



Running Head

Situated Language Discourse and Awareness

Author: Clifford H. Lee

Date: 2010

Series Number: IPSW015-X036

Lee, C. (2010). *Language as graffiti: Situated language discourse and awareness of a teenager*. Unpublished manuscript.

The CENTER XCHANGE is a repository of documents produced by and about UCLA students, alumni, and faculty on the work of transforming public schools. The CENTER XCHANGE is managed by an editorial board that meets monthly to review submissions and develop new content. Access to these resources vary with copyright restrictions, however Center X strives to provide open and free access whenever possible.

Content of the Articles are access by various copyrights;
The XChange Archive is © UC Regents 2010
Center X is a part of the Graduate School
of Education and Information Studies at UCLA
1320 Moore Hall Box 951521
Los Angeles, CA 90095
www.centerx.gseis.ucla.edu

Language as Graffiti: Situated Language Discourse and Awareness of a Teenager

Clifford Lee

UCLA

*Language as Graffiti: Situated Language Discourse and Awareness of a Teenager***I. Research Questions and Sub questions**

From January to March in 2009, I was a participant observer at a K-8 Charter school and its local community in Los Angeles, California. What began as a general observation of the language practices of urban teenagers of color turned into a focused study on one particular student's repertoires of linguistic practices. I spent one weekday afternoon a week following my volunteer focal student, known in this report as Jimmy, from 5th period to the time he was picked up by his parents, usually around between 4 and 5:30 PM. My observations included participating in conversations and activities with him and his classmates during his 5th period Advancement Via Independent Determination (AVID) and 6th period Art class, but it also included transitions between class, after school on the sidewalk with vendors, family members, and friends and occasionally at the Carl's Jr. restaurant two blocks from the school. Towards the end of the study, I also observed Jimmy, six classmates and their Math teacher in an after school Math tutorial class. By the end of the study, I had become quite familiar with Jimmy, many of his classmates, as well as the three teachers' classes whose I observed. Although familiar, I would be overly idealistic in stating that my presence did not have some impact on the discourse, attitudes and actions of the participants I observed.

The following are my primary research questions and sub questions that I arrived at after several modifications to my research focus.

1. What are the linguistic practices of my focus student Jimmy?
2. How do the intersectionalities of setting, audience, purpose, activities, participants' discourse(s) and ideology inform the language practices of Jimmy?
 - a. To what extent is Jimmy aware of the linguistic switches he makes?
 - b. What factors (in school, out-of-school, classroom culture, teacher style, content of discourse, age of participants, subject matter, activity, history) influence Jimmy's selection of language practice?

- c. How do teachers' language ideologies and practices influence the perception and performance of students' language practices?

II. Significance and related literature

“Wild style, bubble letters, blockletters, 3-D, Cholo style, futurism.” These are just a few of the various graffiti styles that exist today. In any given moment, a graffiti artist, or “writer” in graffiti circles, will simply write her/his name in a style that may not be discernable to the typical non-writer. Each particular style has its own distinctive stylistic differences that may only be known to writers. Stylistic choices are influenced by other writers (especially well-regarded ones), current trends, graffiti crews and the location where they are “bombing” or “piecing” (making their graffiti art). Similarly, most speakers utilize myriad repertoires of linguistic practices, with choices influenced by their environment, other participants, and the activit(ies) they are involved in. Additionally, like graffiti, language practices are mutually informing. When a writer adapts a different or original style to their work, other writers will “bite” or copy aspects of it into their next piece.

Typical hegemonic media representations of urban youth generally include some highly stylized discourse littered with slang and profanity. Given these media representations, it is not surprising that many adults not acquainted directly with these young people automatically assume that most are limited by this singular discourse and that they are incapable of communicating with a variety of participants. Unlike the children of privileged white families, who are socialized to speak varieties of academic language in their home, many urban students of color learn and develop varieties of language that simply not valued by dominant society (Gee, 2004). As Lippi-Green (1997) writes:

Dominant institutions promote the notion of an overarching, homogenous standard language which is primarily white, upper middle class, and Midwestern. Whether the issues at hand are larger social or political ones or more subtle, whether the approach is

coercion or consent, there are two sides to this process: first, devaluation of all that is not (or does not seek to be) politically, culturally, or socially mainstream, and second, validation of the social (and linguistic) values of the dominant institutions (p. 65)

If individuals from privileged dominant groups were placed in an urban or non-mainstream context, many would face challenges similar to those faced by English Language Learners across the country today. Therefore, to understand the language practices of Jimmy, one must understand and know the location, participants and activity that he is involved in because "...language is tied to people's experiences of situated action in the material and social world" (Gee, 2004, p. 42).

My study sought to examine the language practices of a single urban youth in a major metropolitan area in the U.S. By having a better understanding of these practices, perhaps Yosso's (2005) cultural capital argument may be used by schools to develop a more nuanced understanding of the value students already bring into classrooms. This could encourage more culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum. In addition, by recognizing and appreciating students' multiple repertoires of practice, including non-English languages, teachers can begin to re-mediate traditionally valued notions of standard English (Lippi-Green, 1997) as those who regularly use academic varieties of language. On a pragmatic level, the National Chicano Survey showed that biliterates have a slightly higher rate (68%) of being employed than those who are only literate in English (62%) (Wiley, 2005). This ideological shift can significantly improve the real and perceived notions of value and worth of students from non-dominant groups. Rather than being viewed from a deficit perspective, this paradigm shift can enable adults in schools to look for areas of convergence between these students' cultural capital and the school's language capital. As Delpit & Dowdy (2002, p. 45-48) state, "If we are to invite children into the language of the school, we must make school inviting to them.... We must respect them, so that they feel

connected to us. Then, and only then, might they be willing to adopt our language as one form to be added to their own.”

III. Description of the Setting

Chameleon Charter Academy (CCA) is situated in the low-rise metropolitan communities of Koreatown and MacArthur Park. Tucked in between a Jewish temple and a Catholic cathedral, CCA occupies a tan and gray-accented, two-story building reminiscent of traditional rural schoolhouses. The former tenant of the building was a religious school, as seen in the various religious and spiritual symbols and a mural that adorns its inner and outer walls. The front entrance faces a busy and modern five-story Korean hotel. CCA is seated on the quieter Stanford Avenue, just off the bustling main artery of Main Street. Between the hours of one and two o'clock, there is scarcely a pedestrian on the CCA side of the street. However, as the clock reaches a quarter past three, the shrieking laughter of little hunter green clad children chasing each other up and down the sidewalk and grass area in front of the school can be heard. They weave in between twelve to fourteen-year old gendered clusters of boys and girls who gossip and banter with pubescent and pre-pubescent excitement. The buttery rich smell of fresh cooked corn and the ubiquitous ring, ring, ring emanate from the white, three-wheeled icebox of the *paletero* man. On most days, a stocky man or woman offer three Churros neatly arranged in white paper bags for a dollar and a woman sells chips and candy from an old supermarket cart.

CCA opened its doors in 2000 and is part of a larger network of charter schools in this metropolitan area. Originally, it was only an elementary school with a smaller number of students before evolving to its current size: 460 students from Kindergarten through 8th grade. It is also part of a network of two other charter schools; another elementary and middle school and a high school. The three charter schools together form a collective network of shared resources

and a single union. Although a majority of students eventually transition to the network high school, they are not pushed to do so. In fact, a majority of the 8th graders participate in a project in which they research the positives and negatives of different local high schools.

The demographics of the school are overwhelmingly Latino (98%). Nearly the entire student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch (99%). I want to emphasize that while seemingly homogenous, this population is far from monolithic. This largely low-income, Latino population hail from a variety of different Spanish speaking countries: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and others, while representing various immigrant and native-born experiences. Some families left for economic factors, while others fled due to political unrest and came as refugees. While many of the students were born in the United States, some are recent immigrants. According to the latest STAR test, 68% of the students are designated English Language Learners. In addition, the average parental education level is a 1.40, which translates to approximately 71% of parents not having a high school diploma and 24% possessing a high school diploma. Despite these figures, CCA students consistently perform well on standardized exams. The school met all 14 criteria of the Adequate Yearly Progress categories. Furthermore, its 2007 Academic Performance Index (API) base score of 739 gives the school a similar schools state rank of 10.

On paper, many observers could easily opine about the typical English Language Learner issues generalized of recent-immigrant youth from Spanish-speaking countries, but my research clearly demonstrated multiple layers of language complexities that are far too often simplified by school officials. Since a majority of the students spoke a language other than English at home, my initial thought was that observations would produce distinctive arenas where students' language practices could be readily seen. Furthermore, with many Spanish speaking staff at CCA

(teachers, after school coordinators, clerical, cafeteria, security, administration), I thought that many examples of diverse repertoires of language practices would be found.

IV. Narrative Description Section

1. What are the linguistic practices of my focus student Jimmy?

Based on my limited observations of Jimmy (2-4 afternoon hours a day, once a week), I argue that Jimmy displayed six different linguistic practices in different settings and activities, and with different participants. The following chart illustrates the six codes and my definition of them.

	Language practice	Definition
1c	Informal social English with minimal slang and/or profanity	Fragmented, incomplete or simple sentences with ends of words that may be cut off and use of a few slang and/or profane words
1d	Informal social English and minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity	Same as above except with an occasional Spanish word and some slang and profanity
1e	Informal academic English with minimal slang and/or profanity	Same as the 1c except used within a subject-matter specific discussion with little to no slang or profanity
1f	Formal academic English with minimal slang and/or profanity	Attempts to use complete, complex sentences, clear enunciation of words, academic vocabulary, descriptive language
1g	Semi-formal Spanglish	Little to no slang and profanity in majority Spanish with an occasional English word
1h	Spanish only	Spanish only

I will define each language practice, since these codes are the basis of my research study. As the chart above illustrates, the difference between some categories might be quite subtle. For example, when Jimmy talks to a classmate about when the after school Math tutorial begins, they engage in a dialogue using short questions and one-word answers.

Jimmy: "You going to Math tutorial?"

Marisol: "Yes, you too?"

Jimmy smiles and nods

Marisol: "Cool."

Jimmy: "What time does it start?"

Marisol: "3:30"

(FN.5.10.30-31, February 18, 2009).

Although the use of "Cool" lends itself to slang, it is the only indicator that might straddle into

the (1d) code. Jimmy and Marisol do not engage in Spanish and there is no use of profanity in this exchange.

For an example of *informal social English with minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity*, we see the following exchange between Jimmy and Miguel, during independent work time in Art class as a clear indicator of the difference.

Miguel: "Me dijo que... Her..."

Jimmy: "Whatever... That one guy Umberto."

Miguel: "The Mexican shit..."

Jimmy: "Because those 8th grade girls... Beefin'"

Miguel: "Fool! You are confusing."

Jimmy: "I am confused."

Miguel "No, no. You're always confused. Fool, you always confused about everything"
(FN.5.7.12-18, February 18, 2009).

If this exchange were analyzed line for line, one could very well argue that "I am confused." actually shows a complete sentence, without slang, profanity, nor Spanish. However, as Gee described earlier, language is situated in the larger context of the participants, environment, activity, etc. The line by itself does not place its context within the larger conversation about the confusion that Jimmy's friend Miguel is going through. This conversational dialogue exemplifies the use of Spanglish, slang, profanity and general topical discussion of non-academic social relations.

I would also like to highlight the difference between 1c and 1e. The communicative style is quite similar in that both may contain fragmented, incomplete or simple sentences with infrequent uses of slang and/or profanity, but the content is exclusively subject-specific. When Jimmy and his group members are discussing the language survey they are filling out, they engaged in a brief exchange about the books they read.

Delvin: "You read books?"

Jimmy: "There's things you people don't know about me."

Delvin: "What books?"

(FN.5.3.5-12, February 18, 2009)

Through short questions, Jimmy's group member probed his answers on the language survey and Jimmy replied with a non-academic phrase interwoven within his answer. If not for the content of this exchange, which was situated inside of AVID class, filling out a survey that asked what students read outside of school, it would have been an example for 1c.

Finally, examples of *formal academic English with minimal slang and/or profanity* is quite evident in the speaker's attempt at using complete, complex sentences with clear enunciation of words, academic vocabulary and descriptive language. I included "attempt" in the definition to provide leeway for situations when a speaker made every attempt to use formal discourse, but occasionally used words or phrases that were not consistent with such a discourse. In the after school Math tutorial, Jimmy demonstrated his "switch" to this discourse in the phrasing of his questions.

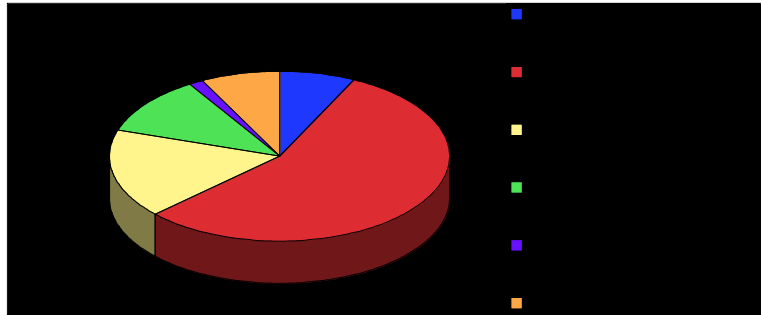
"What do you know about the different answer choices?"

"Do you remember any methods in 6th or 7th grade to divide fractions?"

(FN.5.12.3-4, 8-10, February 18, 2009)

In these questions, Jimmy used complete questions without any truncation of phrases or words nor slang or profanity. His emphasis on enunciation and speed, though not clearly identifiable here, was evident in the manner in which he asked these questions. Sitting upright and making eye contact to the presenter were other aspects of his non-verbal cues in his formal academic language. Also, in other less structured, academic rigorous settings, Jimmy often used "you member..." as the opening to a question, as opposed to line two in this example.

By using a line-by-line tabulation in the field notes of the different language practices, I developed a frequency chart that captures Jimmy's repertoires of linguistic practice, in the afternoons I observed him.



As described earlier, this is merely a representation of Jimmy's language practices on six afternoons of observations. For Jimmy, this minute slice of his life may be a preponderance of his use of *informal social English with minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity*.

Nonetheless, out of 224 lines where Jimmy spoke in the field notes, 125 (59%) of them fell into the 1d code, 38 (17%) for 1e, 25 (11%) for 1f, 17 (7.5%) for 1h, 16 (7.1%) for 1c, 3 (1.3%) for

1g. However, through interviews, Jimmy has explicitly stated that at home, he mostly spoke English and occasionally Spanish among his peers, English with his dad and Spanish with his mom (Interview.1, February 9, 2009). In addition, he also pointed to the frequency in which he spoke Spanish and English with his friends, outside of school (Interview.1, February 9, 2009).

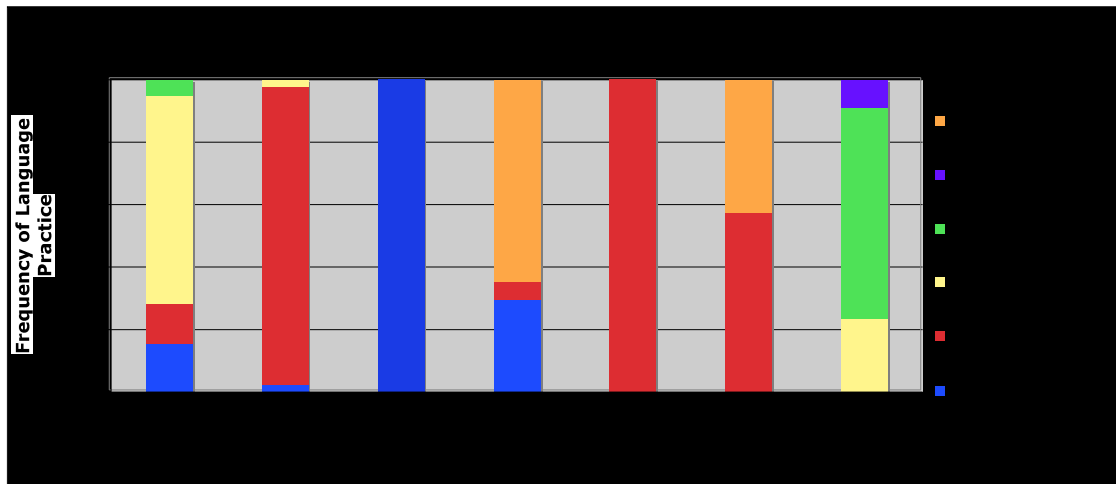
Clearly, Jimmy's various language practices cannot be captured by merely looking at the frequency of his use during the times I observed, since a majority of his life occurs outside of these times. It would interesting to learn Jimmy's linguistic practices while he is working with his dad delivering fruits and vegetables to their predominately Pilipino clientele, at football practice, at home, and with his friends that are graffiti writers. Perhaps we may discover the other repertoires of practice beyond the six illustrated here. Since frequency by itself merely told us that Carlos spoke in *informal social English with minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity* the most, I decided to dig deeper into settings in which this took place. Perhaps by situating his language practices by location, we will begin to understand what factors help to inform these practices

2. How do the intersectionalities of setting, audience, purpose, activities, participants' discourse(s) and ideology inform the language practices of Jimmy?

All of these aforementioned conditions factor into the daily language practices for Jimmy since discourse shifts are multiple, varied and mutually informed by the setting, the activity, and the practices of other participants. Shifts can also occur as a result of the language ideology and conscientious actions of those with power and for this case study: the teacher.

Setting

Using the 224 examples of Jimmy's various repertoires of practice, I disaggregated the data to examine the frequency of use in different settings (AVID and Art class, hallway, sidewalk in front of school, Carl's Jr., on the street, and in after school Math tutorial).



The y-axis indicates the frequency of Jimmy's language practices by percentage. The x-axis breaks down Jimmy's frequency of language practices by setting to highlight the somewhat compartmentalized nature of his usage. I've also included the estimated number of minutes observed for each particular setting in parenthesis for the labels in the x-axis to draw attention to over-generalizing results with a limited corpus of data counts.

As the bar graph demonstrates, Jimmy's language practices vary according to the various settings in which he is situated. With the exception of Art, Carl's Jr., and on the street, where he

mostly uses *informal social English with minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity*, Jimmy seems to use divergent language practices for AVID, hallways, sidewalk in front of school and during after school Math tutorial in Ms. Gomez's class. Many of these clear divisions in Jimmy's language practices may very well be explained out of necessity. The majority of the time on the sidewalk in front of the school, Jimmy is either engaged in dialogue with the *palatero* (man selling ice cream) or his mom. In certain school locations (specific teacher's classrooms and hallways), students may encounter disciplinary actions if they are heard using profanity by a teacher, administrator or another adult from the school. These factors and non-negotiable boundaries serve to create language barriers for certain types of language practices. However, most observed arenas of his life are less predictable and clear, and Jimmy must navigate through them to determine the most effective communication medium.

For a basic disaggregation of Jimmy's linguistic practices, based solely on language use between in school and out of school settings, we see highly distinctive patterns according to his location. Again, I want to emphasize that some of the frequencies are based on numerically small sample sizes, as is indicated for Spanish (17 lines).

	Jimmy's linguistic practices	
	In School	Out of School
English	74 (43%)	5 (11%)
Spanglish	97 (57%)	25 (53%)
Spanish	0 (0%)	17 (36%)

Notice that in the second column (In School), Jimmy uses English and Spanglish quite frequently, 43% and 57%, respectively, as compared to 0% for Spanish. However, Jimmy's frequency of Spanish use was 36% of the time in an out-of-school setting, in juxtaposition to the 11% rate for English in that same setting. These frequencies may represent Jimmy's perception of the value placed on dominant language discourse within school settings since the Spanglish that was recorded in the field notes was largely English-based, with Spanish words

and phrases sprinkled intermittently within the discourse. For a more detailed disaggregation of Jimmy's language practices, we have the following frequency table that demonstrates his English and Spanglish language practices within the three main spheres of in school settings.

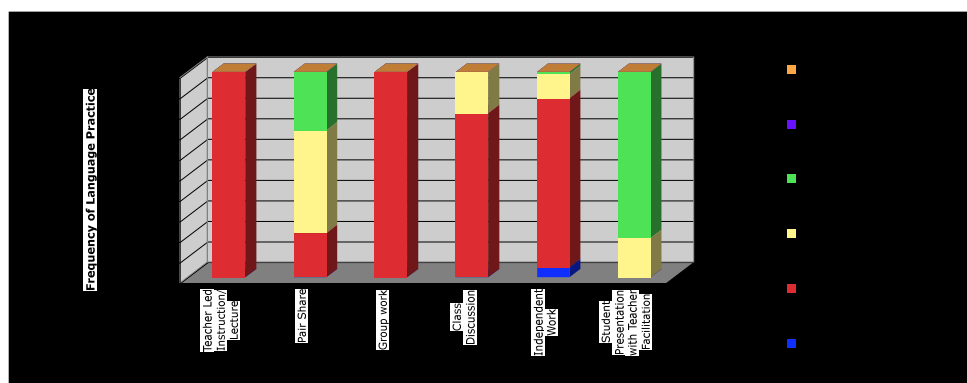
	Jimmy's language practices in different classes (minutes observed in each class)			
Jimmy's language practices	AVID class (200)	ART class (200)	After school Math tutorial (90)	Total
Informal social Spanglish	11 (11%)	91 (91%)	0 (0%)	102
Informal academic English	26 (72%)	2 (6%)	8 (22%)	36
Formal academic English	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	23 (92%)	25

Notice that Jimmy uses his *informal social Spanglish* most often in his Art class (91%), while his use of it is completely non-existent in the after school Math tutorial, and nearly absent in his AVID class (11%). In contrast, Jimmy almost exclusively uses *formal academic English* for his after school Math tutorial class. Finally, his *informal academic English*, one in which he exhibits minimal slang and profanity, while engaged in subject specific conversation, is mostly found in his AVID class (72%) and to a lesser extent in after school Math tutorial (22%). Jimmy's language practices seemed to be highly class specific, as each variation in his language practice is used nearly exclusively for one particular class. Each of his major language practices of English and Spanglish is used over 72% of the time for one specific setting. Despite the fluidity of Jimmy's linguistic practices, he demonstrated clearly defined language practices in accordance with their respective settings.

Activity

After analyzing Jimmy's varied language practices within different settings, I wanted to delineate the data according to the activity in which students are participating. Surprisingly, Jimmy's language practices are consistent (overwhelmingly *informal social English* with

minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity (1d) for most activities during afternoon class time, with the exception of pair share and student presentation with teacher facilitation. For the pair share, he had a mixture of *formal academic English* (1f), *informal academic English* (1e), and the ubiquitous *informal social English with slang and/or profanity* (1d). In the student presentation, he almost spoke exclusively in *formal academic English* (1f), with a few minute examples of informal academic English (1e).



In examining the main pair share activity that constituted the bulk of the results in this table, Jimmy partnered up with a female classmate and used a discourse with minimal slang or profanity. (FN.3.5.6-30, F.3.6.1-8, February 2, 2009). They were also one of only two pairs that had mixed gendered partnerships. His partner's discourse was mostly informal social English with minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity (1d). During a follow-up interview, Jimmy remarked on his recognition of his discourse shift with female participants: "With the guys, I mostly fool around more and... you know... curse at them more. And to the girls, I don't really fool around. Well, I mostly say jokes, instead of... you know... fool around" (Follow-up interview, February 25, 2009). When probed further about why he chooses to converse differently with female and male friends, he finally acknowledge that "cause it's rude" (Follow-up interview, February 25, 2009). Jimmy differentiates between "fool around" and "joking" in

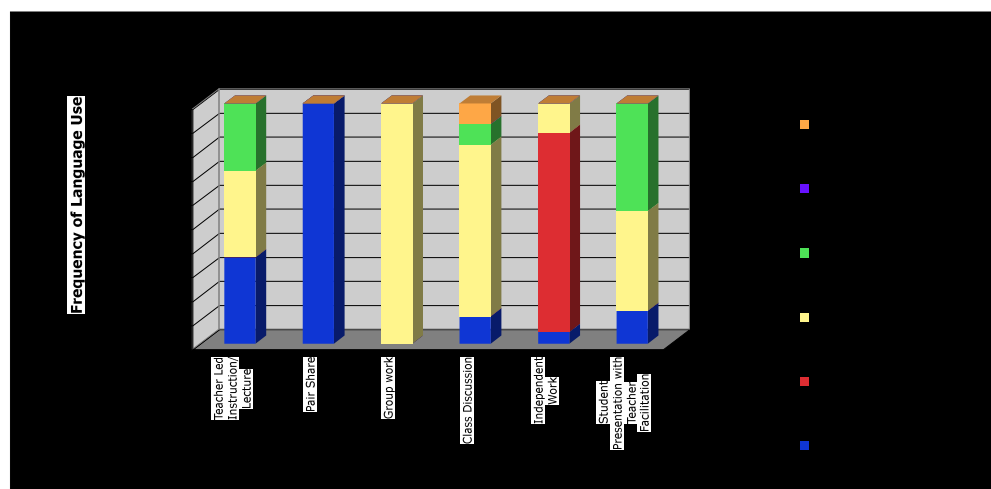
reference to the subject of the conversation, as well as the style in which the message is delivered. By “fool around”, Jimmy and his male friends engage in banter within a range of different topics (physical appearance, size of sexual organs, homosexual tendencies, etc.), whereas by “joking”, Jimmy refers to non-directed, non-threatening humor with minimal profanity. His final statement that “it’s rude” also seems to highlight his gendered differentiated views of discourse between males and females.

Jimmy’s use of formal academic English during student presentations is not surprising considering that most of it took place during the after school Math tutorial with Ms. Gomez. Her consistent subject-specific language repair, coupled with her “standardized” language ideology on academic varieties of language clearly influenced the discourse of her students. Additionally, the highly structured format of AVID tutorial, which is the main structure of the after school class, requires students to stand in front of a panel of their peers when explaining a Math problem. Moreover, audience members are only allowed to ask questions in assisting the presenter solve the problem. This highly structured format, in conjunction with Ms. Gomez’s ideology on discourse, modeling, language repair, and subject matter all contribute significantly in informing Jimmy of the “appropriate” language discourse in this setting.

Although not explicitly stated in the bar graph above, there is a distinguishable difference in the amount of profanity use in the informal social English with minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity (1d) in teacher-led discussions, group work, class discussion and in independent work in Ms. Little’s Art class. Again, the intersectionalities of subject matter, teacher ideology and activity work in tandem to inform the language practices of participants.

After the data analysis on Jimmy’s language practices in specific activities, I wanted to compare that with other participants (classmates, teachers, researcher). Since language practices

are always mutually informing, I wanted to examine the degree to which other participants and Jimmy's discourses informed one another.



When the two previous tables are placed side-to-side, there is little correlation between Jimmy's language practice and those of other participants, during the same activities, with the exception of student presentations and independent work. The other participants seemed to use highly specific language practices for different activities. For pair share, group work, class discussions, and independent work, the language practices used by Jimmy and his classmates, teachers and researcher are completely distinct from one another. For teacher led instruction/lecture, there are three different discourses that are nearly evenly distributed (1c, 1e, 1f) and for students presentations, they are broken mostly between *formal academic English* (1f) and *informal academic English* (1e). The data seems to show that other participants seem to have strong understanding of the different language practices to use in different activities.

Another emerging theme was that the more highly structured the activity, the more likely participants seem to use a more formal academic discourse. If we are to place the activities on a hierarchy from highly structured to minimal structure, things may be viewed in this regard: student presentations, teacher lecture, class discussion, group work, pair share, and independent

work. By definition, highly structured would be an activity with close monitoring/ supervision by the instructor, coupled with highly specific roles, responsibilities, and normative behaviors. Thus, the student presentations (AVID tutorial model) are clearly more structured than independent work in Art, where the teacher has minimal supervision and rules are nebulous. Following this continuum, we see a strong correlation between the use of formal and informal academic English (1e and 1f) in student presentations and lectures and social English (1c and 1d) in pair shares and independent work. However, this does not explain the discrepancy between Jimmy's language practices and other participants.

Language ideology, participants and awareness

Within each setting and activity there are a myriad of other factors that may influence Jimmy's language practices. How might he be influenced by his teachers' discourses? Upon further analysis, Ms. Martinez's AVID discourse varied widely during the course of the observations. She used a combination of 1c, 1e, 1f, and 1g throughout my observations, but Jimmy used *informal academic English with minimal slang and/or profanity* (1e) a majority of the time in her class, although he did occasionally use other repertoires (1c, 1d, and 1f).

In Art class with Ms. Little, Jimmy almost exclusively used informal social English and minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity (1f). During class, Ms. Little used a mixture of 1c, 1e, 1f. During an interview with her, she stated that she "wants to maintain a respectful, but open and comfortable atmosphere. [Her emphasis is on] building a collaborative environment in class" (Interview, February 25, 2009). In order to understand Jimmy's linguistic practice in this context, one must understand the structure of this class. Everyday Ms. Little begins with a 10-15 minute tutorial on an element of art. Following this students are given their art supplies and begin a period of uninterrupted independent work time for the remainder of the period. There is usually a

minute amount of student input during the teacher's lecture and low-level student conversation during their work time. It is during this time that Jimmy and his friends engaged in their informal social Spanglish discourse. The location of their seats, coupled with the lack of proximal attention by Ms. Little, which may be affected by my presence sitting near Jimmy, could explain the informal discourse he and his friends used.

In her after school Math tutorial, Ms. Gomez rarely used anything but *formal academic English* in all of her interactions with students. Jimmy's practice seems to mirror closely the teacher's model. During my follow-up informal observations, I recorded several examples of Ms. Gomez's as she engaged students in language repair. For example, during an interview, she remarked:

In Math, I use Math vocabulary as often as possible. So during instruction and during class time, it's very formal... I don't use slang with them [students] whatsoever, during class...

When we're talking about Math rules, I wouldn't use 'what you do to one side, you do to the other.' I make sure that I say, 'Addition property of inequality to keep your equation balanced.' I won't say, 'you move things around', 'you plug in.' We will use something like, 'substitute' or 'evaluating for this variable.' So it is very formal in that we're using the content vocab. as often as possible." (Interview, February 25, 2009).

Ms. Gomez's language ideology mirrors her discourse during class and students' near exclusive use of academic English during the after school Math tutorial indicate their uptake of her beliefs. Ms. Gomez's language ideology may stem from her beliefs about acquiring the dominant language through school. When she described the conversations she has with students outside of class, she acknowledges that she would readily go back and forth between Spanish and English because "Spanish is [her] first language," but she makes it clear that "it's a lot informal." Does she mean to say that she could not use Spanish formally in the classroom? Strangely, earlier in the interview, Ms. Gomez remarked that,

"Sometimes I codeswitch so I'll go back to Spanish if there's a word that sounds like something they are familiar with in Spanish, but it's new to them. I will do that. And I consider that formal. But I won't necessarily um... so I won't dumb it down" (Interview, February 25, 2009).

This seemingly contradictory ideology may simply highlight the differentiated discourse she models to students. During class, she talks about using Spanish to help students in their understanding of Math concepts, but in non-class settings, she'll readily use Spanish and English together. This may in part stem from her desire to be inclusive of the diverse students in her classes. "I don't want to exclude students who don't speak Spanish... I can't assume they all do... some can't relate at that level. So that's why I don't feel comfortable doing it in class" (Interview, February 25, 2009).

Beneath the seemingly homogenous population of the school lies much diversity. Ms. Gomez recognizes that some students are recent immigrants, while others may be third-generation who do not speak Spanish at home. However, her point about not "dumbing down" the curriculum by using Spanish might be a reaction to the low status given to nondominant languages and cultures by mainstream society. Although highly conscientious and reflective about her language ideologies and practices, Ms. Gomez seems to suggest that she has never made these thoughts explicit to the students.

As a result of Jimmy's poor academic performance in class, Ms. Gomez had developed low expectations for his abilities. At one point, Ms. Gomez expressed surprise and even amazement at Jimmy's rhetorical ability in her after school Math tutorial class. "I had no idea how eloquent he can be when he's explaining until these past few times in study group. He's not this outspoken or engaged verbally in class, EVER" (Interview, February 25, 2009). Although she had taught him since the beginning of September, this was the first time she had seen this "side" of Jimmy. Does this have to do with Jimmy's comfort level in the study group versus the much larger Math class, or is it a developmental change? Or perhaps it has to do with Ms. Gomez's previous experience with Jimmy's abilities? Despite her glowing praise for his

eloquence, Ms. Gomez placed him on the lower-middle average range as compared to his peers. Her explanation of this is that, “it’s been a new experience for him... he’s constantly fishing for that vocabulary that isn’t necessarily all there. ...so he’s constantly correcting himself in the way in what he’s trying to explain” (Interview, February 25, 2009). Based on my field notes, many of the questions he asked seemed to be similar to his six classmates during the after school Math tutorial. Does Jimmy’s low assessment arise as a result of low-expectations Ms. Gomez has of him, based on his previous shoddy performance? How might these types of low-expectations by teachers inform the performance of students? Jimmy’s previous uncommunicative practice may be a direct result of the labeling theory that various researchers have shown to have consequential impacts on the performance of students.

Ms. Martinez also exhibited a form of language repair for an English Language Learner. When the student mispronounced “chef” by using “ch” like “chair”, she re-summarized his statement by adding, “you want to be a chef (with the correct English pronunciation)” (FN.4.3.30 – 4.4.1-2, February 9, 2009). During my observations, I did not notice any examples of language repair from Ms. Little’s classroom. Her lack of language repair may represent another symbolic gesture to students about the low priority placed on *formal or informal academic language* in the Art class. Ms Little’s well-known role as a non-official staff member at CCA may also impact the lower level of importance placed by students regarding her class.

Another possible explanation of Jimmy’s language practices in Art, Carl’s Jr. and on the street may be correlated with the same participants in these three settings. During Art class, Jimmy mainly converses with his good friend Miguel. At Carl’s Jr. and on the street, he is usually with two to three close friends. All of these relationships and group formations are voluntary. In each of these settings, there is minimal to no dictated structure or policing of their language

practices. In the hallway, students are still under the surveillance of administrators and other faculty personnel but in each of the three other settings, there are no adults to police their language discourse. Even on the sidewalk in front of the school, Jimmy is usually with his mom, dad and brothers. This may result in his censorship of certain words or phrases, in an attempt to show respect to his parents. Thus, the proximity to specific participants (especially adults who may perceive certain language as disrespectful) may greatly influence the language practices Jimmy uses.

Jimmy's perspective on the importance of the class and personal or family relationship with the instructor may also play a significant role in the language practice he uses.

"In Math... we do talk in big language too, because of the Science. In Math, you gotta just focus... The more harder classes, that's when we pay more attention. In AVID, it's something to get us more focus to get into college, I take it more serious. She [Ms. Martinez] would take it more personal [if we used profanity], we know her since 7th grade. She knows my parents... Ms. Little doesn't really know my mom" (Interview.4, February 9, 2009).

His placement on important subject areas to better prepare him for a future are high on his priority list, and therefore informs a certain level of language practice (one in which there is minimal to no slang and/or profanity). Jimmy's language practice in AVID is clear when we take into an account of Ms. Martinez's relationship with his mother. For Ms. Little's Art class, there are few cues to encourage Jimmy to use other language practices. Jimmy acknowledged that his mother has had no previous interactions with Ms. Little. This may partly explain Jimmy's higher use of informal linguistic practices in Art class. Furthermore, her views on "respectful, but open and comfortable" language may be seen by students as a license to speak to their choosing. Since she does not use language repair or policing of slang and/or profanity, students may feel that is an open invitation for any variety of language practice. However, given that the Art class is still a space within the larger school community, Jimmy was still guarded (non-verbal gestures of scanning the room for adults nearby) with the volume level of his discourse.

On several occasions, Jimmy's good friend Miguel interjected Spanish phrases or words in their dialogue, but Jimmy almost never reciprocated (FN.4.9.18-20, FN.5.7.12-24, February 9, 2009, February 18, 2009). Based on his responses, it was clear he understood Miguel's comments and questions, but always chose to answer in *informal social English with profanity and/ or slang*. It was not until my fourth observation when I observed his fluency in Spanish. Jimmy's use of *Spanish only* (1h) was non-existent in all school-related settings. The only examples came from the sidewalk in front of the school and on the street. The participants with whom he conversed in Spanish only were with his mother, father, brother and the corn vendor (FN.2.10.4-5, FN.4.10.22-25, FN.5.10.6-10, FN.5.10.17-20, January 26, 2009, February 9, 2009, February 18, 2009). This may be the result of the participants' limited grasp of English (based on my own interactions with them).

As the data suggests, Jimmy seems to use a preponderance of *informal social English with minimal Spanish with slang and/or profanity* (1d) in a majority of the activities during class, and overall during the times observed. During student presentations, especially during the after school Math tutorial, Jimmy overwhelmingly uses *formal academic English* (1f) discourse. What accounts for these vastly different discourses that Jimmy practices in class settings? Perhaps Jimmy's own thoughts may shed light into this quandary:

"Instead of saying [ummm] 'I'm just wondering' I'd say, 'I'm curious about this question' or something... They [7th and 8th grade Humanities class] prepared us to speak with bigger words because in the future we're gonna have to use bigger words with interviews, [umm] you know, things like that" (Follow-up interview, February 25, 2009).

In a subsequent interview with Jimmy, he points out the following:

Interviewer - "Do you think you only use those words sometimes or do you think you try to use it all the time?"

Jimmy - "It depends on the situation. Like, for example, in this interview, I'm trying to talk smart, a lot better."

Interviewer - "Why?"

Jimmy - "It'll make more sense, instead of, you know, smaller words, more basic... I don't really use big words outside... I'm at school, I'm use to saying, speaking a good language at school. Outside, I'm use to speaking how I normally speak."

Jimmy's recognition that specific words connotes differences in people's perceptions toward you

(“talk smart”) clearly demonstrates his understandings of the power of language and the social-political ramifications of them. His allusions towards language usage in interviews, the future and inside school also shows that he recognizes the importance of situated language. His examples of “I’m just wondering” versus “I’m curious about this question...” shows a highly developed recognition of academic varieties of language. His awareness of the goals of the 7th and 8th grade Humanities curriculum to prepare them for a future where “bigger words” are more valued also supports the assertion that Jimmy is keenly aware of the power dynamics of language in society. In addition, his view that he needs to “talk smart” in the context of the interview and how “it’ll make more sense” seems to suggest that he is cognizant of the “academic audience” with which this interview was being conducted. His reference to “speaking a good language at school” seems to support Lippi-Green’s (1997) notion of our societal acceptance of White, middle-class standard English as the valued or preferred language in society. Jimmy is no different in accepting this language ideology. Interestingly, the last line, “Outside, I’m used to speaking how I normally speak” seems to suggest that although cognizant of the need to switch language practices *in* school, to a more formal discourse, he still equates his informal social English/ Spanglish as *the norm*. With his home language(s) being one that is used primarily outside-of-school settings, he’ll always viewed the academic varieties of language practices as *the other*, despite the fluency he develops in it.

Despite data that show Jimmy’s preponderance of *informal social English* in class activities, Jimmy seems to demonstrate a strong recognition and awareness of situated language practices. Perhaps his determination of the intersectionalities of setting, participants, and activities informed him that besides *formal academic English* (1f) and *informal social English* (1d), there is little need to use his other repertoires of language in these situations.

In a follow-up interview with Jimmy, he further demonstrates his recognition and performance of situating language practices. In this exchange, Jimmy shows that he is aware of the specific context and purpose in which he uses certain language practices when addressing participants.

Interviewer: ...so you talked about how you talk to your parents, your teachers, your friends, how do you talk to your coach?

Jimmy: To my coach, well, I can him sir or coach, when he orders me to do say somethin- err... to say something... to DO something like em... "Run this play!" I say, "Yes, SIR!"

Interviewer: He taught you that or he tells everyone to do it?

Jimmy: NO!

Interviewer: Why do you do that?

Jimmy: Respect. You know, it's just a thing with football, well I think with any type of sport.

Interviewer: Uhh... okay. But you don't swear in there?

Jimmy: Yeah, I do.

Interviewer: With him? When you talk to him?

Jimmy: Well, not at him. Well, it's just taking my anger out, you know... Instead of taking it to my teammates, because I'll- ME and this other white kid named Grady, me and him were the hardest hitters, soooo... I didn't want to hurt my teammates, so... um... yeah...

In this excerpt, Jimmy reveals his awareness of the importance that football players and athletes, in general, must show respect toward their coaches. His acknowledgement that the coach did not explicitly teach the players this demonstrates the pervasive nature of this cultural practice in sports. Whether acquired through informal direct observations, media influences or modeling, Jimmy is well aware that to communicate effectively in this arena, he must show deference to the coach with responses in the affirmative, followed by "sir." Furthermore, Jimmy's highly evolved purpose in his language use is demonstrated in his explanation of the use of profanity as an acceptable outlet of anger on the football field, juxtaposed to the harm that can be created through the physical release on teammates.

Intellectual Autobiography

Assertion: Jimmy uses contextual clues like setting, audience, purpose, and activity to determine the most effective language practice to use in a particular situation.

My Methods

My graduate student research work with Professor Marjorie Faulstich Orellana during

the fall of 2008 originally introduced me to Chameleon Charter Academy (CCA). The selection of this site was two-fold: immediate access and connections to stakeholders that would allow for my research to take place. What began as a general observation of the language practices of the mostly Latino/a students soon transformed into the focus of one student's language practices, in and outside of the school. By focusing on one student in a multitude of settings, I felt that I could begin to gain a better understanding of his language practices, his persona and the complexities of his cultural practice. My focus also quickly shifted from a narrow, individual analysis to one that incorporated the range of mutually informing factors: other participants and their language ideology and practices, activities, and location. After multiple renderings of my research focus, it eventually evolved into two major research questions.

My initial informal observation took place during the first week of the course, in my attempts to build relationships and develop a coherence of the site. Since my previous visits to the school were exclusively in Ms. Martinez's Advancement Via Independent Determination (AVID) class, I did not know any other adults nor students in the school. In second week of our course, I found that a new semester would bring with it a new schedule and a new group of students. I soon realized the complexity of finding a focal student when I attempted to solicit students to observe in and outside of the school. Recognizing my positionality as an Asian male adult researcher in a largely Latino school, I asked for interested individuals in this endeavor. To my surprise, one particularly gregarious student offered and I accepted. The fact that my focal student was the sole volunteer out of a class of twenty-six students may have affected the results of my study. His "choice" of being self-selected for this study greatly impacts the generalizability of the results. His decision to raise his hand, when none of his peers did, may suggest his representation of a non-normative or "outlier participant" in this research.

From that day forward, I followed Jimmy between 1:15pm – 5:15pm, either on Monday, Wednesday or Friday. Most observations involved my participation in group work, pair share, student presentation activities, or conversations during independent work time in AVID, Art, the hallway, in front of the school, on the street, at Carl's Jr. or in his after school Math tutorial. After each of the six formal observations, I first reflected in my journal to gather my initial feelings and thoughts of the observation. This was also a place for me to describe developing ideas and themes. Immediately afterwards, I began typing most of my field notes; complementing descriptions with observer commentaries to make sense of my thoughts and the influence of my positionality. At the conclusion of each field note, I also began to jot down questions and “notes-to-self” for things I needed to do at the following observation. These notes allowed me to build continuity from week to week and further developed my understandings of the cultural practice. Halfway through the 222B course, I wrote a memo that shaped my emerging view of the differentiated nature of my focal student's life and his language practices. I will expand on that below. A second memo followed in subsequent weeks, which further disaggregated the major themes of situated language practices for Jimmy.

Towards the last few sessions of observations, I conducted five interviews: one with each of his teachers and two with Jimmy. All of the interviews were done in a one-on-one setting with the exception of Jimmy's first interview, in which Jimmy's brother sat quietly to the left of him. Interviews were either recorded on a digital recorder or in my raw field notes journal. The main function of the teacher interviews was to solicit the thinking behind the routine practices of the classroom, personal language ideologies and its enactment in class, their views and perceptions of my focal student. For Jimmy, the original and subsequent follow-up interview served to gather more background information about Jimmy's life (family, friends, hobbies, school performance)

and to help illuminate his thinking behind his language practices, when and why he “switched” them in various activities and settings. It also functioned to answer lingering questions I had about something I observed but did not understand. Essentially, it helped me understand why Jimmy does what he does.

Additionally, I gathered background information on CCA through the California Department of Education’s website on Academic Performance Index Reports, as well as from my interview with Ms. Martinez, the AVID teacher. This provided me with a background context of general perceptions of the school, through quantitative data that is easily accessible by the public.

My Researcher Role

During the initial observations, I practiced utilizing participant observer strategies as outlined in class and qualitative research methods text. Having been a former classroom teacher in a majority Latino/a school created unexpected challenges for me. I found the need to constantly question, evaluate and modify my instinctive responses to students, behaviors and school personnel. By navigating these impulses, I became more conscientious about how and if my participation contributed and informed my participants’ actions/ behaviors. Eventually, I found a comfortable balance with students in diverse conversations about boyfriend/ girlfriend drama, graffiti, solving Mathematical formulas, the loss of family from violence, sports, language use, and etc. I also quickly learned the intrusiveness of note taking during conversations and quickly abandoned the use of it while participants were around. I employed strategies of note taking in restrooms, hallways, and other settings out-of-the-vision of participants. Occasionally, I jotted down words or phrases under the table, while turned around, or feigning interest in another student group’s activities. Despite these antics and the overall welcoming atmosphere created by my focal student, his friends, classmates, and teachers, my

presence and note-taking strategies may have clouded my participants' conversations and behaviors.

Data Reduction and Analysis

Using the data (field notes, memos, reflections, journal writes, interviews) to influence my analysis, I began by writing down general themes that emerged. Next, I coded liberally, with no particular categories to influence, stifle or narrow my thinking. Many of these codes overlapped and I began to seek commonalities between these and my other data sources. I presented my initial codes and early hypotheses to classmates and professors, who presented alternative perspectives to analyzing the data, as well as questions to push my data reduction and analysis. From these initial codes and categories, themes and additional questions began to develop. To further substantiate these hypotheses, I conducted a follow-up interview with Jimmy, two of his teachers and conducted two more informal observations. Before doing this, I reread my data and code by specific categories (language and communicative practices, setting, activity, audience). As I began coding, the examples of language and communicative practices seemed to emerge from different participants and since the focus of my study was on my focus student, I realized that further data reduction must occur to differentiate the data source. Upon completion of the codes chart, I began disaggregating the data through pie and bar graphs to better see frequencies. I reread my data to delineate Jimmy's various language practices, as a whole, in specific settings, in different activities and in comparison to his classmates, teachers and the researchers language practices in the same activity.

Major turning points

During the research, data reduction and analysis process, there were several distinct turning points that greatly shaped my thinking and understanding of Jimmy's language practices.

They came in various mediums; from individual “a-ha” moments in self-reflections, memos and frequency diagrams, discovery moments through interviews and video analysis, and some came about through arduous re-coding of diagrams, activity logs, 2 x 2 or 3 x 3 charts, and sharing initial epiphanies with classmates and professors.

After completing my first full observation and memo, I had noted the highly disconnected and differentiated nature of the students’ lives. Despite the seven years of teaching experience I had in an urban secondary school, I was struck by how little thought I had given to the disjointed nature of most public schools’ schedules, as well as the students’ lives. Even within a successful, small public school setting, the highly individualized, stratified and disconnected nature of the schooling experience for a typical student is incredible. All too often, adults talk about the short attention spans of pre-teens or young adults, yet the schooling experience seems to reproduce and perpetuate these very ideologies. During the forty minutes of lunch, students are only given twenty minutes for play and twenty minutes to eat. In this bifurcated lunch period, students can momentarily relax with peers, speak how they want (at least if they are not within earshot of adults) and feel a sense of quasi-autonomy from the highly structured schedule of the school. However, once the school bell rings, students are signaled to file into cramped hallways and must quickly adjust themselves into the world of one teacher’s ideologies. In Jimmy’s case, the AVID classroom is an active, intellectually and physically exciting environment, filled with conversation, despite the fact that it is in a highly structured format. Ring! The next bell tells the students to move to the next space where another adult is telling them what the rules are, under the guise that “we’re coming up with the rules together.” They sit for extended periods of time, engaged in an independent activity of listening and writing, until the final bell. However, freedom is fleeting, since most are met with parents waiting, who will impose their view of the

world on these youth.

By observing and navigating through one student's daily routine, in and out of school, I gained clarity and insight into the divisive and often unrelated relationship of classes, school, social and familial worlds of students. It is precisely in these settings that individuals like my focal student *are forced to* develop a highly adaptive language repertoire in order to effectively communicate across the different worlds.

My next major turning point occurred during the first interview with Jimmy. After three formal observations where I observed and participated in the various activities of Jimmy, his classmates and his friends, I finally got a chance to question him about *his* perceptions of his various language practices. From the moment Carlos sat down for the interview, there was a noticeable change in his demeanor, body language, and language register. It was the first time I had seen him in this manner. Even in AVID class, which he considers it to be a serious class, because he says that "it helps prepare you for college", he puts his head down, slouches in his seat and uses a more casual register in communicating with his group members. But during the entire forty-minute interview, he kept an upright body posture, kept eye contact and used a language practice I had not heard him use in any other setting. In addition to using a different vocabulary, he also noticeably slowed his speech down for the first half of the interview and then gradually increased it towards the second half. For the majority of the interview, he also attempted to speak in complete, complex sentences, littered with details and descriptors. In fact, there was a moment in the interview [30:18], where he even corrected his usual informal language, to one that he seemed to deem more appropriate for this interview setting. He said, "Me and my hom, emm... friends, we just say, 'Oh, you know, this is an easy class, we could slack it off.'" Instead of saying, "me and my homies" which I have heard him say many times

before in informal conversations, he used the formal, non-slang synonym ‘friends.’ This interview clearly made me re-examine and question some of my developing theories on Jimmy’s language practices. What signals or symbols told Carlos to ‘switch’ to this formal discourse, attitude and behavior? Could it be the fact that he knows this is for my college class and wants to ‘help me’ do a good job on it, especially since we’ve developed this rapport? When does Carlos practice this particular discourse? What past experiences led him to ‘recognize’ this as one of those formal situations? As a result of this interview, I began to “zoom in” on the activity, the environment, participant(s) and any other symbols that may shed light on factors that facilitate Jimmy’s switch in language practices.

Besides demonstrating a different language practice, Jimmy also discussed at length about his awareness of stylistic changes when conversing with different individuals and in different settings. By his own admission and awareness, he provided several concrete examples of vocabulary modifications and sentence structure changes in his language practices. His insightful demonstration of his formal academic language practice and profound analysis helped me recognize Jimmy’s meta-linguistic awareness and significantly influenced subsequent observations. From that point on, I began to analyze and “unpack” Jimmy’s various language practices in greater detail, with a sharp focus on the participants, their language practices, the setting, and activit(ies) they were involved in.

Another turning point in my study was my interview with Ms. Gomez. Up to that point, I had only paid minimal attention to the language practices of the teachers in the classrooms. I mostly recorded general things they said in class and noted some ways in which they spoke explicitly about language (using a Spanish word, engaged in language repair, etc). However, when she spoke at length about her conscientious decision to use “formal Math terminology” and

her attempts to never use slang, I began to wonder about the impact of teachers' ideologies of language practices on students. Clearly, she was much more adamant than the other two teachers in her vigilance to only use academic discourse and strongly believed in one standard English, but her students definitely understood the priority she placed on their language practices in class.

My preliminary data reduction and frequency charts led me to epiphanies in my thinking towards my research study. After determining that my unit of analysis would be individual line representations of my codes, I was surprised to find that Jimmy actually had a fairly heterogeneous representation of six different language practices. My initial reaction to my field notes gave me a sense that Jimmy had a relatively homogenous language practice, but with the multiple codings, analysis, and a frequency chart, my results were entirely different. This discovery led me to create additional frequency bar graphs, representing these language practices in different settings, activities and when compared to his peers during the same activities. Though time-consuming, these charts allowed me to literally see and compare data. These graphs was what led me to my initial assertion in 222B: Jimmy's repertoires of linguistic practice are highly correlated to the setting in which he's engaged in discourse. Furthermore, it helped me conclude that his language practices are largely dependent on the activity in which he is involved in, which was marked different than his peers. As a result of these assertions, my preliminary hypothesis was that Jimmy had not fully developed the nuanced language practices that his classmates had, but after sharing my results in my portfolio presentation, with classmates and professors, they encouraged me re-analyze my data before drawing such a dramatic conclusion.

Another unexpected turning point came during the time in the 222C class. Since my research has continued at the same site where I did my participant observations, I have remained in the same AVID class from last quarter. The unexpected turn came about from a student-made

video on the language practices of Jimmy and his friends. In one segment of the clip, Jimmy's friends conversed in their casual profanity and slang-filled discourse, not knowing Jimmy was videotaping them the entire time. My shock came as a result of my naivety in thinking that previous observations I had made with this same group of students, while walking to Carl's Jr., was an authentic representation of their language practices. The video clip helped me realize that my position as an adult outsider, possibly representing the school institution, definitively played a critical role in affecting their language practices. Rarely had I witnessed such language practices from Jimmy's friends. Jimmy's non-school, peer participant discourse that I observed however, was much more comparable to the one in the video. This may very well explain his non-normative, self-selection to volunteer to be the focal student of my study. Nonetheless, this eye-opening example of the students' non-school, unobserved language practice caused me to rethink the authenticity of my field notes data. This simply gave me more motivation to peruse through my data again with a more critical and questioning lens.

The final turning point occurred during the re-coding and re-analysis of my interviews with Jimmy and his teachers. When I re-read my activity log and reviewed Jimmy's two interviews, I began to notice more nuances in his meta-linguistic awareness of his language practices. Whereas last quarter, I may have simply taken most of his statements at face value, in the re-reading of the interview I picked up on some of the implied, but unstated reasons for his language practice switches. Specifically, when he discussed the respectful language he used with his football coach, I finally recognized that he was essentially explaining the unspoken rule of deference and reverence, athletes commonly show to their coach. These small "aha" moments came up frequently as I re-listened and sifted through every line of the interview logs. I believe many of my new interpretations of the same data can be attributed to my extensive ethnographic

reading in Professor Allen's Diversity Issues course and Professor Gutierrez's Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) research apprenticeship course. Texts such as Stanton-Salazar's *Manufacturing Hope and Despair* and Carter's *Keepin' It Real: School Success Beyond Black and White* helped me understand how to analyze and pull apart participants' interviews through countless models and examples. In addition, many of the readings by Engerstrom, Cole, Gutierrez and Vygotsky questioned me to see things for more than mere surface level interpretations. Many of our CHAT readings and discussions enabled me to reinterpret previous assumptions about what I initially saw and attempt to understand them by examining the social-cultural, historical, and learning theories in application to Jimmy's language practices. It is only through this combination of recognizing and identifying Jimmy's goals, language practices and setting will one begin to understand how his mind is distributed. And in turn, how he uses his language practices with others depends on his goals for each particular situation (Cole & Engerstrom, 1993).

Though lengthy, arduous and downright challenging at times, the entire research study helped me to begin to conceptualize the nuances of what it takes to complete a meticulously planned out and thoroughly analyzed qualitative study. The places of frustration and struggle are precisely the points of entry for deep and engaging analysis and reinterpretation of data. In many of those occurrences, I noticed that it eventually led me to breakthroughs in my thinking and turning points on "looking" at my initial findings.

This research study also allowed me to witness first-hand the challenges associated in becoming a participant observer. Beginning with an initial hesitancy on how to engage the participants, where I was more of an observer than participant, I quickly moved into the participant-observer role when I had to produce tangible field notes at the conclusion of each

visit. Nonetheless, the role soon grew on me and I became comfortable enough to develop findings and interpretations of the data. However, upon re-reviewing the field notes, interviews, and the discovery of the inauthenticity of some of the students' discourse, I again, questioned the reliability of my data. Regardless, through consistent reassurances from classmates and professors, I soon realized that this is an inherent part of qualitative fieldwork, where the recursive practice of self-reflection and analysis will undoubtedly produce stronger and thoroughly deliberated assertions.

Works Cited

Cole, M., & Engerstrom, Y. (1993). A cultural-historical approach to distributed cognition. In G. Salomon (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions : psychological and educational considerations* (1st pbk. ed., pp. xxi, 275 p.). Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Delpit, L. D., & Dowdy, J. K. (2002). *The skin that we speak : thoughts on language and culture*

in the classroom. New York: New Press.

Gee, J. P. (2004). *Situated Language and Learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. New York: Routledge.

Lippi-Green, R. (1997). *English with an Accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Wiley, T. G. (2005). *Literacy and language diversity in the United States* (2nd ed.). [Washington, D.C.], McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics ;Delta Systems.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

Author's Note

All names (school, participants, street names) have been changed to protect the identity of the people in this study. Language practice, linguistic practice, repertoires of practice, discourses were often used interchangeably through the Report.