

**Language Ideologies and the Positioning of Learners in a
Multilingual Grade 1 Classroom:**

A case study

By
Laura Layton
LYTLAU001

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Education

School of Education
Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town
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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature_____ date_____

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the under theorization of language and the impact that perception and discourse about languages have on diverse language users in the classroom. It draws on the theoretical understanding of Bourdieu's linguistic capital, as well as language ideology and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I argue that there is a link between the micro- and macro-level discourses that circulate a specific type of language ideology that affects the positioning of diverse language users in the classroom.

For the investigation of language ideologies and learner positioning, I observed a multilingual grade one classroom in a township school in the Cape Flats, South Africa for five weeks, and later interviewed the participating classroom teacher. I transcribed video-recorded data from the classroom as well as the teacher interview and used CDA for analysis.

Supported by the analysis of my non-participant observations and interview of the classroom teacher, my study suggests that the discourses of languages as separate and bounded entities that must remain pure limit the teaching of language and literacy, and inhibit the students from using their full linguistic repertoire in the classroom, reducing students to deficient monolingual speakers. At the same time, discourse about students being deficient furthers their negative positioning. The teacher's language background plays a role in the way she connects with the children and the way that children are positioned. I conclude that macro-level discourses and perceptions of languages and students of diverse languages have a large impact on the micro-level context of a classroom. In order to create a more positive learning environment I suggest the need for teachers to have more exposure to theorization of language thereby gaining

a better understanding of language, and an awareness of the impact of discourse on learner positioning in order for change to take place.

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Appendix one: International Phonetic Alphabet Chart

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Chapter 1: Background of the Study

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. Personal Interest

In the North American classrooms I have participated in as a teacher, student teacher, and intern, many of the students have been immigrants of Spanish-speaking backgrounds. In these classes, I witnessed many teachers reprimand students for speaking Spanish in the classroom with the simple explanation, “Because we speak English here.” I saw students become upset and embarrassed after being reprimanded for speaking in the language they feel most comfortable using. This led to my interest in how these students adapt to the discourse about English in the classroom, while simultaneously being socially positioned through the monoglot English language ideology and “English only” school policies.

1.1.2. South African Context

To complete a Master’s of Education in Applied Language and Literacy Studies I came to South Africa where the context is different but where English still maintains social power, especially in education. While the United States claims English as the official language, South Africa claims 11 official languages. However, not all are treated equally. The social treatment of different languages in a country where 11 official languages exist leads to an interesting dynamic not experienced in the United States. The majority of students in the classrooms that I have witnessed in South Africa are not immigrants; moreover, they do not speak English at home. In fact, the most common languages spoken in South Africa are isiZulu (22.7%), isiXhosa (16.0%), and Afrikaans (13.5%) with English spoken as a home language by 9.6% of the population (Census, 2011). Parents have the choice to send their children to school in their home language (out of the 11 official languages of South Africa) or in English, according to the 1997 language

in education policy. Although the United States and South Africa have had different histories and encounters with the English language, Lin and Martin (2005:2) argue that all postcolonial states have one thing in common:

...they... seem to share a similar moment in their respective histories: that in all their encounters with the West, now dispersed into the globe in various forms of global capitalism, global-mass media flows and global technological and communications penetration, English has often been perceived as an indispensable resource which many postcolonial peoples and governments seek for themselves and their younger generations in their socioeconomic context.

In South Africa, English is seen as a resource because it is associated with success. For example; a command of English enables access to higher education because only a few universities offer classes spoken in Afrikaans and only one offers programs spoken in an African language (University of Limpopo). A command of English enables access to the competitive workforce because most business is conducted in English as the lingua franca. However, the Pan South African Language Board survey (2000, in Busch, 2010:289) shows that “more than 40% of people in South Africa often do not, or seldom, understand what is being communicated in English”.

Vivian de Klerk (2002b) conducted a survey of the views and experiences of Xhosa speaking parents who chose to send their children to English-medium schools in a small town in the Eastern Cape and found that parents wished for their children to attend these schools for reasons including: better education and learning environments, more future job opportunities, higher results in English-based exams, and greater overall potential for the future, having learned English, the global language. Despite the negative feelings also expressed by the parents toward English education due to the perceived social ostracization of their children, and the growing reluctance of their offspring to speak Xhosa at home, the trend for parents to seek English

education for their children has become ever more popular. These feelings and actions are part of the paradox; on the one hand, their children need English to gain access to education. On the other hand, their conformity to the English language further perpetuates its hegemony (Janks, 2004). With this paradox, speakers of English as a second language become the majority and other languages seem to become obsolete and diminished in status (Kamwangamalu, 2003).

1.1.3. Language in Education Policy

Kamwangamalu (2003) discusses the causes of shifts toward English in South Africa in relation to the country's past and present language policies. South Africa's Language in Education Policy (LiEP) changed from overt linguistic discrimination and segregation during Apartheid (i.e., the Bantu Education Act), to an LiEP that promotes multilingualism and programs for the "redress of previously disadvantaged languages" (Language in Education Policy, 1997). However, only 9.6% of the population of South Africa speaks English as their mother tongue and more than 80% of the schools use English as the medium of instruction (Kamwangamalu, 2003:77). Both the parents' reports and the school statistics are evidence of the ideology that English is an indispensable resource and that the weight of Apartheid is still present in practice that does not fit the policy. Greenfield (2010:518) says that the discursive arrangements behind the gap between policy and practice "naturalize the hegemonic status of the dominant language [English] and perpetuate systems of inequality..." In addition to a system of inequality, studies show that teachers and school administrators perpetuate a discourse of stigma and deficit toward speakers of other languages in the classroom (Busch, 2010; de Klerk, 2002a; Makoe, 2007).

1.1.4. Hegemony of English

According to Probyn (2005), English continues to dominate as the language of learning and teaching in the classrooms because of the historical impact of the discriminatory Bantu Education along with the lack of resources in home languages, the current Neoliberal discourse linked to the hegemony of English, and a policy that fails to effectively support development of other languages. On the other hand, G. de Klerk (2002a) believes that the policy is not implemented because English is unassailable and hegemonic, the constitution lacks any enforceable clauses to ensure the support of other languages, and because marginalized communities do not have the resources to demand their rights. I aim to see if languages other than English are supported and developed in the specific English medium classroom in which I conduct my research and if there are any moments of counter-hegemonic interactions or resistance to monoglot English ideologies through languages other than English.

1.1.5. Research goal

Aim- To identify the language ideologies that are being constructed and reinforced in an English-medium foundation phase multilingual South African classroom.

Critical Questions-

- What discourses about language are circulating in the classroom?
- How do these discourses shape language and literacy pedagogy?
- How are positions of power being shaped through the discourses observed?

1.1.6. Language use in Cape Town

In order to gain a better understanding of language use in Cape Town, Kay McCormick's (2002) study gives researchers the foundation for the sociolinguistics in Cape Town's District

Six. The most common languages spoken in Cape Town are Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa. McCormick states that linguists call Cape Flats English (CFE) spoken by the ‘Coloured’¹ community a dialect whereas local speakers consider it “broken English” or English not learned properly. South African English (SAfE) is the variety of English taught in schools and associated with prestige. Many Capetonians who speak Cape Flats English also speak a non-standard variety of Afrikaans, often switching between the two within the same conversation. McCormick states that this is an act of solidarity that shows that the speaker is both educated, signaled through the use of English, yet still connected to his or her roots, signaled through the use of Afrikaans. McCormick’s research shows that speaking multiple languages in varying degrees of proficiency is the norm and not the exception in Cape Town.

1.2. Overview of Research

1.2.1. Research setting

For my research, I observed a grade 1 classroom in an English medium primary school which is located in a predominantly Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking township community in order to investigate whether young students are exposed to similar classroom discourse around the ideology of English as I have seen in the United States. Another objective was to observe how Afrikaans and Xhosa-speaking students along with refugee students who speak other languages are socially positioned by the English language use in the classroom. This school was of particular interest because it is only a few years old and was funded entirely by international grants and many private funders from the UK, which links back to the idea of the globalization of English and its impact around the world.

¹ Racial terms: White, Black and Coloured are used in line with those used by the Apartheid classification system.

The school has publically identified the debates around English as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), and has stated its argument in favor of it. According to the school website, the administrators recognize the research around the benefits of children learning in their home languages for the first six years of school. However, they have felt that this could not be possible in this community because of the language diversity. They have identified three problems for not choosing English as the language of learning and teaching. The first problem is that if they had not chosen English medium, the school would have to be divided into Afrikaans and Xhosa-speaking classrooms which would create linguistic and cultural Apartheid. Another problem is that most parents in the community would prefer their children to learn in English. The final problem is that children are required to learn in English later in schooling and this school believes that it is better not to postpone the trauma of English, but to get the students acquainted with academic English as early as possible. In order to support the language diversity in the school, Afrikaans and Xhosa are said to be taught as subjects and each classroom is said to have one language aid to help translate for the students. There are also programs throughout the week where struggling students of languages other than English, most often refugees, are taken out of the classroom and taught English in small groups.

1.2.2. Significance of the research

Some studies have focused on the historical impact of Apartheid on the current social hierarchies and language ideologies in desegregated Model C schools (Makoe, 2007; Busch, 2010), but the school I have chosen was opened after Apartheid and the 1997 Language in Education Policy, which provides a unique context for research. There is also not much classroom based research drawing on direct observation and Critical Discourse Analysis as tools to break away from relying on reports and surveys about language from students and teachers.

Although discourses within a person's life change over time, it is important to see what fundamental ideologies are circulating early in children's educational careers and the relationship between language and power in the positioning and identity of diverse language users in English medium classrooms. It is also important to understand not only the language ideologies, but how the classroom teacher's ideologies affect the teaching of language and literacy. The classroom which I have chosen will bring about new perspectives on language ideology and linguistic capital (which I define in more detail in the theoretical framework chapter) because the students are so linguistically diverse and the language of power is not the home language of any of the students.

This research could be helpful for primary school teachers of English as an additional language, and teachers using English as the LoLT in a linguistically diverse classroom, who want to understand how students are socially positioned by and through English and how they, as teachers, can support positive interactions that minimize the power hierarchy among students in the classroom. It can also be beneficial for policy makers to inform best practices in bilingual classrooms that can support multiple languages without following the hierarchical patterns of one language over another. This research could lead to other interdisciplinary studies such as the effects of social positioning through English language ideology on psychological functioning and self-esteem, or longitudinal case studies of how positioning of certain individuals based on language changes or remains the same over time or across different contexts. I expect this research will show how language ideology exists not only on a global scale, but on a local scale, in an educational context, and that this ideology hegemonically supports the power of those who have the language of prestige, in this case English.

1.3. Chapter Outline

CHAPTER 1: Introduction/Background of the Study

CHAPTER 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In this chapter I outline the theoretical underpinnings of my research. I explain my approach to language, which is based on sociocultural theory, and the three main theories I have chosen to help conceptualize language in discourse and its relationship to social power. These theories include linguistic capital, language ideology, and Critical Discourse Analysis. In this chapter I also identify research from South Africa and abroad that use similar theoretical understandings of language.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology and Design Considerations

In this chapter I discuss the research design, data collection tools, and methods of data collection for this study. I also give an overview of the data collected and my approach to data analysis. This study is a qualitative case study of one multilingual South African classroom and I use ethnographic methods and Critical Discourse Analysis to interpret my data.

CHAPTER 4: Language Ideologies

In this chapter I identify the teacher's language ideologies using discourse analysis of recorded classroom lessons and a recorded interview with the teacher. I aim to connect the teacher's language ideologies with the dominant discourse and its impact on her pedagogy and the students' experiences in the classroom.

CHAPTER 5: Positioning of Learners

In this chapter I analyze how the learners are positioned in the classroom through the circulating discourse. I identify discourses of blame and deficit and I aim to connect these discourses to the impact they have on students' abilities to be successful in the classroom.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter I reflect on the findings of this study, as well as make recommendations for future research within the field of language and literacy studies.

Chapter two: Conceptual Framework

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the theoretical underpinnings of the research are presented. I explain my approach to the nature of language, which is based on sociocultural theory. According to this theory, which is derived from New Literacy Studies and linguistic anthropology, language is seen as a practice that cannot be separated from its social (historical, political, cultural) context. This theoretical understanding of language allows researchers to move away from studying individuals as private and separate beings using language toward studying social practice and interactions through language.

Given my understanding of the nature of language, I explain in detail three main theories which help to conceptualize language in discourse and its relationship to social power which include linguistic capital, language ideology, and Critical Discourse Analysis. Although each theory is unique in the object of interest, they can be tightly interconnected and have informed my methodology and approaches to analysis. Finally, I reflect on South African as well as international research that provides a better understanding of my research topic, my questions, and my theoretical framework and also provides insight into the current body of research to which I aim to contribute my particular research context and analytical perspective.

2.2. Linguistic capital

This research focuses on understanding language as a source to gaining power in society. Languages and varieties of languages hold specific status and value in different regions. Bourdieu theorizes language to be linguistic capital in the social act of linguistic exchange. Bourdieu states that “Linguistic capital is a form of cultural capital and refers to the correct

mastery of the language deemed legitimate in any context.” (Bourdieu, 1991 in Volk & Angelova, 2007:179). Bourdieu does not see specific languages or varieties of language as inherently more powerful, but he argues that the power of a language is socially created and reinforced. In Bourdieu’s (1977) article, “The Economics of Linguistic Exchange”, he seeks to integrate sociology with linguistics and re-examines the previous linguistic notions of grammaticalness, language, and relations of communication replacing them with acceptability, legitimate language, and relations of symbolic power. Finally, he replaces the notion of linguistic competence, which is often the center of focus in English classrooms, with symbolic capital, which is “inseparable from the speaker’s position in the social structure” (Bourdieu, 1977:646). This definition of symbolic power helps us to understand how the students in this study’s social positions led to specific language choices and how their language use or the variety of a language they command may have led to their social positioning.

According to Bourdieu, research should not look at how people use language “correctly” or “incorrectly”; rather, one should look at how certain language use is socially valued and what is considered “legitimate language” (Bourdieu 1977:646) in the context. The idea of “legitimate language” can be seen in the English classroom both explicitly (i.e. when the teacher specifies correct and incorrect grammar, vocabulary words) and implicitly (i.e. when students are acknowledged for speaking a certain way). Bourdieu (1977:659) states that “schooling is one of the most important sites for social reproduction and is also one of the key sites, ‘which imposes the legitimate forms of discourse and the idea that discourse should be recognized if and only if it conforms to the legitimate norms.’” In most classrooms, the discourse around language appears to be that students will gain symbolic power if they conform to the linguistic norms of the classroom and the education system as an institution (Heller, 2007; Makoe, 2007; Martin-

Jones 2008; McKinney, 2010). In South Africa, English maintains hegemonic power in education. However, Prinsloo (2012) points out that ‘English’ itself is not the same in every context and therefore cannot be assumed to always provide access to power. In South Africa there are many varieties of English and teachers are not always able to provide access to the socially valued or prestigious varieties of English. Prinsloo (2012: 29) states that what counts as English “is both diverse and specific.” In other words, different forms of English are context embedded.

By using Bourdieu’s definition of linguistic capital, one can see how children’s home languages might not be “legitimated” in the classroom when they do not match the “legitimate language”. In this study, I aimed to see how English maintains its cultural capital in the classroom and what aspects of the English language are considered “legitimate English”. In addition, I looked at each student as a participant in linguistic exchange to see whether or not their linguistic capital is given value. Bourdieu believes that schools are settings which reproduce social inequalities, as is still evident in South Africa’s recently de-segregated schooling, so I focused on how the discourse in the classroom reflects and reinforces external discourses about language.

2.3. Language Ideology

The second theory that provides a better understanding of language as a source for social power is that of language ideology (Woolard, 1992; Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2002; Blommaert, 2005). Woolard states that, “... language ideology is a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk ... ideology stands as a dialectical relation with, and thus significantly influences, social, discursive, and linguistic practices” (Woolard, 1992: 235). In other words, the

beliefs and ideas behind a language and the use of a language both influence communicative practices. Speakers of a language often are not consciously aware of the beliefs and world views that they portray when they speak. Other times, such as in English language classrooms, teachers are aware of the ideal of speaking a particular kind of English in the classroom. That is not to be confused with the belief that individuals create their own ideologies without the help of others; ideologies are socially supported within discourse. Blackledge and Pavlenko (2002:123) explain,

Language ideologies are about more than the individual speakers' attitudes to their languages or speakers using languages in particular ways. Rather, they include the values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers, and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, national and global levels.

Ideologies around a specific language are said to be evolving. However, they can often be naturalized and hegemonic as I have discussed in Chapter 1. Blackledge and Pavlenko (2002:122) explain the hegemonic power of language ideology: "Hegemonic ideologies in multilingual communities potentially exclude and discriminate against those who are unable or refuse to fit the norm." Language ideology in the United States and South Africa, for example, often privileges English and English speakers. However, since the classroom I chose is so linguistically diverse, different language ideologies around other languages could be seen in the classroom along with varieties of language as well as dialects and accents. I analyzed ideologies at the macro level of the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) of the school, and at the micro level in the student-teacher and peer interactions. Woolard's (1992) definition of language ideology helps to understand the naturalized support for English in the classroom, school LiEP, and community. This definition also helped me to surface the problems of social hierarchy between diverse language users and to connect the ideology with the social structure of the

classroom. I took notice of the interactions of students who were using different languages to gain social power in the classroom, as well as their identities and social positions.

Following recent theorizing in critical sociolinguistics, I take the view that languages are not separate and bounded entities; instead, they must be looked at within socio-historical context in order to be better understood (Blommaert, 2005; Blommaert and Rampton, 2011; Makoni and Pennycook 2007). Makoni and Pennycook (2007:16) argue that "...current approaches to diversity, multilingualism, and so forth, all too often start with the enumerative strategy of counting languages..." but that these approaches fail to answer the important qualitative questions. Through an understanding of language in this manner one can better theorize the best practices in bilingual education that are appropriate for a given context, and not view languages as objects that are simply separate and countable. How language is conceptualized within the LiEP and language curriculum affects discourse about and through language and the positioning of learners. Maintaining language separation as a form of bilingual pedagogy, which is often a product of this concept of language, is neither appropriate nor effective in all contexts and is linked to monolingual ideology. Creese and Blackledge (2010) argue in support of translanguaging, or the natural blending of languages, in classrooms and find value in using a wider linguistic repertoire rather than keeping languages separate.

2.4. Critical Discourse Analysis

The third and final theory with which I worked was Fairclough's (2010) Critical Discourse Analysis. When discussing discourse in this study I am referring to Fairclough's (1992b: 63) definition that discourse is, "... language use as a form of practice, rather than a purely individual activity." In that sense, it is the tool through which we construct the world and

negotiate social meanings within a culture over time. Fairclough states that discourse analysis is a method as much as a theory “for studying language in its relation to power and ideology... the work of discourse analysis is to uncover ways in which discourses become ordered in hierarchies of institutional authority bound together.” (Fairclough in Makoe, 2007:61). This theory looks at ways in which patterns of discourse are placed on the scale of hierarchy, with the central belief that language use is socially constructed within socio-political and historical conditions of production and reception (Janks, 1997).

I use three dimensions of CDA to describe, interpret, and explain specific examples of transcribed dialogue that I selected from my observations. The diagram below gives a visual representation of the way that CDA can be used as a research tool according to Fairclough.

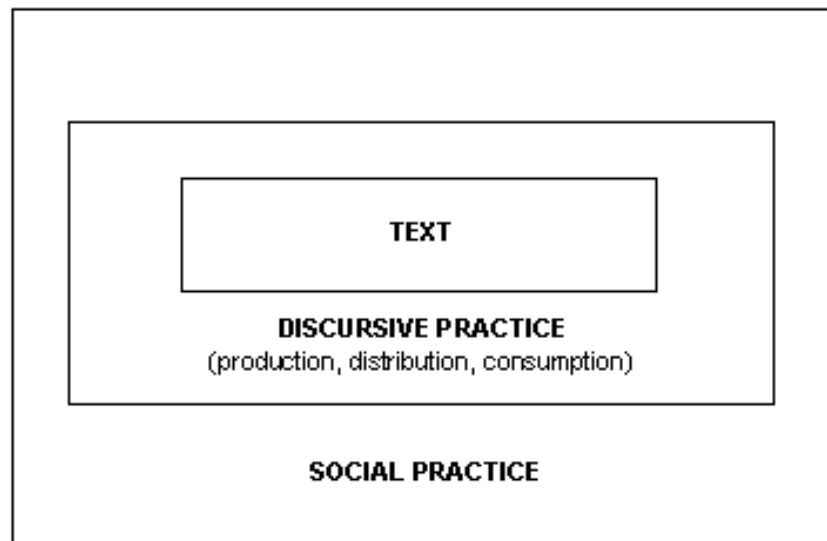


Diagram taken from Janks (1997)

Critical Discourse Analysis has been used for surfacing ideologies, especially those which are manifested and re-produced through systems of education, and connecting language with social

identity. By using the CDA method of analysis, I had a framework for understanding the central issues of linguistic capital and language ideology.

Critical Discourse Analysis helps us to focus on the specific use of language, as in text or speech acts, and how linguistic choices are related to dominance, subordination, access to resources and discrimination. These aspects of CDA are “the object of moral and political evaluation, and analyzing them should have effects on society: empowering the powerless, giving voice to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilising people to remedy social wrongs.” (Blommaert, 2005:25). This theoretical framework has popularly been used to analyze racist and sexist discourse, as well as political discourse. I believe that linguistic difference is another basis for oppressing people and that this oppression can be surfaced through careful observation of speech and interaction.

Blommaert (2005) points out the shortcomings of the use of Critical Discourse Analysis as a research method and conceptual framework for study. Blommaert states that one critique is that researchers using CDA may provide a biased analysis with a particular agenda that will force a particular view on the reader. One downfall of CDA is that the object of the research is often text alone, and the context is not researched. It is my goal, for this reason, to provide a well-rounded analysis that includes the socio-political and historical context within which I am researching, as well as the background to the theoretical framework of language ideology and linguistic capital. For this reason, I spent five weeks observing the classroom in order to gain a better understanding of the context.

The use of Critical Discourse Analysis provides a better understanding of social wrongdoings but does not always provide clear solutions to the problem. The main challenge to

finding a solution to the social hierarchies that result from language ideology and linguistic capital, that is apparent in my research, is highlighted in Hilary Janks' notion of Access Paradox (2004: 33):

If you provide more people with access to the dominant variety of the dominant language, you contribute to perpetuating and increasing its dominance. If, on the other hand, you deny students access, you perpetuate their marginalisation in a society that continues to recognise this language as a mark of distinction.

In South Africa, this paradox is visible. For example, since most South African universities teach in English, one must speak English in order to gain access to most of these institutions. Teaching English for the purpose of gaining access to higher education perpetuates the language's dominance, while teaching students only in their mother tongue and denying them access to English perpetuates their marginalization as well as denying them access to higher education. It is very important to understand that the solution is not clear cut. To begin to resolve the hierarchical patterns and positioning in society based on language use is to become aware of the phenomenon. It is clear that educators cannot simply conform to the linguistic capital of English, nor can they fight it through monolingual home language education. Another problem is that this issue cannot be resolved in the classroom alone, but must also be resolved at the macro-level of the wider society since school and society influence each other directly.

Through this research, I wish to apply the theories of linguistic capital, language ideology, and CDA to the issues of unequal social positioning through differences in forms of speech and variety of language. The design and conduct of the study relied on these theories which were used to analyze classroom interactions. This research explores the validity of these theories in relation to a global issue of the ideology of the English language in a local South African, multilingual context. Through analyzing the text, or transcriptions from video recorded

classroom interactions, I aim to understand the sources of the classroom discourses within the larger surrounding social practice.

2.5. Literature Review

2.5.1. Language Ideologies in international contexts

There is a growing body of research on the impact of language ideology on immigrant students, minority students, and students living in poverty in the United States (Volk & Angelova, 2007; Griswold, 2011; Dyson & Smitherman, 2009). Examples of this research recognize that students in the United States tend to favor using English when possible and that teachers favor a specific standardized form and variety of English. Through these studies one can gain a broader understanding of the global issues of language ideologies that affect diverse populations of students.

In the United States, language ideology around English is similar to that of South Africa. Research by Volk and Angelova (2007) used similar definitions of the theoretical framework of linguistic capital and language ideology as I do while researching a bilingual, dual-medium school where all classes and subjects in school were systematically taught in English and Spanish. The goal of the school was to create an environment where all students could learn through English and Spanish with an equal opportunity to succeed in both; however, the research showed that, through careful observation, students appeared to prefer to speak in English and that Spanish speaking students were more likely to adjust their language to accommodate their English-speaking friends, rather than the other way around. According to Volk and Angelova, this was due to the dominant language ideology that favors English.

Another piece of research which was completed in the United States that supports my research methodology and analysis of discursive practices around linguistic ideology of English is that of Griswold (2011). Griswold's research took place in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom for adults with a desire to pass the US citizenship test and analyzed the ideology that the teacher displayed through her classroom discourse with the students. The teacher constantly corrected and pointed out mistakes made by the students. She focused less on "sense-making" and more on accurate grammar and pronunciation. She also often mentioned that the mistakes the students were making would be examples of errors they needed to correct for the citizenship test. This research has opened my mind to a new form of language ideology that does not simply focus on a specific language but on a specific way of speaking that particular language that is most valued. All of the students in my research classroom were learning to speak English as an additional language, so I saw the teacher correcting for a standard form, or what she thought was a more standard form of English that is highly valued. By focusing on what type of English was valued in the classroom, I was able to find a pattern for types of learner behaviors and proficiencies that were valued as well. Griswold puts an enormous amount of emphasis on the power associated with English from the policies in the United States, to the perceptions that the students have toward English and becoming a citizen. While the history and politics of South Africa are different, this article helped me analyze the classroom discourse while comparing it to the classroom LiEP and the impact that language ideology has on the students' perceptions of English.

Language Ideology not only affects speakers of languages other than English, but also speakers of different varieties of English. Dyson and Smitherman (2009) studied a grade 1 African American student's experience during class to surface the impact of Standard English

language ideology. This student spoke African American English which was not valued or legitimated in the classroom. When the teacher noticed that she had not written something in standard English, she would ask the student if her work “sounds right” in an effort to point out the mistake. This article helps to understand the disconnection between students’ unique linguistic repertoires and what is valued in the classroom by the teacher. This article points out the syntax of African American English in order for the reader to better understand this student’s proficiency in her own home variety of English. In this article Dyson and Smitherman (2009:981) quote Orlando Taylor (originally quoted in Hamilton, 2005, p.35):

Language is a reflection of a people. For example, French culture is perceived as high quality, its cuisine is considered to be great, its fashions are considered to be avant-garde. So if a person speaks with a French accent, it’s perceived to be very positive because the people are perceived positively. But if a group is considered to be ignorant, primitive, backward, ill-informed, then their language is given similar attributes. The problem is that African American people and Black people around the world are perceived by dominant societies to be inferior, and so their language is perceived in a similar way.

This quote brings up a difficult topic that needed to be addressed in my research that is tied to Bourdieu’s theory of linguistic capital. Language and speakers of a language hold a specific, socially created status in society. In South Africa, varieties of English resulted from the history of Apartheid’s racial and linguistic segregation. Therefore, they continue to hold the same value and status as languages had before. Discourse is informed by social ideologies and perceptions that are linked to language; therefore, these ideologies and perceptions are caused by and simultaneously continue to cause unequal positioning in society.

2.5.2. South African Research on Language Ideology

Research in South Africa is beginning to focus on language ideologies in order to provide new insights into the complexities of language problems in South African schools (Banda, 2010;

Busch, 2010; Makoe, 2007; Makoe & McKinney, 2013). As emphasized in the introductory chapter, the history of South Africa's Language in Education Policy (LiEP) is significant in understanding current language ideologies. South Africa's LiEP went from overt linguistic discrimination and segregation during Apartheid (i.e., the Bantu Education Act), to an LiEP that is supposed to promote multilingualism and programs for the "redress of previously disadvantaged languages" (Language in Education Policy, 1997). However, while the goal of the LiEP is to promote multilingual education, studies show that teachers and school administrators frequently spread a discourse of stigma and deficit toward speakers of other languages in the classroom (Busch, 2010; de Klerk, 2002a; Heugh, 2013).

The first topic involved with language ideology which I focused my research on is that of the discourses around languages. Makoe (2007) conducted research that looked at the discourses about English in a South African Grade 1 classroom. Makoe discovered that the teacher in the classroom constantly praised the students for speaking English well. Students often resisted speaking in their home languages because this was portrayed as a "deficit" in English if they had to resort to their home language. Through an interview with the school deputy principal about the school's official language policy, Makoe also found that students were positioned as successful or unsuccessful based on their proficiency in English and that they were seen as coming to school deficient. This led to another area of discourse analysis that showed how discourse around the perceived ideology of English, was both circulating in the classroom and also at the institutional level. More evidence of this circulating language ideology discourse is indicated in McKinney's (2013) recent study of the impact of the history of Apartheid on South Africa's Language in Education Policy and its ultimate effects on language socialization.

Another aspect of language ideology that needs to be addressed is the ideology that languages are separate entities that should be kept separate. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) argue that what we believe language is affects how we talk and socialize through language. They argue that seeing languages as separate and bounded objects can have a negative effect on social positioning of diverse speakers. Banda (2010) argues that Western definitions of multilingualism are not appropriate in South Africa because they promote additive bilingualism which, in a sense, is monolingualism with a second language added. Banda's research in Cape Town schools looked at how students and teachers were using different linguistic resources as a means to defy the monolingual classroom discourse that was prescribed to them. This research accounts for a situation where multiple students and teachers are appearing to resist the monolingual discourse in the classroom. The teacher was simultaneously enforcing monolingual ideologies of languages as bounded and separate entities, while at the same time, enacting mixed language practices, as were the students. Banda (2010) and McCormick (2002) provide insight as to the natural blending of languages that occurs in Cape Town, which informs part of my question, "*How do these discourses shape language and literacy pedagogy?*"

Finally, research in South Africa has begun to address the complex socio-historical causes and effects of monolingual ideology. Busch (2010) researched language profiles at a secondary school in the Cape Flats and analyzed the learner-centered approach to school language policy. Busch's research indicated that the linguistic diversity of the students in the school was complex in relation to the students' language desires and use but that students were often reduced to "monolinguals" (in either English or Afrikaans). This study was conducted with an aim to support the "valorizing" of students' diverse linguistic repertoires as opposed to circulating a deficit discourse around students who do not succeed in the monolingual

assessments. Busch also put an emphasis on the historical changes in the LiEP and the current practices which remain from the Apartheid era which support *monolingualization*. On the other hand, mother-tongue education in South Africa has also undergone changes since Apartheid, but still has the potential to promote exclusion and continues to be contested when it comes to human rights, educational strategies, and notions of national identity (de Klerk, 2002a). Busch's study helps to perceive students not as speakers of a specific language but as multilingual individuals with unique experiences and practices with a complex linguistic repertoire, which the LiEP fails to take into account. My research gives further evidence of the socio-historical influence of monolingual ideology that will add to this body of knowledge.

2.5.3. Learner Positioning

With the unique historical and political context of South African education and the consideration of language ideologies and linguistic capital, recent research has closely studied learner positioning. Learners are often positioned into binaries (powerful/powerless, black/white, competent/incompetent, teacher/student) and within the binary, one side is privileged and the other deprived (Davies & Hunt, 1994). Once students are positioned, either favorably or not, it is difficult to change that position, or change the social perception of the binary position, in the hierarchy of power. Research on learner positioning includes the study of how students can actively create their positioning through their discourse (Makoe & McKinney, 2009), how teachers manage and maintain certain students' positioning as exemplified through assigned seating (Toohey, 1998), how students develop an identity that changes over time and space (Norton & McKinney, 2011), and how students can be positioned by deficit discourse and discourses of blame (Comber & Kamler, 2004).

Makoe and McKinney (2009) began their research in a Grade 1 classroom with an understanding of the inequalities in South African schooling, but were open-minded to the forms of discourses they would see in the classroom. They chose to look at positioning and identity of the students through discursive practices and identified a student of particular interest. This student who had a grasp of the multiple languages that were used in the classroom used discursive practices which positioned her as a person of authority in multiple instances. She used her different linguistic resources as a valuable commodity in the classroom with the implicit support of the teacher. This research was analyzed through classroom discourse analysis and interpretive analysis. Makoe and McKinney had placed the focus on one specific student and her position and identity in the classroom and linked it to her discursive practices. Most importantly, this research brings to light a new way of seeing discursive power relations in the classroom that helped me to answer my final critical question of, “*How are positions of power being shaped through the discourse observed?*”

The previous example shows how students can be active agents in their own classroom positioning; however, teachers have the power to position students in the classroom through something as simple as managing students’ physical space. In Canada, Toohey (1998) conducted a longitudinal study that looked at how and why students were physically placed at desks around the classroom. If students were positioned as causing a problem they were placed closer to the teacher. If they were positioned as not causing a problem, they were placed toward the back of the room; these placements were to prevent disruptions. Toohey argues that the arrangement and supervision of the children in the classroom created a hierarchy and that ESL students were members of a rank that required *normalization*. In other words, since their language and ability to speak English deviated from the rest of the class, they needed to be more closely monitored so

that the teacher could supervise their language use. During my research, I created a diagram of the layout of the classroom and paid close attention to two students; one who seemed to choose to sit alone in the back of the room and one who was required to do so as a consequence of unruly, defiant behavior or loud interruptions.

With the recognition of the positioning of learners in the classroom comes the notion of identity construction. Norton and McKinney (2011: 87) state,

... an identity approach [to second language acquisition] views learners as historically and socially situated agents, and learning as not just acquisition of linguistic forms but as growing participation in a community of practice. Learning ... is thus seen as part of an ongoing process of identity construction.

An identity approach to understanding second language acquisition aims to explain the individual language learner in relation to the social world. The second aim of the identity approach is to address how power relations affect learner's access to the target language. Identity is not seen as constant, predetermined characteristics of individuals, but as changing over space and time. Changes in identity may be due to power relations in society (historically or culturally) or in a specific context (socially).

Deficit discourse is also an emerging topic in the study of learner identity and positioning. Deficit discourse is often linked to students' inability to speak English or the prestigious variety of English and often the discourse puts the student at blame for the "deficit". These discourses continue to be reproduced in student files, educational journals, and reported as fact in media coverage (Comber & Kamler, 2004). Comber and Kamler (2004) conducted case studies in Australia that looked at the impact of deficit discourses on children growing up in poverty. Their research helps to better understand the foundation of discourses of deficit that are often circulated through teachers and staff. It also helps to better understand the underlying

beliefs of who is to blame for children's underachievement in literacy (teacher, student, family, etc.). Comber and Komler's research required teachers to visit student's homes which helped them to better understand their students and remove blame, subsequently changing their discourse and positioning of the students.

Language can also go hand in hand with the concept of race in complex ways. McKinney (2013) points out that having command of the prestigious variety of white South African English is not always favorable for black students. In some cases, black students are labeled as 'coconuts'² for speaking this variety of English. Varieties of English in South Africa are racialized and given prestige or stigma as a result of the history of Apartheid's racial and linguistic segregation and system of hierarchy (McKinney, 2013). This research provides a better understanding of race/language relationships and the reproduction of race in South Africa.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the theoretical framework of my research and my understanding of the nature of language as socioculturally constructed. It has also defined the three main theories with which I analyzed my data; linguistic capital, language ideology, and Critical Discourse Analysis (as theory and method of research). This chapter has also noted research that helps to understand my research topic, questions, and theoretical framework within similar and diverse contexts.

² 'Coconut' is a term used to define a black person who acts or speaks like a white person. This is a metaphor for black on the outside and white on the inside (McKinney, 2013).

Chapter three: Methodology and Design Considerations

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I outline the research design for this study, data collection tools, methods of data collection, and give an overview of the data collected and my approach to data analysis. This research is a qualitative case study using ethnographic methods and Critical Discourse Analysis. I interpreted the data through use of my theoretical framework, and analyzed areas of interest selected through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis, which I describe in more detail below.

3.2. Research design:

I chose to do a case study because I was interested in observing interactions between people in the classroom as they communicate with each other naturally. Knobel and Lankshear (1999:97) define case study as, “the intensive (in depth and detailed) study of a bounded, contemporary phenomenon...” I studied the bounded, contemporary phenomenon of language use in a specific, situated multilingual classroom and the social positioning that occurs through discourse.

I used ethnographic methods as well, which often overlap with typical case study methods. According to Hammersley (1994), ethnography is social research which examines “real world” situations using observation and informal conversations focusing on a small group of people. Ethnography was historically used by travelers because the social interactions in the foreign community are not naturalized to the foreigner. As a North American, I noticed many commonly accepted social interactions in the classroom, more so than would someone from the community who is all too familiar with the norms. Since the aim of ethnography is to better

understand the social interactions of a group of people and to discover social phenomena without any assumptions or strict hypothesis (Hammersley, 1994), I aimed to research with an open mind. Hammersley (1994:8-9) states that, "...ethnography is able to trace patterns of relationships among social phenomena in their natural context in a way that neither experiments nor social surveys can do". Therefore, ethnography allowed me to interpret the common interactions in the classroom and to see the patterns of student positioning through the classroom discourses. This design also enabled me to capture natural discourse as a non-participant in the classroom. Analysis of these discourse patterns were enhanced by a focus on specific examples of interactions between the students and the teacher. Using an ethnographic approach, I contextualized this case study within the greater community with which I had the opportunity to become acquainted by volunteering for four weeks before the research began. In order to contextualize the patterns of discourse which I observed, I used the diagram below from Blommaert and Jie (2010) to place the discourse events within their micro- and macro-contexts.

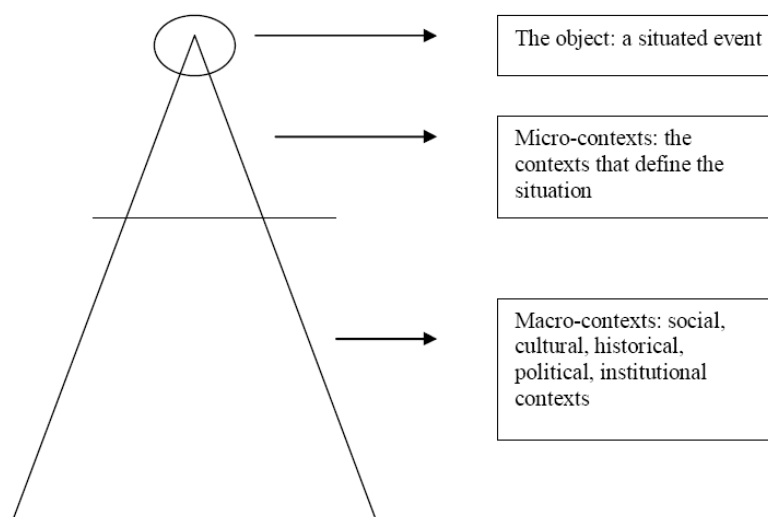


Diagram taken from Blommaert and Jie (2010:20)

The diagram above resembles Fairclough's model for the use of Critical Discourse Analysis. The object in this diagram can be compared to Fairclough's *text*, the micro-contexts can be seen as Fairclough's *discursive practice*, and macro-contexts can be seen as Fairclough's *social practice*. This ethnographic approach to a case study helped me to understand how discourses about languages and language ideologies as well as discourses of deficit are being circulated and naturalized in the classroom from the macro-context within situated events. I used transcriptions from classroom interactions as the object of my study, or text in Fairclough's model of data analysis.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

I used the traditional case study data collection tools of classroom observations, captured through video-recording lessons and taking field notes, a semi-structured interview with the teacher (Fontana & Frey, 2000), collection of artifacts, and collection of historical and contemporary texts which may relate to language ideologies. I focused on one specific grade 1 classroom in an elementary school in the Western Cape over five weeks, three to four days a week beginning at 9:20am and leaving at 2:00pm. I observed how the students interacted and coped with each other and their peers in the mainstream classroom and observed three English-support pull-out classes that three of the participating students attended. I also observed a concert and a puppet show in the school auditorium, an art class, and physical education. I turned my main focus to specific instances of social interaction through talk between the teacher and students in the mainstream classroom and transcriptions of an interview with the teacher which I found relevant to answering my research questions.

3.3.1. Process of Data Collection

The data was collected through field notes, five weeks of non-participant observation of classroom interaction recorded with a video camera, conversations with the classroom teacher and an interview with the classroom teacher. Particular areas of interest were transcribed, and some data translated from Afrikaans to English.

3.3.2. Sources of evidence

Given the focus of my research and research design, two sources of evidence were most appropriate in collecting this data: direct classroom observation and interviews of the teacher.

The data that was collected from these sources comprised:

Direct observation:

A video-recording for each full day of classroom observation excluding special classes outside of the participating classroom (physical education, art, auditorium presentation, English pull-out classrooms, etc.) (237 minutes of video footage were selected to be analyzed for this research)

Field notes taken during classroom observations

Interview:

Two audio-recorded interviews with the classroom teacher (64 minutes in total)

3.4. Research site and participants

The site at which I collected my data was a multilingual grade 1 classroom at a school that has been operating for less than ten years in a township in the Western Cape. This school was of particular interest because it was built after Apartheid. It was relatively well funded,

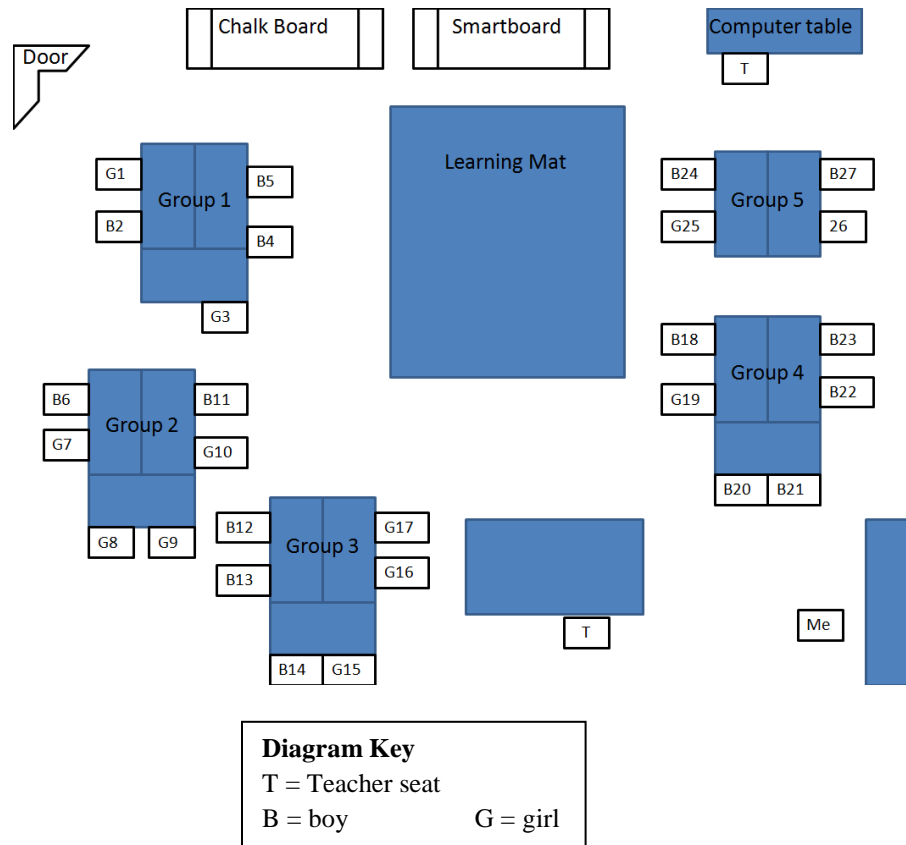
mostly by private grants, with each classroom containing a SmartBoard as well as the traditional chalk board, and with each student having his or her own desk space, chair, workbooks and notebooks. Students wore uniforms of khaki pants and matching collared shirts. The classrooms were metal modular buildings with security bars on the windows. The doors faced a cement courtyard in the center. Barbed wire fencing surrounded the entire facility that was closed during the day and watched by a guard. The school also had a large permanent structure as the auditorium.

The township in which this school was located is considered dangerous with high levels of crime and drug and alcohol abuse. In order for me to conduct my research, I took a public train to the area. For security, a minibus picked me up at the train station and dropped me off directly at the school. The housing in the community could be regarded as shacks, made from scrap wood and the roofs made from metal. Most houses did not have running water. Businesses in the community were independently owned and managed and the community was isolated from more affluent communities.

The classroom's highest attendance was 27 students; however, the classroom never had 100% attendance during the five weeks of my fieldwork. Based on my count from the day with highest attendance, there are 11 girls and 15 boys, as can be seen in the diagram below (seat 26 was occupied by different students on different days so it is not labeled with a B or G for gender). On rainy days as few as 11 students were in attendance. The teacher stated that many students could not get a good night sleep due to leaks and wet belongings which prevented them from attending school the next day. Most students walk to and from school but one student took a minibus daily because she lived in an adjacent township and the walk was too far and dangerous.

English is the medium of instruction in this school while the majority of the students speak Afrikaans or Xhosa at home (estimated at 50%/50%), and some students were refugees and speakers of Chiluba and French. All classrooms are said to have one teacher aide specifically for language assistance, however, this was not always the case. The classroom that I observed had one aide that was not consistently in the classroom and who also taught physical education. She rarely used Afrikaans to assist the students but taught a full Afrikaans lesson one day which I witnessed and recorded.

I chose this school because the students are linguistically diverse and, because it is fairly new; it has a new English language policy and has a recently developed school culture. I carefully observed how students and teachers used forms of talk to shape the discourse in the classroom. I observed the power relations involved with these interactions. The classroom floor plan was as follows:



The diagram above shows the layout of the classroom. The door facing the courtyard is on the left, by the front of the classroom. The SmartBoard and chalkboard can be seen at the front of the classroom. The students sat on the learning mat for most of the whole classroom instruction and sat at their desks for individual work and assignments. I only witnessed one partnered activity which was a spontaneous role-play activity that demonstrated the students’ understanding of various careers. In the diagram, I labeled the area that I sat most of the time. However, during some lessons when the teacher sat in the front and center of the room, I sat at the computer table which possessed one computer that was connected to the SmartBoard. The SmartBoard was often used in a manner similar to a chalkboard, but the teacher sometimes used it for videos as well. The classroom learning mat was very spacious. Nevertheless, the students

did not have much room to move their chairs around their desks because the desks were placed close to the walls.

3.5. Sources of Data and Ethics

Prior to beginning my research at the primary school, I met with the principal and gave her written details about my research. I obtained ethical clearance from UCT, permission from Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and informed consent from parents, guardians and participating teachers. I have also used pseudonyms for the teacher, teacher's assistant, and students. At first, I informally observed an English pull-out classroom but I realized that I would not gain as much information that pertained to my research questions as I would if I had observed a general education classroom. The English pull-out teacher recommended a teacher to me because she was the Head of Department and taught first grade. Both the principal and the participating teacher read and understood the nature of my research and signed their consent to my presence in the classroom.

I focused on an audio-recorded semi structured interview with the teacher, recorded field notes, and selected video footage in the classroom as the primary means of data collection. This enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the teacher's discourse around the students and language. The interview also exposed new lines of inquiry. I used the following transcription conventions for the audio and video-recorded data in this research:

- (.) Pause
- (...) Description of context or additional information
- ... Omitted and inaudible materials

‘...’ Speaker quotes or uses words of others

Bold Cape Flats English dialect [I also use bold in my transcriptions of an Afrikaans lesson for the reader to easily identify when someone is speaking English. In the Afrikaans lesson transcriptions, the subjects are not necessarily speaking CFE.]

italics Speech in Afrikaans

[*italics*] English translations of Afrikaans after the clause

// Overlapping speech

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Since my critical research questions focus on language ideologies, I analyzed the spoken interactions using Fairclough’s model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to surface power relations constructed through speech and discourses about language. Janks (1997:341) believes that “Ideology is at its most powerful when it is invisible, when discourses have been naturalized and become part of our everyday common sense.” For this reason, I chose to surface the ideologies embedded in the classroom discourse in order to “de-naturalize” them. According to Blommaert (2005:25), the purpose of CDA is to analyze and critique “the intersection of language/discourse/ speech and social structure.” In other words, CDA works to find the relationship between discourse and social processes taking place outside of discourse (such as the economy and socio-cultural changes) and how each shapes each other. Blommaert (2005:29-30) explains Fairclough’s method of using CDA in three dimensions; *discourse-as-text*, *discourse-as-discursive-practice*, *discourse-as-social-practice*. In this research, the *discourse-as-*

text could be seen as the discourse used between the teacher and students and between myself and the teacher during the interview. The *discursive-practice* could be seen as the wider context in which the classroom discourse is being circulated. Finally, the *discourse-as-social-practice* could be seen as the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which the discourse operates.

I interpreted the data that I collected by searching for dominant themes that emerged in relation to language ideology. This research cannot be expected to surface generalizable truths, but rather to understand how global language ideology is reproduced and shaped in a small local context, and how these ideological discourses are transformed in this particular classroom and among these particular students and teacher. The theoretical nature of this research does not simply reveal realities but “constructs” realities, because it does not simply discover phenomena, but provides a lens for interpreting what is observed (Knobel & Lankshear, 1999:88).

I ensured my research was well-founded by following Maxwell’s (1992) definitions of descriptive, interpretive and theoretical validity. As a descriptive validity check, I used a video camera and transcribed and translated all material of focus. When necessary, I had the transcription and translation reviewed for accuracy by my supervisor. In order to gain interpretive validity, I conducted unstructured interviews and conversations with the teacher to surface congruency and discrepancy between my observations of ideological behavior and the teacher’s reported assumptions. In order to address theoretical validity, I used the theoretical definitions that I chose and analysed the classroom interactions through Critical Discourse Analysis (Janks, 1997; Blommaert, 2005). When discussing the validity and reliability of this research, it is important to point out that, “The main goal of field research-- to study the people and events etc. in their real-life contexts—automatically excludes considerations of such things

as ‘external validity’ or ‘reliability’ due to the ‘once-off’ nature of these studies.” (Knobel & Lankshear, 1999). I described the context and the events as best as I could and all interpretations and analyses are explained and rationalized in great detail so as not to ignore alternative interpretations and analysis.

3.7. Challenges in Data Collection

A challenge to data collection was posed by my limited knowledge of Afrikaans and Cape Flats English, as a North American international researcher. For my data collection, I needed one video of an Afrikaans lesson to be translated and transcribed for me, and I had a second source confirm the translations. On numerous occasions, I consulted my professor with video footage to confirm my interpretation of what was said because of my difficulty in determining whether the teacher or student had used an English word or an Afrikaans word due to our differences in English variety and accent.

Another challenge occurred when the school was short staffed and the teacher needed to attend a meeting. As a non-participant observer, I could not interact with the students; however, after the teacher had left the room, I needed to step out of my researcher role and maintain classroom order.

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter outlines my research design and methods of data analysis. The data analyzed has been organized into two chapters based on central themes that I identified throughout my research; Chapter 4: Language Ideology, and Chapter 5: Learner Positioning. I aim to first analyse the language ideology circulating in the classroom and then to connect this ideology to how and why learners are specifically positioned in the classroom.

Chapter 4: Language Ideologies

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I identify the teacher's language ideologies using discourse analysis of recorded classroom lessons and a recorded interview with the teacher. I focus on presenting and analyzing the language resources that I have observed in the classroom during language and literacy pedagogy, the teacher's view of the use of multiple languages in the classroom, and the teacher's naturalized language choices. I aim to connect the teacher's language ideologies with their possible impact on her pedagogy, the students' experiences in the classroom and the maintenance of the dominant discourse.

4.2. Language Resources in the Classroom

In this section I analyze the linguistic resources that are valued by the teacher and deemed legitimate for students to use in the classroom. In addition, I examine the linguistic resources that the teacher brings to the classroom, and the language policy of the school that impacts the classroom learning environment.

4.2.1. Language ideology in reading instruction

During my five weeks of observation, the teacher taught or facilitated a phonics-based activity every day. Below is an example in which language ideology is apparent within the classroom reading pedagogy. I analyze this example in order to surface the language regime in the classroom. In this lesson, the teacher gives the students the task of mentally retrieving vocabulary words that begin with a specific letter. Although she says a sound the letter makes,

for instance dʒ³, she only accepts words that begin with the letter *J* and not words that begin with the same sound she has produced but spelled with a different letter, for example *gym*. The students stand in a circle and the teacher decides who begins and picks the sound they will practice. Once a student gives a word that starts with the appropriate letter, then the student to the left (clockwise) must give a new word beginning with the same letter in a timely manner (often, if the teacher deems that the student is taking too long she counts to three). The students have been playing this game since the beginning of the year so I was not able to witness an explanation of the rules, however, based on my observations, the students sat down when they said a word that did not begin with the appropriate letter, or if they repeated a word that was already said. The winner of the game was the last person standing in the circle. I chose to analyze this portion of the transcript to display the interaction between teacher and student when a student chooses to use a word that the teacher deems illegitimate during the game.

English Phonics Game

(The sound is l)

S: *lɑmp*

T: what?

S: *lɑmp*

T: *lɑmp*... *lɑmp* is Afrikaans... *lamp* is the English word. **We using** English words not Afrikaans words

(the student sits down and is out of the game)

In the example above, I use phonetic spelling to write the word that the student said because, based on the way that it sounds, it could have been interpreted as the English word *lump* or the Afrikaans word *lamp* which means the same as the English word *lamp* but with a different pronunciation. The English-only agenda is made clear when it is implied that the student must sit down and can no longer participate when she uses what the teacher characterizes as another

³ See Appendix A for International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

language. Although the student had a clear understanding of the phonics principle, the teacher's language ideology is seeping into the classroom pedagogy as she disallows the use of languages other than English during the game.

Analyzing this transcription would have been less complicated had the student used a clearly distinguishable Afrikaans word. However, as a speaker of English with little Afrikaans knowledge, I would have interpreted the word as an English word, *lamp*. It is apparent that Afrikaans holds no power during this game. Not only did the teacher disallow Afrikaans during the game, her interpretation of the student's decontextualized speech was hindered by her own bilingual repertoire and her view of student deficit. She appears to be listening for linguistic mistakes and not focusing on the positive aspect that the student understands the phonics.

The teacher imposes a view of "an artifactual, denotational form of language, usually called by its name (Dutch, English) and imagined as the kind of stable, immanent, clear and bounded object..." (Blommaert, 2006:515). With this view of language, students are seen as having a deficit when using a word that is not part of the language of prestige, in this case English, which fails to acknowledge the natural multilingual practices in the community that the students bring with them to school. The teacher's interpretation of the Afrikaans word *lamp* varies only slightly in pronunciation from the English translation *lamp*, demonstrating that they can easily be used interchangeably.

Below is another example of an interaction between teacher and student during the same game. This student used a word that caused some confusion.

(The sound is t)

S: **Titi**

T: ti(.) is actually not a word, **hey**. **Titi** is (.) um (.) an Af(.) Its uh uh (.) No it's just a name that **we people** give **uh** older sister. So **titi** isn't a word but I'm gonna leave you here it's fine.

(The teacher allows the student to stay in the game)

On most occasions students must sit down after saying a word in another language. In this instance, the student used a word in Cape Flats English, which led to another unusual interaction. The teacher states that *titi*, a colloquial term of endearment meaning *older sister* is not a word. She says that it is “just a name that we people give **uh** older sister.” On the one hand, the word is not given value as a non-standard variety of English according to this explanation; on the other hand, it is still legitimated.

The teacher promotes the prestigious variety of English by submitting to the discourse that localized language, in this case Cape Flats English, does not hold the same value as does globalized language when she states that it is not a word. However, it appears that the teacher recognizes that the student uses this word in her daily life. She legitimates the word when she uses the inclusive pronoun in “we people,” as opposed to saying “you people,” and implies that she is included in the language community. I believe that the teacher's sense of connectedness to the language community that uses the word *titi* influences her decision to allow the student to remain in the game. I also believe that she possesses an awareness of the translinguaging in the community because *titi* may be a word used within an English speaking setting as well as within an Afrikaans speaking setting. This is evident when the teacher appears to begin to say that it is an Afrikaans word, “**Titi** is (.) um (.) an Af(,)” but stops herself as if she is uncertain as to which language the word belongs. It is not clear to the teacher, who is a native speaker of the community variety of language, why *titi* is “wrong.” However, I would argue that the external

discourses of language purity and the ideology of languages as separate and bounded entities have influenced the teacher's response in this situation.

Woolard (1992: 238) defines another form of ideology as “an intimate connection to social power and its legitimation.” In other words, language ideology can be seen as the force that allows certain social groups to maintain domination while other groups remain subordinate. In both examples it is apparent that the classroom discourse, which is disguised as educational, legitimates the prestigious variety of English and allows it to remain dominant while Cape Flats English and Afrikaans remain subordinate. The language ideology involved with the English language regime does not place value on the students' multilingual repertoires, but in fact, creates an environment that reduces the students to deficient monolingual English speakers in the classroom setting.

Another explanation for allowing one student to stay in the game and another to be out (comparing both transcriptions above) is the positioning of those specific learners. The student who produced *titi* could either be labeled as a bright student who made a simple mistake or as a naughty student who did not know better. A third explanation could also involve the students' individual agency and behavior; one student submitted to the discourse while another transformed it. The student who produced *titi* remained standing while the teacher gave her an explanation and consequently, the teacher allowed her to stay, whereas the other student sat out without being told to do so based on that student's previous experiences with the game and the teacher's discourse about Afrikaans words in the classroom.

In this phonics game, the teacher's motive and lesson objective is unclear. Is the goal of the game for the students to practice their phonemic awareness or their English vocabulary? If the purpose is the former, then the language ideology in the broader context is seeping into the

phonics curriculum. I would like to highlight that Afrikaans and English are both Germanic languages and therefore some phonetical aspects are similar; in this case both languages could have been used in this game appropriately to serve as a phonemic awareness activity.

4.2.2. Teacher's linguistic resources

I observed the teacher speaking Afrikaans in bits and pieces during the day; however, she did not seem to use Xhosa or any languages spoken by the minority in the classroom (French, Chiluba). I discussed this with the teacher during the interview.

Laura: You said that you, you had, you were trained in Xhosa. Was that at the university?

Teacher: Yes the university. I had Xhosa for three years and I know, um, like 10 words (laughter)

Laura: (laughter)

Teacher: so it wasn't really, um, the training that we had wasn't really (.) It helped us in a way but we never used it as much {...} because there was more emphasis on English. There wasn't that much on Xhosa. I **done** it for three years and I passed it but I don't think I'm well equipped to **get** a conversation in Xhosa.

Many educators are expected to learn an additional language in college. However, a double standard emerges because teachers who speak English often do not become proficient in additional languages, but their students of other languages must become proficient in English. Many educators, not only in South Africa, graduate from college without basic communication skills in an additional language, yet are expected to teach students of that language. In this case, the teacher had taken Xhosa classes in college, but does not feel that she had learned enough to communicate in that language. This linguistic disconnection between the teacher and her Xhosa students creates a barrier between the linguistic capital of the teacher as an English and Afrikaans speaker and the linguistic capital of the Xhosa speaking students. It is clear that Xhosa

is a language with little to no power in this classroom even though there are many more Xhosa home language speakers in South Africa than English or Afrikaans home language speakers. In fact, Xhosa is barely visible in the classroom. The vocabulary words on the classroom walls were mostly in English and some were in Afrikaans, but none were in Xhosa even though the teacher stated that the school and classroom population is almost equally distributed between Afrikaans and Xhosa-speaking students (50%/50%). These numbers may have been inflated. However, if it is true that both languages are equally distributed, the nonexistence of Xhosa in the school, classroom, and language use among the students is significant.

Xhosa doesn't appear to be supported in the school or this classroom. It also appears that it is not very well emphasized or regarded highly when taken as a class at the university. The discourse around Xhosa as opposed to English or even Afrikaans places the language and those who speak it at a lower level in the social hierarchy. The teacher plays an important role in constructing the language hierarchy in the classroom by reproducing the macro-discourse into the micro-level classroom context. She supports the naturalized emphasis on English with little emphasis on additional languages.

Later in the interview I asked the teacher about the school's policy on language in the classroom to determine whether the school aims to support the use of home languages or primarily promotes the use of English.

Laura: um, and what are the school's policies on, uh, language in the classroom?

Teacher: I'm not so sure about that. It's just because **we're** English-medium school we're expected to teach in English, speak in English. The only thing is we, we speak in different language is when we make a learner understand. That's all, but we speak English, Afrikaans is our second language. And Afrikaans only starts from grade one up. Grade R they just speak English. And because I don't think we will be able to accommodate all the learners.

Laura: mhm

Teacher: because **there's** so many different languages I can't even pronounce all of the languages that they speak here.

The teacher appears to have an awareness of the difficulties schools face in fully accommodating all learners in an equal manner. This appears to be partially due to the lack of understanding and knowledge about the languages spoken by learners at the school. It is made clear that the school places a high value on English. Afrikaans follows in second place as linguistic capital in the educational market of the school. The teacher's statements above also contradict the school's statements on its website regarding Xhosa language lessons being taught as well as Afrikaans.

Despite the South African Language in Education Policy, this school's discourse does not seem to promote multilingualism or even additive bilingualism. Although the teacher states that instructors at the school speak different languages in order to "make a learner understand", her statement contradicts my observations. The occasions that I observed code-switching from the teacher were to assert control. The words that I repeatedly documented in my field notes include; *onbeskof*, *lekker*, and *asseblief* which mean *rude*, *nice*, and *please*, respectively. When the teacher had to stop a lesson because students were talking, she explained to the students that they were being rude and emphasized this with the Afrikaans word *onbeskof*. When the students walked to the bathroom, library, or auditorium, the teacher told them to "walk nice" and

emphasized this by repeating “walk *lekker, ne*⁴”. Finally, if students did not follow her directions the first few times that she asked, she used the word *asseblief* to gain their attention. I did not witness the use of Afrikaans to assist a student in understanding what was being taught in a lesson.

To further highlight my point, below is part of an extract from the interview with the teacher after asking her if she code-switches in the classroom:

Teacher: I will only switch languages if the child **don't** understand something, for instance if I say ‘sit on the mat’ and the child **don't** understand that then I will translate it to, into Afrikaans. And I know ‘sit down’ in Xhosa. But, um, I was trained to speak Xhosa, I was trained to speak Afrikaans so I’m fine with it if it’s going to be a, uh, advantage to the child then um, sure, mhm.

When the teacher states “I will only switch languages...” it appears that her discourse is informed by the belief that switching languages is not only unsupported or denied as a resource, but is actually considered a bad practice in the classroom. She gives the circumstances in which she uses other languages, but the examples she gives are commands; “sit on the mat” and “sit down!” Neither of these are examples of code-switching to help students understand a concept or idea. Both examples, however, enable the teacher to assert control.

4.3. Language purity explanations and examples

4.3.1. Introduction

In the previous section there is evidence of language ideology in the reading instruction that promotes the regime of a particular prestigious form of English. The English-only agenda became blurred when the teacher was inconsistent with who was able to play the phonics game

⁴ The word *ne* is used in Cape Flats English as a phatic question and sometimes functions as a tag question (McCormick, 2004).

and who was considered out. This ambiguity points out the naturalized blending of languages that occurs in this community, like most communities over space and time. As an American, it was often difficult for me to determine whether someone was speaking Cape Flats English or Afrikaans. This occurred because many of the words between the two languages are very similar and the languages are blended at times. During a recorded interview with the teacher more instances of the pure language agenda surfaced.

4.3.2. “Not really the real Afrikaans” and “Correct English”

During the interview I asked the teacher about her language background. I wanted to get an idea of how she identifies herself as a teacher of English whom I have also observed speaking and understanding Afrikaans.

Laura: Um, Ok, and then what is your language background?

Teacher: I'm English first language. My parents are Afrikaans so that's why I picked up Afrikaans and most of my friends are Afrikaans. Otherwise, I'm English. Unless when I speak English and Afrikaans, with a bit of, a lot of Afrikaans slang. Not really the real Afrikaans. {...} it's difficult to speak, it's difficult to speak to somebody that's first (.) home language is Afrikaans because it makes you feel conscious because they pick up all the wrong grammar and the pronunciation that you say. Like, like for me, like **you English** and I'm English but I'm still, it makes me aware of the way I'm pronouncing my words and my grammar {...} because I know it's totally different {...} In English I feel, um, the way {...} speak English is totally different than the way other people speak English. I think we, we add all our own things in it. Like, because we have English and Afrikaans we sometimes put it together and we say our *nes* and our *mos* and we add all that stuff. And that's {...} the children here. The children here hear us speaking so they're gonna speak English how I speak English, and they pick up on that and they start speaking like us. Because I heard my parents speaking like that, my aunts speaking like that. So, it's really important for the children to hear the correct English. Though sometimes I know I'm not {...}, 'oh should I say it like that or should I say it the other way?'

I would like to analyze the teacher's use of discourses of separateness, deficit, power, and purity. When she states "I'm English first language" and "My parents are Afrikaans" as opposed to "I speak English" and "My parents speak Afrikaans" she implies that there is an ethnic or cultural divide between the two languages and that they represent something more than just varieties of speech. Another observation is that her use of "English first language" is a curriculum term. It appears that she wants to assert her competence as an English-speaking teacher and her qualifications for her career.

The teacher speaks of her ability to communicate in both Afrikaans and English as deficient. Although her parents speak Afrikaans as does her husband, she claims that it makes her self-conscious to someone whose home language is Afrikaans because she does not feel that she is fully proficient. Then she later states that although she and I both speak English, she is still aware of her difference in variety and does not seem to be comfortable with her ability when she compares it to my American English. This surfaces the social issue of promoting monolingual English language ideology in a community where it is not appropriate. She has been subjected to the ideology that she would be successful with access to an English education; however, the stigma that is attached to non-standard English versus prestigious varieties was not taken into account. Although she is an English speaker who has obtained a degree in higher education and is now an educator, her discourse shows discomfort in her ability to speak English. Based on the concept of "pure" language, her discourse appears to give the notion that her English variety is not good enough because it is not the prestigious variety. Now, she is faced with the dilemma of speaking non-standard varieties of two languages and not gaining the full linguistic capital of either.

She also identifies with the stigma involved with being an outsider of a speech community when she discusses that it is “difficult to speak to somebody that’s first...home language is Afrikaans” and when she discusses the difference between her own and my English grammar.

The teacher’s social positioning is based on the ideology of language purity. She states that she speaks “slang” and “not really the real Afrikaans”. She appears to have adopted a discourse that there is a right and wrong way to speak Afrikaans. She seems to believe that since the community blends English and Afrikaans naturally (“*ne*” and “*mos*⁵”) they are not speaking pure or proper English. She later states that it is important for teachers to model this pure and proper form of the language when she refers to “correct English”. The teacher does not seem to recognize that this language ideology is attached to her self- positioning as deficient in both languages with which she appeared to identify. The teacher’s discourse circulates the language ideology and portrays the local variety of English negatively when she states that “the children hear us speaking [blending languages] and... they pick up on that and they start speaking like us.” She appears to view her own variety of English negatively.

What can be seen from the examples above is the maintenance of the prestigious language, Standard English, and the devaluing of another language. English is seen as the legitimate language in this classroom. “[Legitimate language] describes a point in an ideological process in which consensus has been manufactured or achieved on the language and language practices that count, and thus are seen as worth teaching and listening to.” (McKinney, 2013:4). When the “legitimate language” as a clear and bounded object is agreed upon, in this case in the classroom and at the school as a whole, it becomes a language regime - “Language regimes, the

⁵ The word *mos* is used in Cape Flats English meaning “indeed” or “of course” (McCormick, 2004).

common language order operating in an institution, construct and impose norms” (McKinney, 2013:4). Although the norm in the community is to blend languages naturally, this classroom operates with a very specific idea of what proper language is and how it should be used.

Bourdieu explains, “Language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power.” (Bourdieu, 1977: 648). Bourdieu emphasizes the need for research to focus less on grammaticalness or language usage and more on what is considered acceptable or legitimate in a given context. For example, the word *lamp* has little to no value and is regarded as unacceptable according to the teacher’s standards. In the linguistic market of the phonics game, the teacher determined, based on a minor phonological variation and her interpretation of the decontextualized word, whether the word had value or not.

4.4. Teacher’s language choices

4.4.1. Introduction

In the previous sections I point out that there is an English-only agenda for classroom learning, however, the teacher shows an awareness that she cannot always provide the language variety of prestige. I also point out the teacher’s linguistic repertoire and choice to use Afrikaans on specific occasions. The teacher’s assistant in the classroom used Afrikaans more freely and appeared to identify as an Afrikaans speaker. I will first analyze the assistant’s use of English and Afrikaans during the Afrikaans lesson that she taught and then I will examine the teacher’s choice to code-switch and views on code-switching. I would like to determine the broader discourses that are informing this teacher’s ideologies and practice.

4.4.2. Explanations and examples of Afrikaans lessons and practice

The following transcriptions are from an Afrikaans lesson taught by the teacher's assistant. All of the transcriptions appear in the order in which they occurred; however, I omitted data and focused only on the important interactions. She bases her lesson on a young children's book in Afrikaans about careers. The italicized font is the translation of what was said or written. I also use bold font where the students or assistant use English.

Assistant: Ons gaan nou Afrikaans leer, so julle moet luister
[*We are going to learn Afrikaans now, so you must listen.*]

(Assistant writes on the board): Wanneer ek groot is...
[*When I grow up...*]

Assistant: **Who can tell me what that means?**

(Assistant asks students to read what is written on the board and repeat)

Assistant: Wie kan vir my verduidelik wat daai beteken?
[*Who can explain to me what that means?*]

Stephanie: **When I grow up**
Assistant: **Nice.**

In the example above, the assistant uses English to ask the students about the meaning of what she wrote in Afrikaans on the board. This could have been out of habit or done in order to include those students who may not speak Afrikaans as a first language. Immediately after she asks the question in English, she has the students read the words on the board and repeat what they read, and then asks the same question in Afrikaans before allowing a student to answer. For this reason, I do not believe it was a conscious pedagogical action, but a natural switching between languages. Because it was not pedagogical in nature, the assistant's actions favor the Afrikaans first language speaking students. When the student above answers with a direct translation to English, the assistant praises her with the positive response in English of "nice".

In the example below, the teacher appears to make the language lesson a bit more difficult for the students.

Assistant: ‘n Dokter is...? Wie kan vir my die antwoord gee?
[A doctor is...? Who can give me the answer?]

Mimi: **Doctor**

Teacher: Ons praat nou Afrikaans. ‘n Dokter is iemand waarna jy toe gaan wanneer jy...?
[We are speaking in Afrikaans now. A doctor is somebody that you go to when you...?]

Some learners: (complete the sentence) siek is.
[are sick.]

Assistant: Mooi. Stephanie, jy is goed in Afrikaans.
[Well done. Stephanie, you are good at Afrikaans.]

When the assistant asks about the meaning of the Afrikaans word “dokter” and a student responds with a direct translation to English, the assistant does not give the same praise as she had before. She decides to require the students to only respond in Afrikaans, thereby limiting responses to Afrikaans home language speakers. This is evident when only some students respond with “siek is”.

This lesson now appears to be less about teaching the students new Afrikaans vocabulary, and more about checking students’ content knowledge and their ability to express themselves in Afrikaans. When the assistant asks the open ended question about when one should go to the doctor, she is looking for the students to not only demonstrate that they know what a doctor does but also to express that knowledge using Afrikaans vocabulary.

When the assistant praises a student for being “good at Afrikaans,” as opposed to praising her for having the content knowledge to answer the question, she unconsciously demonstrates the

language ideology that languages are separate and bound entities, each with their own prescribed set of rules. The teacher's discourse implies that languages must be kept separate, and as Jacobson and Faltis (1990:4, in Creese & Blackledge, 2010:104) state, "...By strictly separating languages, the teacher avoids, as it is argued, cross-contamination..." At the same time, the teacher mixes languages herself throughout the lesson, as seen in the examples below. The students are expected to speak one language, Afrikaans; however, this rule is undermined by the teacher's natural use of both languages. Although this lesson is in Afrikaans, it shows how the pedagogy of language teaching with this ideology of separateness limits students to a set of linguistic rules and does not allow students to use their full linguistic repertoire in order to develop new knowledge.

Below is an example during the lesson of how language is naturally blended in the community.

Frank: **Teacher, there's spiders on the roof**

Assistant: Nee, daai's 'n nes
[No, that's a nest]

Assistant: ... 'n Wildbewaarder is, hoe kan ek nou sê, sien julle, uhm, by die **Zoo**, dan kry jy die olifante, en slange, sebras. Nou die wildewaarder, is die man, wat na die diere kyk, die plek op pas.

[A game ranger is, how should I say, uhm, at the Zoo, you get Elephants, Snakes, Zebras . Now, the game ranger is the man that looks after the animals, looks after the place.]

Frank: **Teacher, will the snake bite us?**

Teacher: (approaches the student) **You're supposed to speak Afrikaans to me**

Frank: **Is the slange going to bite?**

Assistant: Daarsy.
[That's it.]

At the beginning of this extract, a student disrupts the lesson using English to alert the assistant to the fact that there are spiders on the roof. The assistant naturally responds in Afrikaans and does not comment on the fact that the student was speaking English. Directly after her response to the student, the assistant moves on with her lesson. This is an example of the unconscious code-switching. When the assistant begins the lesson again, she blends languages naturally, as seen in bold. Although there is an Afrikaans word for *zoo*, *dieretuin*, the English word appears to have come to her mind more quickly and fluidly.

The refugee student from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Frank, asks a question about a snake biting them (I assume he was referring to his classmates). Although his home language is French, he clearly demonstrates the ability to understand the word, *slange*, from the assistant's Afrikaans speech and wanted to demonstrate his understanding of that word. However, he was not given any positive feedback for correctly identifying the word within the Afrikaans context until he created an English sentence using it appropriately through blending. The assistant may have accepted his blending of English and Afrikaans because she knows that Afrikaans is not his home language, or she may not have consciously noticed the blending since it happens so naturally. She may also have accepted it because she wanted to move on and did not want to explain any further since what he spoke about was off task from the career topic of her lesson.

Below is an example of another interaction through code-switching between the assistant and a student, however, the assistant acknowledges this student differently than she did Frank when he responds in English.

Assistant: So julle weet wat 'n wildbewaarder nou is. En 'n akrobaat. Wat is daai?
[*So you know what a game ranger is now. And an acrobat, what is that?*]

Benjamin: **The guy that works by the Circus**

Assistant: **Nice Benjamin! That's good. Yes. Okay, okay.** 'n Akrobaat is, ouens wat so (.)
Benjamin, kan jy nie Afrikaans praat nie? ...
[*An acrobat is, guys that (.) Benjamin, can't you speak Afrikaans?*]

The student speaking in the above interaction is identified by the teacher to be one of the “bright” students in the classroom. The teacher explained that his father is from England which may have attributed to his positive positioning. It appears that he is treated differently due to this positioning. When the teacher praises this student for an answer in English, I believe she is praising him for his content knowledge because most of the students didn't know what an acrobat was in any language. Although this student is an Afrikaans speaking student, he retrieved an English answer more quickly in this case. The assistant appears to be at a loss for words when she begins speaking Afrikaans again and tries to explain what an acrobat is when she asks if the student can speak Afrikaans.

The assistant, again, is inconsistent with her praise for students in the extract below. She appears to desire a monolingual Afrikaans lesson but it proves to be difficult for the students.

Assistant: Okay, en wie weet wat's 'n sokkerspeler? Ons vra vir iemand wat nog nie 'n kans gehad het nie. Ian?

[*Okay, who knows what a soccer player is? We'll ask someone that hasn't had a chance yet. Ian?*]

Ian: **A soccer player**

Assistant: **No, Afrikaans**”

(Teacher reprimands a child and makes him tuck his shirt in. She leaves the room. Class mumbles the answer)

It is clear from all of the extracts above that the assistant repeatedly contradicts her verbal “Afrikaans only” rule by selectively praising students who respond in English and by using English herself (in bold). When the assistant blends English into her predominantly Afrikaans speech it appears to be a naturalized way of speaking, rather than designed for the explicit benefit of students who do not speak Afrikaans.

While analyzing this lesson, there were benefits and downfalls to my being a monolingual English speaker. While observing and watching the recordings, I did not notice when the teacher said a word in English because the variety of English used in the classroom had similar or the same phonology as in Afrikaans, so the transition was smooth. I was able to experience the lesson as does a student who does not understand Afrikaans. The students from other countries may not have noticed the teacher’s use of English vocabulary either, because its surrounding context was unfamiliar and not readily understood. For this reason, I concluded that English was naturally blended into the speech, and not for the purpose of assisting the non-Afrikaans-speaking students. Another observation that I have made is that, although Afrikaans may be spelled differently, many of the Afrikaans words in this lesson sound the same as the English word in the variety of English that is spoken in this classroom; for example *dokter* and *doctor* or *sebra* and *zebra*.

I conclude that this lesson became a practice session aimed at the Afrikaans-speaking students in order to reinforce their use of a more standard variety of Afrikaans. The lesson did not focus on teaching the other students an additional language. In addition to the evidence above, two refugee students asked the teacher what it said on the board at the end of the lesson and the teacher simply relayed the instructions in English and told them to copy the information into their books without translating, reading it, or explaining it. It appears that this lesson only

helped the students who already speak Afrikaans to practice what they know and to master a more standard form of the particular variety of Afrikaans. In the data in this section, the assistant was unable to model the ideologies of languages as discrete and bounded entities because in her language practices they are not.

4.4.3. Teacher's view on Code-switching

In the final extract I ask the classroom teacher her opinion about students code-switching in the classroom in order to surface language ideology and compare her beliefs with the actual practices that I witnessed.

Laura: Um, how do you feel about code-switching in the classroom and children using home languages to socialize?

Teacher: Code-switching?

Laura: yea, switching languages

Teacher: Oh, ok. This is (.) I feel that, um, unfortunately this is the only school and parents don't have money to send their children to a[n] isiXhosa school or a[n] Afrikaans school. This is the closest school so obviously they're taking their child out and putting them, the child, in English classes and sometimes I feel the child can't speak their home language, you can't have the child 'no you can't speak Xhosa' 'you can't speak Zulu, this is a[n] English school'. But when you're dealing with English the child should know every subject, English is one of them. So, for me I would freely say the child can speak their language, especially when they're out in the playground, they need to express themselves. But because it is a disadvantage to the parents, this is only a[n] English school, and this is what they can afford and this is what... for them. So, them switching languages, sometimes they just need to express themselves and don't have that in English, but if somebody says something in Afrikaans I would be, 'say it in English' because maybe they haven't heard, but some of them do it purposefully. They, especially when it comes to the Xhosa. I understand Afrikaans, but I don't understand Xhosa. So what they would do, I would say something to them and they would say something else to a friend but they would swear in Xhosa and I already know all of the vocabulary. So, the um, switching of languages isn't, I just feel it's, it's a disadvantage to the children. If there were Xhosa classes, um, Afrikaans classes at this school then maybe it would be different. What is the second part of the question?

Finding out how teachers feel about code-switching in the classroom can be revealing of the ideologies that contradict the Language in Education Policies. This teacher supports code-switching on the playground and in casual settings, but does not seem to support it in the classroom. I would like to analyze a few of her assumptions; parents want their children to go school in their home language; children who are speaking Xhosa are swearing; students benefit by restating vocabulary in English; code-switching is a disadvantage.

She states that parents have no choice but to send their children to this school. The proximity of the school to the children's homes probably has had a large influence on their enrollment. However, research shows that most parents would prefer their children to learn in English because English is a global language. It opens more job opportunities, and parents believe that English schools provide a better learning environment (Vivian de Klerk, 2002b).

The teacher makes an assumption about children who speak Xhosa in the classroom. She assumes that children are swearing or using inappropriate language because they believe she cannot understand them. This discourse positions the Xhosa students negatively based entirely on a preconceived notion and appears to result from the teacher's position of "other" when students are speaking Xhosa together and she does not understand.

The teacher states that she tells the students to "say it in English" after they say something in another language. I observed her do this on a few occasions. She appears to believe that asking them to say it in English will help them to practice or add to their English vocabulary. She notices that some of the students speak other languages consciously. Although she believes that the students are speaking other languages "on purpose", there is no overt evidence of the students' intentions. I observed a student speaking another language at his desk which resulted in

the teacher asking, “Is that English?” in what appeared to be a successful effort to stop it. Regardless of the students’ intentions, it appears that the use of other languages is counter-hegemonic to the mostly monolingual English only classroom. She also states that code-switching is a disadvantage to the students. The notion that code-switching disadvantages students comes from the underlying belief that languages are pure entities that should not be mixed. The English that is valued in this classroom is constructed as a pure language of prestige that must be properly mastered without interference from other languages.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the language ideologies that could be seen in the classroom as well as their influence on the teaching activities. The teacher uses discourse that is informed by the belief that languages are separate and bounded and that a pure form of the language of prestige must be mastered in school. I analysed the teacher’s views along with my observations in the classroom as well as surfaced the discourse surrounding separateness of languages and language purity. I compared the ways in which language was used in the classroom to the teacher’s awareness of language and to the Language in Education Policy of the school. The teacher did not appear to have an awareness of sociolinguistic knowledge.

It is evident in this chapter that language ideology interferes with natural language use. Not only does it stop the blending of languages but it also associates only one language and variety of language as being correct. In this way, language ideology supports the elites in remaining elite and supports the oppression of those who do not follow the norms.

Chapter 5: Positioning of Learners

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter I analyze how the learners are positioned in the classroom. I focus my analysis on the teacher's role in the classroom and her relationship with the students, her communication practices when speaking to or about the students, and her dialogue about the student population at the school. I use discourse analysis of recorded classroom pedagogy and a recorded teacher interview in order to surface deficit discourse and blame, and its subsequent impact on the students' abilities to be successful in the classroom. I argue that once a child is positioned as "incapable" or "deficient", it is difficult for them to assume a new, more favorable position. In the process of positioning, children accept an identity for themselves as certain types of students in the classroom and model their behaviors according to the positions constructed by the discourse. I aim to gain a better understanding of how and why certain groups are marginalized on a macro level through the lens of this multilingual grade one classroom.

5.2. What is normal?

During my interview with the teacher, I noticed that she used discourse that normalized certain student behaviors but negated others. The discourse also positions the students in a specific way within the school and society. I first aim to surface what is considered normal in this classroom.

To begin my analysis, I point out that the discourse labels the children as outsiders to the teacher's social realm. The teacher grew up and resides near the school and the children, and shares a common English dialect with many of them. She was also raised by Afrikaans speaking

parents similar to the majority of the students in the classroom. On the surface, it would appear that she is a part of the students' culture; however, through her discourse of separateness, the teacher positions herself apart from the "type" of students she teaches.

In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher's training and background in education, I asked her about her history at the school as well as her involvement in the previous institutions in which she had taught. In response, the teacher redirected the conversation in what could be interpreted as a defensive justification of her experience.

Extract 1

Laura: [...]Um, the first question is 'how long have you been teaching at this school, and before coming here, where did you teach?'

Teacher: This is the first school I ever taught at, this is my fourth year as a teacher here. My first year was grade three I taught, the other three years was grade R. I'm not a foundation phase teacher, I'm a middle phase teacher, and what I've learned, ...I came straight out of college here to this school, but I don't teach in prac like at other schools. It's quite different to this school. Special schools, um, high schools, primary schools, but I've never been, I never had any experience with these children...

For clarification purposes, I would like to point out that the teacher states that she has worked at the school for four years; however, she states that she taught one year in grade three and three years in grade R and she now teaches grade one, which would be a total of five years.

Based on the teacher's choice to change the direction of the conversation, it appears that she has had difficulty adjusting in this classroom because she was trained as a middle phase teacher and she was trained with different children. She implies that her students at this school are not only different students, but a different "type" of students when she says, "I never had any experience with **these** children". Although she could be comparing her experience with this grade level to her practice and training with middle phase students, I interpret her discourse to be

comparing the students at this school to the students at the schools in which she completed her training. In this way, she is not simply stating the obvious that her students are different, as they will be every year with every class, but that her training was completed with and designed for a different type of learner.

It appears that the teacher's experience in training could not be compared to her current experience in the school when she states that it was "quite different to *this* school". Although what she had learned in training may not have been a one-size-fits-all solution easily applied in this classroom, her discourse of "othering" can be problematic.

The question, "how do you feel..." as shown in extract two below was designed to surface the advantages and disadvantages of working at a new school that not only opened after Apartheid but one that also chose to use English as the medium of instruction. In response, she appears to have misunderstood my "How do you feel...?" for "How would you feel about working at a new school?" As a consequence, she gives details about why she wants to stay at the school. Obviously, my use of *new*, meaning recently opened, was misinterpreted by her to mean a different school. This is a good example of cross-cultural and multi dialectical miscommunication.

Extract 2

Laura: Um, ok, the next question was, um, how do you feel about working at a new school?

Teacher: ...I'm very comfortable with these staff and with these children, although they drive you up the wall sometimes. I'm very comfortable at this school, I think I'm in my comfort zone. And I know these children. Going to a new school I have to get to know the, the staff, I've got to know, get to know the children, the whole culture and atmosphere of the school. So I don't think I'm moving anytime soon. ... I wouldn't move ... It's also convenient to me, it's close to home, my husband works here. So it's all, it's working out.

The teacher states that she is comfortable at the school and that it is convenient for her. In this extract the teacher constructs herself as a part of the culture of the school while still separating herself. She appears to fit in with the other teachers while still showing frustration with the students as she had previously exhibited when she states “they drive you up the wall sometimes.” Her words imply that she is a member of the school culture when she states “I’m very comfortable with these staff and with these students...”, while her discourse implies that the culture is separate from others by choosing to use the word “these” to describe the staff and children as opposed to “our” or “my”. Saying “these” to describe the people at the school gives the notion that the school is different from others and separate from herself.

I observed the teacher using American, British, and Australian material, for example, a video playing American songs like Yankee Doodle, Barney books, and Roald Dahl’s *The Enormous Crocodile*. In extract three, I consequently asked the teacher about the different programs for learning that she uses in the classroom. She responded to my question and added an opinion as to why these programs don’t work.

Extract 3

Laura: Um, my next one is about CAPS. So, um, in addition to CAPS guidelines for teaching and, uh, English and reading, what other programs do you follow as guidelines? I remember you saying something about, about a different program

Teacher: um, it is the Foundations for Learning, FFL, um, that is what we followed in the past and, uh, RNCS, the Revised National Curriculum Statement. And then **after** the RNCS it was the NCS. Yea. I think, I, I don’t know where the RNCS {...} came from. I think it’s Australian, I’m not sure. But the reason why I felt that that never worked was because they expected us to have resources and do things that we didn’t have. It wasn’t for, for *our kind* of education system so I, I that is how I feel that didn’t work.

This extract brings up the topic of the changes the South African curriculum has

undergone over the past 20 years. The teacher is accurate in her account of the sequence of curriculum change; however, I highlighted her use of “after” because I believe she means “before”⁶. The teacher dismisses the different national curricula and programs that have been introduced post-Apartheid as not working because they were not designed for “our kind of education system.” The training that she has participated in was probably regarded as being superficial because they did not address the specific needs of the school. However, I would argue that the teacher is circulating deficit discourse regarding the education system in which she includes herself when she states, “our ...system”. This discourse portrays the schools in South Africa as incapable of succeeding, rather than redefining success according to the local cultures, needs and values. With this discourse and the influence of Western culture, it appears that teachers are less likely to find success, or perhaps it is more accurate to say that they are less likely to position themselves as successful. This is neither the fault of the teacher nor the education system but a much larger and more complicated issue.

In the next extract, I address the way in which the teacher positions students as unable to fit the desired behavioral mold. I noticed that the teacher was well equipped with behavior management activities such as playing games of freezing in different positions, following teachers orders (hands on head, hands on knees, etc.), asking students to close their eyes and reveal what they can remember about other students’ attire, or having students listen for unique sounds in silence. All of these activities appeared to capture the students’ attention and almost all students engaged in these games with interest.

⁶ The first new curriculum after Apartheid was introduced in 1998 called Curriculum 2005, then in 2002 came the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and then the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), then in 2009 came the most recent curriculum, CAPS (Hoadley, 2011).

Extract 4

Laura: Um, and, ok, um, well going to the, to the rewards and everything, the behavior management, I see that you do a lot of, like, um, counting or hands on head, hands on... and those kind of things. Where did, did you learn that somewhere?

Teacher: um, no, I just, I don't, I can't remember if I saw it somewhere, but it's just something you need to do, even if you must stand on your head, you need to do something to get the children's attention. Yes we get a lot of, um, like behavior man-, behavior um workshops that we go to, and then we pick up on these things, the, one of the things they always tell us, count. Like, I'm going to stand in front of my class and count, I'm gonna count, I'm gonna be by a million and the children are still gonna be jumping up and down. ... Sometimes you must come up with a different thing every day because they will get totally bored of the one thing, but you need, I don't know how these children work here. You can't just say sit down, cross your legs, put your hands on your lap. There's like three children in my class that will listen to me if I must do that. But, otherwise, they don't listen. Just competition all the time. Who can do it the fastest.

The first discourse I noticed from this extract was that of deficit. The teacher positions the students as incapable of following directions when she says "I'm gonna be by a million and the children are still gonna be jumping up and down," and when she says "you can't just say sit down." She compares the children in the classroom to her idyllic notion of the model learner who automatically obeys.

She states that only three children in her class actually listen to her. I wonder if she has three specific students in mind or if she imagines only three students listening to her every time she gives an order in the classroom. Other than those three students she states "I don't know how these children work here," and "they don't listen". The discourse appears to indicate that the students in this class are incapable of listening and following directions, which I argue, discourages the teachers from making a change and intervening. In this case, she places the blame directly on the students. According to her perception, the source of the problem is the students. As a result, the problem exists outside herself and therefore is beyond her ability to

affect change. With this discourse circulating, teachers no longer hold responsibility, nor do they feel they need to assume it. By reconstructing the discourse, teachers give value to students' unique resources and construct a supportive learning environment for all students.

She later states:

Extract 5

Teacher: They want to be recognized (.) for everything they do. Recognition. Now you can't go recognize 27 children all day. It's not going to work. ... Then, they like too, attention. They, they want attention from you. That's why also they're disruptive. Because even though if they gonna get, um, negativity, like 'I told you don't do that!' they want you to speak to them. They want, they just want you to have response to them. And that's why sometimes they, they misbehave.

The teacher uses discourse that positions herself and other teachers as incapable of changing the students' behavior. She also does not believe that there is any way to recognize 27 individual children. She recognizes that students are disruptive and misbehave because they want attention but she does not focus on a solution because according to the circulating discourse there is none. Students want to be valued and appreciated for their uniqueness. The positioning of students as abnormal and solely in charge of their own success leads them to failure and is not conducive to a positive learning environment.

She goes on to state:

Extract 6

Teacher: And they want prizes, and they want to be rewarded. Now, they can't be rewarded all the time for, for, um, for to get something all the time like a sweet or a sticker. I normally have sweets on Friday, and that stuff and (.) Now, we can't do that all the time because then, they are only going to listen, they are only going to be obedient and behave when they see there's a lollipop or a sweet or something. So they need to learn to, they, that's just how you're supposed to be, naturally you're supposed to be able to sit and ... table without even the teacher telling you to sit down, don't do this, don't do that. But they want rewards all the time.

Laura: mhm

Teacher: And they shouldn't tha..tha..that, uh, we trying to stop at this school. You don't need a reward for every good thing that you do.

Laura: mhm

Teacher: Especially sitting down and doing your work. That is a given, you should do that. You don't need a reward to sit, because you're sitting down and doing your work. That you come to school to learn.

The teacher states that the students are naturally supposed to be able to act a certain way. If they do not act in the prescribed manner, they are positioned as a naughty student. This is further evidence that the students in this classroom are compared to an imagined ideal student. The teacher uses discourse that labels the school as a place for curriculum and not a place to learn social behaviors because, according to the discourse, the students should already know how to behave. She seems unaware that she has an effect on the students' behaviors.

The teacher mentions using minor monetary rewards to support behavior and states that they are ineffective. I believe that they will continue to be ineffective as long as the students are positioned negatively and as incapable of changing. The overall behavior expectation for the students in this classroom is that they do not have the appropriate behavior and they cannot ever reach it.

5.3. The Ideal Learner

In the previous section I analyzed the teacher's discourse to reveal what is considered normal. I found that there was not a specific notion of normal but that most of the students in the classroom are positioned as abnormal. In order to surface the notion of an ideal or "normal" learner in the classroom, I first analyze an example of an activity in the classroom.

5.3.1. Memorizers

Often, the teacher plays memory games with the students as well as asking questions that rely on the students' memory of facts. These games were played on a daily basis and reveal interesting insights into what is valued as normal or ideal and what is seen as failure in the classroom.

The example below is a game where students had to read words on the board in their head and, one at a time, stand up facing the back wall and repeat every word that he or she remembered.

Extract 7

T: Alright, 1-2-3 open your eyes. I'm going to write words on the board you try to remember the words. I want to see who can remember the most words. ... And I'm gonna close it when I'm finished, as soon as I'm finished writing it... I'm gonna close it. (*walks toward the board*)

S: And then you're gonna ask us?

T: yes my boy. (*begins to write*)

S: Can we look now?

T: yes you look (*writes "I" and "am"*) Don't say it loud... (*student speaks*) You don't say anything. You don't because I'm not going to ask you. Stephanie. You just look. (*writes "they" and "my"*) (*students speak and teacher reprimands them*) (*teacher continues to write more words*).

(the words are [I, am, they, my, play, played, you, went, the, with, can] in random order)

T: *(covers the words that she had written on the SmartBoard)* Alright, how many words do you think **is** on the board?

(students take turns guessing how many words she wrote on the board)

T: Alright. Who can, who can say all the words **that's** on the board? *(students raise hands)* Who can say all the words that I wrote on the board? Alright, Elias stand up. *(student stands up)* Yes look turn around because I'm gonna open the words now, and you don't turn around. *(Teacher uncovers the words)* Alright you may start.

S: *(student states as many words as he can and teacher confirms those words with a "yes")* I'm finished

T: ok, turn around. There's still "I" and there's "am" and there's "with" *(student sits down)* Alright. Okay, let's ask Timna *(he stands up)* Um and you don't say anything!

Timna: can, with, went, I, my, play, played, can, can. my, they, the,

T: yes, just one more word. I think I ga, I don't know if you said it. Just tell em when you finish. Okay turn around. *(Student turns around to see words)*. Did you say "I"? *(teacher continues to ask which words he said to determine which words he missed, then selects one more student to try)*

After three male students played the game, the teacher moved on to the next activity.

Those three students were given the power to demonstrate their ability to memorize, as well as practice their memory skills, whereas the other students were denied the opportunity. In order to participate in this activity, students had to recognize the words on the board as sight words. Students who do not have the linguistic experience in English and exposure to these words would not be able to complete this activity. These activities are very much dependent on their proficiency in English – students can't remember without knowing the words already.

After many other memory games and activities, it became apparent that a student's ability to memorize and repeat determined whether he or she was labeled as a "clever" student or not. Although the words in the lesson above were given out of context, the three students demonstrated a strong ability to remember irrelevant words

when asked. It appears that only the English proficient students could be in the clever position because English proficiency is needed to memorize randomized words and to participate in most classroom activities. I also noticed that the teacher's responses seemed to point out mistakes rather than praising the students for their abilities. She told the students which words they had missed rather than praising them for the words they did memorize.

I asked the teacher about the origin of the phonics game that I analyzed in the previous chapter. It appears to support a similar structure and objective to the other games and lessons in her classroom. The students are required to retrieve words from memory to demonstrate their knowledge.

Extract 8

Laura: um, ok, so going back to, going back to that game, um, I was curious, was it something that came from, that you made up? Or was it something that you learned?

Teacher: I learned it in a workshop.

Laura: Ok

Teacher: ... Yea, I learned that in a workshop, the same with, um, 'I went to the beach, I took my towel, my sunglasses...mm(.)'

Laura: mhm

Teacher: it's the same workshop; memory games, listening skills...

These games seem to be valued by the teacher as classroom pedagogy although they appear to be classroom management tools to keep the students busy; all games focused on assessment to see what students are capable of rather than to learn or practice a new skill. Students who do not understand the phonics game, which required them to produce new words beginning with a particular initial letter, have low English vocabulary, or have difficulty

differentiating between sounds were simply asked to sit out of the game. These games were not explicitly taught, but the students were expected to know and understand by trial and error. Through my observation, I noticed that some students were generally good at the games and others were constantly sitting out. I noticed a pattern that students with isiXhosa language backgrounds often sat out because they had difficulty recognizing the difference between two sounds, such as tʃ and dʒ ; for example, saying *jampion* (with dʒ) instead of *champion* (with tʃ). On the other hand, Afrikaans speaking students made similar errors that the teacher would allow. For instance, when the sound was *h* and a student said *walk*, the teacher understood that the way in which she and other speakers of Afrikaans and Cape Flats English in the community pronounce the word *hawk* is the same as the pronunciation of *walk*. Although I could clearly hear the *w* sound at the beginning of the word that the student said, she deemed it acceptable because the word *hawk* is spelled with an *h* and the student pronounced it properly in her dialect.

The game that the teacher mentions above when she states “I went to the beach, I took my towel, my sunglasses...” is another memory game, however, I only witnessed her teach and play it with the students once. For this game, the students sit in a circle and the teacher begins with “I went to the beach, I took my...” and decides an object she wants to add. Then the student to the left has to repeat her and add an object. The student next to that student needs to repeat both and add another, and so on. Only a small amount of students were able to participate until she deemed it too difficult and moved on to something else.

5.3.2. An Ideal Learner

In order to better understand the ideal learner position in this classroom, I give an example of one student with that label. I have given this student the pseudonym Gloria and she was often recognized for sitting nicely and being quiet. Many times she was so quiet that she did

not even participate at all. During full class instruction she was quiet and compliant but almost never raised her hand to offer an answer. Below is an example of how the teacher positioned Gloria. The teacher asked everyone to sit down and be quiet and noticed that Gloria had already done so.

T: Right, thank you, Gloria. Y'know that's one person if I say close their eyes na , Gloria don't even speak she just close her eyes. One thing that I like about Gloria, she always listens.

The ideal learner that is constructed in this extract conflicts with the ideal learner as a memorizer, however, the teacher often chooses a specific type of student who is able to share their abilities in front of the classroom to do so. During one interaction, when the teacher called on Gloria to answer a question, she did not offer an answer and within three seconds the teacher moved on to someone who had her hand raised. Gloria also appears to embody the “normal” student that the teacher speaks of in extracts four and six, even though her behavior is abnormal in comparison to the rest of her classmates. Her compliant behavior appears to be reinforced by the teacher, as evident in her praise above. It would appear that Gloria is not simply the general ideal learner, but rather the ideal compliant learner. I believe the ideal learner in this classroom would be one with a combination of compliant behavior and a strong ability to memorize facts. The teacher stated that Gloria is the only student who attended the ESOL Class at school that will not be retained.

5.4. Responsibility and blame

In the previous section the discourses analyzed focused on the positioning of students and the education system based on what is viewed as normal and abnormal. In this section, I pinpoint the teacher's discourse surrounding responsibility and blame. I aim to discover how and why

students are labeled as abnormal, naughty or weak and search for patterns in relation to language ideology.

Discourses of blame and responsibility are already evident in two of the extracts presented in the previous section. For example, in extract two the teacher appears comfortable with working with the students at the school; even though she previously stated that she did not have the experience to work with them. I would argue that she is comforted that the pressure for the students to succeed is lifted, because the underlying belief is that the students come to this school deficient and that the teacher cannot fix the problem. In extract six it appears that she is placing blame for bad behavior on the students when she states that they are simply supposed to be a certain way and do certain things.

I wanted to get a better idea of where the teacher believed the students' deviation from acceptable behavior in the class came from when I asked her the following question.

Extract 9

Laura: Why do you think certain students struggle with behavior?

Teacher: I think it's a social thing at home. It's definitely not normal because I know when I grew up my.. I was disciplined at home so discipline comes from home. And also because they come from many backgrounds and so all of them in one class is going to clash behavior also maybe some of them act out because they can't do the work because it's academic problem or they're just not on that level yet they are seven or eight years old but they are not mature enough so they don't know how to act to certain things so that's what is a behavior problem.

The teacher appears to believe that the reason students struggle with their behavior in the classroom is due to lack of home discipline, classroom diversity, academic frustration, or immaturity. First she states that, "discipline comes from home". Then she mentions that, "they

come from many backgrounds and so all of them in one class **is** going to clash behavior.” When she says backgrounds I believe she is referring to cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Her discourse here appears to be grounded in the assumption that children come to school with a desire to remain separated from other cultures or from people of other “backgrounds,” rather than discourse that acknowledges that this is a learned behavior. Then she states that it might be an “academic problem” or that they may not be “mature enough.” The maturational view seems to be a recurring theme but all of the points she mentioned above put the blame of the students’ bad behavior on the students themselves or on their parents. In this sense, her discourse is conflicting because she acknowledges a social factor in the students’ behavior from home, but also states that they are not mature enough to know how to act. Additionally, the discourse supports the idea that students are learning behaviors through their surroundings at home, but fails to acknowledge that students are learning behaviors from their surroundings at school as well.

The discourse that the teacher uses appears to come from her upbringing but is not based on the current reality. The teacher appears to view normal behavior as behavior that is immediately compliant with the teacher’s orders, but there is no physical representation of what the teacher views as normal. All of the blame is placed externally.

At a different point during the interview I ask her about parent involvement:

Extract 10

T: Now, the previous question about, you said, about the parent involvement.

Laura: mhm

Teacher: That also shows that, um, the, they, they, they children think the parents put them here it's almost like a crèche, like a daycare. They must come here, I'm going to work now, I'm dropping you off at school. That's how most people think of that. That they're just dropping their children here and now they're off.

Laura: hm

Teacher: and now the children think 'I must just be here and, and I must just sit here and do nothing.' That's where you get people who don't work. They think they need to be rewarded to do their work.

Laura. Mhm

Teacher: And I constantly, I don't know if you realize, I constantly remind them: If they don't care about their work, if they don't put effort into their work, they're going to stay in the grade. They need to be, um, they need to be made aware of these things. That, that they in grade one and I'm not in grade one. They need to do the thinking, they need to be the working, they need to put effort in, they need to do their homework. ... I say now, that, 'do you know I get paid to do this job?' and they're like 'where do you get the money?' ... They don't know this is a job that I'm doing.

The discourse that the teacher uses in this extract positions the students as the sole sources and creators of their own success without the help of their teacher. She states that in first grade they either want to learn or not, however, her discourse also indirectly critiques the students' parents. The underlying assumption is that the students who are not succeeding in the classroom aren't working, thinking, or trying. Students are reminded that they can be held back for not completing their work; the teacher states, "...I constantly remind them: if they don't care about their work, if they don't put effort into their work, they're going to stay in the grade." But thus far there seems to be nothing to show for their work and nothing to measure their learning.

When the teacher mentioned that “this is a job” I wondered what the job of a teacher is according to the discourse. In this extract, it appears that the job of the teacher is to remind students to care about their work. She appears to be very cautious of doing too much work for the students.

The interview question below is about the selection of students for an externally funded and organized literacy program that I give the pseudonym “the literacy support program”. This program is designed to help students with their reading skills through one-on-one tutoring. I was interested in understanding the selection process that the literacy support program uses to choose students for the program. I was surprised by the answer I received.

Extract 11

Laura: Ok. Um. How are children selected for the literacy support program? This is about, these are kind of about procedures that I had interest in.

Teacher: For the literacy support program is, they change it always. The beginning of this year they took our learners that never had formal grade R. They never had a grade R back home. That is all the, the children that move straight into grade one from other independent sites at home. And then, normally, and then the second, the third and fourth term, they take children that’s going to pass that needs that extra help. That needs more reading and that sort of thing. So they don’t work with weak children at all, the literacy support program, because Sarah’s argument is that it’s gonna discourage the, the volunteers. For instance, I must sit with this child, let’s do the sound, um, uh, R. Then, we do R for three weeks and there’s no progress. The volunteer is gonna feel, ‘oh there’s something wrong with me,’ ‘I can’t,’ rather. So that’s why they move, they sit with children that can progress. Which I can understand. We don’t want to get rid of the volunteers. Because the child can seem forward to their, to their lesson. You know they want that, that, um, they want somebody to acknowledge them. So sitting one on one with somebody is a bonus for them. But, all the children don’t get a chance. And it’s from grade R to grade three, the literacy support program.

The extract above provides the teacher’s reports; however, I do not imply that it is entirely accurate or true. The teacher states that the volunteers for the literacy support program don’t work with “weak students” at all. This extract provides an example of the influence of the

teacher's positioning of learners as it impacts the learners' abilities to succeed in the classroom. The students are reportedly selected for the program based on whether or not they are seen as capable of learning or progressing. The students who are labeled as incapable are denied access to educational support. It appears that the teachers school-wide have given up on certain students and that the discourse is consistently circulating.

This extract also shows the impact of external influence on the school and the discourse circulating in the school. According to the teacher, she and the volunteer coordinator are more concerned with what the volunteers can cope with than what is best for the students, or even what the school thinks the students need. This discourse may be influenced by the schools' desire to give a positive image to the volunteers and funders in the nearby wealthy communities.

I noticed that some of the students were scheduled to repeat grade one or have already repeated a grade. I asked the teacher about it to learn more about the students to see if there were any visible patterns of positioning in relation to the decision to require a child to repeat.

Extract 12

Laura: how many students repeated grade one in this class? And how many years? So have any repeated for more than once?

Teacher: Yea, um, the department only wants us to fail once in a phase and a phase is from grade R to grade three. So the learners that failed now in grade one, there are three learners, and um it's Tia, Tiffany, and Rachel. That's the three of them that have repeated so that means that they're going to pass now to grade two and they are going to pass grade two and go on to grade three. You can only fail once in a phase. Rachel is on the list for a special school so she keeps on passing until she gets accepted into that school

Laura: and what were the reasons for

Teacher: um, I'm not sure, I wasn't their teacher last year but Tia and Tamarin they never progress, they never met the requirements that they needed to pass to grade two. But keeping these children, this is the second time I can actually see, by keeping them a second time in the same grade then they become top students ... it's better for them, they're more mature, they learn how to do things more accurately.

The teacher appears to view retaining students as beneficial to them. She also appears to dislike the rule that students can only be retained once per phase when she says “the department only wants us to fail once”.

The teacher makes a bold statement that Tia and Tiffany “never progress”. She contradicts this when she states that they were held back because they never progressed but that they are now “top students”. This is evidence that these students did learn, that their foundation was laid, and now that they have repeated, their memorization skills have become more strongly developed. This statement shows how the positioning of students that do not fit an ideal mold affects how they are treated.

She states that students learn “how to do things more accurately” when they are retained. As evident in my analysis of phonics and memory games in the previous chapter, the teacher puts an emphasis on accuracy. Students who do not have strong memorization skills and

communication skills in English appear to be the ones failing class. Students who do have these skills fit the ideal mold and appear to be successful in this class.

The teacher also mentions that students are more mature after they are retained. This maturational discourse discredits the social influence on the students and portrays students to be a certain way based on their age. It takes the responsibility off the teacher and places it, not solely on the student, but on nature as it takes its course.

We continued the discussion:

Extract 13

Laura: and the, will anyone be repeating this year and why?

Teacher: yes, um, Liam is repeating I think it's a language barrier. He struggles to follow instructions. He never had a formal grade R um, background, the foundation wasn't laid because of his age he had to be put in grade 1 and never went to grade R, so that's why he's failing. Olivia and Allison are also repeating, they are (.) um (.) it's also a language barrier, and they aren't writing properly, they can't read yet, they were in intervention with The ESOL Class and the literacy program one on one but still I see no progress and I'm sure if they stay another year in grade one that there will be a great improvement. So that is Liam, um(.) Allison, Olivia, and there's one more. Why can I not remember? Um(.) there's one more I can't remember. And Melissa. Melissa is repeating because she's FAS so that means she's, uh, her brain's not yet developed yet so she's staying in grade one, but I don't know if there is going to be progress, but she will be tested next year to go into a special school, if she needs it. Her sis.. her twin is totally different. Her twin is progressing

Laura: Are they identical?

Teacher: yes they are

The teacher mentions that multiple students are repeating grade one due to a suspected language barrier. This extract appears to reveal a pattern that non-native South African students from language backgrounds other than English, but also isiXhosa students, are more likely to

repeat grade one. To the teacher, a language barrier means low English proficiency, however, I would argue that a language barrier could also be seen in the teacher's inability to speak the students' home languages and facilitate mutual understanding.

I also noticed that the teacher referred to the student with the disability who will be repeating grade one as FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome⁷). She said that, although she has an identical twin that is progressing, this child will be retained. From my observation, her identical twin also has the physical features of FAS, which raises the question as to why one is progressing and the other is not. It appears that the teacher does not expect progress due to the student's disability and because "her brain's not yet developed", which fits maturational discourse. I observed this child participating in classroom activities such as reading, writing, and group games. I see this example to be the positioning of a student who is identified by her disability. The teacher also states "I don't know if there will be progress" referring to the choice to retain this student which shows her doubt in the student's capabilities in the future.

Another interesting aspect of this extract is the connotation of "foreigner". All of the students have different home language backgrounds. The students that are labeled as foreigners in this class are from the Democratic Republic of Congo, however, isiXhosa students are treated as foreigners in their own country. It appears that "foreigners" are seen as outsiders that have low education and less likely to begin school in grade R when she speaks about Liam's previous schooling and how that impacted the decision to retain him. I would argue that the connotation is that the education at this school is better than any education that students at this school could have received in other countries or contexts. In transcriptions from the previous chapter, the teacher stated that students come from other countries to this school to learn English.

⁷ The Western Cape in South Africa has the highest incidence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in the world.

Similar to the literacy support program, The ESOL Class is a program that pulls children out of class to work with them in small groups. This program is designed specifically to help improve children's English speaking abilities. I wanted to have a better understanding of how the students are selected for the program since all of the students speak English as an additional language.

Extract 14

Laura: Ok, why do you think the four students in The ESOL Class struggle the most and how are they sele.. why are they selected for that program?

Teacher: Ok. They were selected for that program because English is not their first language they, um, Liam and Gloria **is** foreigners but Olivia and Allison they are South African, they are isiXhosa speakers. But, um I never selected them, ... selected them. But it's just to improve on their English, and it did work with Gloria because Gloria is progressing to grade two. The other three will be staying behind.

This extract provides further evidence of the treatment and positioning of students from other countries and students who speak isiXhosa. The teacher states that “[They] is foreigners” but “...they are South African ... isiXhosa speakers.” Foreigners are seen as those students that do not speak English (or Afrikaans) as a first language and therefore isiXhosa speakers appear to be foreign in their own home country. Then she states that she didn't select them for the program, which I would argue shows a sign of discomfort with the fact that South African students are selected and identified as needing this resource. Students with these diverse backgrounds continue to be viewed as having a deficit rather than having unique resources.

The teacher explained why she believes the students struggle in class.

Extract 15

Teacher: **Ja no**, what I realized a couple of days ago, the child is gonna do the work individually, they can't do it. but when they do it aurally (or orally) they can so writing then translating, for instance I say something then they translate it in their language { } so they first they translate it back in their language and back again so there isn't that, um, they struggle when it comes, they do much better in numeracy, but literacy is, they struggle because of, this is not their first language, some of them this is their third of fourth language for them and, like, I have different groups. I have my top, middle and bottom group. My top and my middle group { } they can read, they know the sounds and they can blend and the phonics. But the bottom group, those are the children that are repeating grade R.

In this extract the teacher often mentions what the children can't do. This is an example of deficit discourse because it pinpoints students' "problems" without supporting their abilities and talents. She also groups the students into top, middle, and bottom groups as opposed to viewing them as unique individuals.

It is interesting to point out that the teacher believes that the students' main struggles have to do with the fact that students are constantly translating back and forth from home language to English, however, I did not see any evidence of this. According to Creese and Blackledge (2010), children blend languages and the ability to speak more than one language can be a helpful resource to students. The teacher views the students' languages as separate and bounded barriers from one another, and therefore her discourse does not place value on using more than one of them at a time. She also uses the phrase "their language" when referring to the process she describes, which gives me reason to believe that she is not referring to Afrikaans speaking students. This supports the theory that "foreigners" and isiXhosa students are positioned differently from Afrikaans speaking students in a classroom where the teacher comes from an Afrikaans family.

The teacher emphasizes specific identity positions and skills while simultaneously disadvantaging those who do not hold these specific identities or skill-sets. The teacher seems to

be aware that the students are disadvantaged by learning through a language that is not their primary form of communication, however, her discourse positions them based on what they cannot do.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined how the students are positioned in this classroom based on the teacher's discourse when speaking to or about the students. Based on my analysis of her role in the classroom and her relationship with the students, I found discourses of deficit and blame to be produced. According to the discourse, it would appear that the students come to school a certain way that is unchangeable. The ideal learner in this classroom appears to be one that is both compliant with the teacher's orders and directions, and also a good memorizer of facts.

I found that once children obtained a position as incapable or deficient it became difficult for them to take up a more favorable position. This was evident when the teacher selected a few students to demonstrate their abilities in the classroom. It was also evident when Gloria obtained the position of compliant learner, even though she rarely participated in active learning.

The classroom hierarchy appeared to be based mostly on the students' languages. Students with high vocabulary in English were positioned most favorably, as evident, for example, in the English-word memory games which could only be successfully played by students with strong English vocabulary skills. The next students in the classroom hierarchy were those who spoke Afrikaans, as evident by the teacher's relationship and connection with Afrikaans students. When Afrikaans speaking students made phonological errors during the phonics game discussed in Chapter four, they were sometimes not penalized (*hawk* and *walk*), whereas when Xhosa speaking students made phonological errors that the teacher could not relate to they could no longer participate (*champion* and *jampion*). Therefore, below the

Afrikaans speaking students were the Xhosa speaking students and refugees who spoke languages other than English, Afrikaans, or Xhosa. These students were more often referred to as having language barriers and, based on the teacher's lack of Xhosa speaking skills and position as an outsider to the Xhosa speaking students, were accused of using cuss words in Xhosa.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Overview of the study

This small scale case study focused on the impact of language ideologies on a teacher's language and literacy teaching as well as on the positioning of diverse language users. The context of this study was unique because the school of interest is relatively new and opened after Apartheid. The students in the classroom came from Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking backgrounds as well as three refugees who spoke French and/or Chiluba. I observed and video-recorded in the classroom for five weeks and recorded an interview with the teacher to analyze as data. Field notes also informed my data analysis.

I adopted a sociocultural view of language, that language is a social practice which cannot be separated from its social context, when completing my research. This notion of language helped me to focus on the social context of language use in the classroom. In order to analyse the language ideologies in the classroom, I used Woolard's definition that language ideology is "...a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk... ideology stands as a dialectical relation with, and thus significantly influences, social, discursive, and linguistic practices." (Woolard, 1992: 235). My goal was to examine the hegemonic power of language ideology in the classroom, specifically the ideology that English is an unassailable resource and that languages must remain pure and separate. Language ideologies support not only one language over another, but support certain varieties of language and ways of speaking over others.

6.2. Reflections on findings

Both the interview with the teacher and the video-recorded classroom lessons revealed discourses of language as separate and bounded entities that must remain pure and separate. For

example, in Chapter four, the teacher allowed some students to remain in a phonics game while others sat out, based on whether she believed the word suggested was English or not. The ideology that languages must remain pure and separate was also evident during the Afrikaans lesson when the assistant insisted that the students speak only Afrikaans, but naturally blended English and Afrikaans herself. This discourse of linguistic purity inhibited the students from using their full linguistic repertoires in the classroom, and frequently reduced them to deficient monolingual speakers. At the same time, the discourse about the students being deficient furthered their negative positioning, making it more difficult for them to take up a more favorable position in the classroom.

The teacher's language background appeared to play a large role in the way that she connected with students in the classroom and the way that children were positioned. The teacher identified herself as an English first language speaker, however, she appeared to position her own language resources as deficient when speaking to me because we speak different varieties of English and she was not confident that her variety was always "right". She also did not identify herself as a speaker of Afrikaans even though her parents and husband speak Afrikaans and she lives and teaches in an Afrikaans speaking community. She discussed her discomfort as an outsider to speakers of Afrikaans and to speakers of more prestigious varieties of English because she does not feel that she always speaks "correctly" in either language, more so in Afrikaans. With that being said, my observations of the language teaching in the classroom revealed privilege toward Afrikaans speaking students and their variety of English, and a devaluing of students from other languages.

I analysed the teacher's views along with what I observed in the classroom, as well as surfaced the discourse surrounding separateness of languages and language purity. I compared

the ways in which language was used in the classroom to the teacher's awareness of language and to the Language in Education Policy of the school. Although the Language in Education Policy aimed to support languages in addition to English, the classroom teaching did not align with this goal for many reasons including: the implicit rule that languages other than English are not to be used in the classroom, as evident during the phonics game and the teacher's discourse during my interview; and that the required Afrikaans lessons, said to be offered weekly, were in fact rare. I only witnessed one Afrikaans lesson during my five weeks of observation. The teacher did not appear to have an awareness of sociolinguistic knowledge when I discussed the topic of language in the classroom during the interview.

It is evident in my research that the language ideology in the classroom causes language to be used in a less natural way, by preventing the blending of languages and identifying only one language and variety of language as being correct. In other words, it is not only English but a standard variety of South African English that holds linguistic capital in the classroom. This variety does not include Cape Flats English. Cape Flats English, which often blends Afrikaans and English simultaneously, is considered "broken English" that has not been learned properly (McCormick, 2002) and therefore holds little value in the classroom. In this way, language ideology supports those who speak standard South African English in remaining elite. The oppression of those who do not follow the language norm remains invisible.

My research highlights evidence of how students are positioned in this classroom based on the teacher's discourse when speaking to or about the students. From my analysis of her role in the classroom and her relationship with the students, I found discourses of deficit and blame to be produced. According to the discourse, it would appear that the students come to school a

certain way that is unchangeable. The ideal learner in this classroom appears to be one who is both compliant with the teacher's orders and directions, and also a good memorizer of facts.

I found that once a child was positioned as incapable or deficient it became difficult for them to take up a more favorable position. This was evident when the teacher often selected a few students to demonstrate their abilities in the classroom before moving on to another activity. It was also evident when Gloria obtained the position of compliant learner, even though she rarely participated in active learning.

The classroom hierarchy appeared to be based mostly on the students' language proficiency. Students with high vocabulary in English were positioned most favorably, as evident, for example, in the English-word memory games which could only be successfully played by students with strong English vocabulary knowledge. The next students in the classroom hierarchy were those who spoke Afrikaans, as evident by the teacher's relationship and connection with Afrikaans students. When Afrikaans speaking students made phonological errors during the phonics game discussed in Chapter four, they were sometimes not penalized, whereas when Xhosa speaking students made phonological errors that the teacher could not relate to they could no longer participate. Therefore, below the Afrikaans speaking students are the Xhosa speaking students and refugees who speak languages other than English, Afrikaans or Xhosa. These students were more often referred to as having language barriers and, based on the teacher's lack of Xhosa proficiency, were accused of using cuss words in Xhosa.

I conclude that macro-level discourses and perceptions of languages and students of diverse languages have a large impact on the micro-level context of a classroom; for example, the impact of the Language in Education Policy. South Africa's LiEP has changed from overt linguistic discrimination to supposedly supporting multilingualism, however, the hegemony of

English makes the policy appear impractical and very difficult to implement. Despite parents' negative feelings toward English education, they often wish for their children to learn through English. There is an "access paradox" that children need English in order to gain access to education, but their conformity to the English language further perpetuates its hegemony (Janks, 2004). Languages in South Africa continue to be racialized and given prestige or stigma as a result of Apartheid's racial and linguistic segregation (McKinney, 2013). The classroom teacher has internalized the macro-level discourse when she positions herself as deficient in English as well as Afrikaans in Chapter four. While the teacher positions herself as 'English first-language', she does not feel confident in her ability to offer the prestigious variety to the students. The fact that the teacher holds these views of language is a direct reflection of the macro-level discourses circulating in the school and the broader education system. The teacher had expressed that her teacher training had not prepared her for the learners in her classroom and, I would argue, that most teacher training and education lacks a fundamental emphasis on a theoretical understanding of language and the ways in which learners are positioned in the classroom.

6.3. Recommendations

In order to create a more positive learning environment, I suggest the need for teachers to have more exposure to theorization of language and sociolinguistics, thereby gaining a better understanding of language, and an awareness of the impact of discourse on learner positioning in order for change to take place.

This research could be helpful for primary school teachers of English as an additional language, and teachers using English as the LoLT in a linguistically diverse classroom, who want to understand how students are socially positioned by English and how they, as teachers, can

support positive interactions that minimize the power hierarchy among students in the classroom. It can also be beneficial for policy makers to inform best practices in bilingual classrooms that can support multiple languages without following the hierarchical patterns of one language over another. This research could lead to other interdisciplinary studies such as the effects of social positioning through English language ideology on psychological functioning and self-esteem, or longitudinal case studies of how positioning of certain individuals based on language changes, or remains the same over time or across different contexts. This research shows language ideology existing not only on a global scale, but on a local scale, in an educational context. This ideology hegemonically supports the power of those who have the language of prestige, in this case standard South African English. Language ideologies impact the way that language and literacy are taught and therefore how students learn through the classroom discourse. Changing how educators and policy makers theoretically view language will help to improve language and literacy education and lessen deficit discourse around speakers of less prestigious varieties of language.

Appendix A
International Phonetic Alphabet Chart

p	t	k	f	s	θ	ʃ	tʃ
p <u>e</u> n	t <u>a</u> lk	c <u>a</u> n	f <u>i</u> ve	s <u>i</u> x	t <u>h</u> anks	sh <u>e</u>	te <u>a</u> cher
b	d	g	v	z	ð	ʒ	dʒ
b <u>e</u> d	d <u>o</u> es	g <u>e</u> t	v <u>e</u> ry	z <u>e</u> ro	t <u>h</u> is	telev <u>i</u> sion	jac <u>e</u> t
h	l	r	w	m	n	ŋ	j
h <u>a</u> t	l <u>e</u> g	r <u>e</u> ad	w <u>e</u> t	m <u>o</u> ther	n <u>u</u> rse	s <u>i</u> ng	y <u>e</u> s
ɪ	i:	u:	ʊ	eɪ	ɪə	əʊ	
h <u>i</u> t	b <u>e</u> en	f <u>o</u> od	f <u>o</u> t	p <u>a</u> ge	h <u>e</u> re	k <u>n</u> ow	
ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ɒ	aɪ	eə	aʊ	
ag <u>o</u>	f <u>i</u> rst	b <u>o</u> ught	g <u>o</u> t	f <u>i</u> ve	th <u>e</u> re	h <u>o</u> use	
e	æ	ɑ:	ʌ	ɔɪ	ʊə		
p <u>e</u> n	c <u>a</u> t	c <u>a</u> r	b <u>u</u> t	v <u>o</u> ice	p <u>o</u> or		

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