and they seemed to have a mutual affinity. Sally sometimes functioned as an “informant” to Ms. Spring, reporting on other students’ activities, and participated fully and vocally in classroom activities. Tiffany also appeared to enjoy the reading group and its activities. She seemed to the researchers to be a little ahead of the other students at reading comprehension and spelling. Like Sally, Tiffany got along well with the other students, but she was somewhat more reserved. Danny seemed to be the least engaged of this small group of students. His attention would wander, and he and Tiffany would sometimes engage each other in interaction alone. Danny seemed not only uninterested in the reading group at times, but even visibly discouraged. As is discussed later, he made few attempts at long sequences of talk.

Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures
Data collection and analysis took place over the course of two years, from September, 1998 to June, 2000. During the first year, Betsy Rymes spent one day a week at the school as a participant observer, and taped one reading session per week. During the second year, the school established an ESOL pull-out program, and Ms. Spring took a teaching job elsewhere. Betsy Rymes continued to visit the school weekly, but focused those visits on the new ESOL pullout class that René participated in every morning along with 6 other children. Data collection procedures included participant observation—encompassing participation as an after-school reading tutor for René during the first year—and videotaping of reading-group interaction. Data sources consisted of field notes taken throughout the two years, video-taped data from the reading groups during the first year, and video-taped data from the ESOL pullout group during the second year. All videotapes were roughly transcribed during the two years of data gathering.

Data Analysis Assumptions
Discussing, Doing, and Co-Constructing
Our analysis was based on the epistemological assumptions of language socialization studies. Language socialization has its roots in the work of Dell Hymes (1972)
and his definition of *communicative competence*. Reacting to Chomsky’s notion of the “ideal speaker” as one who has mastery of grammar, Hymes, a linguistic anthropologist, argues that to be an ideal speaker, one needs knowledge of the norms and expectations within a local context, and that only with this contextual knowledge can an individual be “competent” as a communicator. Building on Hymes, language socialization researchers investigate how children acquire language and language attitudes not only through what is said about language and culture, but also how culture is reproduced through language (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin, 1990; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986). Accordingly, to address this understanding of language and its role in socialization in our own data, we began our analysis by isolating those passages in which participants were 1) discussing language and culture; and 2) doing cultural and linguistic diversity through language use.

It is important to note that often, the doing and discussing of language and culture did not spring from a single person, but were jointly accomplished over the course of an interaction (or multiple interactions). How a language attitude was enacted was not necessarily a matter of individual intentions, but could result over the course of an unfolding series of turns (Duranti, 1997). For this reason, we have chosen not to code for generic indicators of attitude or linguistic preference located in individual speakers (e.g., “positive attitude toward Spanish” or “positive attitude toward AAE”), but have isolated passages in which a language attitude is jointly constructed in interaction. These passages are central to our analysis below.

### Sampling, Coding, and the Video Viewing Process

Our analysis focuses on the moment-to-moment interactional effects of Spanish use in the pull-out group context. The initial goal was to see how interactional patterns changed when two languages were in play; therefore, we began by selecting, from the entire corpus, those interactions in which Spanish occurred. This entire selection consisted of six short clips (each under 4 minutes).

The two authors of this paper and Ms. Spring viewed the six clips across the span of several weeks and recorded our reactions to each on a guide sheet (see Appendix A). We began our coding of these clips with no assumptions about effects on African American participants. Instead, we were using standard descriptions of classroom questioning patterns (e.g., Mehan’s [1985] Initiation-Response-Evaluation pattern) and types (e.g., known-answer versus genuine questions) to create our clip-viewing sheets. We were concerned with who asked questions, who answered questions, what types of questions they were, how they were evaluated by Ms. Spring, and how the use of Spanish influenced these variables. For instance, Ms. Spring would usually ask “known-answer” questions of the group based on a book they just read. Typically a student or a few students would offer answers, and Ms. Spring would react positively (e.g., “Yes, that’s right.”), neutrally (e.g., “Hmmmm”), and less often, negatively (e.g., “No.”). Finally, we examined
whether Spanish was used in the examples as a translation tool suggested by Ms. Spring (e.g., “‘Hora’ means ‘time’”), or suggested by René.

In addition to identifying question askers and respondents, question types, and ranking both the degree of student participation and the effects of language change on participation, we discussed as a group (and at length) the qualitative features of each interaction (e.g., Whether it seemed the students were “getting it,” if Ms. Spring reacted in a constructive way, what background activities were occurring, etc.). These discussions/viewing sessions all took place after school in Ms. Spring’s classroom. Ms. Spring enjoyed viewing herself teaching on the clips, but often cringed at her own tendencies to dominate or put words in students’ mouths. She also expressed concern about the African American children in the group, but did not know concretely what she might have done to facilitate their learning. This analysis is taken up in part to help us understand what she might have done interactationally to facilitate Danny’s and Tiffany’s participation while simultaneously validating Spanish language use.

In our clip-viewing and coding, we focused on how language use was enacted. Only upon seeing the vivid ways in which the African American students were excluded from the Spanish language interactions did we go back to isolate those occasions in which language was talked about. These passages were selected on the basis of their content, but their selection was informed by the interactional analysis we conducted with Ms. Spring.

We formulated answers to our three questions by looking at two levels of language functionality. We first examined the use of language to represent. In this case, we were looking simply at the content of what teachers and students said about each other’s languages and ethnic backgrounds (Were teachers asking about the backgrounds of students? Were the students asking about each other’s languages and ethnic backgrounds?). At the second level of language functionality, we looked at variation in language use and how such variation affected group participation. At all times, during data collection and especially during coding, the researching and teaching roles were in tension, as discussed further below.

Researchers’ Roles
As noted above, data collection began as an individual research project designed by Betsy Rymes in collaboration with Ms. Spring. Especially during the first year of the study, Betsy’s roles of researcher/tutor/friend were very blurred. Though not fluent in Spanish, she was able to read Spanish children’s books with René after school, to talk with his mother in Spanish, to let her know of any concerns Ms. Spring had about René, and to provide encouraging news about his progress. However, until late in the first year, when another Spanish-speaking (and non-English speaking) peer arrived, René socialized primarily in English. That is, he was not interested in using his Spanish to socialize with Betsy or to speak with his mother when Betsy was around. After two years, data collection ended, but analysis
on the multilingual interactions continued in partnership with Kate Anderson, a graduate research assistant. After constructing a sharable set of clips and focused questions, in the fall 2003 Kate and Betsy visited Ms. Spring in her new classroom in a different school district to work on some collaborative analysis. These viewing and coding sessions therefore included the distinct perspectives of three individuals—Ms. Spring, the teacher in the study; Betsy, the researcher who had collected the data and had been in Ms. Spring’s class personally throughout the focal year; and Kate, who, as a graduate research assistant, joined the project only after the data had been collected. Kate gained familiarity with the classroom exclusively through Betsy’s and Ms. Spring’s accounts, and through viewing the video-taped reading sessions. As mentioned, too, Kate brought fresh eyes to the data and, as a graduate student particularly concerned with African American English and societal perceptions of linguistic variation, she was acutely sensitive to the way AAE was taken up (or not) in classroom interaction. Though Kate’s observations were only of the reading group videotapes, upon re-reading her field notes, Betsy was surprised to discover that those observations echoed her own thoughts on the classroom and school discussions of “language deficit” children in general.

In the account that follows, we begin with a discussion of the dual functionality of Spanish language and one child’s Latino ethnicity within this group. We then discuss parallel instances of African American language and ethnicity.

Findings

**Discussing René’s Difference: Talking about Costa Rica**

Concerned about René’s inclusion into the classroom, Ms. Spring sometimes chose a book for the reading group that she thought would draw him in. While these overt attempts to enhance René’s learning and engagement were commendable, similar efforts were not always extended to other students. While René was struggling, other students were as well; it seemed that his unique cultural and linguistic identity flagged him as a special case for Ms. Spring. The following example illustrates a typical way the teacher used content to attempt to make links to René’s homeland. She was reading *My Little Island* (Lessac, 1987) with the six students in the reading group. The book tells the story of a young European American boy visiting the Caribbean island homeland of his good friend. Cultural differences are positively highlighted through mention of cuisine, dress, pastimes, and customs in general, and the teacher encouraged the students to discuss how their families’ customs contrasted or aligned with those described in the book. Ms. Spring specifically chose this book to encourage René to participate more actively in class and to use his own memories of Costa Rica as a foundation for writing. As illustrated in this excerpt, the teacher tried to build a bridge from this book into a discussion of René’s home country, Costa Rica:
1. Costa Rica’s Sounds and Smells

**TEACHER:** All right, so what are you gonna write about René?

**RENE:** Costa Rica.

**TEACHER:** Costa Rica: We wanna know what Costa Rica looks like (.) and what sounds you hear, what smells.

Ms. Spring was asking about René’s country of origin here. Her attempt to draw René out, however, remained a two-person, teacher-instigated question-and-answer sequence. Even when René volunteered details about his home in Costa Rica, as in the next example, he and his teacher remained locked in teacher-led dialogue:

2. I had a well

**RENE:** I had a well when I lived in Costa Rica

**TEACHER:** So (.) Okay, so you wanna put that down?

**DANNY:** When I— when

**TEACHER:** Would you u- (.) Like a water well?

**DANNY:** I see buildings when-

**RENE:** ((makes a pumping motion with his arm))

**TEACHER:** ((And) did you pump it? (.) Okay. Put that down. That would be exciting, wouldn’t it? To hear about.

Although René did volunteer a response here—a detail about his home in Costa Rica—the overall participation pattern remained strictly teacher-led, with little opportunity for tangential student-driven topic shifts or student-expert roles. For example, Danny’s comment (“When I—, when I—, I see buildings when . . .”) was not attended to by the teacher at all. The I-R-E participation structure here created a need for the teacher to follow up on René’s minimal responses and encourage him to flesh them out. These examples represent a recurring pattern that occurred in this reading group—interaction and topic remained teacher-initiated, Spanish language was never used, and the participation followed a strict series of teacher-student-teacher-student dialogues (see Table 1).

René’s participation would take on a different, more agentive role later in the year, after the arrival of his new classmate José, who spoke Spanish in his home.

Doing Linguistic Difference with René: Using Spanish in the Classroom

In the following excerpt, classroom activity revolved around the children’s book *Time for Bed* (Fox, 1993). In this excerpt, José, a recent Mexican immigrant, knew much less English than René did. At the teacher’s encouragement, René scaffolded José’s English learning by serving as interpreter of much of the teacher’s instruction during a task structured around the book.
3. *Time for Bed*

**RENE:** (Looking at José) Cama, that’s bed.

**TEACHER:** “Okay.” Ti:me fo:r

**RENE:** Do you know what is bed in Spanish?

**TEACHER:** What is bed in Spanish?

**RENE:** Cama.

**TEACHER:** Gama. Is it= ((starts to draw a letter in the air with her finger))

**RENE:** =Ca:ma:.

**TEACHER:** Ca:ma.

((Danny reaches for the vocabulary cards))

**TEACHER:** Hands to yourself, kay? (.) Cama?

**RENE:** Cama.

**TEACHER:** [And this is what- ((pointing to her watch)) Hora?

**DANNY:** [Cama]

**RENE:** Hora.

**TEACHER:** Hora,

**DANNY:** Hola.

**RENE:** de,

**TEACHER:** [de:,

**DANNY:** [de:,

(2.0)

**TEACHER:** Cama?

**DANNY:** Cama.

**RENE:** That- that’s sleeping,

**TEACHER:** [O::h].

**RENE:** [Hora] de dormir.

**TEACHER:** “Oka:y.”
**RENÉ:** It’s time to:
(1.0)

**RENÉ:** [sle:ep].

**DANNY:** [Hora de dormir,

**RENÉ:** That’s hora (. ) de (. ) dormir.

Here, René had an agentive, expert role as a Spanish-speaker, controlling the topic by posing known-answer questions for the teacher. This was the first time we saw him taking such a dominant role in the classroom; it was also the first time any student was allowed to control the topic to such an extent, in Spanish or English.

Ms. Spring had attempted in previous class sessions to have René “show” some of his Spanish to the class, occasionally asking him during teacher-fronted lesson time to display the Spanish word for an item under discussion. But here, René used Spanish as a legitimate language for instruction. The use of Spanish was no longer simply a display of language diversity, but used to accomplish an academic task. This change in the function of Spanish also changed the participation framework from a series of teacher-initiated teacher-student-teacher-student exchanges to a student-initiated exchange in which multiple students took turns between teacher turns. This was a practical necessity, since René was acting as interpreter for José, but this opening of the participation framework also provided a space for Danny to potentially participate. In the “I had a well” example, Danny’s interjection appear to be an attempt to start his own dyadic exchange with the teacher. But in this example, he began to join in the more distributed participation framework that evolved out of the use of Spanish. When he voiced “hora de dormir,” he was not discussing linguistic or cultural diversity, but joining in or *enacting* the linguistic diversity going on around him.

The arrival of another Spanish speaker seemed to change classroom interactional opportunities for everyone. Before the arrival of José, interaction and topic choice remained teacher-initiated; Spanish language was never used, and the participation followed a strict series of teacher-student-teacher-student dialogues. With José’s arrival, René discovered space to initiate question sequences, to control the topic, and to use his home language. With René in this new role, participation patterns were no longer strictly locked into a teacher-student-teacher-student series of dialogues, but were instead opened up to include multiple student voices between teacher turns (see Table 2).

As this brief comparison suggests, the arrival of another student who spoke Spanish had a transformative effect on René’s participation in the class and on the interactional resources on which Ms. Spring drew. In these examples, asking about René’s culture was less involving than using his home language as a tool for instruction. Nevertheless, the teacher’s initial attempts to legitimize René’s home
culture may have paved the way for his subsequent Spanish use. Also, when Spanish was used as a medium in this group, it opened the door to integrating more fully Spanish language and culture into classroom interaction. This recognition of the impact of José’s presence was a highlight in our analysis of René’s language use. Meanwhile, as we noticed René’s increasing agency, and despite Danny’s initial foray into the Spanish-speaking exchange, we also began to notice the delegitimizing of other students.

Discussing Danny’s Difference: Issues of Race

While the examples so far show the teacher and students taking interest both in René’s cultural difference and in the use of Spanish, the examples that follow illustrate a striking contrast regarding the positioning of the African American students, whose culture and language, rather than being highlighted or legitimized, tended to be backgrounded and delegitimized.

Students and the teacher were quick to take up both the topic of “Costa Rica” and the use of Spanish. However, the teacher was not so quick to topicalize issues of African American culture when opportunities arose. For example, when the teacher was introducing the book Time for Bed, she told the students a little about the author, an Australian named Mem Fox. While she was always interested in showing the authors of these books to be real and interesting people, when Danny brought up the issue of Mem Fox’s race, Ms. Spring silenced this line of talk, and his contribution was treated as off-topic. Yet as seen below, this contribution was not about African American culture. It was about whiteness—the question raised by an African American child to the teacher. Possible reasons for this type of silencing could be due to parent-teacher relations or just the fact that teacher education in Georgia does not adequately prepare educators to deal with deeply feared,
long-standing cultural issues such as the historical relationship between African Americans and European Americans.

4. Mem Fox is White

Teacher: This is by Mem Fox. She’s from (.) an author that I really like, and she’s from Australia. That’s another continent.

Danny: (And she’s) White.

Teacher: She’s white, ((nodding))

but uh- uh:m: (.)

I don’t think that matters though.

This interaction, nested within an otherwise helpful conversation designed to provide engaging background, positioned Danny’s inquiry about the race of the author as irrelevant. Similarly, when reading My Little Island, deliberately chosen by the teacher to facilitate the students’ talk about their homelands, another student brought up an issue of race in relation to the book. Danny had clear ideas that this might be a taboo topic as indicated in the interaction that follows:

5. Don’t be Talkin’ About That

Sally: They’re white and everybody else is black.

Teacher: Oh, so her friend is white and everybody else is black in the picture.

Danny: Hey don’t be talkin’ about that.

Teacher: What is wrong with that?

Danny: Nothin’ ((Danny shakes his head))

Sally: Nothin’

Teacher: Is there anything wrong with that?

Students: No. ((Sally shakes her head))

Teacher: No, I didn’t think so either, but that was really- neat that you=

Teacher: But look at there ((Points to a small animal in the picture book))

Teacher: =It was neat that you pointed that out.

Teacher: What is that behind them right there?

Here, while it was a European American child, Sally, who pointed out the race of the picture-book characters, it was Danny who firmly made the point that this was a subject not to be discussed. While the teacher insisted that there is “nothing wrong” with talking about “that,” she swiftly closed down this topic by seeking agreement all around (“Is there anything wrong with that?”) and then changed the topic, pointing to a small animal in the same picture. The four teacher utterances in a row, as well as her self-interruption, represent her conflicted stance toward discussing race in this context. While she started to say “It was neat that you pointed that out,” she interrupted herself to point to a more innocuous little
animal in the book, apparently forcing herself to change the subject. Again, we see the tension associated with this touchy subject of race relations. While it is easy for researchers to suggest talking these matters through on the spot, teachers unaccustomed to fielding discussions such as these may have trepidation about the matter. Also, Ms. Spring specifically liked the class to stay on track with a given lesson. Many opportunities arose for tangential learning, but her style was more in line with getting a lesson completed; this probably had something to do with the fact that this group of students (as with many second grade students) had trouble staying on task in an informal setting.

These examples of closing down race as a topic for the group to discuss are striking, especially in contrast to the other pattern we have pointed out: the discussion of René as a person from an interesting country, Costa Rica, and as the speaker of a legitimately foreign language, Spanish. Though usually met with minimal peer uptake, the teacher often used discussion of René’s cultural and language background as a point for departure.

**Doing Linguistic Difference with Danny: Using AAE in the Classroom**

This contrast between uptake of René’s language background and his comments and concerns is consistent at the second level of analysis as well. The silencing of Danny’s comment about race was echoed in the way his own contributions, regardless of topic, were treated in interaction. The following example illustrates those rare times in which Danny took an extended turn at talk. This was his longest turn in the entire corpus; however, his talk, which exhibited some canonical features of AAE grammar (Bailey, 2001; Cukor-Avila, 2001; Green 2002) and discourse patterns (Morgan, 2002), was never taken up as germane to the current topic or literacy event (for an extended analysis of this literacy event, see Rymes & Pash, 2001).

As this interaction began, the teacher was questioning the students about a picture in a book called *Big Old Bones* (Carrick, 1989). “What do all the men have on their heads?” Ms. Spring asked, receiving an obvious answer, “hats.” But when she began to probe about whether people wear these kinds of hats today, Danny talked about hats in detail—the kinds of hats “train people wear”:

6) **Train Hats**

**Teacher:** What do all the men have on their heads?

**Tiffany:** Hats=

**Rene:** Hats,

**Teacher:** Hats. [Do men wear a lot of hats now?]

**Rene:** [Some don’t.]

**Danny:** The train dude – the train peoplewear they wear these like (.) big ol:

((Danny makes hand gestures around his head))
RENÉ: ((copies Danny’s hand gesture))
TEACHER: The train people (. ) [that= 
Tiffany: [like this ((Pointing to the picture emphati-

ically and showing it to the teacher))
TEACHER: that drive the train. [(   )
DANNY: [And somebody better put on some (. )uhm 
things for uhm there little thing cause they hurt their ears. ((pointing into 
his ear))
TEACHER: Ah:
DANNY: Because (. ) the noises come in their ear (. ) and 
(0.5)
TEACHER: But do men, do a lot of men wear: hats now?

Just as René took a leadership role in the “Time for Bed” example, here Danny 
boldly initiated a new topic concerning the kinds of things train people wear on 
their ears. This seemed to begin to open up the conversation. There was evidence 
that the participation framework was changing as students began to take up 
Danny’s topic: René copied his gesture, and Tiffany pointed to the book, both 
nodding and involved in Danny’s description. However, in contrast to René’s 
question about the Spanish word for “bed,” Danny’s new topic was swiftly 
constructed as a departure from relevant classroom material, prompting the 
teacher to rephrase her original question about hats.

Why was Danny positioned so differently from René in these interactions? 
Race was certainly an issue in this setting, as illustrated in the previous two ex-
amples. The teacher may also have held some assumptions about Danny’s lan-
guage that influenced her responses to his talk. The way Danny spoke here may 
also have fed into those assumptions about his ability to participate. To be sure, 
Danny’s was not the only speech in this group with marked dialectal features; 
however, given the teacher’s response to his input, we attended to his language 
more closely to understand why the teacher did not seem to listen to him, and why 
she treated his remarks as off-topic. A closer look at Danny’s talk, then, is relevant 
to our discussion of his marginalization as a participant.

Certain features of Danny’s talk were characteristic of AAE (see Bailey, 2001; 
Cukor-Avila, 2001; Morgan, 2002): At the phonetic level, Danny replaced the th-
sound with a d- sound (e.g., “dey” for “they”), exhibited consonant deletion 
(“Somebair” for “somebody), and lowered the “i” sound in thing to “thang.”5 At the 
syntactic level, Danny used a non-standard tense marker not found in school En-
glish (e.g., “the noise is come in their ear”). These have been noted as systematic 
features commonly found in some varieties of AAE (Cukor-Avila, 2001; Green, 
2002).
Danny also seemed to be sensing that his language was inadequate in the eyes of the teacher. He self-corrected at least two times. While he initially used the phrase “train dude,” he re-started the sentences with “train people.” He also changed his pronunciation of “thang” to “thing” when he re-started that sentence. He was clearly trying hard to make his point, and seemed visibly frustrated when the teacher provided minimal response. The other students, too, seemed to notice that the teacher was not taking up his topic, and jumped in to try to indicate to the teacher what Danny was trying to explain.

While the phonetic features of Danny’s talk may have fed into the teacher’s assumptions about his ability, the discourse features of his talk made it pragmatically difficult for the teacher to change her behavior and include him in the reading group interaction. At the discourse level, Danny’s talk resembled an episodic topic structure rather than a topic-centered style more typical of middle-class White classroom discourse (Cazden, 2001; Smitherman, 1977). The teacher expected the students to focus their talk on her topic (hats through history) in a concise and predictable way. Clearly Danny was talking about hats in a way his teacher had not been expecting; and while we cannot offer conclusive evidence, perhaps the episodic structure he employed here may have been received more positively in other settings. In hindsight, Ms. Spring realized her own implicit expectations for this interaction, recalling that she had used this questioning strategy very successfully with the “high” reading group; when she had asked students in that group about hats and whether men wear them today, they had responded unanimously with “no,” as they seemed to have predicted the direction of the teacher’s questioning and followed suit. Danny responded differently, however. Any child will face obstacles to classroom learning when their discourse strategies are expected to conform to school norms without any explicit instruction about those norms (Baugh, 2001; Heath, 1983; Richardson, 2003; Wyatt, 2001).

As is the case with different phonetic realizations (e.g., different pronunciation or “accent”), differences in discourse conventions (e.g., different ways of storytelling) are widely perceived as less noticeable than differences in language code (e.g., Spanish versus English). However, teachers have a responsibility to be informed about both kinds of linguistic variation. Without knowledge of AAE conventions, students like Danny can be perceived as “not having language” (a comment we heard numerous times from Ms. Spring’s peers)—rather than having a different set of conventions for their perfectly competent language use.

**Comparing the Discussing and Doing of Spanish and AAE in the Classroom**

**Spanish Recognized, AAE Made Invisible**

So far, our comparison of the cumulative patterns in the classroom we investigated seems to paint a gloomy picture for the African American children in this
classroom. For René, the teacher established a foundation of interest in his home culture, paving the way for subsequent Spanish use upon the arrival of another Spanish speaker. The use of René’s home language opened the door to integrating Spanish language and culture (and Spanish speakers) more fully into his classroom interactions. In contrast, when Danny responded to teacher initiations with comments on racial issues, he was swiftly silenced. When he responded to teacher initiations with AAE discourse patterns in the “Train Hats” discussion, his response, rather than opening up the participation framework, was sequentially deleted (Ford, 1993). That is, after his lengthy description of the ear protectors worn by train men, the teacher simply repeated her initial question as if Danny had not said anything. Only after we noticed the inclusive use of Spanish in this setting did we become increasingly aware of this marginalization of AAE speakers.

**Spanish Recognized for All?**

Recognizing the tendency for Danny to be marginalized interactionally brought us back to the Spanish-English examples. What happened to Danny during these events? Was he invited into the Spanish language interactions? Did José’s transformative effect on the participation structure have positive effects for Danny, too? We found that as René was being reaffirmed through José’s presence, Danny was interested as well in joining the ranks of legitimized Spanish speakers. In the same interaction in which René was given the floor, and in which he took up an instructional role regarding Spanish, Danny also attempted to participate as a potential Spanish speaker (like his teacher). Just as the teacher was attempting to learn the phrase “hora de dormir” from René, Danny echoed along. This is noticeably one of his more actively involved moments in this reading group. Danny expressed interest consistently in that excerpt, even uttering an entire Spanish sentence. Tiffany, another African American student, also took an active interest. However, as the interaction continued, their attempts to participate as Spanish language learners were not taken up.

7. **Time for Bed (Reprise)**

**Danny:** Hora de dormir.

**Tiffany:** Hora de dormir.

**Teacher:** (1.8) Okay.

**Teacher:** [This-]

**Tiffany:** [I wanna] talk in Spanish.

**Teacher:** You do? [(Yeah) maybe if they’ll just help us, ((motioning toward René and José)) we can learn can’t we.

**Tiff & Dan:** ((indecipherable talk and giggles)).

**Teacher:** ((holds up the book again)) This is by Mem Fox. She’s from (. . .) an
author that I really like, and she’s from Australia. That’s another continent.

The most striking feature of this continuation of the Spanish talk was that all the participants (Danny, the Teacher, and Tiffany) were native English speakers. While René and José instigated the Spanish dialogue in this momentary interaction, the interest in Spanish spread to the rest of the group. It was potentially very good that these children wanted to learn Spanish, and a tribute to the way that Spanish had been encouraged as a legitimate tool for learning in this classroom.

Again, Ms. Spring reinforced the interest and value of René’s language, and even went so far as to suggest that René and José could teach Spanish to Tiffany and Danny also; however, after this interaction, her attention remained on the book and on ensuring that René and José participated, with the unintended effect of limiting Danny and Tiffany’s participation. Despite Tiffany’s announcement, “I wanna talk in Spanish,” neither Tiffany nor Danny was provided another opportunity to take part in Spanish language exchanges. Spanish was constructed as a legitimate language, and a legitimate tool for instruction, but only for some children. As Spanish use continued in this group, it was exclusively between René and José. Neither Tiffany nor Danny made another attempt to use Spanish or voiced the desire to do so.

Summary

Having viewed and analyzed several examples, we now return to our initial research questions (see Table 3): (1) How are language and culture talked about? (2) How are language and culture enacted? and (3) What, if any, are the interactional affects of the content and kind of language used? As the examples shown illustrate, we found that in this particular reading group, opportunities for learning were very different for the Spanish-speaking children than they were for the African American children. While utterances from Spanish speakers about Spanish language and ethnic background were foregrounded and topicalized (as in the Costa Rica examples), utterances from African American speakers about race (as in the “Mem Fox is White” and “Don’t be Talkin’ About That” examples) were always closed down.

We also found that the use of Spanish language as opposed to the English of African American students had different interactional effects. While the Spanish use in the “Time for Bed” example placed René (momentarily) in the expert position, the use of AAE (as in the “Train Hats” example) was never foregrounded as a legitimate variety or one worthy of emulation. Finally, even the use of Spanish, while an object of interest for the AAE speaking students, was reined in as primarily a medium of interaction for the native Spanish speakers. The momentary shifts in expertise and breaks in the participation structure that the Spanish language provided were swiftly closed down by topic shifts initiated by Ms. Spring.
**Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications**

The examples we present here underscore the complexity of contemporary classrooms, and the need to encourage multilingualism in all students, thereby ensuring that our efforts to foster Spanish do not cloud the recognition of AAE. The Oakland Ebonics debate was waged precisely over the implications of this bilingual-bidialectal tension as it relates to school funding. We combine attention to Spanish and other linguistic minorities in this article with the intention of attending to multiple linguistic varieties—and the fact that some are often granted more legitimacy than others.

Our findings further suggest that where some linguistic varieties are granted more legitimacy than others, so are some cultural backgrounds as well. For René, being from Costa Rica was highlighted (often to his own dismay) as a topic to be discussed as an entire class. At the same time, any mention of being “Black” or being “White” was explicitly shut down. These were topics to be treated not as legitimate, or safe cultural discussions, but as strictly off limits. When we have mentioned these moments in our data to teachers, they have raised their eyebrows, usually countering that were this teacher to have encouraged talk along the lines

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**Table 3: Analysis Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How are language and culture talked about?</th>
<th>How are language and culture enacted?</th>
<th>What are the effects for group participation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mem Fox is White/Don’t be Talkin’ About That</td>
<td>Racial background —Whiteness vs. Blackness— SILENCED.</td>
<td>Danny uses AAE syntax/phonology.</td>
<td>Teacher’s topic and stance maintained. Race and dialect recede to background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for Bed (Hora de Dormir)</td>
<td>Teacher’s lesson content.</td>
<td>René &amp; José—use of Spanish.</td>
<td>Topic control ceded to Spanish-speaking students <em>momentarily</em>. Other students’ participation minimized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train Hats</td>
<td>Teacher’s lesson content.</td>
<td>Danny attempts to foreground elaborated description of ear protectors—AAE syntax &amp; discourse pattern.</td>
<td>Teacher’s topic is maintained. Danny’s topic is sequentially deleted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Want to Learn Spanish!</td>
<td>Content shift to meaning of “hora de dormir.”</td>
<td>Danny and Tiffany attempt to join. Foregrounded Spanish speaking interaction.</td>
<td>Return to story reading. T-S-T-S pattern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of “Yes, Mem Fox is White,” “Let’s talk a little about Blacks and Whites and segregation,” or “Why do you think there is only one White person on My Little Island?” the teacher would likely be the recipient of numerous unpleasant parent phone calls. We are not saying such fallout is easy, but it may be necessary. Even more subtly, recognizing Danny’s forms of participation may be equally difficult and equally resisted by teachers and parents today. As Richardson (2003) has written, “Our American culture is so opposed to the idea of the rationality of African American ways of knowing that we are willing to accept the dismal literacy achievement rates rather than exploit the language and culture that students use as a technology” (p. 16). But despite the general political climate that excoriates non-“standard” varieties of English and policy that mandates against bilingual education, the fact remains that every individual in the United States is entitled to receive an education. In order to ensure that the civil rights of every student are not violated, schools must be granted the authority to use students’ home languages as paths to school language and academic content.

Our analysis was conducted to help us understand what teachers might do to facilitate African Americans’ participation and validate their home language and culture, while simultaneously validating Spanish language use in classroom instruction. We found that our initial clip-viewing with Ms. Spring revealed vivid ways in which language affected participation, but that these ways only became vivid upon review and analysis. That is, only upon seeing the ways in which the African American students were excluded from the Spanish language interactions did it become clear—to Ms. Spring and to us—that a double standard was in effect. Even this exemplary teacher, characterized by a concern for different learning styles and participatory learning, had not known she was enacting such a double standard until she viewed her own teaching on video. As researchers, our primary regret is that we didn’t take time during analysis to problem-solve this aspect of the classroom dynamic—that is, the teacher’s self-knowledge. Our goal for future work is to design studies with teachers from the beginning, and to focus as much attention on researchers’ and teachers’ relationships with the students and with each other as on students’ interactions and progress.

Thus, our primary suggestion—our most practical piece of advice for teachers and teacher educators who are concerned about recognizing multiple linguistic and cultural resources in their classrooms—is to get reflexive. We believe that the most effective and grounded way to foster reflexivity is to tape oneself teaching. We encourage teachers to practice their own analytic skills as they view and evaluate themselves, ground their analysis in their teaching concerns and in established codes for classroom discourse, then build on their analysis by reading literature related to what they have observed. If possible, teachers might share a crucial video clip with trusted colleagues or peers and ask for their analysis. Current computer and digital video technology afford this kind of sharing and prob-
lem solving for any teacher with a laptop computer. This is one suggestion that will guarantee personal growth—but not without the occasional painful realization.

It is not easy to watch oneself teach, but it can be very energizing to make the changes that self-critique suggests. And this brings us to the issue of struggle. We have documented one teacher’s struggle to integrate multilingual children into her classroom and to provide them with the instructional support they need to get the education they deserve. This teacher was consciously and deliberately endeavoring to reach those children who spoke Spanish, a language she recognized as legitimately different from her own. However, as researchers in her classroom, we came to the realization that it was also important to recognize the difference in cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the English-speaking children who had been in her classroom all along. Thus we want to encourage professional development that promotes heightened reflexivity about language use in the classroom. We want to promote teacher action research as an important contribution to the body of work investigating the interactional dynamics of classrooms in which both Spanish and AAE are spoken. Such research can afford deeper analysis of linguistic diversity in classrooms, encouraging teachers to recognize the legitimacy of all language varieties that exist in schools today, and to ensure that support for language learning along multiple dimensions is available for all.

NOTES
1. “A person who speaks two languages is twice as valuable.”
2. The term African American English holds many connotations. For this paper, we are focusing on those students whose language significantly diverges structurally and/or phonetically from what is generally considered school English usage. We acknowledge the wide range of linguistic variation among speakers of African American English, including varieties that are less distinctive to the ears of classroom teachers.
3. In hindsight, it is interesting to note that the 6 African American students in the classroom (all of whom were struggling readers) did not come up as a focal concern initially. Only during our analysis (and thanks to the fresh eyes of graduate assistant Kate Anderson) did this blind spot become apparent. As Betsy looked back at her field notes, she found supporting evidence of her own emergent recognition of this reality. An early entry, for example, reads, “Why are all the ‘non-readers’ black?”
4. Transcription conventions are as follows:
   • Question mark indicates rising intonation (e.g., René?)
   • Period indicates falling intonation
   • Comma indicates continuing intonation
   • Colon indicates sound stretch (e.g., Costa Rica:)
   • Period in parentheses indicates a brief pause (e.g., like (.) and )
   • Square brackets indicate overlapping speech (e.g., Danny: [When I- when / Teacher:] Would you)
• Double parentheses enclose transcriber comment on non-verbal actions (e.g., ((makes a pumping motion with his arm)))
• Single parentheses enclose unsure transcription (e.g., (and))
• Small circles enclose utterances spoken in a quiet voice (e.g., “Okay.”)
• An equals sign indicates closely latched speech or the interruption and continuation of a connected idea (e.g., Is it = =Cama)
• Underlining indicates emphasis (e.g., Ca:ma.)
• Single dash indicates a self interruption (e.g., And this is what- )
• Pauses are timed in tenths of seconds and inserted in single parentheses (e.g., (2.0))

Transcription conventions attend primarily to content and sequence—not phonetic features of the various Englishes represented in the speech of this group. Certain phonetic features will be transcribed in the analysis section, where relevant.

5. These phonetic features are also noticed in some southern European American dialects but are often stigmatized when found in the speech of African Americans (Bailey, 2001; Cukor-Avila, 2001).

REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: GROUP CLIP VIEWING SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

1. Who’s asking the questions. (q1, q2, …)  
   Who is answering? (a1, a2, …)  
2. What kind of questions are they?  
   a. Genuine  
      i. Open-ended  
      ii. Yes-no  
   b. Known-Answer/Rhetorical  
      i. Open-ended  
      ii. Yes-no  
      iii. Single answer

3. Is this interaction primarily TEACHER-Led or STUDENT-Led?  
   Teacher Led 1 2 3 4 5  
   Student Led

4. Who designates turns? Teacher or students?  
   Teacher 1 2 3 4 5  
   Students

5. Who generates subtopics?  
   Teacher 1 2 3 4 5  
   Students

6. How is Spanish being used?  
   Translation of Teacher 1 2 3 4 5  
   Sharing of Student Knowledge

7. Sequential Order of Turns  
   IRE 1 2 3 4 5  
   Chained Utterances

8. Preferred Goal  
   Correctness 1 2 3 4 5  
   Shared Knowledge/Participation

9. Occurrence of Repair (Directed at self or other(s))  
   Always 1 2 3 4 5  
   Rarely

10. Initiation of Repair  
    Teacher 1 2 3 4 5  
    Student(s)

11. Expansion Options Realized  
    None 1 2 3 4 5  
    A Lot

12. Kind of Participation  
    T—S Dyad 1 2 3 4 5  
    T—S—S—S—etc.

Other comments: