'Speak Our Language…Abide by Our Philosophy': Language & Cultural Assimilation at a U.S. Midwestern High School

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Abstract

Based on an approximate eight month critical ethnographic action research project at a U.S. Midwestern high school in 2004-2005, this article presents data related to the linguistic ideology and associated cultural assimilationist attitudes and practices at Junction High School. During an intercultural peace curricula development project, members of a teacher inquiry group identified lack of empathy about non-English language use at school as "non-peaceful" and in need of change. This article links linguistic normative monitoring practices with cultural assimilationist orientations enacted by several members of the local dominant Euro-American population. How social inequality and unequal power relationships are reproduced via restrictive practices on how students speak and on what languages they use when speaking in schools are important questions considered. Discussion focuses on the intersection of language, cultural power, and national identity. Broader ties to conservative ideological movements in the United States that focus on linguistic and cultural assimilation are explored.

> In a pluralistic nation such as ours, the function of government should be to foster and support the similarities that unite us, rather than institutionalize the differences that divide us.
>
> ProEnglish (http://www.proenglish.org/main/gen-info.htm)

> They tell me, 'Go back to Mexico, don't speak Spanish'
>
> Juan, a Latino student at Junction High School

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to describe the prevalent linguistic ideology of certain members of a dominant Euro-American group.[1] This linguistic ideology was encountered during an approximate eight month critical ethnographic action research project. In response to reported experiences of prejudice and racial discrimination by transnational newcomer students, seven teacher inquirers[2] engaged in an intercultural peace curricula development project that was facilitated by the author during the 2004-2005 school years at a U.S Midwestern High School. Though the original dissertation research study design was not focused on mapping the prevalent linguistic ideology at Junction High School, attitudes about non-English language use quickly

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[1] For the purposes of this article, Euro-American refers to local cultural actors who are considered white via the racial classification system common in the United States; their countries of origin can be traced back to Europe. The terms Euro-American, white American, and Caucasian are used interchangeably throughout this article.

[2] The term "teacher inquirer" best describes their role as participants engaged in critical inquiry and in efforts to improve school conditions for newcomer students. The researcher's role was to map and to facilitate this change process.

became central to our peacebuilding efforts.[3] Data presented here relays these attitudes as well

as cultural assimilationist orientations exhibited by some students, teachers and administrators

who were members of the dominant Euro-American population. The attitudes and linguistic

normative monitoring of members of this dominant social group at Junction High School[4]

created a non-peaceful[5] school and classroom environment for newcomer students whose first

languages included: Spanish; Japanese; Mandarin; and Arabic. Related research further

examines everyday understandings of peace and non-peace at Junction High School (Brantmeier,

2007b) and also gives a more in-depth description of the process of building intercultural

empathy (Brantmeier, 2007a).

In this article a theoretical discussion of the terms linguistic ideology and cultural

assimilation foregrounds a description of the action research methodology employed in the

dissertation study. Findings related to non-peaceful attitudes and behaviors, more specifically

data related to attitudes about language and cultural assimilationist orientations, are then

presented. A discussion follows that connects themes in the data analysis to wider cultural

debates concerning language use and identity in the United States. Finally, a call is made for

further research that maps how dominant linguistic ideologies are enacted and countered.

Theoretical Discussion: Linguistic Ideology and Cultural Assimilation

Working conceptions are needed for the terms ideology and linguistic ideology. Apple

(2004) describes a functional understanding of ideology as "a form of false consciousness which

distorts one's perceptions of social reality and serves the interests of the dominant class in a

society" (Apple 2004: 18-19). Understood in this light, an ideology is a social construction that

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[3] The purpose of the project was to map understandings of peace and non-peace and build intercultural peace
curricula that would lessen the degree of prejudice and discrimination experienced by newcomers.
[4] Pseudonyms for the research site and for participants are used throughout.
[5] "Non-peace" was a term used during the research process to "get at" insider conceptions of the opposite of peace.

serves the interests of a situated group of people within a society; unequal power relationships are maintained through the propagation of an ideology. Apple focuses on class relations in the previous definition. The term linguistic ideology here is linked to a broader focus on power and place, to race, to class, to regional dialects, to the language spoken, and to related status and power differentials in linguistically diverse environments. Rumsey (1990) describes linguistic ideology in terms of everyday understandings of language practices, or "commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (Rumsey 1990: 346). This commonsense understanding of *right* or *correct* language use can have consequences for those who lie outside the dominant linguistic norms. Thus, linguistic ideology can be understood here as dominant, everyday attitudes and practices concerning language use that serve to reinforce power and status differentials among members of a population within situated social contexts. The rightness and correctness of *what* language should be spoken and *how* that language should be spoken can foster in-group acceptance and demarcate out-group status within those contexts.

In a British context, Stubbs (2002) urges awareness about the implications of "linguistic stereotyping" based on dialect and accent by citing Giles (1971) study of standard and regional dialects:

> Speakers of standard English were *perceived* as more ambitious, more intelligent, more self-confident, and more reliable. Such judgements can be manifestly unfair, but it is an important social fact that people judge a speaker's intelligence, character and personal worth on the basis of his or her language (Stubbs 2002: 67).

The linguistic stereotyping, used to sort and select for individual intelligence and in-group or out-group status and membership, reinforces the power of some at the detriment of others. Such

exercises of cultural power have serious consequences for those being judged. Stubbs (2002) focuses on dialect and accent and the associated judgments related to these stylistic differences. Similarly in a U. S. context, Lippi-Green (1997) maintains that language is used to reproduce unequal power relations. Baugh (2000) explores inequalities related to African-American vernacular English and calls for tolerance of stylistic differences of the English language. Both authors suggest there is a need to understand how language is used to maintain power relationships in social institutions in the United States.

Language, power, and cultural capital intersect in varying ways and the intersection has serious consequences. In a French higher education context, Bourdieu (1973) discusses the concept of cultural capital, or the cultural and linguistic forms that serve as a form of currency for passage and membership into certain "high culture" elite upper-class groups. Clearly, Bourdieu (1973) situates his argument in a class-based analysis of social stratification; those from upper-class family backgrounds have acquired the cultural and linguistic capital necessary for success in elite schools. Labeled cultural reproduction (Bourdieu 1973: 56), Bourdieu theorizes how an economically stratified society reproduces itself through passing down cultural and linguistic forms similar to the schools students attend. Thus, those who do not acquire the *correct* cultural and linguistic currency lie outside the dominant in-groups conceptions of acceptable speech, mannerism, and taste. *Perceived deficiencies* relegate non-conforming cultural actors and groups to low-status social positions in a larger stratified society. Out-groups become marginalized, possess little power, and are subject to lower status positions. A dominant group's linguistic stereotyping, one exemplar of a linguistic ideology, can serve as a dominant mode to differentiate, to sort or to select according to preconceived desirability of both the style and type of language spoken.

Stubbs (2002) poses a pertinent question of whether or not the problem is language differences, or attitudes about language differences (Stubbs 2002:67). Linguistic differences exist in cultures, societies, and nation-states around the world. Related hierarchies of greater or lesser value exist within those contexts as well. How members of a society or nation-state respond to language differences in terms of style, dialect, and type (Arabic, English, Mandarin) vary across contexts. Linguistic normative monitoring practices, or the process by which dominant groups monitor and enforce certain linguistic norms through speech acts or behaviors in a given social context (Brantmeier 2005), aid to reinforce commonsense notions of acceptable language use and serve the nested interests of ruling elite and/or dominant groups within a local context or a larger society.

E Pluribus Unum & Cultural Assimilation in the United States

A founding motto of the United States that can be found on U.S. currency today, *E Pluribus Unum,* typically translates from Latin to "out of many, one" in the English language. The motto embodies a fundamental tension within U.S. society—the tension of diversity and unity. Should the analogy of the melting pot that privileges homogeneity or the analogy of the tossed salad that privileges heterogeneity be used as an orientation toward pluralism in the United States?[6] How to create a unified nation-state and integrate a culturally and linguistic diverse citizenry remains an essential democratic question for the United States and other countries around the world.

Cultural assimilation is one mode for forging unity among citizens of a nation-state--often at the cost of diversity. Grey maintains:

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[6] Historically, the melting pot analogy, with a focus on homogeneity, was widely accepted. Cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity were in tension prior to European colonization in what is now called the Americas; hundreds of different languages and dialects were spoken by Native American people and different cultural practices that varied by region and tribe existed. Diversity and unity are still in dynamic interplay today in the United States.

> Assimilation is best defined as the process of "absorbing as one's own." Clearly, assimilation demands that the burden of change falls on alien people if they wish to become members of the dominant culture (Grey 1992: 4)

Cultures change. This claim probably would be readily accepted by most scholars. But how cultures change, for what purposes, and who benefits from this change are questions for critical inquiry. In the process of cultural assimilation,[7] one group absorbs another in terms of language, cultural practices, value frameworks, and ways of "interpreting experience and generating behavior (Spradley 1997:22). Dominant groups control subordinate groups through public policy, constructions of social memory,[8] and valuations of acceptable behavior, speech, and type of language use.

According to Billson (1988), cultural marginality

> Usually stems from a hierarchical valuation of two cultures in which an individual participates, so that relations between the two are commonly defined in terms of acceptance and rejection, belonging or isolation, in-group or out-group (Billson, 1988: 184)

In the United States, a nativist position that maintains foreigners should not be provided the same rights as those born on U.S. soil,[9] has significant historical roots. In 1729, the Alien and Sedition Acts, extended length of time to become a U.S. citizen from five to fourteen years in order to extend and complicate the citizenship process (Gollnick & Chin 2006:94). The interests,

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[7] Historically, this uni-directional narrative of cultural change positions power within the colonizer and powerlessness within the colonized, creating a subject-object dichotomy. This uni-directional narrative should be challenged in the context of contemporary globalization; local cultural groups and actors are appropriating the content of globalization through their own means and for their own ends (Brantmeier 2007c).

[8] The propagation of a "remembered past" through the means of historical truth claims often relay the history of those groups of people who held positions of power, not necessarily the under-privileged and the marginalized (i.e. women, people of color, linguistic minorities).

[9] It could be considered ironic that nativist positions did not acknowledge equal rights for Native American people— the First Nation people in the United States.

rights, and power of Native-born Americans were served through this legislation and through other Nativist rights affirming legislation because it maintained their superiority and dominance in the United States. Not granting legal rights to newcomers was a powerful tool for maintaining in-group and out-group status and related citizenship privileges.

In the early 1900's, the intercultural education movement emerged as a way of forging a common citizenry and making Nativists more tolerant to newly arrived immigrants through homogenizing practices in U.S. Schools (Monalto 1982). Again, the focus of these efforts in schools was more on homogeneity or assimilation to the dominant linguistic and cultural practices of U.S. society than on understanding, promoting, and cherishing cultural differences. Today, multicultural education efforts attempt to promote diversity in terms of curriculum inclusion of the historically marginalized and culturally responsive pedagogy that meets the needs of diverse learners. However, many scholars critique the depth of this current multicultural reform (Sleeter & Grant 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1996; Olneck 1990).

Practices and attitudes exhibited in schools can promote acceptance of difference and unify students; they can also reinforce division, reinforce intolerance of difference, and reinforce power and status differentials. How a country, society, and local school in community respond to changing demographics as a result of migration and immigration explains an orientation to difference that might involve identity change and/or and boundary maintenance. Alred, Byram, and Fleming (2003) write about "being intercultural":

> The locus of interaction is not in the centripetal reinforcement of the identity of one group and its members by contrast with others, but rather in the centrifugal action of each which creates a new centre of interaction on the borders and frontiers which join rather than divide them (Alred, Byram, and Fleming 2003:4).

The generative potential of intermingling cultural groups paints a hopeful and ideal portrait for braiding unity and pluralism in nation-states with a diverse citizenry. An examination of attitudes about non-English language use and cultural assimilationist orientations exhibited at Junction High School tempers this idealism with the realities of status and power differentials among cultural groups within public institutions.

Methodology

The overarching study from which this data derives was a critical ethnographic action research project aimed at describing existing realities, at promoting change, and at monitoring the change process. What follows in this methodology section is a description of the research context, a description of the research tradition, and an exploration of the research questions developed for the overarching study. This section concludes with a description of the participant group and an explanation of the validity techniques employed throughout the research process.

Research Context

Unityville is located near a large urban center in the state of Indiana in the U.S. Midwest. State statistics indicated that since the 1990 census the Latino/a[10] population of the surrounding county has increased over three hundred percent. Demographics at Junction High School reflected the surrounding community. Based on district information for 2003-2004, the Unityville School District as a whole currently had a five percent total minority population consisting of African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic people. Junction High School had about ninety four percent white/Caucasian students, and about six percent of students who were non-white. Of minority populations, African-Americans and Latinos comprised the largest

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[10] The terms Latino and Hispanic are used interchangeably throughout this article. The term "Hispanic" is a United States census term used to refer to people with countries of origin in Central and South America. Some people choose the term Latino instead of Hispanic for important political and identity oriented reasons. In the Spanish language, Latino is a masculine word form and Latina is the feminine word form.

numbers, with some Asian students, a handful of Native American students, and an even smaller number of students who identified as multi-racial. During the course of the 2004-2005 school year, several newly arrived Latino students enrolled at Junction High School.

This research was conducted during the 2004-2005 academic school year at Junction High School. It was part of a larger, ongoing qualitative study that involved a multi-lingual, multi-national team of faculty and graduate student researchers at the Indiana University School of Education who partnered with a school district. Researchers conducted a qualitative study in the fall of 2003 that included administrators, faculty, staff, community members and students (both newcomer and Euro-American) in Unityville Schools. Multiple findings from this study emerged. Korth, Frey, et al's (2004) "Report for Unityville Outreach Program" indicated that:

- Faculty & Staff felt under-prepared to meet the needs of Newcomer (Spanish speaking, Japanese speaking, and Mandarin speaking) students (6).

- Faculty expressed interest in acquiring responsive teaching skills to work with newcomer students (8).

- High School faculty was aware that racial incidents and bullying were occurring in school (21).

- English acquisition by newcomers was a school district concern, but little linguistic expertise existed within the School District (6).

- Formal & informal practices (especially at the high school level) seemed to result in unintended cultural suppression (6).

- Differences in needs existed among Japanese, Mandarin speaking, and Spanish-speaking newcomers and community differences existed in attitudes about those groups (7).

- Socio-emotional needs of newcomer students (fear, trauma, isolation) needed to be addressed (6, 14).

- Newcomer students did not feel welcome in schools (12).

- Non-English use in school was viewed as a problem by mono-lingual English speakers (9).

In response, I co-created a proposal with Dr. Barbara Korth. This proposal aimed to engage teacher inquirers in the development of intercultural peace curricula that would attempt to lessen the prejudice and discrimination experienced by newcomer students at Junction High School.[11] This proposal was accepted by the Central Office administration, with the stipulation that I would not conduct research in the wider community.[12] It was formally approved by the School Board in early October, and I began informal observations shortly thereafter.

Critical Ethnographic Action Research

This research project falls within the framework of critical social research. Carspecken (1996) describes of the concerns of critical social researchers:

> We are all concerned about social inequalities, and we direct our work toward positive social change…We also share a concern with social theory and some of the basic issues…the nature of social structure, power, culture, and human agency (Carspecken 1996:3).

Critical social research aims to understand inequalities and injustices and to change them. This project modestly attempted to add to a critical understanding of the linkages of local practice,

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[11] This research was funded by a $30,000 Indiana University School of Education Proffitt Grant under the direction of Dr. Barbara Korth.

[12] This was a serious limitation to the study because schools do not exist in vacuums; they are directly influenced by the cultural and community forces of the surrounding community.

wider educational policy context influences, and dominant ideologies in operation at Junction High School.

The study aimed to describe and to transform negative attitudes as part of an action research process (Punch 1998). Accordingly, three distinct yet overlapping phases comprise the research design. Three phases of data collection with multiple activities including formal and informal observations, personal interviews, classroom observations, document analysis, and teacher inquiry group meetings were conducted (See Figure One).

<u>Research questions</u>

The overarching inquiry domains and related empirical research questions of this qualitative study follow:

Domain One: Reconstructing Everyday Understandings of Peace and Non-Peace

❖ What were the situated meanings of intercultural peace and non-peace at "Junction High School?" (Including how were particular understandings enforced AND what contestations occurred regarding understandings?)

Domain Two: Doing Intercultural Peace

❖ How did an intercultural peace curricula process affect teacher and student attitudes about peace & non-peace and behaviors toward "others?"

Domain Three: School Culture and Education Policy Context

❖ What constraints and possibilities were encountered when this curriculum was developed at Junction High School?

The findings presented in this paper primarily answer the research questions for inquiry domain one. More specifically, teacher inquirers discussed the "lack of empathy" related to attitudes about non-English language use as non-peaceful and problematic. They believed that these attitudes needed to change. These attitudes will be mapped and analyzed in this paper.

Participant Group

Selection of the teacher inquiry group surely was conducted primarily from the inside out. The distance education coordinator and the assistant principal were the key players in the recruitment phase. Julianne identified and Carrie, the assistant principal, confirmed these choices with some questions about busy schedules and prior time commitments. It was eventually agreed that a teacher with a "resistant" attitude should be included, but not many teachers of this sort of attitude were desirable. The "success" of the project, to use Julianne's words, depended on teachers "committed to the cause" (FN 11/ 4/04)

Seven teacher inquirers were selected to participate in the teacher inquiry group. Of the seven, most teacher inquirers were Euro-American, female teachers and school personnel. Five of the seven teacher inquirers taught in academic content areas. Formerly a Spanish teacher, Lisa, an English and English as a new language teacher, was bi-lingual. Similarly, Denise, a Japanese language and English as a new language teacher, was also bilingual. Thomas, a math teacher, was actively studying Spanish. Having Mexican and Euro-American heritage, the guidance counselor identified herself as half Mexican. She joked about not being able to speak Spanish.[13] Julianne, the distance education coordinator, Jennifer, a social studies teacher, and Pam, a science teacher, were Euro-American, mono-lingual members of the teacher inquiry

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[13] The principal of Junction High School made comments on separate occasions about hiring a Mexican guidance counselor who could not speak Spanish.

group.   A Euro-American male conversationally fluent in Spanish, it was my task to facilitate the teacher inquiry group meetings.

Validity

During ethnographically informed (Wolcott 1999) data collection, triangulation methodologies that included multiple sources of information were used: teacher inquiry group interviews (Schensul, LeCompte, Nastasi & Borgatti 1999); individual semi-structured interviews (Carspecken 1996); participant observations (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995), and relevant document analysis (See Figure Two for complete data inventory). The data for the overall study was collected during the approximated fifty field visits that the researcher conducted to the Unityville community and/or to Junction High School. In addition to classroom observations, personal interviews, and numerous other ethnographic activities (school board meetings, visits to the public library) nine formal teacher inquiry groups meetings and two informal lunch meetings were conducted from November 2004 until May 2005. All teacher inquiry group meetings were facilitated by the researcher, observed by a co-investigator, transcribed by the researcher, and then accuracy checked by a neutral second party to ensure validity. The transcripts from these meetings were then meticulously low inference coded (Carspecken 1996).

Findings

Linguistic normative monitoring practices were enacted at Junction High School and resulted in the suppression of native language use by newcomer, transnational students (Brantmeier 2005). In this context, White-American attitudes about non-English language use affected the socio-emotional experiences of newcomers, both in terms of their classroom experiences and their social experiences in the school (Korth et al 2004). Related monitoring

practices of the dominant group served a cultural assimilationist role; curtailing unacceptable non-English language use was one mode of controlling school space and culture by the Euro-American group at Junction High School. Conceptions of non-peace, the monitoring of language use, and cultural power[14] are explored in this data analysis section.

Non-peaceful Attitudes and Behaviors

In the first inquiry group, the purpose of the semi-structured conversation was to map participants' everyday understandings of peace and non-peace. Teacher inquirers were asked to list words they associated with peace and words they associated with non-peace. They were then asked the question, "Could you identify peace related attitudes and behaviors that you see in your classroom or in school?" The group chose to start by naming non-peaceful[15] related attitudes and behaviors. As participants expressed a word, I listed them on a flip chart and asked them to identify what they suggested as an attitude or as a behavior. The compiled list is represented on the table that follows:

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[14] In Lisa Delpit's (1995) *Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Education Other People's Children* she uses the theoretical framework labeled the "culture of power" that applies to the analysis in this article given that newcomer students at Junction High School had to adapt to the codes and rules enacted and enforced by members of the dominant Euro-American faculty and student body. They were marginal in their relative status to members of the "culture of power."

[15] I had a difficult time figuring out what to label attitudes and behaviors that were the opposite of peace. Therefore, I chose the term non-peace, the opposite of peace, to frame my questions aimed at "getting at" conceptions of the opposite of peace.

Non-peaceful Attitudes and Behaviors

Name calling *(identified as behavior)*
Prejudice *(identified as an attitude)*
Exclusion *(identified as attitude and behavior)*
Anger *(Discussion as both attitude and behavior)*
Derision *(identified as behavior)*
Lack of empathy *(identified as attitude, later one group member suggested it was the most important).*
Physical abuse *(kicking, shoving, bumping (in the halls) (identified as behavior)*
Whispering/gossip *(identified as behavior)*
Stereotypic slur *(identified as both attitude and behaviors, stereotyping/slurs)*
Rude comments *(identified as behavior)*
Ignoring *(identified as behavior)*   (TIGOne11/17/04)

After identifying observed non-peaceful attitudes and behaviors, I asked the following to try to understand explicit and tacit understandings rooted in concrete remembrances:

> Researcher: Now, I want to ask somebody to look at one of those, and could you share a concrete scenario or story based on one of these non-peace related attitudes and behaviors that you have identified? (TIGOne 11/17/04).

Pam, who listed "stereotypic slurs" as a non-peace related attitude and behavior, shared a story about a "male Caucasian" who, in her classroom, stereotyped a female Hispanic student, "You carry knives, you all carry knives." Pam reported that she felt embarrassed to be Caucasian and intervened by asking the girl if this was offensive. She then asked the boy "How would you like it if someone placed a 'redneck' stereotype upon you?" (TIGOne 11/17/04). A stereotypic slur placed upon the "other" due to "ignorance" about cultural differences was a repeated theme that Pam discussed in subsequent meetings. Hispanic students were criminalized as knife-carriers by a white student in this story.

Lisa reported, "We don't have enough time, for all of the behaviors that I see (shakes her head, looks down)" (TIGOne 11/17/04). When asked to share a story that was the *most* important, she began:

> Lisa: One is, and my students now *(stresses)* know not to ever *(slightly stressed)* bring it up, because they [regular English class students] know that I teach ENL [English as a New Language classes]. So when I'm in a regular English class, for example, that's where this happened. It was a quote 'American' *(puts her hands in the air and moves her fingers to emphasize quote[16])* student who said, thinking about Hispanics, 'What are they doing here? This is our country, we made this country. They have no right to come here.' My immediate comment was I looked over the class and said, "Are any of you Native Americans, are any of you Indian? If you are not, and that includes me, then this is not your country *(stresses each of the last three words individually).* Your ancestors, somebody *(stresses)* came here from Europe, and found a new life and made a new life. And that's what many of these students are doing with their parents. So, don't ever say to me, 'this is our *(stresses)* country.' So they don't say that in my class anymore.
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> Pam: And even from a scientific standpoint, the Native Americans weren't Native Americans, they came from Asia.
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> Lisa: *(interrupts)* Correct, Correct. But if anybody owns *(gets interrupted, they talk over one another).*
>
> Pam: Asians came over here first *(talking over Lisa).*
>
> Lisa: Exactly.
>
> Pam: And we call them, we call the society, Native Americans.
>
> Lisa: Right.   (TIGOne 11/17/04).

Lisa shares a story of a Caucasian student claiming white people, not Hispanics, "made" this country. The Caucasian student claims the privilege and status of a "maker" of this country. Lisa replied by challenging his sense of ownership of being American. She suggests Euro-American settling was one of displacement of Native American people, struggle and strife. She

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[16] She had been struggling with what to call non-newcomer high school students. She commonly used "American" students to refer to this population. However, there were several Hispanic students who born in the U.S.A.—they were also U.S. Citizens.

asked the student in her class, who felt that Hispanics do not belong in the United States and have no right to belong, to think about their own ancestors' struggles and to empathize with Hispanic students and their parents. She challenged the student who constructs rigid boundaries of in-group membership. Non-peaceful attitudes and behaviors included a stereotype by a member of the dominant Caucasian group perpetuated about Hispanics and claims that newcomers did not belong that served as a boundary maintenance technique. These incidents were presented in opposition to peace at JHS and clearly teacher inquirers attempted to change student attitudes that they perceived as negative. This example illustrates a Euro-American attitude of privilege that relegates Hispanics as outsiders or those who do not belong. It also illustrates a one teacher's approach to countering marginalizing attitudes in her classroom.

Non-peace, Lack of Empathy & Linguistic Normative Monitoring

When other teachers shared non-peace related stories related to school, Julianne relayed the following comments about language use:

> Julianne: I've seen with students and faculty a real lack of empathy dealing with language. Where I hear, see a group of Hispanic students speaking Spanish to each other. And have another student walk down the hall and say 'Don't do that here.' Trying to tell them 'don't speak your native language here.' And I also heard from a faculty member that they didn't think they should be allowed to speak Spanish in the classroom *(voice lowers, then increases)* and if they did (**stresses**) it automatically meant they were talking about her in a negative way
>
> Lisa: *(adding)* Or cheating.
>
> Julianne: Well, I didn't hear the cheating, I'm just saying what I heard. So, a total lack of empathy that there would be a reason why they would niche together. If you had a problem in the class, of course you are going to lean over to the person next to you to speak them in your native language to ask a question. Why would anybody assume (**stresses**) that it automatically meant that they were talking negatively about you?
> We don't think that about students who speak English, if they lean over and whisper to each other, or to ask a question, they are automatically talking negatively about the

teacher in the room. It's just a shame for students to not understand how isolated these students must feel and why they would niche together and want to seek their own language. And to tell them "don't do that here." I just (pauses, shakes her head a little).

Pam: And I think that is a very big issue with faculty and students. That's where the non-peace part of me with the ignorance comes in.

Julianne: I find *(gets talked over)*

Pam: I can't speak another language. So automatically, when you don't understand what someone else is saying, I can see where the other person is thinking, 'what are they saying?' The same thing about a Hispanic student who doesn't speak the English language and hears a conversation going on. That's why I see where they're very, they're very quiet people. They're very reserved and they don't say anything. But you can see the look on their faces all the time of 'what's going on around me, I don't understand it. And I'm right here this little space, and there's this big space around me and I don't know how to deal with it" *(voice gets softer with pronunciation of words and volume.)* That is, that is a very, when we get into that language barrier thing…

Julianne: And that's why I thought lack of empathy is number one. Because how could you not have some kind of empathy for that situation, what that must feel (**stresses**, but with lower volume) like (pauses) to be that (**stresses**) isolated. And then not only be that isolated, but then be asked not to even be able to niche together with your own kind without people coming down on you for that. I mean, anyone who's ever been to a foreign country where they can't speak the language, what do you do? You niche into your own little group and you speak English. Because you don't understand and you want some help from those people. And why people can't have any kind of understanding *(stresses 'any kind of understanding')* of that, is *(pauses)* appalling to me.
(TIGOne 11/17/04).[17]

Julianne discussed specific instances where Native language use of the newcomer students was monitored by other students or condemned by a teacher. Julianne was appalled by lack of understanding of some faculty and non-newcomer students at Junction High School. She acknowledged the isolation, both physical and emotional, that newcomer students felt. Her statement, "but then be asked not to even be able to niche together with your own kind" suggested empathy and disagreement with the practice of isolating students from one another by not allowing them to speak their first language. Julianne disagrees with this boundary

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[17] The abbreviation TIGOne 11/17/04 indicates Teacher Inquiry Group Meeting One, November seventeenth, the year two thousand and four.

maintenance practice that enforced English as a dominant language in the classroom. This quote conveyed her empathetic response for newcomer challenges and her perceptions of a lack of empathy in relation to first language in both students and faculty at JHS.   However, an empathetic response to mother tongue use was an exception, not necessarily a typical response to non-English language use.   For example, "Some of the high school students said that if newcomer students didn't talk English it was because they 'had a bad attitude'" (Korth, Frey, Hasbun, Nakamichi, Pereira, Soto, & Su 2004). Such normative monitoring, or monitoring of the norm 'one should not speak another language besides English in our school' was typical at JHS.

'Speak Our Language…Abide by Our Philosophy'

During an initial observation in a social studies classroom, a Euro-American male student turned around to ask the researcher why I was observing in the classroom. I said to "study education for diversity," and then I said I was studying "students whose first language is not English as well as issues of ethnic and racial diversity in the school." He said:

> I don't have a problem in this class. *(pauses)* In terms of ethnic/racial diversity. *(pauses)* I believe if you come to this country, you should speak our language. You should abide by our (**stresses**) philosophy. That's just what I think *(stresses "I", points to himself)* though.

He paused for a moment, said something else I could not hear and then conveyed:

> Unityville is a good place. We're mostly Caucasian. It's changing though. It's complicated. (Pauses, thinks, then says…) I don't care anyway. I'm moving to Canada. (He turns around and continues his work) (CO-SS 11/14/04).

Latino and other newcomer students at Junction High School were told they should not speak their first languages in the hallways and classrooms of Junction High School.   One Euro-American student in a social studies classroom affirmed that if newcomers wanted to come to

Unityville, that they should speak English and abide by our philosophy that existed there. Rather than viewing language and cultural differences as positive, they were viewed as negative. English-language use was associated with coming to the United States and geographic boundaries were specifically linked to linguistic space in the comments of both the Euro-American male student and the Euro-American male Superintendent of Unityville Schools. Linguistic boundaries were consistent with local geographic boundaries; the community and schools were English-speaking space and patrolled accordingly. Those who transgressed these white-dominant geo-linguistic rules were negatively sanctioned with comments by some members of the faculty and student body at Junction High School.

Data Dialogues about Language Use

A data dialogue was an innovative means to collect data as part of this critical action research methodology. Essentially, a data dialogue was the provision of data gathered at the research site to other in-group members at the site for their interpretation. During group meeting two, teacher inquirers were asked to reflect on the 'speak our language…abide by our philosophy' student comments:

> Denise: I felt in a lot of ways this is representative of hmm, a large section of the community who feels that ya know, that 'you need to speak English if you are going to live here. Or go back to the country from whence you came. You need to accept our way of doing things, or go back to where you came from.' And um, in that sense it was somewhat, somewhat typical. *(pauses)* And I agree that he may have been a little bit less narrow minded than some folks though, because he did recognize that it was his opinion. Ya know and that it was his *(stresses)* opinion, and that it wasn't everyone's opinion.

> Jennifer: I kind of took it like Thomas took it, like I think that, people of this era kind of always give tribute to being politically correct *(inflection on correct)* and whether that's really there in the feelings though. It depends on the tone and *(looks to Julianne)* how it was stated.

> Julianne: Yah, because the first statement that I had written down was that I felt the scenario was fairly typical, but less hostile then most.

Jennifer: Uh-hmm.

Julianne: So I'm kind of seeing

Jennifer: Yah,

Julianne: A little less hostile, but others didn't necessarily read it in the same way.

(TIGTwo 12/1/04)

Teacher inquirers slightly disagreed with whether or not the 'speak our language…abide by our philosophy attitude was typical in the Euro-American population in Unityville and at Junction High School. Mary, an inquiry group member who was Mexican-American and who identified herself as bi-racial/bi-ethnic, warned about the tendency to over-generalize:

> Mary: … And I mean I think the danger in the conversation we are having today about Caucasian students is that we're kind of grouping them all together when there are a lot of student here who are very *(stresses)* respectful. And who know right from wrong and maybe don't have as faulty of beliefs as some of the other students do. And so that's the danger in grouping them all together. We have to realize that we do have students who understand *(pauses briefly)* more so than others and who. They're our strengths. And they are where we have to start with I think.
>
> Researcher: I think that's a really critical point. I've been sitting in on classes and hearing stories and different things like that. And I'm wondering similarly about how diverse of perspectives am I getting from some of the students I'm talking to? I talked to a student the other day in your class *(looks at Math teacher, Thomas)* who said the same thing as this scenario right here... He said, 'I think it's gay. They should speak English. They should hmm, not group together' and different things like that. That was one (**stresses**) student. And I'm wondering how widespread some of these attitudes and beliefs are in the general Caucasian[18] population here?
>
> Pam: I think unfortunately (**stresses**) you have more of the negative outbursts than you do of students… We have a lot of kids that are very respectful. But most respectful kids are not going to say negative things about other people. (pauses)

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[18] I consciously used Caucasian here, though I do not prefer using this word. I looked at the science teacher when I did because she often uses this word when referring to white, Euro-American people.

You are just going to hear the negative things from these kids that come out of these kids that are very outspoken and shouldn't be saying those things. And the kids that thinks 'no, that's not something appropriate to say' probably looks off and will not say to that person who said the inappropriate thing, 'that's not right (**stresses**) to say.'

Researcher: Mmm.

Pam: I don't think they are going to be vocal (**stresses**) enough to do that. Because first of all the kid shouldn't have said that to begin with. You know, so I think a lot of kids who would be more sensitive to the differences among every kid aren't going to come out and say, 'you shouldn't do that. That's not right. This isn't right.' Unfortunately." (TIGTwo 12/1/04).

Teacher inquirers suggest that not all Euro-American students at Junction High School held linguistic and cultural assimilationist attitudes. However, Pam suggests that "respectful" students may not hold the same 'speak our language…abide by our philosophy' attitude, but they may not publicly oppose negative comments made to newcomer students. Mary advocates for those Euro-American students who do not hold "as faulty of beliefs as some" and a strengths based approach where the group should focus on students "…who understand."

Power & Language Use

Whether or not a mainstream attitude of 'speak our language …abide by our philosophy' was dominant in the school and community was debated by teacher inquiry group members. However, this attitude existed at the top of the power hierarchy in the Unityville School District—a district that placed importance on the "chain of command." In an interview with the superintendent, Mr. Sander, I asked the following question:

Researcher: Some would argue that all (**stresses**) Americans should learn more than two languages. How do you respond to that?

Mr. Sander: I have a prejudiced view there. *(pauses)* I think they need to learn to speak English. If you come to a country, learn English. *(pauses)* That's important.
(PIS 2/9/045).

In the flow of our conversation he mentioned that 'I don't say it [view about speaking English] (**stresses** say it) like some of the kids though.' Mr. Sander shared that his ancestors came to America from Europe and "they had to learn English" (PIS 2/09/05). He established historical precedent to justify an assimilationist attitude. When talking about ENL students, Mr. Sander said, "The younger we get them, the better it is for us." He continued, "The younger kids learn English." He mentioned that the younger kids were easier to "absorb." He then talked about ENL high school kids, "They're more hardened, less fluent… [they are] hard to mold." He constructed the status of students as either good or bad in relationship to their English fluency. He constructed younger children as "better" because they assimilated to the dominant language more quickly and were easier to "absorb" than older ENL high school students.

Generally, Mr. Sander viewed diversity in language and racial/ethnic identity as something to be assimilated. Without prompting, he started talking, "Mexican-American, African-American—that doesn't matter. We're all Americans" *(with hand gesture and emotion behind words).* He claimed that when African-Americans use the African, "they are separating themselves from us [white Americans]." "We're all Americans, that's it. *(stresses it, pauses briefly).* Don't tack that on *(said with emotion)"* (PIS 2/9/05). His approach to difference was apparent in these comments. Separating identities through hyphens that designate core elements of ethnic or racial American identities was unacceptable. This 'we are all the same approach' links with melting pot analogies for explaining cultural difference and similarities. This approach negates differences; so much that diverse ethnic or racial cultural traits become secondary to American-ness. Some would surely argue that this approach is easy for those who reside within the dominant white-American paradigm. But for those who differ, this melting pot

approach favors homogeneity over heterogeneity and implicitly demands assimilation to the dominant paradigm and loss of ethnic or racial group differences.

When I explained to Mr. Sander about ethnically segregated physical space in the lunchroom, his non-response was suggestive. I reported:

> Latino high school students tend to sit together in the cafeteria. I've been told that they do so because if they try sitting elsewhere, other Euro-American students tell them to 'go back to Mexico'' and 'speak English' (PIS 2/9/05).

I added that I had observed some threats to Latino kids in the school. Mr. Sander's expression did not change when this was said. He did not acknowledge or respond to the comments about Latino student segregation in the cafeteria and threats by Euro-American students.

Mr. Sander did not acknowledge the power and privilege differentials between Euro-Americans and other groups in the United States, and he did not engage me in a conversation about Hispanic student harassment in the lunch room at the high school. The burden of change was placed on the newcomer student and those who were not part of the Euro-American dominant population; members of the dominant society should not have to change in his view. Clearly, Mr. Sander advocated for the cultural assimilation of newcomers; linguistic assimilation was pivotal to this process in his belief system.

Discussion

Linguistic Ideology and Assimilation at Junction High School

The data presented here affirms that the imposition of an English-only linguistic ideology at Junction High School permeated multiple levels of "the chain of command"—from the Superintendent's office to classroom teachers to students. Normative monitoring practices helped curtail "unacceptable" language use by newcomer students. This monitoring was one mode used members of the dominant group to assimilate newcomers into a white-American world filled

with both visible and invisible cultural codes. First and foremost, one needed to use the proper linguistic capital--"Speak English." English-only attitudes and cultural assimilationist orientations served to maintain the cultural power of members of the dominant Euro-American group and they reinforced lower status positions and the out-group status of newcomer transnational students at Junction High School. Monitoring English language use at Junction High School denied a newcomer's right to freely speak their mother tongue in the public spaces of school.[19] Little consideration was given to the benefits of a multi-lingual environment by some mono-lingual English speakers at Junction High School.

Changing attitudes about non-English language use and creating empathy for the situations of newcomer students were identified by teacher inquirers as related to creating a more 'peaceful' at Junction High School. Some empathetic responses to language issues in the teacher inquiry group were voiced, however there was a perception that empathy was more generally lacking in wider faculty. Based on teacher inquirer comments and research observation, some members of the dominant Euro-American group at the school typically promoted "English only" practices through linguistic normative monitoring. Dominant normative constructions of what an "America" should be like were related to English language use from the perspective of several Euro-American insiders. Some insiders, such as the Superintendent, linked English language use with living in America and provided historical precedent for linguistic assimilation. He held an assimilationist stance toward newcomers whose first language was not English; he placed the burden of change on newcomers rather than on the dominant Euro-American population.

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[19] However, these Euro-American norms were transgressed intentionally at times by some Latino students and by the researcher himself who sometimes purposefully talked in Spanish with some Latino students in front of Euro-American faculty and administrators. Some of the faculty and administrators did not comment about this and others openly approved of this.

To claim that one dominant linguistic ideology existed at Junction High School would be false. Different ideological tensions exist within a given social site. Clearly, certain Euro-American faculty and students disagreed with the linguistic normative monitoring practices enacted in relation to newcomer students whose first language was not English. Clearly, teacher inquirers felt that a lack of empathy about non-English language use by Euro-American members of the faculty and student body was a problem that needed to be changed. Teacher inquirers advocated for a language dissonance experience for faculty for a professional development day and intercultural peace curricula developed by different teacher inquirers focused on building empathy for the plight of newcomers and courage to stand up against prejudice and discrimination against newcomers.

Generally speaking, the burden of change was placed on newcomer students, not change in school policy and approach to newcomers. Linguistic assimilation and associated monitoring practices were, in effect, a method for "absorbing" newcomers into the dominant culture of everyday interactions at Junction High School. In-group and out-group affiliation and associated boundary maintenance were reinforced through the enforcement of English language use. This *accepted and correct* linguistic currency served as a basis for social inclusion or exclusion, though little evidence existed that if newcomer students did acquire English they would be openly accepted as equals at Junction High School. Unequal power and status relationships were maintained through the propagation of English only attitudes and practices at Junction High School.

Wider Debates in the U.S.

Themes of linguistic and cultural assimilation present in this local study connect to broader tensions involving immigration, national identity, and cultural change in a broader U.S.

society.   Should cultural/linguistic variations be viewed as a *deficit* or a *difference*? A deficit implies a problem inherent to non-mainstream cultural groups; a problem that needs fixing through assimilation to the dominant cultures way of speaking, acting, and general meaning-making. In this conception, ethnic differences should be sanded down to create the smooth, all-American citizen.[20]   The term *difference* does not have the associated negative connotations of *deficit.* A difference is simply something that is not the same; negative valuations need not enter the conversation.

However in U.S. immigration debates, conservative ideological camps push for cultural assimilation, not for learning from and embracing cultural differences. Several active anti-immigration groups push for cultural assimilation and immigration law enforcement.   For example, the Minutemen, whose motto is "Americans doing the job congress won't," act as a watchdog group that patrols the U.S. border in order to stop illegal immigration. They warn of the negative impacts of illegal immigration:

> Future generations will inherit a tangle of rancorous, unassimilated, squabbling cultures with no common bond to hold them together, and a certain guarantee of the death of this nation as a harmonious "melting pot." The result: political, economic and social mayhem. (http://www.minutemanproject.com/default.asp?contentID=2).

Mayhem will ensue, according to the Minutemen, if illegal immigration is not stopped at the border.   Other groups advocate for linguistic assimilation upon entry into the United States:

> ProEnglish believes English should be the official language of the United States. We believe this is vital for preserving our national unity and the strength of our democracy. To ensure our linguistic unity and promote the successful assimilation of new

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[20] This conception is according to a white dominance paradigm.

immigrants, the United States has long required that they learn English in order to naturalize i.e. become citizens (http://www.proenglish.org/issues/ci/index.html).

To "naturalize," according this group, requires linguistic assimilation—a process aimed at preserving national unity. The "naturalized" citizen of the United States learns to speak English and in doing so ensures the strength of "our" democracy. This position represents one ideological camp that urges for homogeneity, not for embracing and promoting differences in languages and cultures in the United States.

The burden of change is often placed on immigrants rather than on the mainstream society to which they adapt. Many social, political, and economic reasons are used to explain this necessary adaptation:

> When it comes to the issue of language, there can be little debate that there are Two Americas; One America for the majority who can speak English, and another America for those who cannot. English proficiency is the different between a life of citizenship or non-citizenship; it is the gap in liberty between effective speech and an unheard voice; and it is the distance between pursuing happiness with upward mobility or under a language-imposed ceiling. In short, English language for immigrants is a necessary condition for America to be the Land of Opportunity.
>
> (U.S. English Foundation http://www.usenglish.org/foundation/publications/english_in_america.asp, 2).

In this conception, not learning English will result in an immigrant's inability to take part in the American Dream—a dream that surely favors those willing to give up elements of ethnic difference in order fit within the dominant linguistic and cultural paradigm. English language proficiency can grant privilege, access, and opportunity and a "life of citizenship."

However, it also reinforces the power base of those who define the linguistic norms. Does quality teaching and learning involve an appreciation of diverse regional dialectics and stylistic variations of the English language? Should quality teaching involve recognition of a diverse linguistic and cultural pre-European history in Native America? Should the approach to bilingualism be one of additive bilingualism (Cropley 1983) for the wealthy and subtractive bilingualism for the working-class and poor? Who really benefits from this?

Toward Closure

The contestation of norms of language use in schools has serious consequences for those who lie outside the "commonsense" practices of dominant social groups. Understanding how dominant linguistic ideologies are perpetuated and how counter-normative efforts are enacted provides glimpses of the possibilities and constraints for social change in schools. In increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse schooling environments, a crucial need arises for understanding how social inequality and unequal power relationships are reproduced via restrictive practices on how students speak and on what languages they use when speaking. Studies that map how dominant cultural and linguistic norms are reinforced can provide awareness of how ideologies are enacted and can provide insight into opportunities for positive, peaceful change in administrators, teachers, and students—a change that will require adaptation by many groups, not just immigrants, to balance the tension of diversity and unity in *E Pluribus Unum*.

Surely, multi-lingual, multi-cultural environments thrive around the world—not without tension or challenge. There are a myriad of ways to respond to cultural conflict and change. In the midst of contemporary globalization with significant transnational migration, diverse people

with different languages and cultures are settling among historically homogenous populations in

rural areas and in historically segregated urban spaces. The results are threatening to some,

hopeful for others, and life-changing for all involved. How a society responds to these changes,

tensions, and challenges can be both fettering and freeing for newcomers and Nativists alike.

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Figure One

Data Collection Phases

Phases	Types of Activities	Timeline
Phase One: Initial Contact and Observations	Administrative meetings; attended school board meeting; visited public library; school board approval meeting; non-intrusive library, hallway, lunchroom JHS observations; school yearbook reviews; school discipline code review; teacher inquirer recruitment meetings; attended faculty meetings; attended professional development day; began classroom observations; electronified field notes.	September 7 through the middle of November
Phase Two: Peace Curricula Development	Bulk of classroom observations; teacher inquiry group meetings; helped organize professional development day; facilitated session for professional development day; shadowed ENL students; helped develop newcomer orientation guides; electronified field notes; developed interview protocols; conducted interviews; transcribed group meetings and personal interviews; accuracy checks on transcriptions.	November through April
Phase Three: Peace Curricula Implementation and Examination	Implementation observations, teacher inquiry group reflection meeting, administrative interviews; department chair interviews; personal interviews of teacher inquirers (Co-investigator conducted).	April and May

Figure Two

Formal Data Triangulation Inventory

Type	Explanation	Numbers
Teacher inquiry group meetings (full)	Group meetings to discuss issues related to peace curricula and to develop peace curricula.	9 full group meetings, some participants absent at several meetings.
Teacher inquiry group meetings (small group)	Lunch meetings with available participants to discuss professional development day and peace curriculum development.	2 small group meetings, several participants absent during meetings.
Teacher inquirer classroom observations	Classroom observations during initial phases to understand and explain context. Classroom observations during curricula implementation.	5 plus initial classroom observations per content area teacher inquirer. 2 life sciences class observations of peace curricula implementation. 1 English class observation of peace curricula implementation
Teacher inquirer semi-structured interviews	Personal interviews with teacher inquirers during initial phases of research, midway during the research process, and process reflection toward the end of the school year.	Initial: 1 per 7 teacher inquirers. During: 1 per 7 teacher inquirers. Reflection: 1 per 7 teacher inquirer. (Conducted by Dini Metro-Roland).
Administrative semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured personal interviews with assistant principal and principal of JHS.	1 initial interview with principal and vice-principal. 1 interview with vice-principal during curriculum development. 1 process reflection interview with assistant principal, 1 with principal and vice-principal (Co-investigator Yoko Nakamichi present).
ENL Student Shadows	Shadowed English-as-a-New Language students for 3 hours during school day.	2 shadows each of 3 different students. 1 shadow of one student.
Student Interviews	Semi-structured individual and group interviews.	1 interview with 1 student. 2 group socialization connections with Latino students.
Faculty and staff interviews	Semi-structured interviews with key school faculty and staff.	2 interviews with ENL Aide. 1 interview each with department chairs: social studies, English, foreign languages.
Community Interviews	Semi-structured interview with key community member.	1 interview with Latino community organizer.
Document Review	Review of pertinent documents	Student handbook, school discipline code, high school yearbook, school district ESL plan, ESL student individualized learning plans.