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Literacy practices, linguistic anthropology and social inequality

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Abstract[1]

Covering classroom reading, Ebonics, multilingual shop signs, No Child Left Behind and the state, this paper argues that to understand literacy or language policy as a social practice, we have to examine how policy operates as multiple levels, from national legislation to face-to-face interaction in classrooms. To conduct such multi-leveled analysis, we need to focus on hegemony and state effects. Hegemony encourages us to examine how class stratification and cultural assumptions about language converge in the school. The Gramscian emphasis on state as well as civil society suggests that language policies must be seen in relation to historical political economies that inform official definitions of "language problems" as well as popular perceptions of kinds of citizens and kinds of minorities.

Introduction

This paper follows a roughly chronological framework, discussing a selection of my own literacy research, the intellectual and research climate it emerged from, and how the questions and findings of a given work or period of work led to further questions and subsequent studies. The studies I discuss examine language difference, schooling practices, and social dynamics. The data analyses are part of investigations into language use and such topics as schooled literacy, the interplay of race and class in minority status, and social reproduction. My enduring intersecting concerns are literacy practices (an educational arena and field of study), linguistic anthropology (a research tradition), and social inequality (an ethical-political project as well as research area).

In my work, prior to the advent of the literacy practices framework,[2] the study of literacy events was part of an effort to understand institutional processes leading to social reproduction. In this initial work, I came to ideas of practice through Bourdieu's work on reproduction as practice (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1984) and have always viewed the study of practice as committed to investigating the dialectic of the subjective and objective in social life and social

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[2] It began with theoretical and methodological commitment to studying literacy as an event rather than a text (see Heath 1983 for a classic study). This was also a starting point for influential early work in the theory and study of what came to be called 'literacy practices' (Barton & Hamilton 1998; Baynham 1995; Street 1995).

structures. This dual focus on events and structures has been shaped by conceptual frameworks and knowledge commitments originating in Linguistic Anthropology as well as what came to be called "the New Literacy Studies." In particular, my research has been influenced by Gumperz' insistence on the interactive bases of meaning (1972; 1982; 1996), Silverstein's work on semiotics and indexicality (1976; 2003) and Hymes' vision of ethnography as a critical, democratic mode of knowledge (1974; 1996) as well as Street's original formulation of an "ideological model" of literacy (Street 1984; 1993), which pushed forth both an event-centered methodology and a set of productive if unsettled questions about power. My studies of literacy have been motivated by a desire to understand social inequality.[3] My intellectual horizon for understanding inequality -- how it comes about, what forms it takes, how it is reproduced, what opposes or lessens it – has been a Marxian tradition (represented by studies of economics (Henwood 2003; Marx, 1906), politics (Gramsci1971), language (Ohmann 1987; Voloshinov 1973) and global systems (Arrighi 2011; Friedman 2003; Wallerstein 1983)) and by feminist and anti-racist studies (Foley 1990; Nicholson 1986; Patterson 1998; Weis 1990) that have engaged that tradition.

In the argument that follows, I will briefly discuss several studies of literacy and literacy practices, conceptualized from evolving perspectives within linguistic anthropology that illustrate aspects of both social practices and reproductive processes. These will be followed, in turn, by a longer treatment of a work-in-progress that analyzes language and education policy as social practice. This research examines the implications of the federal legislation and implementation of No Child Left Behind for English Language Learners (ELLs), a large category of bilingual students in the U.S. It analyzes "state effects" (Trouillot 2003) as they operate in and across national, state, district, and classroom sites. I argue that such a scope of analysis is necessary if we want to understand how broader political and institutional dynamics inform the social practices of literacy in and out of schools.

Perspectives on literacy practices – or, an evolving conceptual framework

My earliest academic research on literacy emerged from a context where the primary empirical and analytic focus was on the social interaction that accompanied acts of reading or writing. The overall study was the School-Home Ethnography Project, which involved year-long classroom interaction analyses of classroom literacy events as well as research into students' social networks and their language use at home. My entrée to the project was as a transcribing-dogsbody also charged with organizing and cataloguing the data archives. Over the course of a summer, I did these tasks and also made an initial analysis of project research questions, provisionally locating where in the tape and transcript archives material might be found for answering these questions. One of the project directors, John Gumperz, found this sufficiently

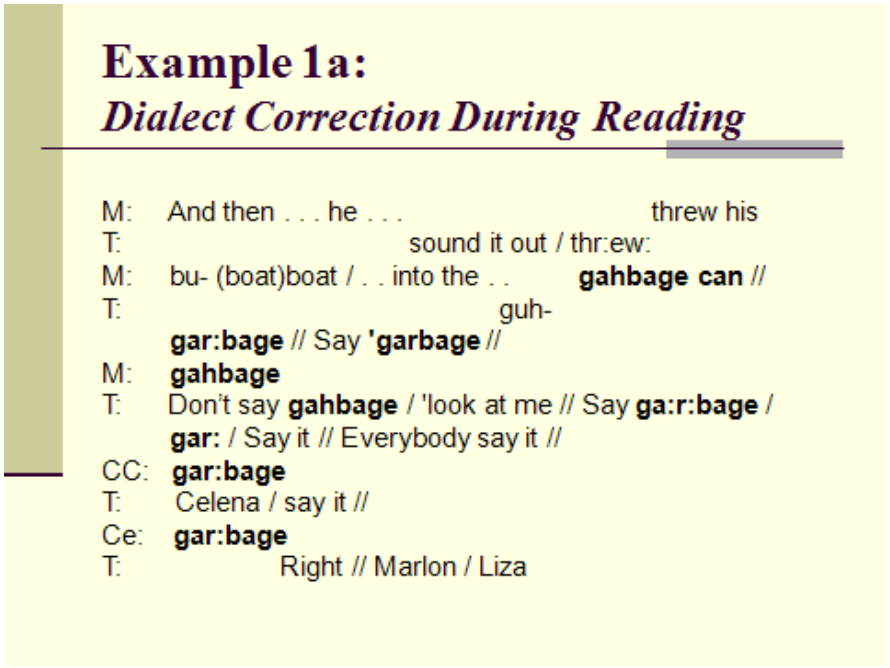
[3] This motivation is due several causes. First is my experience of poverty early childhood, including how that shapes educational possibilities. Second, my adulthood and intellectual development have occurred in the decades since the late 1970s, marked by the erosion of the post-WWII social contract, the emergence of class war from above, and consequent sharpening economic inequality within the U.S. and the rest of the world. Last, among the subjects that I have studied as an anthropologist, dispossession of linguistic resources has always accompanied economic precariousness and material scarcity, whether the people concerned were Native Americans seeking to revitalize their language and political status (Collins 1998); African-Americans, Latinos, and rural Whites struggling with school in K-12 and postsecondary contexts (Brandau & Collins 1994; Collins 1988; Collins 1993); or migrants in Belgium and the U.S. interacting with health and educational institutions (Collins, 2012; Slembrouck & Collins 2006, 2007)

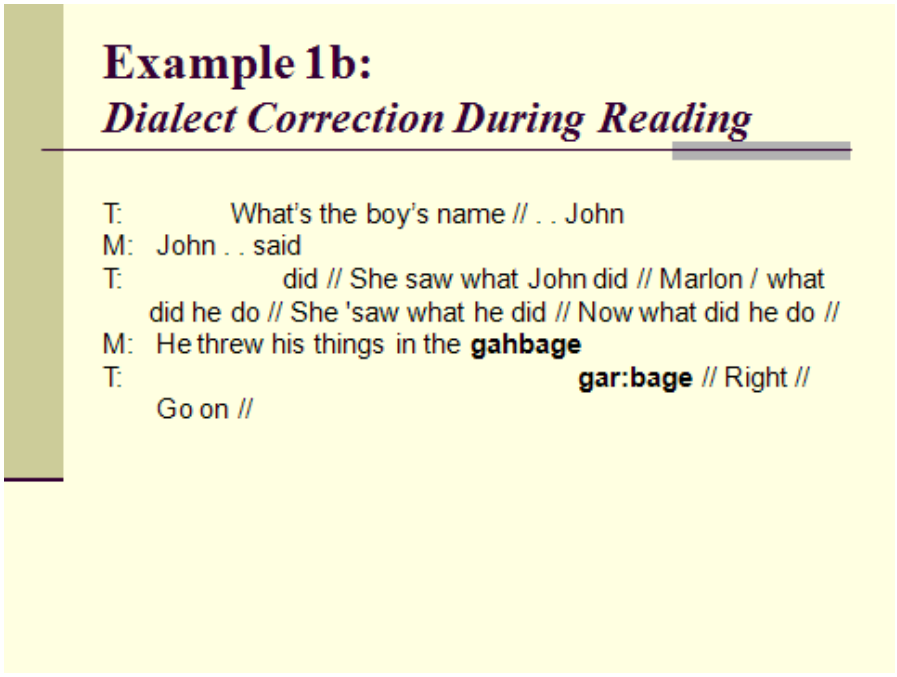
useful that he asked me to do more, in particular, to focus on one of the research questions: differential treatment in classroom literacy lessons. Briefly, differential treatment referred to Civil Rights era school research reporting that students from working-class and minority backgrounds received different instruction from middle-class white students, whether in the same schools or, as was typically the case, in urban versus suburban school districts (Leacock 1973; McDermott 1976; Rist 1971).

Literacy events and indexes of identity: My study investigating differential treatment involved a year-long analysis of tracked or streamed early elementary reading groups. Because I was in regular conversations with Sarah Michaels, Jenny Cook-Gumperz, and John Gumperz, the nature of literacy events, which we discussed as activity types, and the interactional meaning making in such events, which we discussed as situated inference, were among the primary descriptive and conceptual concerns. So also was a concern with socialization, viewing teaching and learning as an exchange, in which all parties shaped one another's evolving sense of what reading consisted of as over time students learned and teachers taught particular ways of reading in events of reading (Michaels 1981; Collins 1986; Cook-Gumperz 1986).

The primary findings from this research were that students classified as "low-ability" and "high-ability" had different approaches to text. These approaches resembled what was reported in the educational psychology research literature on the reading styles of good and poor readers as a lifelong profile: poor readers conceived of and performed reading as word-based decoding, and "speed and fluency" were hallmarks of good performance; good or skilled readers conceived of reading in terms of meaning, and understanding text content was the hallmark of successful reading. A question, not answered in the psychological literature on this subject, was how such differences emerged and persisted. My study was of first-grade reading groups as they developed over the course of a school year. There was evidence that the different initial orientations to reading emerged very early and persisted over the school year. My final analysis was that teachers and students socialized each other to different styles of reading. This was in part because we had evidence that students' language use, both their use of intonation to segment syntactic and rhetorical units and their ways of pronouncing English words, their "accent," differed between groups. This seemed to influence their interaction with the teacher in reading lessons, during which they read aloud from text as well as answered questions about meaning.

In (1a and 1b) we see examples of reading group interaction in which response to dialect is prominent. Here the effort is to correct 'gahbage can' to 'ga**r**bage can', focusing on the presence or absence of post-vocalic 'R'. In the fuller publication, I analyze in detail what we can see from inspection below: Concern with regulating pronunciation can distract from the activity of reading (Collins 2006[1986]: 158).





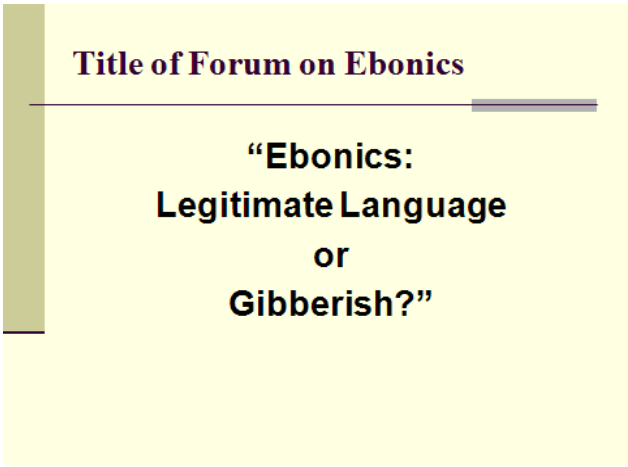
The implications of the study were several-fold. First, viewing reading lessons as literacy events orients analysts to the diverse sources of meaning-making, in the text, in participants' expectations, and in their interactive responses to each other. Second, event-based processes cohere over time; as we would now say, they travel across discursive sites. In that coherence, that inter-discursive trajectory, there is evidence of socialization to school identities as "good" or "poor" readers, and thus as "good" or "poor" students. Put otherwise, we find evidence of a pathway for how differential treatment emerges and persists in classrooms and schools. These implications, in turn, raise questions about social reproduction, that is, how schooling perpetuates social inequalities among students; and they raise questions about practice, that is, how mundane, everyday activities are connected to larger-scale entities, processes, and outcomes. In the case at

hand, the salient question is how early primary school experiences with literacy can reinforce hierarchies of race and class in educational attainment.

In the interests of time, I will focus simply one aspect of this multi-faceted issue, the treatment of nonstandard English, that is, the correction or rejection of nonstandard English in classroom settings. I have examined this issue in historical and comparative perspective in a 1988 paper entitled "Language and class in minority education," (Collins 1988); explored it in an re-analysis of school responses to dialect, models of reading, and group interaction with new empirical material from Chicago (Collins 1996); and returned to it in a more recent 2008 essay "Language, class and education" (Rampton, Harris, Collins & Blommaert 2008). In all of these studies, a primary question was how responses to class differences in language use, intertwined with ideas about ethnoracial identities and associated ways of speaking, influence the school project of promoting universal literacy in Standard English.

The Ebonics conflict as language ideology: A dramatic, public illustration of language conflict over the acceptable varieties of English for formal education emerged in the United States in the winter of 1996-1997, when the School District of Oakland, California, proposed to have "Ebonics," or African American Vernacular English, taught in the public schools along with Standard English.[4] A media furor soon followed the Oakland School Board action, and in the ensuing debate, it became clear that white media elite were resolutely against the proposal that Black English be taught in a public school and that middle class African Americans were also opposed, although more conflicted by the issue.

In late winter of 1997, I took part in several public forums on the Ebonics controversy. One was held at the main public library of the City of Albany, where I live. It was organized by an African-American community organization, and featured community speakers, speakers from the state Department of Education, and myself as a university academic. Let me first give the title of the event, then briefly comments on remarks made, before turning to what I see as the wider significance. Here's the forum title (from Collins, 1999: 208-209):



[4] I was first apprised of the situation by a neighborhood coming over for a Saturday morning coffee and asking "Did you hear that they want to teach Black Slang in Oakland Schools?"

I ask that you think about both options offered in the title, 'legitimate language' and 'gibberish,' as we turn to discuss remarks made at the forum. During the forum event, several African-American speakers commented on the controversy and spoke to their affection for Black Speech. One audience member described it as the language she learned from her mother and family, but she and others on the panel and in the audience also argued that the vernacular should be banned from any classroom setting. The conflict between intimate association and il-legitimate language was painful and telling.

What I took away from a study of this event and analysis of the overall Ebonics Debate (Collins 1999) were several points relevant for how we think about literacy practices. First, language ideologies are often about kinds of language and kinds of people, and those ideologies shape social subjectivities, including intimate domains, such as pride and shame. Second, language-ideological debates are conflicts over what Bourdieu called "the linguistic field" (1991, p. 57, passim). All fields concern value, often hinged on fundamental contrasts of good and bad. With the question "Ebonics: Legitimate Language or Gibberish?" we ask whether a major social dialect of American English, a primary language variety for working-class African Americans, who number in the tens of millions (Mufwene, Rickford, Baily & Baugh 1998), can be a legitimate vehicle for acts of learning, for practices of reading or writing, or, conversely, whether Ebonics is "gibberish," that is, unintelligible or meaningless noise.

I suggest that the society-wide dynamics of language hierarchy just described – in which the variety of English known as Ebonics is forbidden from the fields of education and legitimate language – must be part of the analysis of literacy practices. Here I am arguing that the analysis of literacy practices entails both the situated, ethnographic study of literacy events coupled with analysis of inter-event, structuring principles such as language hierarchization (Rogers 2003; Wortham 2002). In the cases just discussed, such inter-event structuring principles are investigated as processes unfolding during the ordinary course of an ordinary school year, in the classroom reading study, or uncovered in the analysis of exceptional, national debates and conflicts about legitimate language, in which enduring language hierarchy is challenged and powerfully re-asserted, as in the society-wide controversy over Ebonics in school. Let us note, for later consideration, that the hierarchy involves issues of class and race in relation to language.

Let me argue, further, that the field of linguistic anthropology, because of its emphasis on the interactional, processual nature of semiosis, and its intensive study of communicative events and inter-event structuring principles, has specific contributions to make to research on literacy practices. I take this to be the contribution of John Gumperz' insistence on the interactive bases of meaning, in which concepts such as situated and metaphorical code-switching, conversational inference, and contextualization cues all involve conceptualization and analysis of indexical signs (1972; 1982; 1996). Indexicality rests on a principle that the communication of non-referential, non-literal social meaning depends on knowledge of regular relationships between language use and social structure (Gumperz 1968). The study of such 'regular relationships' has been the bedrock of linguistic anthropology, for it underpins the normativity and performativity of language use. Silverstein's work on semiotics and indexicality now spans more than three decades (1976; 2003). His work shares with Gumperz an emphasis on the interactive basis of social life. However, he argues that we must understand interaction to extend beyond face-to-face processes, involving a dialectic between situated, micro-analytic processes and macro-scale phenomena that, in their real-time unfolding, can produce multiple, layered indexical orders (Silverstein 2003). Such orders can range, for example, from the indexical layers involved in the 'social meaning' signaled by the habitual, automatic classroom correction of a child's reading in

dialect to[5], on the other hand, those indexical layers involved in the 'social meaning' about language and people signaled in nation-wide debates about legitimate and illegitimate language, as in the Ebonics controversy. Let us add to this tradition the work of Dell Hymes, which frequently explored the relationships, both normative and counter-normative[6], between language use and social categories (1972). If we add to this semiotic focus Hymes' vision of ethnography as a critical, democratic mode of knowledge (1974; 1996), then we have a tradition of linguistic anthropology that has contributed much to the study of communicative events in relation to wider cultural orders, social structures, and historical frames. It is a tradition that shares with the study of literacy practices assumptions about the communicative underpinnings of social orders and a desire to use critical inquiry to make a better world.

In the account just offered Linguistic Anthropology may seem uniformly American, but that misses important exchanges across the North Atlantic. The founding and vigorous activity of the Linguistic Ethnography United Kingdom forum, for example, has featured research on language and social analysis from around the world, especially the UK and EU, and drawn frequently on the work of Gumperz and Hymes, as well as others. The busy presence of Jan Blommaert, in the UK, Finland, Belgium and the Netherlands reinforces this exchange and brings direct attention to the tradition of anthropologically-grounded semiotic analysis just discussed (Blommaert 2005; 2010; Superdiversities Research Network website: http://www.mmg.mpg.de/subsites/sociolinguistic-diversities/about/). For several years early in the last decade, I was fortunate enough to collaborate with both Stef Slembrouck and Jan Blommaert on studies of multilingualism and literacy practices in immigrant neighborhoods in Belgium (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck 2005a,b; Collins & Slembrouck 2006, 2007, 2009). We presented and debated this research at forums and conferences in Belgium (ContactForum 2004), the Netherlands (Sociolinguistics Symposium 17 2008), the UK (British Association of Applied Linguistics 2004) and the US (American Anthropological Association 2005) (see, for example, Collins & Slembrouck, eds., 2005).

Literacy practices and indexical orders: One study which came out of this work concerned multilingual shop signs, a phenomena that Stef Slembrouck and I had first encountered, noted variations in, and puzzled over, during early ethnographic forays into the working-class immigrant neighborhoods that ring the Flemish city of Ghent. Entitled "Reading shop signs: Multilingual literacy practices and indexicality" (Collins & Slembrouck 2007), this study examined how different readers made sense of the multilingual shops signs encountered in the immigrant neighborhoods we studied. Having decided to focus on signs that featured Turkish and Dutch, we obtained translations from a visiting Turkish scholar, and then obtained a second set of translations from a Belgian-Turkish community activist who lived in one of the neighborhoods of our study. We were intrigued by the ways in which our two Turkish-speaking interpreters attended simultaneously to features of spelling, word choice and grammar in the Turkish and Dutch signs, as well as to textual signals of the social background and intentions of sign-makers. We were fortunate, as the research progressed, to literally triangulate: We set up an additional interpreting session with a Flemish man we knew from our fieldwork. Ostensibly helping me understand the Dutch in the signs, he similarly combined attention to word choice, spelling, and sign design with assumptions about social background and communicative

[5] We may assume that there are differing, conflictual social meanings for students and teachers involved in such correcting (Ohmann 1987, p. 288)), but their study is an empirical matter.
[6] Or, in Hymes' semiotic terms, 'unmarked' and 'marked'.

intention, which he framed in terms of a discourse about native/migrant ethnic relations in Belgium. He arrived at different interpretations from the other two, whose interpretations, in turn, differed from each other.

What this variation in response to the same sets of Turkish and Dutch shop signs led us to investigate were the indexical meanings associated with varieties of Turkish, varieties of Dutch, and the juxtaposition of Turkish and Dutch. Briefly, the Turkish academic, Meryem,[7] read the Turkish of the signs in terms of an Istanbul educated standard, seeing evidence in the linguistic form of the signs that the writers of the signs were of rural, Anatolian, uneducated origins. Our Turkish-Belgian consultant, Nežat, examined features of Dutch as well as Turkish in the same signs, interpreting variations in signs as indicating variations in the multilingual repertoire of sign makers, which in turn indexed the signer makers' length of residence in Belgium, and their membership in different immigrant networks. Our Flemish consultant, Herman, interpreted the orthographic, lexical, and design features of signs as indexing both the kinds of immigrants who operated a given shop or enterprise and the state of immigrant/native ethnic relations in a given Flemish city. A sign example illustrating these differences is given in example (2):

Example 2:

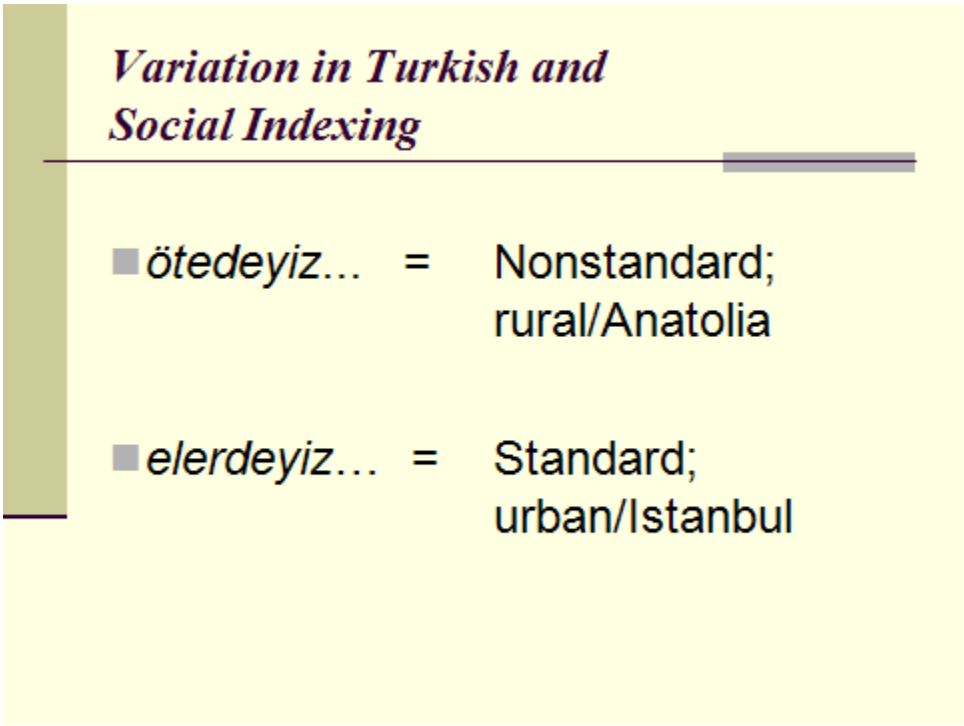
What we learned from this study is that language users interpret given textual materials in terms of indexical frames of different scope and scale, and they do so by intertwining assumptions about linguistic form qua grammar with knowledge of sociolinguistic diversity. As Silverstein (2003) had argued, to interpret an utterance as an instance of a given language, a Saussurean langue (grammar or model of competence), is to bring a macro-scale of analysis to bear. This is because in academic as well as everyday understanding, langue/competence is characterized as a set of rules or norms that are presumed to hold for an entire speech or language community. But

[7] All names of research consultants are pseudonyms.

users of language also operate with a sense of a social-linguistically differentiated world of actual and potential interlocutors (Bakhtin 1981; 2007). This is a crosscutting and finer-grained schematization, of differences within putative language communities, and it is always available for making sense of a given utterance, for what Gumperz (1982) calls the indexical process of contextualization.

Thus, when Meryem evaluated ötediz she alternated between judging it as grammatically irregular or as rural, and this judgment was made in implicit contrast to a standard and urban alternate form: ilerdeyiz. The items being focused upon and the differing judgments about speakers and communities are schematized in Figure 1::

Figure 1: Variation in Turkish and Social Indexing



Interpreting the same form, Nežat, who spoke and read both Dutch and Turkish, initially noticed something odd about ötediz. He attributed this, however, to the writer's Dutch being better than their Turkish, a judgment about linguistic competencies, and to the order of translation, since he inferred that the translation had been directly from Dutch into Turkish. Subsequently, he qualified these judgments, saying that maybe the oddness of lexical choice was due to the writer's origin in Anatolia where they "speak Turkish differently."

Herman, for his part, focused directly on the global treatment of Dutch in relation to Turkish, seeing this as a direct index of the state of autochthone-allochthone relations[8]. Herman noted departures from Flemish-Dutch usage or spelling but only in passing.[9] When he noticed that immigrants did use Dutch along with allochthone languages in the signs (as all of the sign

[8] Autochtone and allochthone are Belgian (Dutch) terms for "native born" and "immigrant" or "foreign".

[9] He comments on unusual content, a bank advertisement offering an unusual range of financial services, which he sees as enabling foreigners to "buy up" Belgian properties in order to profit from their incoming co-nationals.

examples illustrated), he interpreted this as indicating their respect for Dutch. He interpreted example (3) we zijn verhuisd as meaning in English "We have moved to number 171", but as notable because it revealed a proper linguistic deference by placing the immigrant language below the Dutch and in a smaller script. He constructed an explanation in terms of an account of regions and cities within Flanders: In his view such signs typified the city of Ghent, which was unlike Antwerp, with the latter's well-known conflicts between native Flemish and immigrant residents, or Brussels, with its postcolonial, post-Soviet ethnic mosaic. Instead, "genial" Ghent encouraged the right kind of assimilation and sociolinguistic order.

The lesson we want to draw from the interpretations of Meryem, Nežat and Herman is that all reading is a contextualized interpretative practice utilizing diverse frames of interpretation. Such frames may be organised, inter alia, by assumptions about geographic scale or historic social relationships, linguistic-grammatical norms or sociolinguistic mapping. In addition, and this will provide a bridge to our last study, language contact is seen in terms of class and ethnoracial differences and conflict. For Meryem, immigrants are seen as the uneducated, rural poor; for Herman, Turkish immigrants are a threat to Flemish livelihoods and ways of life, as Turkish is a rival to Flemish, to Dutch.

In returning to this material, I see that Meryem, Nežat and Herman were all articulating widely-shared views of our contemporary world, in which large-scale working-class migrations and multilingual language practices are seen alternately and simultaneously through lenses of class and race. Although we have not yet discussed it, it takes the work of a state to preserve the dominance of monolingual Standard language varieties in the face of sociolinguistic diversity wrought by regional histories, class divisions, and ethnoracial hierarchies.

Migration, states, and inequality: When we remember to take notice, many things are state concerns. For example, the Belgian labor recruitment of the 1960s, which brought large numbers of Turkish, Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian workers to Belgium coal, steel, and textile industries, was based on state-to-state agreements between Belgium and the governments of nations from which the workers were drawn. In the course of our neighborhood studies, when Stef Slembrouck and myself consulted Ghent municipal statistics for demographic information on given neighborhoods, we discovered that the official census listed eighteen different "ethnocultural" minorities, ranging from West African Gambians to East European Bulgarians and Georgians. In addition to those eighteen, we discovered that there were four groups categorized as "migrant minorities": Turks, Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians. That is, half a century after the labor agreements bringing large numbers of working-class men from these countries to work in Belgian industries, official classification still grouped together these men, their descendants, and those connected through networks of kin as "migrants." In addition, popular discourses of government ministries referred to the problems of "integrating migrants" into the Flemish or Walloon social fabric, despite those "migrants" multi-generational residence, family history, and, commonly, citizenship in Belgium (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck 2005b; Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs 2007).

In the book Literacy and Literacies, Collins & Blot (2003: chapter three) provide an historical account of how state classifying practices influence literacy, attending closely to the dynamics of class division, racial and gender hierarchies in the history of public schooling in the U.S. In the last case presented below, I argue that contemporary efforts to preserve the dominance of monolingual Standard English in public schooling in the United States emerge from a politics of

racialized language difference (Crawford 2000; Zentella 1997), generating a series of "state effects" that operate across different social levels, dispossessing speakers whose primary languages are other than English from linguistic resources relevant for learning and literacy.

In the issues to be discussed, we will focus on the issue of social inequality. As stated in the introductory remarks, I think the intellectual horizon for thinking about inequality remains the Marxist legacy. It offers three lessons pertinent to thinking about literacy practices in the current century:

- Lesson one is to take material conditions seriously. Marx famously argued that social conditions determine consciousness, but even those who question Marxism often share that prioritization. Bourdieu gave us an elaborate conceptual and empirical research program for investigating the relation between the subjective and objective, whether addressing reproduction in education, fields of cultural production, or migrant exclusion in modern France (Bourdieu 1977, 1993, 2000). In all these inquiries, however, he kept a steady eye on what he termed "objective conditions," by which he meant the positions and resources of social class.
- Lesson two is that historical capitalism, in all its variety, is organized into global systems that, in turn, generate a placing and ranking of regions and nations. Part of its restless dynamism is the construction and destruction of spatio-temporal scales. These have been fruitfully explored by sociologists (Wallerstein, 1978, 1983), economists (Arrighi 2011) and anthropologists (Friedman 2004). Sociolinguists have investigated how time-space scales comprise relations of verticality, that is, inequality, that pervade national and global sociolinguistic fields (Blommaert 2005, 2010; Collins, Slembrouck & Baynham 2009; Silverstein 2003).
- Lesson three is that language plays an important role in the forms of consciousness and structures of perception found in class societies, whether conceptualized, for example, as "structures of feeling", in Williams (1976) formulation, which has been analyzed with remarkable linguistic detail by Rampton (2006; 2011); as "habitus", in Bourdieu's (1977) terminology, analyzed with insight by Pahl (2008) in studies of family literacy practices in migrant households; or as "hegemony", in Gramsci's term that points to the connections between forms of consciousness, powers of state, and practices of civil society (Collins 1991; Donald 1980).

Ethnography, language debates, and education policy: An analysis of state effects as literacy practice

In an essay 'Report from an Underdeveloped Country: Towards Linguistic Competence in the U.S.", Hymes provided a frank discussion of what he termed 'cultural hegemony through language.' Here is an excerpt of what he said on the issue:

> "The heart of the matter, I have suggested, is that language has been a central medium of cultural hegemony in the United States. Class stratification and cultural assumptions about language converge in school to reproduce the social order. A latent function of the educational system is to instill linguistic insecurity, to discriminate linguistically, to channel children in ways that have an integral linguistic component, while appearing open and fair to all." (Hymes, 1996 [1975]: 84).

This is a blunt statement of social reproduction and schooling, and it still seems accurate some 35 years after it was first presented. However, it needs reworking conceptually and empirically if we want to investigate how 'class stratification and cultural assumptions converge in schools' in the 21st century or if we want to examine 'latent function[s] of the educational system' after several decades of economic restructuring, shrinking support for public education, and recurrent controversies over culture, identity, language, and citizens' rights.

In an essay on the anthropology of the state, Trouillot (2003 [2001]) raises two issues relevant for such conceptual and empirical reworking. The first concerns Gramsci's original conceptualization of hegemony and the need to think about the state as well as culture or society:

> "Gramsci's insist[s] on thinking state and civil society together by way of concepts such as hegemony and historical bloc […]. I read Gramsci as saying that, within the context of capitalism, theories of the state must cover the entire social formation and articulate the relation between state and civil society." p. 127

Second, Trouillot argues that in our era of globalization, we cannot assume that nation and state are simply equivalent and this nonequivalence has implications for how we conceptualize and study state processes and practices:

> "If we suspend the state-nation homology, as I suggest we should, we reach a more powerful vision of the state, yet one more open to ethnography, since we discover that, theoretically, there is no necessary site for the state, institutional or geographical. Within that vision, the state thus appears as an open field with multiple boundaries and no institutional fixity—which is to say that it needs to be conceptualized at more than one level." P. 127

In what follows I will examine empirical materials, focused on the federal legislation No Child Left Behind and its consequences operating "at more than one level" in the educational system. Taking inspiration from Menken's (2008) excellent study of the multiple effects of NCLB on English Language Learners in New York City schools, I will argue the federal legislation, and its testing regimes, and its realization in classroom practices comprise de facto language policy. Such state practices "channel children," devaluing and excluding the linguistically diverse, thus serving what Hymes' termed a "latent function of the educational system," but doing so through what Trouillot terms state effects.

By "state effects," Trouillot means the decentralized practices through which political and cultural subjectivities are shaped in relation to sharpening national and trans-national inequalities, especially those of race and class. Several "effects" discussed by Trouillot are relevant for the data and themes of this paper. First, there is an isolation effect, the "production of atomized individual subjects molded and modeled for governance as part of an undifferentiated but specific 'public'…" (Trouillot 2001, p. 126). We argue below that the category "English Language Learner" within No Child Left Behind legislation and implementation produces just such an isolation effect. Second, there is a legibility effect, involving processes of classification, measurement, and mapping, all of which render populations more transparent to centralized administration. Prominent among processes that produce such an effect are language standardization and monolingualism (Scott 1998). Last, there is an identification effect, processes that align individuals within collectivities, whatever the complexities of their actual lives and histories. We will consider below how class- and race-sensitive models of educational success

and failure, operating in classroom language and literacy lessons, help produce just such identification effects.[10]

NCLB and the discursive erasure of class at the national level: an "isolation effect": The signature school reform of President George W. Bush was No Child Left Behind, an unprecedented federal intervention into schooling and education.[11] NCLB handles linguistic diversity in U.S. education by focusing on a category "English Language Learners," by which is intended every public school student whose primary language is other than English and who is assessed as needing language instruction or support. "English Language Learners," or ELLs, are in fact a very heterogeneous category, including those with high proficiency in English and those not; those literate in their primary languages and those not; the immigrant and the U.S.-born; those living in middle class affluence or in poverty. This definitional erasure of heterogeneity matters because it displaces the issue of social conditions on school learning from official policy discussion (see note 2).

Such displacement can be seen in a federal congressional hearing on NCLB re-authorization (U.S. Congress 2007). Entitled "The Impact of No Child Left Behind on English Language Learners," the report of this 2007 hearing presents a range of expert testimony: from the federal Government Accountability Office on how individual states define and assess ELLs; from state university systems on how best to prepare teachers to work with ELLs; and from Hispanic advocacy organizations on problems with test validity and reliability in assessment of ELLS under NCLB. What gets mentioned only once in the long report, and is never taken up for questioning or subsequent commentary, are the following demographic facts: That ¾ of ELL students are Spanish-speaking, and that more than "2/3s" or 66%, are from low-income families (U.S. Congress 2007, p. 29).

Such demographic data seem noteworthy. After three decades of "English Only" campaigns throughout the U.S., often targeted at Spanish language bilingual education programs, that 3/4s of ELL students are Hispanic gives the category a strong social value (Adams & Brink 1991; Crawford 2000; Huntington 2004). Similarly, after decades of research showing that family economic status is the strongest variable predicting with poor school performance (Henwood 2011; Jencks 1972; Rothstein 2004), that 2/3s of ELL students live in low-income families seems relevant to understanding their performance on literacy and math assessments.

There is evidence that the demographic facts about ELLs are significant for school performance.

Consider a recent study by the Pew Hispanic Resource Center (Fry 2008), entitled "The Role of Schools in the English Language Learner Achievement Gap," which focuses on an interpretive conundrum. It is widely-documented that ELL students perform worse on literacy and math

[10] A fuller analysis of these data, and a third category of state effect, legibility, are discussed in "Migration, language diversity and education policy: A contextualized analysis of inequality, risk and state effects," to appear in Education and Risk, a special issue of Policy Futures (2014), Stephen Bialostok, editor.

[11] Central to NCLB has been a definition of literacy as a specific set of skills, with reductive programs implemented when students to do not meet mandated annual improvement targets. The definition and remedial programs are highly controversial (Allington, 2002; Collins & Blot, 2003; Rogers, 2003), in part because they obscure evidence of the social bases of individual differences in tested skills (McNeil, 2005; Rothstein, 2004).

assessments compared to non-ELL students.[12] The report shows, however , that such students are also concentrated in schools where, on average, everyone performs worse on standardized assessments. So the interpretive problem becomes how to determine whether there is an "English Language Learner Achievement Gap" or a "Poor and Minority Kids in City Schools Achievement Gap"?

The report documents the following social class-related educational disadvantages of "ELL-reporting" schools[13]:

- ELLs are more likely to be concentrated in central cities, than in suburban or rural areas, e.g. among California elementary schools 48% of ELL-reporting were in central city vs. 30% non ELL-reporting.
- ELLs are more likely to be concentrated in large schools, e.g. in New York elementary schools, the average size of ELL-reporting schools were 691 students vs. 456 for non ELL-reporting schools.
- ELLs are more likely to be in schools with a high proportion of student poverty, measured as the proportion of the student body eligible for free lunches, e.g. in Arizona elementary schools, 80% of the student body ELL-reporting schools were eligible for free lunches vs. 45% of students in non ELL-reporting schools.

Such findings raise the question: How much does student poverty count in school performance? This question was not asked by any of the expert witnesses testifying before the Congressional Review Panel. However, in an analysis of state performance rankings based on the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) results, Henwood argues that the most powerful statistical predictor of an individual state's school performance on NAEP assessments ranking is student poverty, while ELL-status by itself only modestly correlates with differences in math and English scores:

> "almost 60% of the states' positions in the rankings can be explained statistically by the share of the student population on free or subsidized lunches…" [Regarding students whose primary language is other than English] "… the share of students with limited English proficiency … yields only a modest correlation coefficienct (r = .17)… and adding it to the [school] lunch model adds nothing to its explanatory power." (Henwood, 2011, pp. 3, 5)

To sum up: There is good evidence that class inequalities are implicated in ELL performance on standardized assessments, but these inequalities are not part of category definition or assessment criteria. I suggest that the category of ELL and its use in NCLB-mandated assessment practices performs what Trouillot terms an "isolation effect." That is, the category and its use represents students as atomized individuals, aggregating them in normalized achievement distributions, and obscuring the connections of any cultural or historical relationship, including those of social class. It renders them instead as individuals before a state process, in particular, a federal intervention into "what counts" as literacy and math education and its assessment.

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[12] The gap is significant: In all the states with major ELL populations (which together accounting 70% of 4 million students receiving ELL services), ELL students score significantly below "white students", and they are less likely to score at or above a state's "'proficient" level. For example, "in Florida 45% of ELL third-graders scored at or above proficiency level on the math assessment, compared with 78% of white third-graders." (Fry, 2007, p. iii).

[13] "ELL-reporting" designates schools in which a significant proportion of students are English Language Learners.

The following section examines a second "state effect", analyzing how macro-scale cultural models and micro-scale dynamics of language use in classrooms are both implicated in educational language policy-in-practice. It presents material from case studies of Korean and Mexican immigrant children in Upstate New York.

Social class and ethnoracial hierarchy in the differential treatment of Korean and Mexican ESL students: An "identification effect": The immediate ethnographic facts to concern us are these. In a study of primary-school Koreans in a suburban school in Upstate New York, Eunyoung Hong (2006) describes how the teacher of the ESL classroom she studied accommodated to the children's primary language in various ways. The teacher in this school, which we will call Farmer Elementary, allowed special times when the students could speak Korean amongst themselves; she brought Korean books and pictures into the classroom; she incorporated numerous references to Korean cultural practices into her teaching; and she endeavored herself to learn some Korean words and phrases.

This situation of relative linguistic accommodation differed strikingly from that discovered by myself and a research assistant when we studied how Spanish-speaking immigrant children fared in the same region (Collins, 2011; Collins & La Santa, 2007). One of our sites was a suburban school similar to that studied by Hong – both schools served predominantly middle class and professional populations and were high achieving schools. In the elementary school we studied, which we will call Sanderson Elementary, several teachers whose classrooms we observed said that they spoke Spanish. But they were also quick to point out that they felt Spanish should not be used with their immigrant Mexican students, and that they strove to keep Spanish out of school activities. In the ESL classroom there was no accommodation to the children's primary language.[14]

Both groups of students brought their language repertoires into the school setting. As Hong reports, the Korean students at Farmer Elementary frequently spoke Korean among themselves. Although the ESL teacher discouraged the practice during formal lessons, she also established special times, "play time" and "snack-time," when they were free to use their primary languages. In addition, Korean also entered into the regular ESL lessons in diverse ways, as we can see from example (4):

Example 4: Using English and Korean in ESL at Farmer

1T: (reading the book) "Aekying went to school for the rest of the week and tried to ignore the teasing of the other children. On Sunday, Aekyung's Aunt Kim came to visit. She had just returned from Korea with many presents for the family, fancy dress for Aekyung. "How's everything in Korea?" asked Father."

2T: What's this called? (pointing to the picture in the book, which includes a girl wearing a Korean traditional costume.)

3Dan: Uh…

4Mina: Hanbok

[14] Although the Sanderson class was taught by an experienced teacher, herself an immigrant, and sympathetic to the linguistic challenges her students faced.

5Kim: Hanbok

6T: Hanbok, remember that we had that in the play last year?

7Mina: How… how do you… know… in English? Like… that English?

8T: How do I know that?

9Mina: Yeah.

10T: Because you taught me when you brought to me that dress, you taught me it was called Hanbok.

11Mina: No… (speaking in Korean and walking to her sister, Hana, who is sitting across the table and whispering in Korean to her)

12Hana: How do you know, like, how to say Hanbok in English?

13T: I think it's the same word, same word. There's no English word unless you want to say Hanbok fancy dress.

14Mina: Oh. That's the same thing?

15T: I think that means fancy dress.

(January 7, 2005; from Hong 2006:90-91)

Several things are notable about this excerpt. First, the teacher reads to the ESL students a story about Korea (in turn 1). In addition, when she asks them for the name for a dress, and they reply in Korean, she then incorporates the Korean word, Hanbok, into her subsequent questions (in turn 6). When one of the students, Ming, grows frustrated with her questioning of the teacher (because of an apparent misunderstanding[15]) she turns to her sister, Hana, (in turn 11) and asks Hana in Korean to interpret question to the teacher. Hana does this and the teacher supplies an answer (in turns 12 and 13). As Hong comments about this exchange, the students are not only reading about Korea, and discussing Korean words, they use their primary language to arrange interpreting tasks among themselves, in the service of lesson discussion.

When possible, the Mexican immigrant students at Sanderson Elementary also used their full linguistic repertoires. There were, however, no special times, such as "playtime" or "snacktime", when they were licensed to do so. Instead, they were repeatedly enjoined to only speak English in school settings. They were likely, however, to use both Spanish and English when there were enough Spanish-speakers present to constitute a sub-group within a classroom. One such occasion occurred during an ESL lesson late in our research period. During this lesson, there were four Spanish speakers in the room: three young girls plus our project research assistant. Throughout the class period the ESL teacher interacted with the students solely in English.

Thus in example (5a), a student, MV, asks the teacher about a picture/word vocabulary-building activity in which they identify words and circle animals. As we see, all business is conducted in English: MV asks "This is elephant?"; the teacher acknowledges the question, but corrects MV's work and sends her back to finish the sheet.

[15] Ming wants to know the English term; the teacher thinks Ming is asking how the teacher knows the Korean word.

Example 5a: Receiving instructions in English in ESL at Sanderson

(MV approaches teacher, T)

T: Sure can, bring it over here (to MV)

MV: This is elephant?

T: Uh, no… FINISH and then come and see me

MV: Ok.

During this same lesson the project research assistant Amarilys (AL), a fluent bilingual, had been working with another student on a similar vocabulary activity. She would pose her questions in English, but allow the student to reply with answers or questions in Spanish or English. At one point, shown in the next example (5b), MV and a new girl approach (AL), in order for MV to introduce the new girl:

Example 5b: Introductions in Spanish at Sanderson

1 MV: Ella es mi prima (She is my cousin.)

2 AL: Si? Como se llama? (Yes? What is her name?)

3 MV: Ella? (Her?)

4 AL: Uh huh

5 MV: LAURA [lawra]... Pero se dice "Laura" [lorə] en ingles.

6 (LAURA [lawra]…but you say "Laura" [lorə] in English)

In this exchange, we can see that the Sanderson students – like the Farmer students – have metapragmatic as well as metalinguistic knowledge in their primary languages, which they use in organizing interaction during classwork. MV introduces her new classmate and also comments on the differences in Spanish and English pronunciation of the name Laura ([lawra]/[lorə]). The exchange resembles example (4), depicting Korean as used at Farmer Elementary, in this regard: When the use of the primary language was interactionally-enabled by speaker demographics, the children would use both languages, for social interaction as well as pedagogical tasks. Normatively, however, Spanish was never a licensed part of the classroom at Sanderson Elementary. The predominant pattern at Sanderson was as shown example (5a), with interaction restricted to English. The pattern was consistent in the half dozen ESL lessons we observed. In addition, the principal of the school as well as two of the classroom teachers whose classrooms we studied articulated very clearly their commitment to English Only instruction. Under this language regime, that is, in these linguistic circumstances, the Spanish-speaking students were much quieter and restricted themselves to brief exchanges in English.

A key issue is that for some reason the greater ethnolinguistic difference of Korean students at Farmer was viewed as a resource to be used in learning English, while the lesser ethnolinguistic difference of Mexican students at Sanderson was viewed as a hindrance to that same learning. In appreciating this puzzle, we should recall that at Farmer the teachers, including the ESL teacher, did not know Korean, whereas at Sanderson some of the teachers did claim to know Spanish, but

saw use of the language in school activities or settings as a 'barrier' to students learning English. If we accept that social groups and their linguistic and cultural properties are perceived through the lens of cultural or discourse models about kinds of persons, life worlds, and social trajectories (Gee 2003; Holland et al. 1998), and that such models influence the school's classification of students (Wortham 2005), then we can begin to examine how cultural stereotypes and social conditions might play a role in these counter-intuitive differences in the classroom treatment of migrant languages.

Urciuoli's (1996) Exposing Prejudice contains a discussion of language, race and class in the U.S. that can help us develop this issue. In her analysis, Urciuoli focuses upon racializing and ethnicizing discourses – ways of characterizing groups of people, tied to stereotypic projections of their families and communities, the kinds of language they use, and the likelihood of their acquiring an 'unmarked' or normative American cultural identity, a symbolic ideal in which language use and social class are central features. In her account, racializing and ethnicizing discourses are ways of handling difference, of symbolically marking those who are not White, Middle Class, Standard English speakers, but doing so in a gradient fashion.

Ethnicizing discourses represent difference as safe, contained to the proper social domains, and somehow providing the basis for class mobility. In such a discourse model, Koreans might speak other languages, but they can be trusted learn English; they come from presumptively stable families and law-abiding communities; perhaps most crucially, they are presumed to be upwardly mobile: they will become middle class (Park 1996). Racializing discourses represent difference as dangerous, occurring outside the proper social domains, and incorrigibly working-class or poor. In such a discourse model, Mexicans not only speak another language, it is feared they will not learn or will refuse to learn English; they will insist on Spanish not just in the proper domain of home or church, but also in public arenas like law courts, workplaces and schools (Huntington 2004). In the discourse, they do not come from stable families and neighborhoods but from sprawling barrios. They are not presumed to be upwardly mobile, for they are predominantly working-class, and they have been for many generations (De Genova 2005).

What we suggest, following Urciuoli as well as literature on Asian immigrants as model minorities (Park 1996; Shankar 2008), is that such a cultural model is operating to distinguish among ethnoracial minorities as preferred and dis-preferred students and citizens. It contributes to the advantages Korean speaking students in ESL classes encounter at one school and to the disadvantages Spanish-speaking students in ESL classes encounter at another school. Further, the casual, everyday implementation of this stereotype (discourse or cultural model) in public schools provides school children with an intimate encounter with a second state effect, what Trouillot terms this an "identification effect". These are processes that align atomized individuals into collectivities, in the case at hand, into ethnicized versus racialized ethnolinguistic minorities. Lest connecting widely-circulating cultural stereotypes to state processes seems far-fetched, we should bear in mind that the "model minority" stereotype arose in response to the demands of the 1960s Civil Rights movements. Those movements mounted collective demands for redress from state and national governments, based on African American, Latino and Native American organizations and mobilizations. In response to this process, beginning in the early 1970s, popular, academic, and governmental discourses emerged in which Asian immigrants were represented as an alternative, "model" minority (Lee 2009; Shankar 2008), an ethnoracial minority, to be sure, but one "destined for success."

Conclusion

In the preceding we have shown the following. First, that in order to understand literacy or language policy as a social practice, we have to examine how policy operates as multiple levels, from national legislation to face-to-face interaction in classrooms. In order to conduct such multi-leveled analysis, we need a conceptual focus, and we have argued for a focus on hegemony and state effects. Hegemony encourages us to examine, as Hymes noted, how class stratification and cultural assumptions about language converge in the school. The Gramscian emphasis on state as well as civil society suggests that language policies must be seen in relation to historical political economies that inform official definitions of "language problems" as well as popular perceptions of kinds of citizens and kinds of minorities.

The concept of state effects derives from a vision of the state "as an open field with multiple boundaries and no institutional fixity", needing to be conceptualized at more than one level, and needing ethnographic study in order to document and analyze the diverse contexts in which state effects operate, as forms of power shaping social subjects, whether in 'civil' or 'state', 'private' or 'public' settings. I have suggested in the foregoing analyses that attention to indexical meaning of language use and its layering into local and broad-scale ideologies of language and person is a fruitful way of connecting the social and the linguistic. It helps us understand, and illustrate, how cultural-historical frames of differing generality – national, institutional, organizational, personal – are evoked in the immediate circumstances of communication.

In Kate Menken's excellent sociolinguistic and comparative study of the implementation of NCLB in New York City schools, she argues that NCLB represents de facto language and education policy. Analyzing the linguistic complexities of test questions, the hierarchy of languages created by translation protocols, students' comments on the stigma of being ELL, and teachers' reports on their curriculum planning in response to NCLB, Menken concludes as follows:

> "… No Child Left Behind is a language policy, even though it is not presented as such and rarely seen in this light. At every level of the educational system, the *law's top*-down testing policies are interpreted and negotiated, such that all of the individuals involved become language policymakers, with teachers acting as the final arbiters of policy. Tests are de facto language policy in schools, and essentially become policy for language education when curriculum and teaching are aligned to the tests. Testing and accountability under the law ultimately reflect a 'language-as-problem' or 'deficit model' orientation in recent US language policy, where language has become a liability for ELLs." (Menken 2008:160; emphasis added).

Menken's conclusions provide an apt illustration of Hymes' insight that "a latent function of the education system is to instill linguistic insecurity, to discriminate linguistically, to channel children in ways that have an integral linguistic component, while appearing open and fair to all," allowing language to function "as a central medium of cultural hegemony." I have built upon this insight by analyzing several state effects, dispersed through a variety of sites and social scales, in which a semiotic process of category formation and an indexical process connecting "language use and social regularities" both create and reflect social realities. This is true whether it concerns the treatment of dialect differences in reading groups, or the treatment of different languages in ESL classrooms. It is true whether encountered in a nation-wide controversy over Ebonics in school, or the national implementation of a category, "English Language Learner,"

that isolates those aggregated under it from their diverse and significant cultural and historical relationships to inequality. Such inequality is a fundamental feature of life in capitalist societies, a salient principle in many literacy practices, and, I would argue, a pressing descriptive and analytic task for the linguistic anthropology of education.

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