ARTIGO

Deconstructing and Reconstructing Language, Race, and Power Relations in a Secondary Classroom in the United States

Desconstruindo e Reconstruindo Linguagem, Raça e Relações de Poder em uma Sala de Aula Secundária nos Estados Unidos

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ABSTRACT: In classrooms, teachers explicitly and implicitly engage students in exploring the language ideologies that influence their attitudes about language variation and race relations. The case study reported here uses detailed ethnographically informed discourse analysis to examine how the instructional conversations in a secondary language arts classroom invited students to reflect on, deconstruct, and reconstruct language ideologies that influenced how they viewed language use and race relations. We employed a microethnographic, discourse analytic frame, informed by interactional sociolinguistics, critical race theory and raciolinguistics to analyze the instructional conversation. The analysis made visible how the instructional conversation guided students' deconstruction and reconstruction of language variation through positioning one another to question linguistic binaries, linkages between language ideologies and racial hierarchies, and language ideologies that lack grounding in their own everyday language experiences. The findings also show that the students' own social identities were implicated in the language ideologies they held, deconstructed, and reconstructed.

KEYWORDS: African American Language; Attitudes about language variation; Language ideologies; Language and racial identity.

RESUMO: Nas salas de aula, os professores envolvem explicitamente e implicitamente os alunos na exploração das ideologias linguísticas que influenciam suas atitudes sobre a variação da linguagem e as relações raciais. O estudo de caso relatado aqui usa análise do discurso etnogeograficamente detalhada para examinar como as conversas instrucionais em uma sala de aula de artes de língua secundária convidaram os alunos a refletir, desconstruir e reconstruir ideologias linguísticas isso influenciou a forma como eles viam o uso da linguagem e as relações raciais. Empregamos um quadro mircoetnográfico, analítico do discurso, informado por sociolinguística interacional, teoria racial crítica e raciolinguística para analisar a conversa instrucional. A análise tornou visível como a conversa instrucional orientou a

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desconstrução e a reconstrução da variação da linguagem pelos alunos através do posicionamento uns dos outros para questionar binários linguísticos, ligações entre ideologias linguísticas e raciais hierarquias e ideologias linguísticas que carecem de aterramento em suas próprias experiências linguísticas cotidianas. Os resultados também mostram que as próprias identidades sociais dos alunos foram implicadas nas ideologias linguísticas que detinham, desconstruídas e reconstruídas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Língua afro-americana; atitudes sobre a variação da linguagem; ideologias linguísticas;e linguagem e identidade racial.

INTRODUCTION

We begin this chapter with three questions about language and race in classroom settings. One, how might we understand classroom conversations about language as opportunities to understand students' formulations about their own and others' racial identities? Second, in what ways might classroom conversations about language and race reflect and refract students' interpretations of power and society? And third, what heuristic questions might be asked about how classroom instruction might mediate the relationship between language and race in ways that help students deconstruct and reconstruct connections between language hierarchies and racial hierarchies?

We explore the questions above through an interactional sociolinguistics framework that attends closely to race. Interactional sociolinguistics focuses our attention on the use of language within face-to-face level events while acknowledging that every moment of a micro-level event is intimately connected to other social events and contexts over time and space (GUMPERZ, 2001). The interactional sociolinguistics framework we employ holds that the meaningfulness and social significance of interactional events cannot be understood without attending to the complexity of how a social event is languaged into being (AGHA, 2007; BEACH & BLOOME, 2019; BECKER, 1991; JOGENSON, 2004). We use this approach alongside critical race theory (e.g., CRENSHAW, GOTANDA, PELLER, & THOMAS, 1995; LADSON-BILLINGS, 1999; LADSON-BILLINGS & TATE, 1995; ROITHMAYR, 1999; CHAPMAN, 2007) and raciolinguistics (e.g., ALIM & SMITHERMAN, 2012; ALIM, 2016) and their commitment to 'deconstructing the meaning' of ideas, social events and language ideologies, using counter and oppositional storytelling to situate events within a larger frame that recognizes the ubiquity of race and power relations.

Our attention to race in classroom settings derives from recognition of the ubiquity of race relations at every level, in every moment of teaching and learning, and in every aspect of curriculum in education (within, across, and outside of schooling) (Woodson, 1968; Delpit, 1996; Gillborn & Youdell, 2009; Leonardo, 2009;Apple, 2011); and the goal of understanding teaching and learning environments that support the development of criticality and agency in the education of working class and African American students, among others (Brown, 2013; Rogers & Mosely, 2006). The nature of our research requires attention to historical contexts in education, including issues of race and equity in the United States (Brown, Bloome, Morris, Power-Carter, & Willis, 2017; Gutierrez et al., 2017) and how those historical contexts influence classroom learning events.

It is important to note that our inquiry is less about teaching methods and pedagogy and more so about what meanings are embedded in students' languaging about how they position themselves and

others through how they construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct relations between race and language. The case study we present yields grounded theoretical constructs about how instructional conversations can engage and position students to unpack naturalized and dominant ideologies of language and race.

We begin by briefly discussing the theoretical framework we used in exploring the use of language in a seventh-grade classroom. Then, we review studies that have provided us with insights we used in our study. Then, we present findings from the study, and finally we offer grounded theoretical constructs about language and race in classrooms that address the three questions we listed earlier.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework we employ begins with the precept that any use (or form) or language is responsive on multiple levels to what is happening in an interactional event (Bakhtin, 1986; Volosinov, 1929/1973). For example, as occurred in the classroom conversation we analyze in detail later, the statement made by the teacher, "So you think, over time, there is not any choice in how you talk, so after a while you hear grandmother and your mom and your dad and your cousin and your aunt and you hear it like this all the time, you're gonna talk that way," is at one level responding to a student who responded to a previous question the teacher asked, the poem they are reading by Sterling Brown and his use of African-American language in that poem, while at the same time indexing a series of folk theories and language socialization theories about how people learn to speak the way they do and to language ideologies concerned with race relations (as previously they had been talking about people "talking Black" and people "talking white"). The teacher is also indexing (although not validating) deficit theories of African-American language and the people who use African-American language. However, the teacher's statement is not just being responsive, it is also refracting what has been said (cf., Volosinov, 1929/1973) by revoicing what the student said as a particular theory of language socialization (a person learns to speak the way they speak naturally and unconsciously from their family, there is not any choice) and opening up that statement for deconstruction.

Another theoretical construct that guided the study concerns the relationship of language and power. Building on critical discourse analysis (e.g., Bloome, et. al, 2005; Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2001; Fairclough, 1995) we view every use of language as contributing to power relations either by promoting continuity of social relations or by promoting change. For example, the teacher in our study maintains the power relation between herself and the student by framing her response in a way that took for granted her "right" to ask questions, demand responses, evaluate, and revoice what a student had said; while at the same time challenging taken-for-granted theories of deficit models of the use of African-American language.

As noted earlier, we employed critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings, 2013a; 2005b; Lynn, 1999) to guide how we explored the instructional conversation. Central to such an exploration is the role of narratives of ordinary people about their own lives, where their conceptualizations of life and living are used as tools despite "their lack of material wealth or political power [they] still have access to thought and language and their development of those tools will differ from that of the more privileged"

(Matsuda, 1995, p. 65). In brief, we take it as axiomatic that any use or form of language that takes place in a social setting involves issues of race explicitly or implicitly (Kirkland, 2010; Richardson, 2003).

Further, we employed discussions of critical pedagogy in the field to guide our analysis. Across our reading of the diverse approaches to critical pedagogy, there is an emphasis on engaging students themselves in the processes of deconstruction and reconstruction (e.g., Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Freire & Macedo, 1995; Giroux et al., 2013). That is, teachers cannot do the deconstruction for students and then give it them but rather teachers must work side-by-side with students. Further, deconstruction must be linked to reconstruction in a manner that foregrounds social justice and the dignity of all people and the languages they speak.

We note that although we were guided by the theories referenced above, we kept an open mind about how what happened in the instructional conversation might be interpreted; never viewing the theories noted above as dogma nor as restricting the analyses or interpretations of how the teacher and students' language the classroom event into being. The theoretical framings noted above gave us the warrant to ask how the teacher and the students were using language in ways that reflected and refracted the racialized society in which they live, how what they were doing responded to and refracted extant racialized language ideologies, how their reflections and refractions provide them with insights into the use of language in their own lives including in the construction of social identities, and how the students and the teacher engaged in a process of deconstruction and reconstruction.

RELATED RESEARCH

There is an extensive body of research on language and race in educational settings in the United States. We do not have the space to review that research here (for reviews see BAUGH, 1983; FOSTER, 1992; KINLOCH, 2010; SCOTT, STRAKER, & KATZ, 2009; SMITHERMAN, 1994; WOLFRAM & THOMAS, 2002). Here, we highlight research in three areas pertinent to our study. The first concerns attitudes teachers have about African-American language. The second concerns how language attitudes change. The third concerns the complexity of interaction among language, race, and social identity.

Research on teacher attitudes about African-American language has shown that teachers often have negative views and often correct children who speak African-American language (e.g., Cross, DeVaney, Haddix, 2008; Jones, 2001). Even teachers who may not explicitly state negative opinions about African-Americans or African-American language may have implicit basis against both the language and speakers of African-American language. Researchers have shown that many teachers implicitly make negative judgments about students' educational potential because of their use of African-American language (LIPPI-GREEN, 2012; BALL & LARDNER, 1997; HOOVER, MCNAIR-KNOX, LEWIS, & POLITZER, 1996; HEATH; 1983; MICHAELS, 1981). That the bias held by teachers against speakers of African-American language is implicit speaks to the difficulty of changing language attitudes about language difference, more broadly (BLAKE & CUTLER, 2003; FOGEL & EHRI, 2006).

Historically, schools have been viewed as a vehicle to enculturate people whose culture and language lie outside that of the dominant social group (VAVRUS, 2015; LEONARDO, 2009). Whether explicitly framed as cultural and linguistic deficits or differences, the enculturation role of schools places all but members of the dominant social group in a deficit position (LEE & OXELSON, 2006; MACEDO,

DENDRINOS, & GOUNARI, 2015). Yet, the situation is complex. First, though perhaps a small portion, there are teachers and school administrators who recognize how the structure of schooling creates a deficit positioning of students of color and of students who speak a language other than that of the dominant social group, and who work against such deficit positioning (e.g., CAMICIA,2007; COLEGROVE & ADAIR, 2014). While an individual teacher or classroom may provide some resistance to such deficit positioning, it is not clear how much such individual efforts promulgate institutional change (see DECERTEAU'S, 1997, discussion of the difference between tactics and strategies). Nonetheless, the presence of such teachers and classrooms suggests that deficit-positioning is not totalizing and insights gained from their efforts might provide opportunities for change on a broader, institutional scale. Second, students and their parents may come to school with a deficit orientation to their own culture and languages (e.g., EDWARDS, 2006; PHINNEY, ROMERO, & HUANG, 2001). Further, even if not accepting such a deficit label, parents and students may recognize that economic and educational success may mean that students need to learn the language and culture of the dominant social group (REITZ & SKLAR, 1997; ZHOU & PORTES, 2012). At issue is how to address this complexity without yielding explicitly or implicitly to deficit-positioning.

It is in response to this complexity that we locate the research we present here. For example, while it is important for students to have knowledge about language variation (e.g., EDWARDS, 2014; MOORE, 2002; SMITHERMAN, VILLANUEVA & CANAGARAJAH, 2003) that is not enough. Students need to examine the complex contexts of language and race, understanding how those complexities influence their social identities, and then be able to act on the worlds in which they live (e.g., HADDIX, 2010; KINLOCH, 2010; KIRKLAND, 2013; PARIS & KIRKLAND, 2011).

Social identities are claimed, assigned, and indexed through how people speak and how they present themselves to others. With regard to race, language plays a complex role. For example, in our study and in the classroom event we present here there is a white male student we identify as "Daniel," who critiques how another student speaks during the speaking event. However, Daniel is identified among the students as a white boy that wants to be "Black", as he speaks (style of speech) and dresses (style of clothing) like the black boys at school and within the neighborhood. Yet, he is not critiqued by his classmates as appropriating the style to gain racial/cultural capital among the students, as he identifies his choices as part of his own cultural frame of reference. Alim (2016) theorizes racial translation or *transracialism* by suggesting that one can be positioned as "black" through how they translate and adopt codes for existing within identity groups.

Richardson (2003) notes that the use of African-American language is one way that "Black people create ways to both express and value themselves," including resistances. This occurs in a context in which racialized discourses align speech (e.g., the use of African-American language) with intelligence and academic potential despite decades of scholarship debunking such a relationship (FORDHAM, 1993; OGBU, 1986; POWER CARTER & KUMASI, 2011; TOLDSON & OWENS, 2010). As we show later, there are instances among the students where these insights emerge in subtle ways.

THE RESEARCH STUDY

We conducted a video-enhanced microethnographic discourse analytic study (cf., BLOOME ET AL., 2005) of a seventh-grade classroom in which 19 of the 25 students were African-American. The field work occurred during the second half of the school year. The field work was initiated because conversations with the teacher suggested that she was employing culturally-relevant pedagogy (cf., BROWN, 2018; LADSON-BILLINGS, 2017) with success and both she and the researchers were interested in exploring what instructional conversations were like in such a classroom. More specifically, we were interested in classrooms that took up the challenge posed by Hill-Collins (2009):

> In a classroom, the answers we give matter less than the questions we ask. Big, important questions rarely have short, simple answers. Rather than masquerading as being a place that has all the answers, the classroom can be the place to hone the questions and bring the ideas of kids to bear on provisional answers (HILL-COLLINS, 2009, p. 102).

There is a history of research on such classroom conversations, often referred to as exploratory talk (MERCER & HODGKINSON, 2008) and in research on critical pedagogies (GIROUX, LANKSHEAR, MCLAREN, & PETERS, 2013; NORTON, 2008).

Observations were conducted in a series of two-week blocks, each month for the last three months of the school year; video-recording was targeted to specific events that were viewed as key events (cf., BLOOME ET AL, 2005). Students were interviewed about the classroom, the teacher was interviewed, and the teacher was involved in analysis of the video recordings.

The school had a reputation of low academic achievement. The teacher, Ms. Wilson, was in her first year of teaching. She had a background in progressive education from a teacher-education program completed at a Historically Black University (HBU) and was pursuing a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction that emphasized sociolinguistics. Although it was her first year, by the end of the year she had great respect from the school administration and her colleagues, and she won an award for her teaching.

The students came from a pre-dominantly African-American, working class community. According to the teacher, although most of the African-American students spoke African-American language, not all of them did and many of the white students also spoke African-American language.

The lesson itself involves students reading a poem by Sterling Brown titled, "After Winter." The lesson was transcribed and parsed and initially analyzed using procedures described by Green and Wallat (1981) and by Bloome et al. (2005). In brief, the instructional conversation was parsed into message units (similar to utterances), interactional units were identified (a set of message units implicating each other so that they have a beginning, middle and end), and each message unit was described on a *post hoc* basis for form, social-interactional function, and its propositional contribution to the classroom discussion. We then interpret our analyses using the theoretical framework we discussed earlier. We do not provide a moment to moment transcript of the classroom conversation; however, we offer a detailed analysis of the conversation with detail to support the reading of how the constructions of language and

race manifest themselves in the message units. The analysis is based on an early question posed by the teacher, Ms. W, that attempts to situate the students' interpretation of language in the context of time and the racial politics that existed within the United States.

We selected this lesson to analyze because it was one of the few times when there was a class discussion that involved both race and language related to a literary text that the students had read. We selected the 10-minute segment to analyze here because, through the analysis, it revealed aspects of the instructional conversation that we view as key to understanding how the instructional conversation positioned students to engage in a process of deconstruction and reconstruction.

Given the emphasis on narrative in critical race theory and in the theoretical framework we employed, we focused attention on the narratives the students and teacher told. We used Brown's (2008) discussion of narrative in discussions of race to guide parts of the analysis. Further, based on the theoretical framework we employed and on our initial analyses of the video-recordings, we identified three instructional conversational processes that we view as relevant to how the instructional conversation was positioning the students: reflection, deconstruction, and reconstruction. Table 1 outlines the conversational processes, how they are defined, and the language functions related to discussion of race that emerged within each action.

Table 1: Construction Codes

Conversational Process	**Definition**	**Typology of language functions within discussions of race**
Reflection	Uses of narrative to provide context for ideas or to offer insights	1. Informational 2. Interactional 3. Social 4. Historical 5. Political 6. Emotional 7. Moral 8. Intellectual
Deconstruction	Forms of analysis of language in use where ideas are broken a part, critiqued or questioned as a process to develop or explore meanings or contradictions	1. Repetition 2. Commentary 3. Challenge 4. Questioning 5. Narrative
Reconstruction	New meanings or ideas are assigned to previously stated ideas as a discursive move to build complexity or as a strategy to move between the perceived accepted institutional language practices and students' social and cultural language practices.	1. Saving Face 2. Justifying 3. Comparing 4. Narrative 5. Agreement or "Taking up"

Source: Brown, 2008.

The classroom lesson begins with the reading of the poem, "After Winter" by Sterling Brown. The poem was read twice. First, the students read the poem independently; the second reading was led by the teacher, aloud. The discussion then began with the question, "Who is the speaker?" This is a typical question asked in language arts classroom discussions of literature; however, in this case there are subtleties to the asking. Given the teacher's questioning of the students in previous lessons, asking students to identify the speaker is to suggest that they might know something about the identity of the speaker based on what they have read. After a short period of silence where none of the students offers a response to the question, the teacher inserts an historical context for the poem by noting the date, 1865, indexing the enslavement of Africans in the United States. The students are positioned to call upon historical knowledge of structural racism in the United States in order to critically think about how the sociopolitical context of the time period might interact with the potential identity of the speaker. The teacher responds to a comment a white student named "Tiffany" makes earlier in the lesson that the speaker in the poem speaks this way because [they] "don't know any better." The teacher picks this comment up and frames it by mentioning educational opportunity and equity for African Americans, positioning Tiffany to adopt a new position. Tiffany takes up a new position "They didn't have the opportunity." The teacher builds on Tiffany's point (which validates Tiffany's identity as aligning with the position of equity and education) and asserts that even since the language features from the poem remain present. The teacher also introduces the idea that "many people speak this way" asserting language as something that exists beyond the boundaries of a racial group. These utterances, early in the classroom conversation of the poem, are foundational for the directions students take and the propositions they will make about race and language. These early utterances provide one of the grounded theoretical constructs we derive from the analysis: that initial framings in classroom discussions of literature are key to how the conversation evolves and that providing a historical context related to race and language provides students with opportunities to examine and explore the relationships of race and language.

Later, the teacher positions the students to choose between two theories of acquiring a way of speaking: choice or no choice. Jeannetta argues for no choice stating people acquire how they speak from their families. Cameron joins the conversation, and she connects how people speak with racial hierarchy and raises the issue of "proper" ways of talking. Cameron locates the connection between race and language as being in the past, not the present. The teacher names the "time" issue and then moves on to another student. This interchange provides another grounded theoretical construct: the articulation of binaries as a means to open up to students the interrogation of language and racial ideologies.

The teacher then shifts the conversation to a different participation structure and asks the students if they engage in code-switching. This questioning requires students to consider their own life experiences and then take a position regarding whether they do or do not code-switch. There are two significant aspects to this question. First, the teacher directs the students to examine their own experiences. This recurs constantly through this lesson and through other lessons. The teacher makes clear at the end of the lesson that examining one's experiences is necessary to understand whether an idea is valid. In doing so, she is positioning the students to view their own lives and experiences as a valid source of knowledge for understanding academic content, such as interpreting a poem. When Marcel indicates that he does

not code-switch, the teacher probes his response. She then expands on the notion of code-switching but does so by invoking the students' experiences coming into class. Then, the teacher positions the students to have to address the connection between race and code-switching asking the students "does [code-switching] have anything to do with the color of your skin?" This set of conversational exchanges provides another grounded theoretical construct. Similar to discussions within critical race theory and critical pedagogy, the actual experiences of people themselves become a valid source of knowledge for examining and then redefining taken-for-granted conceptions of everyday life, in this case taken-for-granted conceptions of language use. What is at issue here is not just that students are exploring code-switching but more so that students are engaged in using their own experiences as a valid source of knowledge and reflection.

Another student, Danielle addresses how they have been positioning by invoking the concepts of proper and slang and connects that binary to individual choices in the social identities people want to claim, stating, "It all depends on how you carry yourself." Danielle has denied that there is a racial dimension to code-switching; for her, it is a matter of how people want to present themselves linguistically. Danielle provides the teacher with a series of interrelated binaries: proper and slang, Black and white, people who want to present themselves well and people who do not care to do so.

The teacher begins by positioning the students to unpack proper and slang, and tells a story about being accused when she was young of talking white. In so doing, she connects for the students' proper language with talking white, and then positions students to have to unpack talking white by asking, "how come white people never hear that phrase you sound white?"

Cameron responds by telling a story about what happened to her once at lunch. However, when Cameron begins to tell her story, she is interrupted by Andrew, as she begins her story stating, "When I be at lunch…" This interruption is key for several reasons. First, Andrew is pointing out what he views as a contradiction between Cameron's claim that she speaks proper and her use of the habitual "be" in African-American Language. The teacher picks up on the topic of the habitual "be" positioning the students to have to take a position on whether it is, indeed, wrong. In brief, the teacher positions and re-positions the students by providing evidence, alternative arguments, exploring (and exploding) binaries, and pushing the students to examine their own experiences.

The classroom conversation on that day ends with the teacher noting that the discussion will continue and that the students will receive a second poem. The teacher praises the students for their contributions to the discussion but reminds them and warns them to "put yourself back into your statements." The way this classroom conversation ends raises a series of what might be called "grounded theoretical questions" including: What is the role of coming to closure or of not-coming-to-closure in a classroom conversation addressing ideological issues related to race and language? Inasmuch as the classroom conversation ends with what might be called a denouement ("put yourself back into your statements"), how does – if at all – the denouement frame the interpretations and student responses to the classroom conversation they have just had?

GROUNDED THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS DERIVED FROM THE ANALYSIS

We begin by recognizing that the analysis was partial. Were it not for space limitations we could have provided an analysis many times as long; even so it would be partial.

First, with regard to the content of the instructional conversation, we note that with regard to language and race, there were patterns of topics that continued to emerge and among several speakers. Three of the topics were:

1. racializing sound;
2. aligning racialization with speech, and
3. contextualizing error.

These topics were often revisited during the speech event and were thematic within the larger corpus of data as well. These findings about content are not new. They have been previously identified in research on race and language in educational settings. For example, Dyson (2012) describes racializing talk as how things are said which indexes "mechanics of grammar, intonations, pace, cadence, and the flow of rhetoric" (p.xi); Alim (2016) describes aligning racialization with speech as an active language construction or an act of positioning one's self by acquiring, "Black ways of speaking and being in this world" (p.38); and Brown (2008) defines contextualizing error as the process of contextualizing grammar rules within a racial analysis or presented as cultural constructions, mitigated by the identity of the speaker or the relationship between the speech community; error is not absolute but situated, and oftentimes, subjective to varying perspectives of language in use.

As the analysis in the previous section suggests, we focused attention on the ways in which the teacher engaged the students in conversations about the complex relationships of race and language. Thus, the grounded theoretical constructs derived from our analysis focus mostly on ways of languaging the unpacking of the relationship of language and race in the classroom conversation.

With regard to ways of languaging, one of the grounded theoretical constructs we derived through the analysis concerns the use of experiential knowledge. There are several places where students' experiential knowledge is made visible and is used to support their interpretations and contextualize their exploration of race and language. Yet, it is not a simple matter of exploring one's experiences. Experiences may be interpreted and reported through extant frames. Thus, it is not a matter of using one's experiences, but rather a process of critically exploring one's experiences, reflecting on them as a kind of dialectic between what one has experienced and reflections on how diverse ways in which those experiences might be understood. In lines 187-202, the recursivity between constructing and deconstructing and race wanes as they collaborate around and confront each other on race, style sounds, language, power, and implicitly intelligence. We interpret the denouement of the classroom conversation as articulated by the teacher - "put yourself back into your statements" – as asking students to do more than merely use their own experiences as an interpretive frame but rather to use critical and historically oriented reflections on one's own experiences to unpack taken-for-granted ideological formulations.

Another grounded theoretical construct concerns the positioning of students to deconstruct given

binaries. There were a series of binaries raised in the lesson and the binaries often indexed other binaries. "Sounding White" quickly shifts to "talking proper." Cameron complicates this positing that white people can *sound* black and *talk* like black peoplefurthering the distinction between sound and method. But Cameron's views change over the course of the classroom conversation. Cameron deconstructs the idea that having education does not remove someone from talking "slang." Here, Cameron is constructing an alternative position to an earlier idea that speech is based on one's academic intelligence alone. Cameron implies that there is power in one's ability to speak to different audiences for different purposes.

The analysis also showed that there are instances where the issue of what constitutes "correct" speech emerges in ways that indexes race and language. Students identify and align notions of "proper," "correct," or "mistakes" in ways that encode race. These "errors" however, also are contextualized by the students, as they work to situate them within the classroom discussion. For example, during Cameron's reflective narrative about lunch, Andrew repeats the beginning of Cameron's reflection, "When I be at lunch," and laughs, interrupting the nrrative. This signals that while he is listening and engaged in the classroom event, he did not intend for his critique to be taken up as a part of the speech event, itself. However, the teacher takes up Andrew's utterance, inviting Andrew, and the students in the class to deconstruct the language in-use and his laughter that follows. Similarly, Daniel, a white student, conjugates the verb "to be," in Cameron's, "When I be," with "I am," correcting what he perceives should have been said by Cameron. The teacher prompts to hear more from Daniel, and his response is to provide another example of correcting Cameron's use of language. Daniel is contextualizing Cameron's error outside of her own use-of- language during this event, and through his own perception of what her speech should be like. One interpretation of Daniel's insistent hypercorrection (cf., LABOV, 1964) is that because Cameron is in an academic setting, the classroom, and is offering a story to the class, her use-of-language should align with the implied institutional setting. However, it is important to note the teacher does not take-up Daniel's position. The teacher does bring attention to his attempt to correct in order to make explicit the diverse interpretations of language use, their purposes, and how they influence the central question for the reading lesson, "Who is the speaker?" It is important to note the teacher does not close the discussion with an evaluation of Daniel's interpretation as a new speaker, Tiffany, joins the conversation. The teacher removes herself from evaluation allowing the contextualization of correction to be a point of exploration, deconstruction and reconstruction. Contextualizing error also occurs, where Tiffany, asserts a position that aligns with Cameron's earlier notion of racializing language; the dynamics of language are not limited by the racial identity of speech communities. Tiffany reconstructs language identity by questioning Daniel's authority, "Why are you correcting someone when you say it yourself." This might be interpreted as Tiffany's consciousness that as white people, although socially and culturally integrated within a predominantly Black school within a working class racially mixed-community, Daniel maintains a white racial privilege. As such, Tiffany contextualizes Daniel's error, meaning he is 'out of order' for correcting Cameron. Tiffany poses her contextualization of Daniel's error in the form of a question, by outing him as an African American Language speaker and reminding him that this is also his language practice and he is inciting racial privilege by correcting her.

We also find reconstructing language to happen in ways where the students move back and forth through language ideas, accepting them as dynamic, but also challenging pre-existing ideas with new considerations. For example, while Randy and Daniel have been participating discussions, they draw some conclusions on their own that the teacher overhears and encourages them to share with the class. In lines 227-233, they determine that there is no language called White language or conversely, black language. Here, they offer a counter-narrative that runs against much of what the students have articulated for most of the lesson. Their conclusion suggests they do not accept how language has been raced or its implications.

CONCLUSION

We return here to the three questions we listed at the beginning. First, how might we understand classroom conversations about language as opportunities to understand the ideas students formulate about their own and others' racial identities? Second, in what ways might classroom conversations about language and race reflect students' interpretations of power and society, including their ideas about their own power? And third, what questions might be asked about how classroom instruction might mediate the relationship between language and race? In our efforts to explore these questions, we are challenged by the limitations of research that seeks to focus on how and in what contexts do teachers develop sociolinguistic processes within language arts classrooms. On one hand, the standardization of the language arts curriculum in the United States is dominated by skills-based forms of instruction and assessment. The saturation of a mechanized approach to the study of language precludes students from learning language and language systems while contexualizing the variety of ways language is used by ordinary people in everyday life. In this study, we see the teacher building upon Gramsci's (1971) notion of the organic intellectual. In this context, students inform, contest, refract, and create new ways of thinking about language in complex ways, yet in a manner that reveals their abilities to struggle with race and language reducing the distance between the intangibility of race and the experiential knowledge one gains when race is language within their own lives. Perhaps, what we are challenged to think about is how might students' learning about language and its functions heighten students' performances in language tasks, be them academic, social, or cultural? Despite the omnipresence of race within the political milieu of the United States, notwithstanding the social and economic consequences of racialism, the "silent dialogues" about language and race reproduce racialize standards for language and what constitutes literate practices because of these standards. In the classroom conversation we analyzed here, the teacher invited and guided students into a critical conversation about language and race that foregrounded students' interactionally constructed and reflection-oriented knowledge and experiences of language. In so doing, the classroom conversation challenged the silence that is pervasive around the relationship of language and race while also providing the students with ways of engaging in a conversation that made accessible to them social practices of deconstruction and reconstruction of taken-for-granted ideologies of language and race.

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