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Deconstructing Teachers' Conceptions of Academic Language

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Introduction

"Academic language" is a term that is thrown around frequently in educational circles, particularly in recent years. Whether in pre-service teacher education with candidates and cooperating teachers preparing for the widely required Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA; Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2016), or in-service teachers grappling with the implementation of the Common Core Standards (National Governors Association, 2010), academic language has become *de rigueur* a jargon term required for a number of current classroom, school, and university initiatives. But what is academic language?

According to Zweirs (2008), academic language is "the set of words, grammar, organizational strategies used to describe complex ideas, higher-order thinking processes and abstract concepts" (p. 20). This concept holds value because the so-called achievement gap between students has often been attributed to differences in students' knowledge of this concept (Wong-Fillmore, 2004). Yet, while educational scholars

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have defined and discussed academic language in peer-reviewed jour-nals in great length (e.g., Snow & Uccelli, 2009; Uccelli, Galloway, Barr, Meneses, & Dobbs, 2015; Valdes, 2004), little is known about what, if any, consensus exists among practitioners in the field around this oft-used but frequently misunderstood term (Valdes, 2004). To our knowledge, no empirical studies have explored in a fine-grained manner educators' definitions or understandings of academic language. This lack of consen-sus becomes evident in practice when considering how educators talk about and act upon issues related to academic language. Based on his observations in schools, educational linguist Nelson Flores (2015) recently called for a moratorium on the term academic language because of the frequent misuse and resultant misunderstandings, including errant and deficit-based practices with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

As a part of a larger study investigating trends in practitioners' effi-cacy in teaching, using, and supporting academic language in classrooms, we honed in on teachers' definitions and corresponding understandings of the term academic language. We surveyed 332 teachers spanning 26 schools in the same geographic region of one large, urban public school district. Of the 25,000 students attending these elementary, middle, and high schools, 92% are considered low-income. Demographic data indicate that participating schools are 66% Latino, 15% Black, 8% Asian, 2% Mul-tiracial, and 9% White. 31% of students are labeled as English learners (ELs), with Spanish emerging as the dominant native language, and ap-proximately 90 languages other than English spoken by the culturally and linguistically diverse student population. Though the larger study collected both quantitative and qualitative data, this paper focuses on teachers' survey responses to a question asking them to define academic language in their own words (Jansen, 2010). We coded participants' nar-ratives by emergent themes, resulting in 418 coded responses, as some definitions fell into more than one code (Erickson, 1986).

Overall, 84% of coded responses reflected misunderstandings of academic language. Eight categories of conceptions emerged from the data, including academic language as (a) the language of schools, (b) vocabulary, (c) the opposite of social language, (d) the language of textbooks, (e) prerequisite to learning, (f) the language of teachers, (g) needed primarily for ELs, and (h) only occurring in English. The purpose of this article is to deconstruct these emergent conceptions of academic language. In addition to sharing the larger research findings in another article (Heineke & McTighe, 2018), our goal is to encourage teachers, leaders, teacher educators, and other readers to probe their own understandings of academic language. The article is organized by

eight assertions that respond to the emergent conceptions of academic language, presented in order based on the percentage of teachers who responded and reflected that misunderstanding. For each assertion, we share study findings and deconstruct the related conception, using examples from social studies education to demonstrate the complexity of academic language in discipline-specific settings.

Common Misunderstandings of Academic Language

Academic Language is More Than the Language of School

The primary conception of academic language is the generic ascription as "the language of school." In our study, 27% of coded responses indicated that the teachers defined academic language as solely situated in common educational settings, including classrooms, schools, and academia. Whereas some respondents remained nebulous (e.g., "language used in classrooms"), others provided additional detail by tying academic language to state standards and grade-level objectives, as well as non-specific subject areas and curricular content. While these responses are not necessarily incorrect, the broad scope of the definition fails to capture the nuanced nature of academic language. More specifically, referring back to Zweirs' definition, conceptualizing academic language as the language of school avoids two core facets of this construct: (a) complex, discipline-specific ideas reside in complex, discipline-specific language, and (b) this relationship between these habits of mind and language are intertwined and do not have to be restricted to a space like school. For example, some students may use academic language at home when discussing current events with parents, such as local and state elections, and trips to the local museum may involve academic language about historic artifacts.

This wide definition, the language of school, further fails to highlight an essential aspect of this linguistic register, which is that academic language helps students access and make meaning of disciplinary content (Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Uccelli et al., 2015). This less-specific characterization likely comes from linguistic generalizations prevalent in the educational community, such as the juxtapositions between language used at home and school or the classroom and the playground (Grugeon, 2005). Over time, these context-specific dichotomies can become associated with particular assumptions which emerged in our study participants' definitions. For example, language assumed as used in formal educational settings (i.e., school, classroom) becomes associated with language that is considered to be *proper* or *well functioning*, in contrast to the language used in juxtaposed setting (i.e., home, playground). In this way, this more

general definition may prompt teachers to focus on academic language as observable student behavior in these school-specific settings, rather than as a means to cognitively engage with disciplinary concepts and ideas across locales.

To deconstruct this common conception focused on the generic language of school, consider how academic language is shaped by discipline: the language of social studies is different than the languages of science, mathematics, or language arts (WIDA, 2012). Even within social studies classrooms, students use language in varied ways to actively participate in learning (see Figure 1). In history, students engage in learning via primary and secondary sources about historical events with ample details including names, dates, places, concepts, and systems (e.g., *Industrial Revolution*, *John D. Rockefeller*, *capitalism*, *manufacturing*). In geography, students use maps, visuals, and texts to learn specific geographical features (e.g., *Mississippi River*), generalize classes of phenomenon (e.g., *rivers* versus *streams*, *creeks*, and *brooks*), and make inferences based on learning (e.g., *why people live near rivers*). Civics education involves learners in political processes and concepts (e.g., *democracy*, *electoral college*, *straw poll*), while incorporating everyday words in political discourse (e.g., *left*, *right*, *party*, *lobby*, *house*). The study of economics includes words and acronyms tied to concepts (e.g., *gross domestic product*, or *GDP*), sentence connectors indicating relationships (e.g., *based on*, *were seen as*), and text features such as economic models (e.g., *supply and demand curves*). Anthropology, psychology, and sociology also prompt nuanced language to engage with content (Cruz & Thornton, 2013).

Academic Language is Not Synonymous with Vocabulary

The second prevalent conception of academic language is the synonymous equation with vocabulary, rather than recognizing the various linguistic features students use while engaging with academic texts and tasks (e.g., grammar, text features, and language functions). 25% of coded responses equated academic language to vocabulary, noting the centrality of teaching terms, words, and phrases that connected to the curriculum and content area. Drawing from prior knowledge, a handful of teachers precisely indicated academic language as either "Tier 2" or "Tier 3" words, which refer to high-frequency words spanning disciplines (i.e., for younger grades this often means new labels for known concepts) or subject-specific words (i.e., Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002), respectively. Whereas some teachers provided a simple definition for academic language (e.g., "subject-specific vocabulary"), others emphasized the centrality of vocabulary in student learning (e.g.,

"content area vocabulary necessary for a student to learn effectively in school"). These understandings of this term likely stem from traditional approaches to content-area literacy, where teachers prioritize, select, and pre-teach vocabulary prior to disciplinary instruction (e.g., Carney, 1984; Wixson, 1986).

Moving beyond vocabulary, academic language also includes discipline-specific words, phrases, grammar patterns, sentence structures, text features, and classroom discourse. WIDA (2012) provides a helpful framework on the features of academic language, including discourse-, sentence-, and word-level demands of disciplines. *Discourse-level* language features center on overall linguistic complexity, or the quantity, density, variety, and organization of oral and written texts. Complex texts and classroom discourse tend to be longer with varied sentence types, multiple ideas per sentence, inclusion of non-essential ideas, and higher-level text structures. *Sentence-level* features include types, structures, conventions, and mechanics of sentences. More intricate syntax includes long sentences with modifying words, phrases, and clauses, as well as use of progressive and perfect verb tenses (Assessment and Accountabiloty Comprehensive Center at WestEd, 2010). *Word-level*

Figure 1
Discipline-specific Language
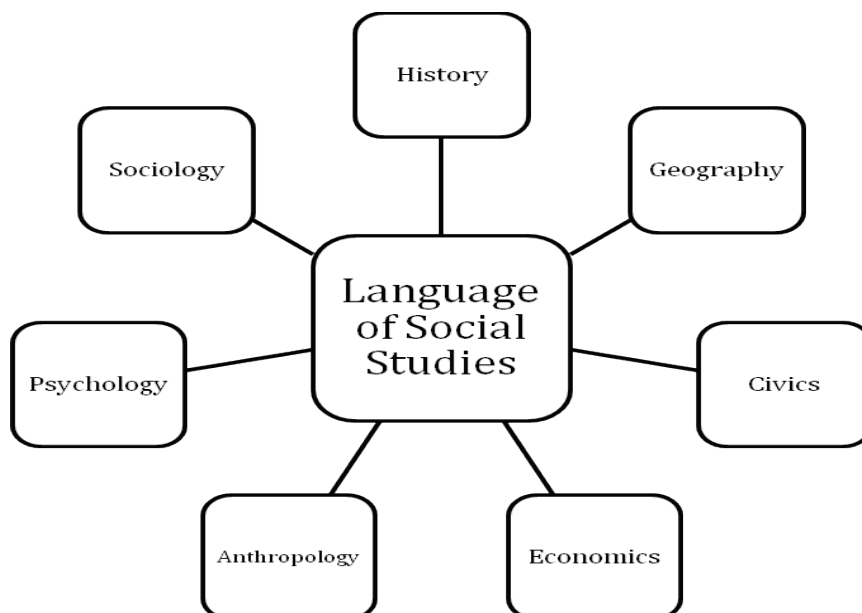
demands focus on specificity of words and phrases, such as vocabulary terms, multiple meaning words, and figurative language. Examples of complex lexicon are nuances and shades of meaning (i.e., closely related verbs or adjectives) and collocations (i.e., common sequence of words). See Table 1 for sample language demands in social studies.

Table 1
Sample Language Demands in Social Studies

Components	Features	Examples
Discourse	Amount of speech/text	Extended lectures, long texts, and passages
	Structure of speech/text	Mixing of various sentences types and structures
	Density of speech/text	Mixing of proper, common, and temporal nouns
	Organization of ideas	Varied text features (maps, photos, timelines)
Sentence	Sentence types	Passive construction, indirect/reported speech
	Sentence structures	Chronological, compare-contrast, cause-effect
	Logical connectors	from that time forward, by the twentieth century
	Lexical bundles	at the same time, as a result of, the fact that
Word	Discipline-specific terms	medieval, revolutionary, patriotism, superdelegate
	Discipline-specific phrases	substantive due process, wholly owned subsidiary
	Words used in new ways	period, party, assembly, market, depression, cycle
	Words used in similar ways	Republican Party, GOP, the right, conservatives
	Nominalizations	explore/exploration; occur/occurrence
	Collocations	rich culture, strong opponent, heavy rain
	Use of acronyms	WWI, NAFTA, WPA, SEC, NRA, OMB

Note: Table from Heineke, A. J., & McTighe, J. (2018). *Using Understanding by Design in the culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Academic Language is Not the Opposite of Social Language

The third conception of academic language is the staunch dichotomy between social and academic language. In our study, 9% of definitions included clear juxtapositions between academic language and what respondents referred to as social, conversational, informal, or everyday language. Most responses made broad comparisons assuming academic language did not occur in everyday interactions (e.g., "not the everyday language that one uses in conversation") or social communication (e.g., "It is a language that is not social communication"). Some attempted more detailed comparisons (e.g., "it uses more difficult vocabulary than conversational language and is more proper). A few specifically referenced Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), the dichotomy proposed by Jim Cummins' (1980) early work on second language learners (e.g., "CALPS [sic] is formal language… separate from social language"). These misconceptions likely emerge from teachers' previous learning about ELs, specifically the oft-presented dichotomies used to simplify the complexity of language. For example, we have observed many teacher educators spanning institutions who present BICS and CALP as separate and opposite entities, despite multiple arguments to the contrary (e.g., Edelsky et al., 1983; Genesee, 1984; MacSwan & Rolstad, 2003; Spolsky, 1984; Wiley, 1996).

We do enact language in different ways to accomplish specific goals and tasks, referred to as *language functions* (Halliday, 1975). Throughout the school day, teachers and students use various language functions to engage in daily learning experiences (see Table 2). Using communicative language functions, students greet one another, ask for a hall pass or to go the bathroom, give information or assistance to their peers, and express their feelings and emotions (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Students

Table 2
Communicative and Academic Language Functions

Communicative Language Functions	Academic Language Functions		
Greeting	Identifying	Defining	Hypothesizing
Leave-taking	Labeling	Explaining	Arguing
Requesting information	Enumerating	Retelling	Persuading
Requesting assistance	Classifying	Summarizing	Negotiating
Giving information	Sequencing	Interpreting	Synthesizing
Giving assistance	Organizing	Analyzing	Critiquing
Describing objects	Comparing	Generalizing	Evaluating
Expressing feelings	Inquiring	Inferring	Symbolizing
	Describing	Predicting	

incorporate *academic language functions* while participating in classroom learning, ranging from identifying and labeling geographic features on a map, sequencing and explaining historical events, hypothesizing outcomes to economic situations, and critiquing the stances of political leaders (Assessment and Accountability Compreheisve Center at WestEd, 2010). But communicative and academic language functions are not maintained as separate entities; intermixed through authentic disciplinary practices. Consider a small group of students constructing a museum display on immigration stories. Focused on one disciplinary task, learners describe personal stories of immigration, negotiate and organize the stories to share, give directions and distribute project tasks, request particular materials or resources, and summarize the overall immigrant experience. In sum, students use both communicative and academic language dynamically when engaged in authentic disciplinary practices.

Academic Language Includes Oral Language and Literacy

The fourth misconception centers on academic language as text-based, rather than embracing the complexity of language-in-use via the interconnected language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nagy & Townsend, 2012; vanLier & Walqui, 2010). In our study, 8% of coded responses indicated that academic language was the language of texts and text-based materials, including textbooks, books, novels, essays, articles, poems, tests, exams, directions, instructions, assessments, standardized tests, and assignments. Teachers connected academic language to texts due to (a) the level of linguistic precision in texts (e.g., "consistent, correct, textbook terminology") and (b) their regular use in classrooms as a means to facilitate student learning (e.g., "[texts] that the students are required to read in the classroom and for homework each day"). This misconception equating academic language to formal, text-based artifacts might stem from the focus on complex texts in the Common Core Standards (Hill, 2011), as well as the reliance on standardized tests and exams to determine students' achievement across disciplines (Menken, 2008). Further, text is the most decontextualized language and thus the most unlike colloquial talk.

Language mediates all learning and communication, both orally and in writing (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). In this way, not only do learners use academic language when reading texts, but they also regularly engage in disciplinary tasks that authentically and dynamically merge language domains, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In social studies, teachers seek to build students' conceptual understandings,

content knowledge, inquiry skills, and civic values that are "necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy" (NCSS, 2016, p. 1). Not surprising with the disciplinary focus on the *social* components of society, language plays an integral role in social studies instruction. Students use language to pose questions, investigate issues, solve problems, evaluate situations, communicate conclusions, and take informed action (NCSS, 2017). Texts are often used to mediate learning in social studies, including both primary sources (e.g., *historical documents*, photographs) and secondary sources (e.g., *textbooks*, *guidebooks*). Nonetheless, when engaging in discussion and other disciplinary tasks like debates and simulations, learners use academic language to understand and grapple with social, historical, cultural, and economic ideas, concepts, and questions.

Academic Language is Not a Prerequisite to Learning

The fifth conception situates academic language as a prerequisite to learning, conjuring up antiquated approaches to teaching where students first develop proficiency in language (e.g., grammar, spelling) and only then go on to engage in learning within the content areas (e.g., math, science; e.g., Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). In our study, 6% of coded responses indicated that language was the first and foundational step in learning, consequently allowing students to learn, participate in classrooms, and complete schoolwork (e.g., "Students need to master this language to be able to do schools' [sic] work"). These misconceptions likely stem from reductive approaches to language teaching and learning that center on decontextualized language skills. In the state of Arizona, for example, ELs must first demonstrate proficiency in language skills (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) before being shifted to mainstream classes for content area learning (Heineke, 2016). In other locales, teaching methodologies center on separating language and content, such as pre-teaching vocabulary or requiring correct spelling and grammar prior to subject-specific learning (Heritage, Walqui, & Linquanti, 2015).

Academic language is not a prerequisite for learning, but rather the medium by which learning occurs (Heritage et al., 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). In this way, students develop academic language concurrent to disciplinary learning, rather than consecutively. This assertion stands for all students, including ELs at early stages of developing English language proficiency. Students do not need flawless grammar to gain access to content topics and ideas. Instead, they should engage in disciplinary learning while developing language, which likely means making errors as they grapple with conceptual and linguistic understandings (vanLier & Walqui, 2010).

We contend that social studies provides an ideal context for students to develop academic language simultaneous to interpreting rich narrative stories spanning history, exploring geographical features via visual and sensory resources, actively participating in civic engagement, and using primary and secondary sources to investigate social phenomena and continuity. It is within these language-rich and authentic disciplinary settings of social studies classrooms that teachers foster and promote learners' academic language development.

Academic Language is Not Limited to Use by Teachers and Professionals

The sixth misconception is that academic language solely belongs to the teacher as the linguistic authority in school settings. In our study, 3% of coded responses defined academic language as that which is used by teachers and other educated professionals. Among these responses, some reserved academic language for teachers (e.g., "language educators use"), whereas others maintained it for professionals (e.g., "language used and understood by educated professionals"). These misconceptions likely emerge due to a misunderstanding of the framing of academic language initiatives as the need to teach the language used by professionals in the field, such as mathematicians and scientists (e.g., Adoniou, 2016; Zwiers et al., 2014). This understanding is likely perpetuated by deficit-based viewpoints that assume students – particularly those in low-income communities and non-English-dominant households – do not possess the same linguistic resources as teachers and professionals (Crumpler, Handsfield, & Dean, 2011; Gutierrez & Orellana, 2006; Mitchell, 2013).

We do not dispute that professionals regularly use discipline-specific academic language, such as social studies teachers, historians, politicians, economists, anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists (Cruz & Thornton, 2013). But, in addition to teachers and professionals, it is pertinent for educators to recognize and embrace students as academic language users. Even children as young as Kindergarten utilize academic language as they engage with social studies topics and ideas, such as citizen responsibilities, economic concepts, family roles, community members, and cultural identities (Strachan, 2015). Consider a school-wide voting initiative where students from across grade levels, as well as educators, parents, families and community members, come together to simulate the presidential election. With the support of teachers, students take on roles of candidates, campaign staff, media, and voters to then simulate the campaign and electoral process: organizing campaign teams, writing party platforms, studying the role of the media,

presenting positions on policy issues, negotiating the public's opinions, and critiquing the election outcome. Both inside of school during the simulation, as well as the conversations that carry outside of school, students across ages and developmental levels use academic language. Indeed, children's academic language use in the classroom has been found to influence the increase in academic language use by their peers (Mashburn el al., 2015). As such, teachers and students drive the use and support of academic language in the classroom.

Academic Language is Not Only for English Learners

The seventh conception is that ELs are the primary audience for academic language in classrooms, rather than recognizing its importance for all students. 3% of definitions included a unilateral lens on ELs, a label referring to students who are developing proficiency in English as measured by standardized tests of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Linquanti & Cook, 2013). These respondents defined academic language by asserting ELs' deficiencies in classrooms, such as (a) the high level of academic language above their levels of language proficiency, (b) the longer time needed for ELs to acquire academic language than their peers, and (c) the need to teach academic language explicitly to ELs as opposed to their non-EL peers. It is important to note that some of these responses came from teachers who work solely with ELs. Thus, their response may have been tailored to explaining the definition of academic language in the context of their own classroom setting as opposed to a general definition. For others, this misconception likely comes from the tendency to discuss language-related topics only in concert with EL and bilingual students (Valdes, 2004). For many teachers of content, language instruction evokes English instruction with teachers being less aware that instructing in their content area requires students to learn how to write, speak, and consume the language of texts in specific ways, ways that should be taught explicitly (Zweirs, 2008).

Whereas teachers should certainly attend to the unique needs of ELs in instruction, all students need to develop academic language. Since individuals rarely grow up critiquing and debating social studies concepts like appropriations and emoluments, academic language is often considered as everyone's second language (e.g., Gottlieb, 2016). Consider middle school students engaged in learning about the government through the Constitution, a requirement across the nation. Within the complex discursive organization by sections, articles, clauses, and amendments, the Constitution uses antiquated forms of English, including punctuation, hyphenation, grammar, and spelling (e.g., *chuse*, *controul*, *defence*, *erazure*).

Additionally, a grasp of technical vocabulary specific to government is needed to make meaning of the narrative (e.g., *apportionment*, *cession*, *comity*, *videlicet*, *writ*), including terms in Latin (e.g., *Habeus Corpus*, *ex post facto*). Regardless of language background or proficiency, students (and many adults) will need support to maneuver the academic language demands and access the content of the Constitution equitably.

Academic Language is Not Limited to the English Language

The eighth and final emergent conception is that academic language is always in English. In this study, 3% of coded responses associated academic language with the English language. Some teachers directly noted the English language in their definition (e.g., "Academic language is the English language that students need"), whereas others juxtaposed academic language with students' native languages (e.g., "The language that the students learn in, not their native language"). These misconceptions connect to the predominant language ideologies that guide practice in American schools, grounded in unchallenged assumptions regarding monolingualism (Wiley & Lukes, 1996).

Academic language occurs in all languages. In bilingual classrooms, students' native languages are the medium-of-instruction, whether learning social studies in Spanish, science in Mandarin, mathematics in Arabic, or language arts in Polish. But English-dominant classrooms should also tap into native language academic language. Decades of research confirm that use of students' native languages bolsters disciplinary learning, literacy development, and English proficiency (August & Shanahan, 2008). For example, using knowledge of cognates—words in two languages that sound similar, are spelled similarly, and have similar meanings—between Spanish and English can support academic vocabulary development. First, students may have a rich existing repertoire of academic language skills from their native language and second, in the case of Spanish, many basic and commonly known words (i.e., Tier 1 words) are often considered all-purpose academic words (Tier 2 words) in English (e.g., *frequencia* and *frequency*). In this way, teachers should embrace other languages as resources for learning to develop academic language by transferring knowledge and skills from the native language (see Table 3). Students should also be encouraged to *translanguage*—or draw from their holistic linguistic repertoires—to preview learning, brainstorm ideas, and discuss disciplinary concepts (Celic & Seltzer, 2011; Garcia, 2009). Translanguaging simulates authentic disciplinary settings, as people utilize multiple languages when interacting in our globalized world. Regardless of the language background of the teacher, daily instruction should purposefully

integrate students' multiple languages to foster disciplinary learning and academic language development.

Conclusions and Implications

The eight assertions above aimed to deconstruct common misunderstandings that teachers have about this multi-faceted term while putting forth more complex and nuanced understandings of academic language. In sum, we recognize academic language to be intertwined with learning and development: it is the language that all individuals, including students, teachers, and professionals, use when engaged in learning and communicating about disciplinary content (Uccelli et al., 2015; vanLier & Walqui, 2010). Academic language must be considered within and across disciplines. Within disciplines, unique discourse-, sentence-, and word-level features vary based on the field and sub-field of study (WIDA, 2012). Across disciplines, various language functions allow learners to engage with texts and tasks, such as explaining, interpreting, arguing, synthesizing, and evaluating (Sato, 2010). Further, academic language is both oral and written – merging listening, speaking, reading, and writing and spanning linguistic mediums (Flores, 2015; Nagy & Townsend, 2012). In our study, 16% percent of respondents captured this complexity of academic language, in contrast to the 84% that included one or more of the above-described misconceptions. We are invested in supporting teachers' deep understanding about academic language primarily due to the possible influences that understandings and misunderstanding of this term can have on classroom practice with students (Townsend, 2015).

Stakeholders must consider how words and actions might perpetuate misconceptions of academic language. In our experiences in K-12 and teacher education, we have observed two tendencies that allow misconceptions to fester. The first is the use of the term academic language without

Table 3
Sample English-Spanish Cognates in Social Studies

association/asociación	desert/desierto	map/mapa
biography/biografía	dictator/dictador	pioneer/pionero
candidate/candidato	geography/geografía	population/población
ceremony/ceremonia	history/historia	president/presidente
colony/colonia	immigrant/immigrante	society/sociedad
congress/congreso	independence/	space/espacio
democracy/democracía	independencia	state/estado
document/documento	island/isla	vote/votar
	leader/líder	

clear definitions or specifications for application, prompting teachers to tap into prior knowledge and possible misconceptions. The second is the use of generalized and refuted dichotomies to explain academic language, resulting in over-simplified understandings and deficit-based approaches in classrooms (Crumpler et al., 2011; Mitchell, 2013). For stakeholders outside of classrooms, such as administrators and teacher educators, we recommend critical consideration of terminology prior to introducing initiatives and ideas to teachers. Rather than assuming one common definition, literature on academic language can serve to begin conversations among educators, followed by monitoring teachers' or candidates' developing understandings over time (e.g., Nagy & Townsend, 2012; Zwiers et al., 2014). This should go beyond any generalizations, simplifications, and dichotomies to prompt educators to embrace the complexity of academic language (vanLier & Walqui, 2010).

We also recommend engaging teachers in interactive exploration and investigation into the complexity of academic language within the disciplines that they teach. Teachers should be provided with the time and space to analyze how language is utilized within their specific academic disciplines, working with other content experts to uncover linguistic blind spots in disciplinary units of study (Heineke & McTighe, 2018). Various tools and resources are available to support educators' exploration of academic language, such as WIDA's Features of Academic Language (2012), which provides details on discourse-, sentence-, and word-level features, or WestEd's Language for Achievement Framework (Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center at WestEd, 2010), which adds a detailed taxonomy of language functions. Additionally, teachers can collect, share, and deconstruct data on how students listen, speak, read, and write in multiple languages when engaging with academic tasks and texts (Flores, 2015). This focus on language should not be limited to professional learning with social studies teachers, but rather be prioritized with all educators across the school building (Heineke, 2012). In this way, students receive consistent and ongoing support for language development simultaneous to engaging in rigorous and authentic disciplinary learning with their teachers and peers.

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