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**Teacher research as a response to "Miss, do we really have to pass this class?" : examining discourses in the middle school students' foreign language classroom.**

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**TEACHER RESEARCH AS A RESPONSE TO: "MISS, DO WE REALLY  
HAVE TO PASS THIS CLASS?" – EXAMINING DISCOURSES IN THE  
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

A Dissertation Presented

by

ADINA C. ALEXANDRU

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2005

School of Education

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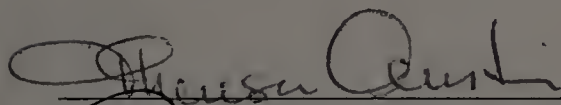
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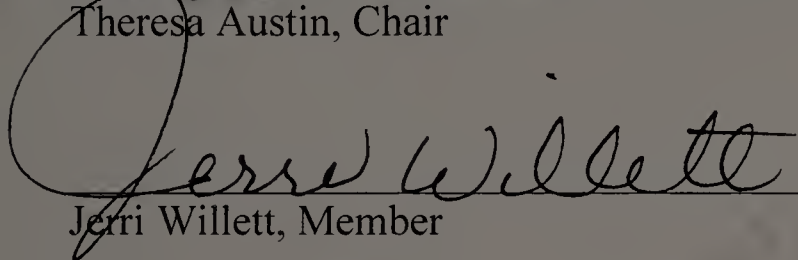
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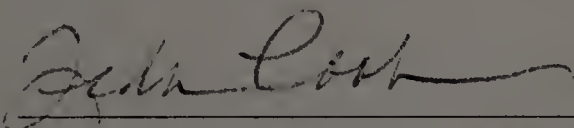
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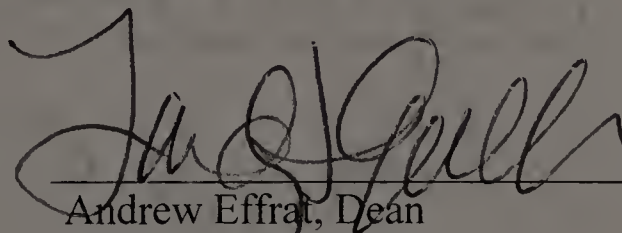
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## ABSTRACT

TEACHER RESEARCH AS A RESPONSE TO: "MISS, DO WE REALLY HAVE TO  
PASS THIS CLASS?" – EXAMINING DISCOURSES IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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It seems a paradox that the United States, a country with a highly diverse population and a long history of immigration, has one of the poorest records of sustained public foreign language programs when compared to similar post industrial countries. In an educational system such as the one in United States that is not centralized, foreign language instruction appears not to be a real, tangible necessity. In this situation are engulfed many school districts that are left with state and/or national guidelines and an ever-changing budget, to decide who should learn what languages, if any.

By framing and understanding the foreign language education in this context, this ethnographic study examines through a post-structuralist perspective, a current program in the United States and looks specifically at how issues of motivation and power get constructed by students in the foreign language classroom of an urban middle

school setting. This study also examines how language policies enacted through class instruction impact student endorsement of foreign language education during the formative years in U.S. public schools that may influence learning, and may generate resistance, or lack of motivation to learn a foreign language.

Critical discourse analysis is employed in this study as a tool to: 1) review and analyze specific recent legislation that is interpreted and enacted in the foreign language program of a local school system, 2) examine data collected through interviews with students and administrators, and 3) understand classroom interactions within the local political context of a school system. In examining the social, textual and discursive levels of these policies, it is possible to challenge how traditional education defines the roles of teachers and students and to envision new relations of power that could condition the existence of new learners' identities and new possibilities for teachers.

This study will contribute towards the understanding of classroom practices in foreign language programs as they influence and are influenced by language planning and policy decisions, and so point to areas where change can be made. In terms of stating the practical implications for the foreign language field, the concept of student *endorsement*, as it is employed in this study, is examined for its potential as a viable replacement for the traditional notion of student motivation. Understanding endorsement issues in relation to the current language policies on learning situates learning not as an individual psychological factor but rather as a socially shaped response that can be changed. Furthermore, teachers' and administrators' understanding of endorsement could challenge current policies and practices that contribute to the devaluing and reduction of benefits of foreign language instruction.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION .....	1
1. INTRODUCTION .....	4
Statement of the Problem in Context.....	4
Theoretical Lens.....	22
Purpose and Goals.....	25
Research Questions.....	27
Significance of the Study .....	29
2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	33
Concepts Researched and Definition of Terms .....	33
Power and Motivation.....	35
Power .....	37
Motivation.....	53
As a Psychological Construct .....	54
As Agency.....	55
As Investment .....	56
Identity and Classroom Practices .....	59
Identity .....	59
Homework Check as a Practice Site for Identity Construction.....	61
Journal Writing as a Site for Identity Construction .....	64
Foreign Language, Globalization and Language Policy .....	69
Foreign Language .....	70
Globalization.....	72



	Language Policy.....	78
	Conclusion .....	83
3.	RESEARCH METHODS .....	88
	Data Collection .....	88
	Participants.....	96
	Data Analysis .....	105
	Discussion of Limitations .....	117
4.	FINDINGS .....	123
	Foreign Language Classroom Participants .....	127
	The Students.....	127
	The Routines .....	131
	Homework Check .....	133
	Journal Writing .....	147
	Student Notes.....	161
	The Teacher - Myself.....	191
	The Media .....	198
	The Administrators .....	217
5.	REFLEXIVITY, LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS.....	246
	Reflexivity.....	246
	Lessons Learned form the Process of Doing Research - Discussion of Terms .....	249
	Motivation/Endorsement/Motivation.....	250
	Resistance .....	255
	Power .....	258
	Identity .....	260
	Implications .....	263
	Foreign Language Field .....	264
	Foreign Language Teacher .....	267
	Legislators.....	269
	Media .....	271
	Students.....	274

District Level Administrators .....	277
Researchers .....	279
Parents.....	281
Open-ended Coda.....	283
APPENDICES .....	289
A. DEFINITION OF TERMS .....	290
B. TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS .....	296
C. HOMEWORK CHECK TEXT .....	298
D. STUDENT INTERVIEW ON HOMEWORK AND POWER.....	301
E. STUDENT INTERVIEW ON MOTIVATION.....	304
F. STUDENT WRITTEN ESSAYS .....	305
G. INTERVIEW TEXTS .....	308
H. QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT INTERVIEW .....	348
I. QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW .....	349
J. STUDENT CONSENT LETTER.....	350
K. ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT LETTER.....	352
L. MEGHAN'S SURVEY .....	353
M. TABLE 2B- REFLEXIVITY ON F.L CLASS PARTICIPANTS .....	354
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	355

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: Data Collection Sheet .....	94
2: Participants in the Foreign Language Class .....	101
3: Data Collection Sheet – written text .....	171
4: Degrees of Endorsement .....	172

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1: Diagram of How Relations of Power Exist in the Classroom .....	35
2: Representation of the Concept of Power .....	39
3: Representation of Student Investment .....	129
4: My Representation of Ashley's Understanding of Homework Practices in Spanish Class .....	146
5: Denise's Event Flowchart on Motivation .....	161
6: Student Appropriation of Text .....	190
7: Vizualization of the Concept of Power in Relation to Endorsement and Resistance .....	257

## INTRODUCTION

“It has become very clear that broadening our international understanding is critical...This will mean renewed efforts to encourage the study of foreign languages and cultures, and to provide opportunities for all students to broaden their knowledge of the world.”

Secretary of Education Rod Page, November 2003

“I think we study Spanish as a way to explore other languages and cultures. This is how we learn history, grammar, reading skills, math and maybe even some science. I think Spanish teachers say that it will help if we ever happen to go to a Spanish speaking country. But first of all, a lot of people don't, and second, there are such things as the translator on the internet”.

Meghan, Spanish student, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Kiley Middle School - February 2001<sup>1</sup>

“1<sup>st</sup> The reason why I don't have a dictionary is because there is no store near my house to go buy one, and I forgot to tell my mom. And I don't even want to go buy one; I don't want to tell my mom or DAD.

2<sup>nd</sup> The second reason is because I don't think about school when I am out of school and I don't want to spend my money on things like the dictionary for French, and I don't need one if I have one in the back of my French book.

3<sup>rd</sup> The third reason I think I don't need a dictionary for French is because French is just a language and I can still pass if I don't pass this class and I don't like French because last year I failed French and I don't want to fail it this year.”

Josh, French student, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Kiley Middle School- October 2003<sup>2</sup>

“We had to recognize that our generation was more to be trusted than theirs. They surpassed us only in phrases and in cleverness...we distinguished the false from the truth, we had suddenly learned to see. And we saw that there was nothing of their world left. We were all at once terribly alone; and alone we must see it through.”

All Quiet on the Eastern Front  
Erich Maria Remarque, 1958

“Yes”, our schools need foreign language instruction included in the curriculum, says secretary of state Rod Page, “...so that our students broaden their knowledge of the world”. “No”, we don’t need foreign language instruction, says Meghan, an eighth grade student, the internet is a good replacement. In school, I “can still pass” even if I fail French, so “no” we don’t need a foreign language, says Josh, an eighth grader. In reading these contradictory statements, I can almost place them in the powerful novel “All Quiet on the Western Front”, and construct a broken picture made of puzzle pieces that come from different boards. Although in the novel the adolescents are introduced to the world of maturity through a frightening war, it is not hard to imagine that many of today’s students could have the same feelings of insecurity and adversity toward today’s education and its challenges. Therefore, as an outsider, one could have trouble understanding “the truth” by looking at this image of foreign language education issue.

It is my intention in this dissertation to deconstruct the “truths” of these visible and invisible participants in the foreign language education agenda (policy makers, administrators, students, etc.). Although they are all situated on different social and political levels, and operate from their own individual paradigms on time and space, they all seem to be compressing their social levels of discontent in the foreign language class. How many truths are here, anyway? Is this a world that has lost faith in the grand narrative of education? Is it a generational issue? Is it a political issue? Is it a pedagogy issue?

These had been my thoughts before I embarked on the exciting journey of researching the many “truths” of foreign language education, and before I put them

together in my doctoral dissertation on issues of power and motivation in foreign language education in the United States.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem in Context

In this dissertation I examine how language policies enacted through class instruction impact student endorsement of foreign language education during the formative years in a U.S. public school. Simultaneously, I look at how these policies get reconstructed outside the classroom and how they may influence learning and may generate resistance or lack of motivation to learn a foreign language.

Zooming in with a critical eye into the daily life of my students and my own as it occurs in my foreign language class, became the routine of using a lens under which I see how foreign language students construct their identities, and how they establish and manage their own connections with the world they live in. It is interesting to note how my foreign language class becomes yet another space where we embody Bakhtin's heteroglossia<sup>3</sup>. Our classroom, as the intersection point where many visible and invisible participants bring with them discourses and voices that originate in a diversity of social communities and groups, is the space where we experience a range of discourses from many layers of society that each brings its own social power. We, then "work" the voices and discourses of different legislations, media, family, other students and teachers, into our own "unique speech experience," or utterances (Bakhtin, Holquist, & Emerson, 1986). How we weave in and assimilate semantically many different viewpoints is often a subversive process that allows us to use those institutions' terms in a powerful, detrimental way to the institution itself, in the hope to attain membership in a more desirable group that promises additional returns.



Since education in the United States is not centralized, many school districts (mine included) are left with state and/or national guidelines and an ever-changing budget to decide who should learn what. Although the problem seems to be a national one, issues of language planning and language policy take place all the time at the school level, and all teachers implicitly or explicitly are involved in the implementation of these policies. It is also common knowledge that the very existence of foreign language educator depends on language policy decisions. Some of the most common decisions that schools have to deal with are: what language to be used as a medium of instruction, what languages are to be taught, how they will be taught, at what level of proficiency, for what reason, at what cost, and what is their significance in the school context. Although most of the decisions about the foreign language instruction are made at the level of the local education districts, it is not without importance that at the State level or at the Federal level other legislators spend time and money to refine these issues even more. However, as long as national and state documents remain in the stage of guidelines and students are faced with options every year to begin a language, to switch it or to drop it, little progress is made in the direction of foreign language proficiency.

According to a federal report published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, titled *A Nation at Risk*, the U.S. public was informed with heightened concern, as early as 1983 that foreign language education should be offered “at the same level as the basic academic fields - English, mathematics, computer science, social studies, and the natural science” (Education, 1983). 20 years later, after changes in curricula, teacher education, policies, national standards, research on

language development, immersion and heritage language programs, Secretary of Education, Rod Page, addressed the issue again with concern and re-stated the need to continue to encourage foreign language education in order “to provide opportunities for all students to broaden their knowledge of the world” (Page, 2004).

Although numerous other prominent political advocates for the foreign language education link the awkward approach that the United States take when it comes to the foreign language instruction of its students, to political and economic events (Helms, 2002; Simon, 1980), etc.), in general, U.S. public opinion does not value foreign language education as essential for developing bilingualism. Consequently, I argue that this opinion is reflected at least partially in the complex nature of students’ involvement in foreign language classes. In addition to these potential contributing factors situated at the macro level, foreign language students find themselves caught linguistically in a potential conflict between a dominant language (English), as a powerful capital legitimized through school discourse, grammarians, dictionaries state ordinances, and the newly introduced, non-dominant foreign language. As one of my students Josh, the eighth grader in an urban public school, puts it: “I don’t need a dictionary for French because French is just a language, and I can still pass if I don’t pass this class...”<sup>4</sup>

This is a perfect example that illustrates that when this potential conflict happens between the official language and the foreign language, students generate discourses that struggle to endorse symbolic power over “the formation and re-formation of mental structures” (Bourdieu, 1982).

Furthermore, if we are to consider the economic and “linguistic capital” that Bourdieu speaks of in his model of culture (in this case the significance or lack of

significance of learning a foreign language in U.S.), as a coercive method of the state to exercise power, strengthen and officialize a language (English, in this case) in formal spaces and occasions (school, public administration and institutions), then, the apparent promotion of other languages through foreign language reforms for instance, will not “happen because the state decrees it, but because of other social factors correlated with the officialization” (Bourdieu, 1982). Such factors may include the social position of the speaker, the social structure, and the social context, and are generally conditions that regulate the use of a new language, and that give weight and authority to its use. These factors, easily identified in the foreign language classroom, have not been examined, I argue, in relation to the use of a new language, and could heavily depend on the degree of involvement that potential users apply vis-à-vis the new language. It is important to examine how these factors interconnect in the foreign language classroom or outside the language classroom, in order to examine how they may contribute to the students’ everyday involvement in such classes.

From another point of view, according to some language policy researchers, in particular Grin (2002), as the world is becoming multilingual and the United States is not, English will be valued less across the globe. One can easily see how unprepared the population of the United States will be in dealing with this future problem. In this age of globalization where the swift movement of people, goods and financial transactions has created unimaginable opportunities and challenges, knowledge of foreign languages and cultures becomes indeed a necessity, especially for non-dominant groups who want to understand world affairs that have an impact on their daily life. For dominant groups, that have ignored consistently areas and cultures that did not present an economic or

political significance, these linguistic issues are turning into major predicaments. For example, recent international events that amounted to the level of crisis involved solid knowledge of languages less used in the North American hemisphere. These international events affected directly American daily lives when confronted with skyrocketing gas prices, frightening health issues like SARS, the 9/11 terrifying events or the War on Terror in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. These are just modest signs that increasingly indicate that within globalization, English alone cannot be used to fulfill its function to facilitate and maintain social networks across national boundaries, or even within a single boundary.

In an educational system such as the one in the United States that is not centralized, until there is the realization that foreign language instruction is a real, tangible necessity, we are looking at a situation where many school districts are left with state and/or national guidelines and an ever-changing budget, to decide who should learn what subjects, and the decision of which languages are included, if any. This general state of affairs becomes both constituted by practices in foreign language classes as well as perpetuated by the educational system. Although the problem seems to be a national one, issues of language planning and language policy take place at the school level, and all teachers implicitly or explicitly are involved in the implementation of these policies.

Periodically, districts are faced with new legislation that oftentimes does not build on previous legislation. Therefore, local districts in an effort to salvage the foreign language program from being starved of local or state support, ingeniously strive to implement pioneering approaches<sup>5</sup> in education in order to maintain a competitive edge

in their share of student education. These approaches include but are not limited to piloting online assessment, and exploring online foreign language education. Although these programs could be the basis for tomorrow's curriculum and teaching methods, they could also backfire on the current foreign language program due to the fact that they are perceived to be too new and/or too costly.

However, the attempt to legitimize foreign language instruction as part of the general curriculum by implementing formal online assessment could be a successful strategy if it shows improvement in student learning. Conversely, that could also reveal that an abundance of low scores, (when compared to MCAS failing scores in English and math) have the potential to seriously question a long-term commitment and investment in a program that yields too little return. In this case, the very existence of foreign language education in a district like mine could be jeopardized even further if media's interest is aroused by this new approach to assessment in foreign language programs. Simply looking at the way MCAS was presented to the public in the past 5 years is a clear example of how media forced the public to take one side or the other, and become the advocate (or not) of a policy that they knew too little about. Assigning political or economic connotations to social issues that become controversial only to serve the interests of few is a practice that media is often using in order to get the attention needed.

This type of events constitutes the medium that allows a discursive cacophony of voices that often puzzles students and teachers alike. This is the case with a foreign language teacher in my district that I interviewed in 2004:

**G:** Underperforming in school, underperforming on the MCAS,..

I: In subjects like...

G:.. like math, English, you know. Everything becomes ah, MCAS, MCAS, and nobody cares about anything else. In many schools they have taken all the “exploratories” or specials or prep time, what ever you call them, out. In some schools the kids have 24 hours of reading. As if that is going to help big time the children to learn more reading. It just doesn’t work that way.

(Gipssy McKenzie, Spanish teacher, August 2004)

Oftentimes, the discrepancies in meaning created by the discourses that the legislators employ in order to gain access to the foreign language class, and consequently exert more influence and power, are creating confusion not only among the students but also among the educators. These discourses appear to be disconnected from one another, and in the setting of the foreign language class construct a false appearance of coherence. Frequently, the coexistence of such discourses in the foreign language class becomes incomprehensible for the majority of students and leaves the foreign language class and its members vulnerable to attacks from its own ranks. The mere existence and purpose of the class is questioned and voided of meaning. “Miss, do we really have to pass this class?” becomes the motto of an entire generation of students who are unable to connect to events in which they are the main protagonists.

In an interview with a former foreign language supervisor in December 2004, the inner mechanism of a language policy is revealed to work like this:

And as you know, over the past few years, that has changed in terms of who is in the FL class. There are decisions being made based on reading scores. And what’s happening, is that the pressure is very intense imposed by the State on the school system, and therefore by the leadership of the school system on the principals, and therefore by the principals on everybody. So, it is a downward pressure that is there.

(Dr. Riordan, FL Director, 2004)

The end result could be a source of uncertainty for many. Here is a fragment of an interview conducted with another supervisor on the same topic:

**I:** Would you say that the language policies that have been enacted over time could be a source of the...

**R:** for a negative?

**I:** Yeah...

**R:** Yes and no. I see “No Child Left Behind” as a potential negative because the push is on reading and math, or English and math. However, foreign language is considered a core, so foreign language should have a piece of this national pie. And in listening to Rod Page at ACTFL last year: “Foreign language is part of the core”... and we made the comment that is only mentioned once. “But”, he said, “you’re still part of the core”. So, very slowly we are trying to change the mindset from a negative one of only reading and math.

(Rita Oleksak, FL Director, 2004)

Such instances of uncertainty frame federal and state language policies as contradictory discourses that come down on the students in waves. Although these waves wipe out the previous ones, they strike with such a force and to such an extent that it carves in the students a perception of education that embodies in my student’s question a “critical moment” in education: “Miss, do we really have to pass this class?” As a foreign language teacher in my district I become animated every time I read about a new law that has the potential of positively impacting the foreign language education. In the school where I work, it seems that lately, all I heard and read about whether it was or not related to foreign language, made reference to “No Child Left Behind Act” of 2001. Countless documents coming from the foreign language director or the superintendent made reference to this document. Additionally, in many teacher meetings reference is made to this legislation. As a concerned teacher for the fate of my students, especially when it comes to the foreign language education, I started to

research the law in an effort to lessen the confusion that takes over me when I attend the curriculum or faculty meetings and this law is mentioned.

What is “No Child Left Behind Act”, in addition to a famous phrase of Maryann Wright Edelman, and a part of the 6.57 billion dollars business in the United States?

“No Child Left Behind” is a federal document, fairly thick (1184 pages), created for parents and children, issued by the House of Representatives and signed by President Bush in January 2002. The intent behind this document, as outlined in its introduction, is to provide a substantive overview of the education policy changes for state and district officials (changes were long overdue since the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965!)<sup>6</sup>. All its 10 huge chapters are organized around the four guiding principles:

1. Accountability, 2. Flexibility and local control, 3. Parental choice, and 4. What works.

After getting lost more than once in the myriad of stipulations for the education of American children, I finally found my way to Title V, “Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs”, Part D “Fund for the Improvement of Education”, subpart 9 “Foreign Language Assistance Program”, section 5491 through 5494. I was so happy that I finally found the part that addressed foreign language education issues that I started immediately to read it. There it was, out of a document of 1184 pages, 2 were related to foreign language! After reading the two pages, I thought that perhaps, this was not what I expected to find. Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) is a federal grant program awarded on a competitive basis to elementary and secondary schools, if they are able to prove implementation of innovative program in foreign



language, such as intensive foreign language programs for professional development, promotion of a sequential study of foreign language, etc. Each grant is awarded for a period of three years.

According to the grant stipulations, it seems that “No Child Left Behind” Act could leave many children deficient in foreign language education because of grant eligibility issues. Or perhaps the purpose of including foreign language education in this act is a mere reflection specific political discourses: Due to “our” global presence in the world, United States has an exceptional need for individuals with high competencies in other languages. In this case how would a grant stipulated in this notorious Act, in reality “help students reach the national objective of mastering one or more foreign languages”?

Since these grants are awarded only to programs that meet at least 4 times a week for 45 minutes, I was lucky that my classes met 5 times a week. Of course that was not the case with the other 550 students in our school who do not take foreign language. The 9 wireless laptops that were given to our school are only to be used by foreign language students who meet at least 4 times a week. Overall, the total federal funds for 2002 in U.S. were \$7,264,490 for the FLAP (foreign language assistance program). Out of these funds our district received \$300,000 (LanguagePolicy, 2002; Policy, 2002) ;(R. Oleksak, May 2003, personal communication)

In our district, the funding provided under this grant covered during the first cycle the following: four resource teachers, a three credits methods course for 20 teachers, and some additional funds to support minor improvements to a foreign language program already in place, such as nine laptop computers per middle school

(there is a total of 4 middle schools in the city). Unfortunately, these four highly qualified teachers left four teaching jobs in the classroom that were filled by inexperienced substitutes. Additionally, these resource teachers truly offer too little of their time in the many different classrooms with the students, but instead have to attend conferences, and occupy their time keeping an accurate track of how grant money is spent, so that next time when our district applies again for the same grant, they can produce a documented report of how the funds were used.

During the next year, 2003, when the school budget was slashed by the city, the grant funds were “temporarily” frozen, and according to the director of foreign language, a total of 20 foreign language teachers were laid off. Additionally, the foreign language program at the elementary level was cut for grades k-2, and at the middle school was seriously questioned. Two years after this Act became a law the only vocational high school in the city was depleted of the foreign language program (R. Oleksak, personal communication, April 2004). From these statistics, it looks that many children are going to be left behind in foreign language instruction. How are these children going to become proficient in one or more foreign languages and therefore, meet a national objective? Or why would then a student ask me “Miss, do we really have to pass this class?” From the data that I have examined so far it seems that policies that are made are distinct from the policies that are implemented. However, the consequences often undermine the original intent producing contradictions only understood by close examination of these gaps.

After I finished researching the foreign language part of “No Child Left Behind” Act, I decided to find where in fact, the goal of FLAP is coming from. It took me

several hours to locate on the Internet the United States Code, issued by the US House of Representatives. Under Title 20, Education, I found chapter 70 “Strengthening and improvement of Elementary and Secondary Schools”. Further research took me to subchapter VII “Bilingual Education, Language Enhancement and Language Acquisition Programs”, and under Part B I finally found “Foreign Language Assistance Program”.

On this site I found out that this program was first implemented as early as 1994 as a result of eight important findings under Section 7512 (that we, foreign language teachers, knew all along). Here are some of them:

1. Foreign language proficiency is crucial to our nation economic competitiveness....
2. Proficiency on two or more languages should be promoted for all American students,
3. The optimum time to begin a foreign language program is in elementary school,
4. Children who have studied a foreign language in elementary school score higher on standardized tests, etc.

Apparently these findings did not make their way safely to the classroom because nine years later, on April 22, 2003 the local newspaper was publishing a gloomy article: “Schools Poised for More Layoffs” (...foreign language education is ripe for substantial cuts.... the program mostly Spanish ....implemented K-12... was costing the city nearly \$1,5 million)(Republican, 2003). On May 9, of the same year my principal told me that he will not offer foreign language in grade six and was not sure

about 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade either, in view of all the budget cuts. Instead, his plan was to replace them with remedial classes for reading and math, since the MCAS scores of our school were critically low (L. Tillman, personal communication, May 9, 2003).

Obviously the above information, recorded in the United States Code, Title 20, Chapter 70, subchapter VII, Part B, section 7512, # 8 “*children who have studied a foreign language...score higher on standardized tests than those who have not... .*” were not too useful to our school.

Due to these conflicting messages that I read through different legislation, at the present time I see not connection between the “No Child Left Behind” Act, the Massachusetts Standards for Education, our district’s Learning Outcomes, or the students in my classroom. Perhaps we, as educators, should ask ourselves, or maybe ask the law makers, or the administrators, or our city and state officials, the most important question of all: What is the purpose of education and how can we accomplish it?

Assistance programs for foreign language as outlined above are not the only manifestation of the United States concern for its nation education in foreign language. An important legislation that had a temporary impact on foreign language education took place in 1979, when the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, appointed a Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies to evaluate the situation nationwide and make recommendations. Out of the 65 (vital at the time) recommendations, today only a few remain implemented (Panetta, 1999).

Twenty years later, the state of foreign language was brought again in the Congress. This time the foreign language capabilities of the nation were evaluated one more time in relation to the national security. In the beginning of 2000, the 106 session

of the Congress reviewed the current foreign language programs and the present funding to the foreign language education in the United States. Among the various issues discussed some resurfaced repeatedly as major areas of concern: the dual and immersion programs, K-12 implementation, higher education, teacher training, shortage of less common taught languages like Arabic and Swahili, distance learning and exchange programs. But the problem still remains; the inconsistent funding will only perpetuate an undesirable state of affairs (International Security, 2001).

Another important avenue in education policy is Goals 2000 legislation. Part of the "Goals 2000 Education America Act" is competency in foreign languages. This legislation defines student achievement by developing goals and standards in core subjects. The inclusion of foreign languages in this act was made possible by the existence of the National Standards in Foreign Language, a document that came into existence in 1996 as a result again, of federal funding. Although the acknowledgement of some official documents like "Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" has raised the awareness of the importance of the foreign language education in the United States, there is still a great disconnect between the document and its implementation. The famous "five C's"<sup>7</sup> are geared to develop performance standards across the states, but out of 50 states, only 17 are truly claiming to implement these standards in their curriculum. A major criticism brought to the "5 C's" is that fact that it is aimed generally at monolingual students and does not take into consideration linguistic diversity in the U.S.

Other organizations like "The National Board for Professional Standards" strive to give an official and professional twist to the foreign language education, and to

increase the awareness for foreign languages by opening recently (2001) the certification process to foreign language teachers in an effort to recognize master teachers at the national level. In order to see the rigor of such process and better understand the benefits of such certification for the students in my classroom, I personally went through the laborious three year assessment process of my skills of foreign language educator. After passing all the hurdles, I can say now, as a National Board certified teacher of French, that NBPTS is geared heavily at promoting standards for content mastery and does very little to raise the professional's awareness of the skills needed for advocacy in addressing the general public's need for foreign language education (NBPTS, March 2005, personal communication).

Overall, in the last 30 years, several influential groups provided sufficient economic and political reasons for the government to provide funds under the form of grants. Districts that were able to meet specific objectives benefited from these insignificant funds, but nevertheless, the related legislation was only meant to **encourage** not **enforce**, education of specific subjects like foreign language. It looks that three year federal grants stipulated in "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001" and "Foreign Language Assistance Program" of 1988, are only adding to the uncertainty of the foreign language state of affairs, and that they hardly make a difference in the way foreign language instruction is implemented in local public schools. Due to the temporary nature of the grants as well as to the conditions in which money can be used, these programs are providing funds only to improve (not initiate) foreign language education through model programs that can show the promise of being continued

beyond their project period. However, other restricting conditions for these grants, such as the size and the age of the school populations, make them difficult to consider.

Consequently, none of the documents issued at the federal level that mention foreign language education, bind the states or the local districts to offer a solid foreign language program. On the contrary, when presented comparatively with math and science literacy requirements, it is at serious disadvantage. Except for waves of legislation that come and go with each administration, the local (decentralized) education policy in foreign language in the United States has little other connections with the mighty federal government.

Sharply contrasting with the US approach to foreign language education that generates apparently a lack of student motivation in learning a foreign language, internationally, other countries use different patterns to approach foreign language education that serve different objectives. While the European Union's objective is to render the students competent in 3-4 languages by the time they graduate from high school, Japan's foreign language education policy requires 6 years of intensive foreign language study (English primarily) for graduation from high school, and required competency in English mostly. If the student chooses to further his education, the admission to college incorporates a very rigorous oral and written foreign language exam. By contrast, in my district the single vocational high school in the city, has no foreign language requirements for graduation, since the foreign language program was eliminated in 2004 (R. Oleksak, personal communication, May 2004).

Looking on the other side of the globe, it is interesting to note the nature of investment that Japan's society has in the foreign language education, which is English

proficiency primarily. The education reform implemented in 1980 had as a main objective to develop self expression by learning Japanese and a globally used foreign language of wider communication. This reification of English in the Japanese society is believed to ensure that there is only one valuable commodity that the government sponsors: the mastery of English and with it a membership to a valued discourse of economic power.

The foreign language education in Japan is a liberal-progressive effort to primarily offer English education under the umbrella of foreign language education (Kubota, 1998). Starting from the assumption that English is an international language, the Japanese language policy makers set the perimeter for what that means in terms of language teaching. The focus was, and still is, on British or American versions of English due to implied political and economic power. The ultimate premise that justifies this policy for the Japanese (although critiqued by Kubota), is that this form of English leads to better international understanding, one of Japan's main objectives in international policy (Kubota, 1998).

By attaching symbolic power to one language (English) the Japanese policy makers, supported by world events, managed to increase the student motivation in learning the language, and officially sponsored the access to an exclusive membership in that particular discourse (by attaching economic value). This is a substantial effort that also provides students with opportunities to understand that international understanding is achieved as a result of intercultural communication and multicultural education. Other researchers like Grin (2002), disagree, and believe that the more English is learned and becomes indispensable, in addition to temporarily eliminating the



need for other languages, it accelerates the erosion of its market value, and in time, other second languages will become more valuable. Nevertheless, Japanese society continues to invest heavily in English education, and for the moment, claims with it a good share to the U.S. goods market. As a result, it becomes increasingly important for many countries around the world that there is a need to diversify the choice of foreign language education in public schools, and as a result, unanimously in these countries, the beginning of a second language starts by age 11 and of a third language by age 13 in most of Europe and Asia (Eurydice, 2001).

In conclusion, the above discussion on findings related to how legislators and language policies participate in foreign language classes in the United States or internationally, sheds a different light on the perception that it is only up to the teachers and students to complete the educational process. As a foreign language teacher-researcher, I argued that teaching and learning foreign languages is no longer the intimate relationship between teachers and students. This event, as part of the greater act of education located in the ideological system of values of a society is, in fact a public space, vulnerable and empowering at the same time, where many “outside groups” use their discursive force to help shape students’ identities and ideology. As I move forward in my teaching and research career, attempting to balance, and mostly make sense of the place that foreign language instruction takes in my life as well as in the life of my students, I realize that under my eyes, surreptitiously, a system of previously unknown relationships starts to become unveiled.

Framing and understanding the foreign language education in this context, this study will examine a current program in the United States and will look specifically at

how issues of motivation and power get constructed by students in the foreign language classroom of an urban middle school setting, and how outside-the-classroom factors contribute to their construction of meaning.

### Theoretical Lens

My research is situated within a theoretical framework that represents a range of existing positions that combine individual theories, classroom pedagogy and sociology aspects. My theoretical lens in this dissertation is grounded in the poststructuralist discourse that helps me examine how specific constructs of power, motivation, identity have been framed by various scholars. With the help of these theories I situate societal manifestations, or more localized instantiations of the foreign language education, in order to better understand and possibly transform classroom practices.

What is unique about this theoretical framework, is the fact that although it appears that there are considerable difficulties in bridging concepts from a sociological and critical understanding of humanity (looking at power), with one of individual psychoanalytic understanding (motivation), there is also the promise of a challenging intersection of critical perspectives. The literature included in this theoretical framework, allowed me to discuss how two epistemologically different concepts (power and motivation), can be redefined and incorporated in a viable relationship in the foreign language class context.

From this perspective, I will use theoretical positions that generate a self-reflexive discourse, and that acknowledge the tentativeness and slipperiness of the text, allowing at the same time for ambiguity and complex interrelations between meaning and text<sup>8</sup>. This study allows different constructs of power, that at the macro level afford

access to the construction of power relationships at the society level, a level that foreign language students have access outside the classroom (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991; Foucault, 1972; Foucault & Trombadori, 1991). At the micro level, I will use positions on power that students generate at the stage of the speech act. These positions permit for the deconstruction of power relationships enacted between the classroom participants (D. Boden & Molotch, 1985; Edwards & Mercer, 1987). Working previously with positions on power at the micro level (Alexandru, 2002), helped me construct a working definition of the complex concept of power in the foreign language classroom. Aligning this definition to outside factors such as language policies, could be essential in formulating an acceptable approach on the issue of foreign language programs that provide opportunities for students to participate in foreign language instruction.

The second major concept that I will use in this study is the notion of motivation. On the one hand, a rich body of literature demonstrates that student motivation is individually constructed at the *psychological* level (R. Gardner & Lambert, 1985; J. Hall & Verplaetse, 2000; Ryan & Giles, 1982; Schumann, 1979). On the other hand, we find the type of motivation that revolves around constructivist learning, and that represents for the student a personal and collective *agency*, socially constructed. According to these studies motivation is a continuous struggle to find a place in oppressive social structures (Dirkx, 2000; Giroux & McLaren, 1994), and a key element when examining the social identity within any language policy (Ager, 2001). In this dissertation I take this concept a step further and replace it with “investment”, in order to examine the importance of social identity for successful language learning (McKay, 1996; Norton Peirce, 1995; Ullman, 1997). But the closest and the most

intriguing discussion of motivation is initiated by Bourdieu who locates it in the relation between the “habitus” and the “field”, where the field is a historically developed objective structure, and the “habitus” is a socialized subjectivity with an internalized history (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). In other words the motivation to access literacy (foreign language in this case) is conditioned by the habitual disposition combined with certain structured social conditions. Looking at motivation this way one can see that although immersed in social context, motivation is heavily governed by the social capital inherited from the social class in which individuals belong. Nevertheless, in spite of all these attempts to grasp a more complex conception of motivation, research has failed to fully account for how individuals manifest certain subjectivities.

In a previous study (Alexandru, 2002) I examined at the micro level, the relationship between student motivation in classroom activities and instantiations of power in certain discourses in the foreign language classroom.<sup>9</sup> Although in this ethnography I used the insights gained in the above-mentioned studies to look critically only at instances of power and motivation in routine classroom events (micro level), this endeavor also helped me redefine the concepts of power and motivation (using an inductive approach), in such a way in which to prompt the need to examine macro structures of power manifested in wider instances of language policies. When looking at the different language policies that impact the foreign language class, it is not without concern when one realizes that a potential student involvement in the classroom activities and implicitly the foreign language learning process, is not directly, observably related for the most part, to many foreign language practices, and thereby even less apparent and relevant to the core of the policy itself, which in turn prompts

valid contestation and further reconfiguration of such perpetuating practices. Attention to this phenomenon is long overdue.

### Purpose and Goals

In my early work (Alexandru, 2002), I looked at instantiations of power and motivation in classroom interaction events, and realized that motivation could take a whole new meaning as it is framed in today's classrooms. Consequently, a better way to refer to motivation would be to use a different concept that emerged out of this study and related literatures: the notion of "student endorsement".<sup>10</sup> As a result of this shift in perspectives on motivation, I take an ecological stance and explore what other possibilities are to connect this concept to social factors, and then re-examine how student learning occurs, a question still open in education today. As a result, the key factors that I decided to look at in conjunction with endorsement are: identity, power relations, foreign language education, and language policies. My goal became to find out if there is a connection between endorsement and other social factors, in the context of the current practices that I make use of in my foreign language classroom. During this process, I found very useful to compile a list of terms (Appendix A), that was meant to clarify the terminology used in this research. Sometimes the terminology was taken from established research in the field, and other times I felt the need to redefine and reinterpret the terms in order to best reflect their use in this study.

Looking critically at the past and current state of affairs of the foreign language education model in the U.S. and abroad, this dissertation has as primary goals to examine: 1) questions about how policies on foreign language education impact student learning, and 2) how students resist the effects of these policies in a local classroom to

learn a foreign language. In order to fulfill this goal, first, I will briefly discuss the definitions and classifications of *foreign language* as well as some of the implications of the U.S. foreign policy on the foreign language education in the U.S. Second, I will review several key official foreign language documents issued at the local, state, and federal level. Third, I will focus on a local school district, and take a close look at the contradictory trends in the curriculum that may have an impact on student learning of a foreign language. Finally, I will discuss some competitive education language policies abroad that may offer alternatives in creating a more realistic long-term perspective of foreign language education in the U.S.

A secondary goal for this dissertation is to use the theories and principles developed and used in two studies (not yet published) that I conducted previously: *Examination of Foreign Language Learning Motivation through Power Relations in the Classroom*, and *Student Endorsement of the Foreign Language Discourse as a Result of the Language Policies Prompted by Globalization Practices*. By bridging the results in these studies, I will speak of discursive connections between student resistance to foreign language education and current trends in language policy implemented in the present curriculum.

Ultimately, my dissertation represents a critical poststructural epistemological stance, to examine from multiple perspectives and reflexively, a set of assumptions about the foreign language education and what learning is needed to construct such an education as well as about the specific human behavior pertaining to foreign language education implemented in one school system. From a perspective as a researcher, I embrace the notion that by interacting with my data, I am able to construct meaning that

is micro context dependent and at the same time part of the macro, globalization context. In addition, by deconstructing the power relations occurring in this context, I discuss how they relate to the student endorsement of foreign language education.

### Research Questions

It seems a paradox that the United States, a country with a highly diverse population and a long history of immigration, has one of the poorest records of sustained public foreign language programs, when compared to similar post industrial countries such as Japan, England, Switzerland, Spain, and Canada. The foreign language structural design in U.S. public schools has changed very little in spite of significant efforts toward transformation in the field of bilingual and second language acquisition, language investment, and establishment of assessment programs and standards (Dutcher, 1995). In trying to understand this paradox, a number of fundamental questions can be posed and sought. Throughout my research study I strived to provide an answer to the following questions: 1) what is the nature of student resistance that affects the endorsement of foreign language education in public schools systems? And from here a delineation of a subsumed yet specific question: 2) how do wider discourses influence the foreign language students and their learning process?

During a previous study (2001), I examined the students' investment in a Spanish language class (Alexandru, 2002). Although factors like power relations and identity were also examined in their relation to student investment, a significant part of the findings pointed to students' attitudes and opinions that reflected their lack of investment in the foreign language class, due to possibly, the inconsistency of foreign language policies at various levels.

This time, in this dissertation I decided to look at student learning considering wider discourses that might affect the foreign language class and its students as well as the possible interplay of these discourses in the class. Such wider discourses included the research of the concepts of power, motivation, identity, foreign language as a subject taught in schools, globalization and language policy that were previously researched in isolation, in their relationship to the classroom (Agar, 1994; Ager, 2001; Ager, Wright, Hantrais, Howorth, & NetLibrary Inc., 2000; Angelil-Carter, 2000; Dörnyei, 2003; Kramarae C., 1990; Kreisberg, 1992; Norton Peirce, 1995; Rosenbush, 1997). When I started my research, I did not look specifically for instances of power, investment, globalization, etc.; however. I wanted to have a solid understanding of the research that had been previously done on these concepts. My general area of interest was related to what constitutes student language learning, and for that reason, in this inductive study I used a grounded approach, that is that from the data examined I inductively developed preliminary theoretical statements. Two of the factors researched in this study (power and motivation) were concepts that I pilot tested earlier, using the same inductive approach. In that previous study, initially, I looked at my classroom practices in general, and finally, I ended up focusing on patterns that were suggesting that instances of power and motivations were jointly constructed by my students and me in a dynamic relationship.

In this dissertation, I examine additionally the following factors: identity, foreign language education, language policy, and globalization as well as the interplay of these elements in the classroom. In examining these aspects, I acknowledge that I will not necessarily resolve the artificiality and fragility of the U.S. foreign language



programs assigned in current curricula. Rather than provide the answer, I will demonstrate the complexity of learning in the U.S. context, and I will identify potentials for teaching and learning a foreign language that have not been considered before.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study that I present and discuss in this dissertation has the potential to contribute towards the understanding of classroom practices in foreign language programs as they are influenced by language planning and policy decisions, and so point to areas where change can be made. I also examine modalities that suggest that it is possible to challenge how traditional education defines the roles of teachers and students to establish new relations of power that could condition the existence of new learners' identities and new possibilities for teachers. In terms of stating the practical implications for the foreign language field, the concept of endorsement, as it will be defined later will be examined for its potential as a viable replacement for the traditional notion of motivation. A teacher's examination of students' discourses, may also shed new light on the mechanics in which education is engulfed in the phenomenon of globalization. Additionally, understanding endorsement issues in relation to the current language policies on learning could change current perceptions that are contributing to the downplaying of the benefits of foreign language instruction. For instance, defining the role of the students in language policies not as the recipient of services, but as an active, essential factor in a successful learning experience.

Theoretically, in this dissertation, the study that I discuss sets out to produce a framework that in its turn could explain how foreign language instruction contributes to the construction of knowledge by the students. In addition, professionally, the foreign

language field benefits from understanding of what kind of membership is promised in the foreign language education when students are engulfed in the "webs of significance" of one language program or another (Geertz, 1973). Because symbolic power is attached to certain languages and not others, the implications on the national and global level of the process of promising a share of the exclusive membership in one discourse or another (see current policy in foreign language, bilingual education policy, ESL approaches, and English Only Movement) will be analyzed. This study will build a new and more complex understanding of the teacher's role in foreign language instruction in the U. S.

This study offers local examination of the foreign language education in U.S. in an age when the world's schools and universities become increasingly international in character. If the current state of affairs continues unnoticed, the United States policy of de-emphasizing internationalism and foreign language with it may only decrease the competitiveness of U.S. students in the world global market. Additionally, as particular practices of globalization continue to develop worldwide, such as the production and consumption of technology and implicitly of collective identities, by maintaining mainstream monolingualism practices, the educational system in the U.S. will facilitate the outsourcing of white collar employment in international contexts, where populations with bilingual proficiency in English will prevail in the global market. Furthermore, political alliances are still to be formed in many areas around the world. For example, demographics in South Asia may have a decisive role in what language is to be used 50 years from now. Recently, the interests of the U.S. in the oil cartel in the Arab world have already become a decisive factor in spurring Arabic language instruction that may

prove to become an important language in 10 years. Who can predict the interest level in one language, as borders worldwide already have become permeable and porous? U.S. education policy is facing challenges to the belief that English is the only universally-used language, and thus should become more accommodating with other cultures and languages.

## Notes- Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Alexandru, 2001 (unpublished manuscript)

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the body of the present dissertation proposal

<sup>3</sup> See list of terms

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in the body of the present dissertation proposal

<sup>5</sup> Online assessment was done for the first time in the country officially to collect student data that was comparable to state assessment programs

<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately not all changes were good since the funds allocated for this Act are not even at the level of 1965 legislation.

<sup>7</sup> The 5 C's outlined in the National Standards in Foreign Language Education are: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

<sup>8</sup> Here by "text" I refer to cultural text

<sup>9</sup> This study was the result of an ethnography conducted in a beginning Spanish class in an urban middle school. In this study I was a participant observer and interacted with and observed a group of 25 8<sup>th</sup> graders for the duration of a school year.

<sup>10</sup> Although the term heavily resonates with economic and financial terms, it is merely used to designate a new approach to the notion of motivation, an approach that has a more social and global connotation, more in line with the post-modern manifestations of what we see in today's subjectivities of students, who are in the process of permanently constructing and deconstructing their identity. A more elaborate discussion as well as a definition is presented in the Findings and Conclusion section under "Endorsement".

## CHAPTER 2

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### Concepts Researched and Definition of Terms

Perhaps that out of all the subjects studied in school, foreign language is the one that offers to make a connection between cultures and languages that are essential to understand wider societal issues and more localized and restricted ones that affect individuals. Therefore, in trying to achieve a theoretical foundation to support my research in the foreign language classroom, I decided that it was important to compile in a concerted, meaningful synthesis, concepts, theories and studies of specific classroom practices that support the idea that foreign language education is not limited to the classroom, or the school, or the state. It intertwines values, beliefs and social practices of societies.

From this understanding this chapter is organized in the following sections:

- 1) The research on power and motivation and related terms as backbone concepts to the entire study
- 2) The research on the notion of identity building and how it materializes in two classroom routine practices: homework check and journal writing, as a local view on the learning of foreign language
- 3) The research in the areas of language policy, and globalization as societal manifestations that frame foreign language as a being part of a wider system of knowledge.

The purpose of bringing together the concepts researched in this chapter is to create a visible interconnectivity between the notions of power and motivation previously existing in well-established, but separate fields. Throughout this literature review I will use the concepts researched to build the foundation for the teacher's use of *endorsement* as a viable lens to look and understand student learning process.

The first part of this chapter will begin with a review of two concepts and theories that I argue, represent a promising intersection of critical perspectives. This review addresses apparent disparate research literatures from which the concepts of *power* and *motivation* are understood in classroom practices. Next, I will introduce alternative views on the concept of motivation such as *investment* and *agency*. In the second part of this chapter, I will examine the concept of *identity* in relation to classroom practices that affect students' subjectivities and reveal their relation to dominant discourses. In the classroom context, these alternatives on motivation also establish a connection to the concept of power as it is researched in the first part of this literature review. The third part of the chapter will introduce the literature on *globalization*, as macro structure of social transformation. Through this perspective I will examine *foreign language education* as integral part of the educational model in U.S. and in two other countries abroad. Related to foreign language education, I will also examine how *language policy*-making is occurring locally in my practice, and how this policy is impacting the students in the foreign language classroom.

# The conceptual framework draws on 3 concepts and theories that explain:

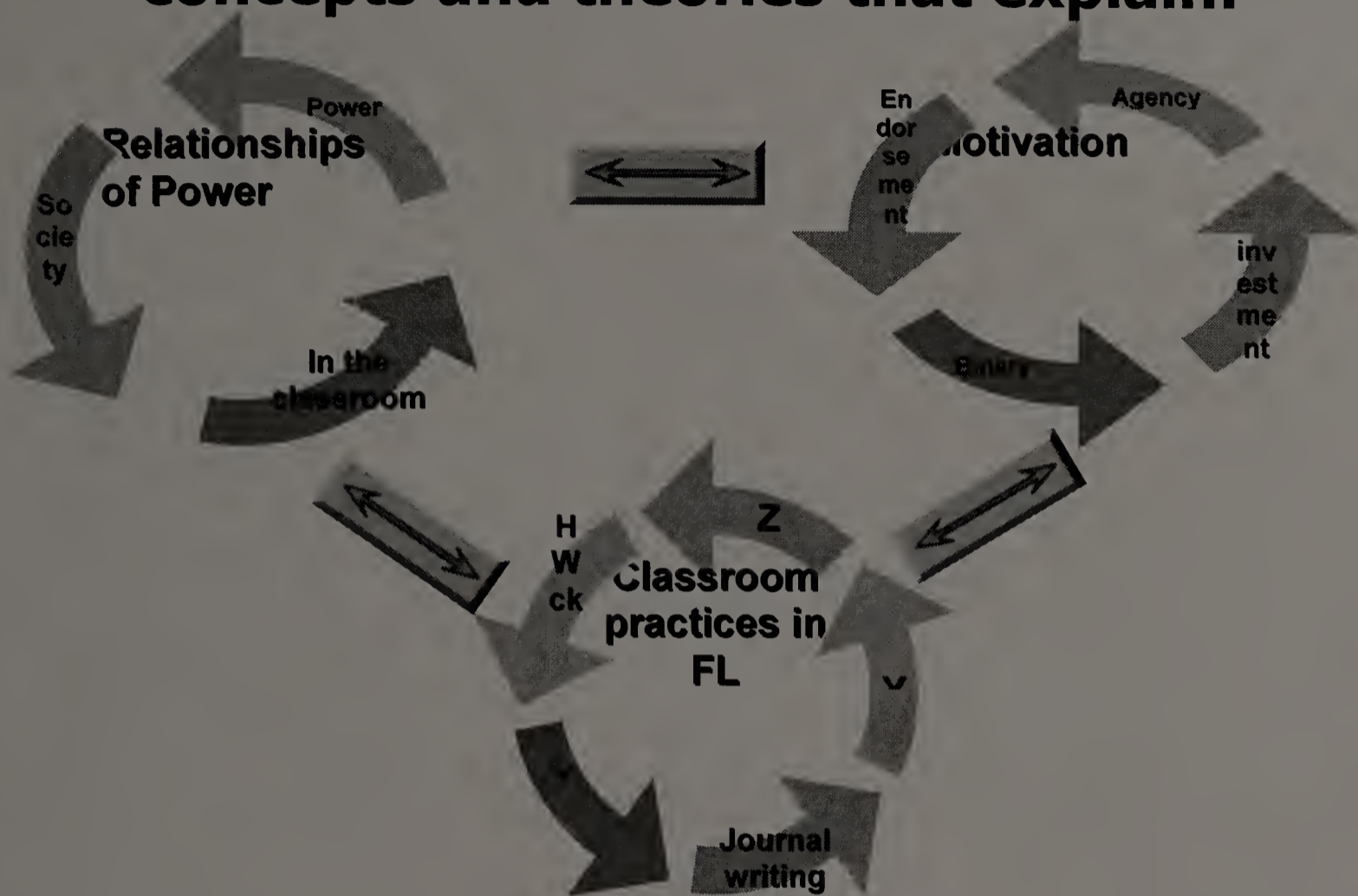


Figure 1 - Diagram of How Relations of Power Exist in the Classroom

## Power and Motivation

Although there are considerable theoretical difficulties in bridging a concept from a sociological and critical understanding of humanity with one of individual psychoanalytic understanding, I will attempt this in this review, to create working definitions of these two constructs in order to establish how they can shed light upon each other and be used in my study.

In this chapter I have performed a comprehensive search of the concepts of power and motivation. I looked at primary sources of either original text or English

translations of the cited works. This review includes also interviews, peer reviewed articles published either in professional journals or online as well as personal research. I have conducted this review over a period of three years and it covers work published in the last 70 years. The purpose of this review was done to serve as theoretical foundation for an initial ethnography study conducted in 2001 in an urban public school among a group of 25 foreign language students. However, in the next three years I continually added to, and expanded the review in an endeavor to re-conceptualize power relations in the classroom, and situate their possible relevance to the notion of student investment in learning a foreign language. Although there is a significant body of literature written in the area of power relations in the classroom as well as a plethora of studies that examine motivation in the second language class, I argue that the present review is pioneer work in the attempt to discuss how these two epistemologically different concepts from psychology and sociology, can be redefined and related to each other in the context of the foreign language class.

In order to present this review in a manner more relevant to the research question that I outlined in the beginning on this dissertation, I will first examine issues of power ideology in general. In this vein, I will be reviewing the definition of power and its classification, as it was formulated and interpreted by critical and poststructuralist scholars. Then, I will examine power relations in society relevant to language use, and power relations in the classroom instantiated in teacher-student interactions, and student-student interactions.

Secondly, I will also research the concept of motivation mostly used as a psychological construct. Next, I will extend my review of motivation in the socio-



cultural literature. There, I will continue to examine the notions of agency and investment as developed by Norton (1995) as well as other scholars, in order to capture the social dimension of student involvement in learning and its possible relationship and implications to the notion of power.

## **Power**

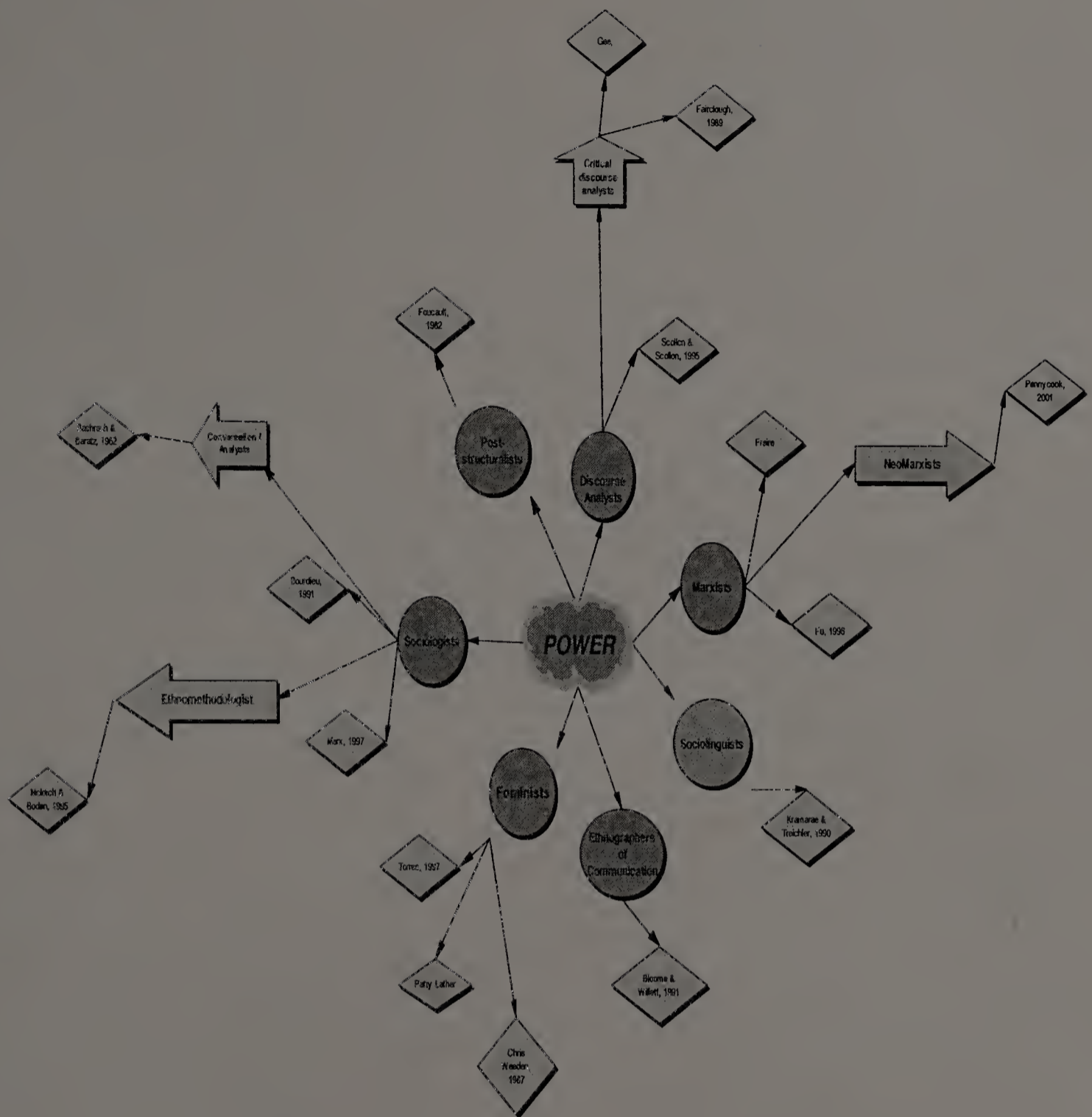
In my theoretical framework I draw on individual theories that elaborated a complex understanding of the concept of power. Theorizing the conception of power was not an easy task. In trying to understand and capture ontologies of power as they were examined by sociologists at the societal level like Bourdieu and Foucault, I also had to look at the conception of power at the level of the speech act as it was formulated by scholars like Boden & Molotch, Edwards & Mercer, Stubbs, etc.

In building my conceptual framework on relationships of power I draw on the literature on power ideology looking in particular at the definition of power and its classification as it was formulated mostly by critical and post-structuralist scholars. I am looking at relationships of power in society (trying to understand the *modus operandi* at the macro level) and in the classroom setting (as the micro level), specifically in classroom instantiations of teacher-student interactions and student-student interactions.

Understanding the concept of power associated to its context whether it is examined at the societal level (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991; Foucault, 1972; Marx, Easton, & Guddat, 1967) or at the level of the speech act (D. Boden & Molotch, 1985; Edwards & Mercer, 1987; McHoul, 1978; Stubbs, 1996), is a necessary endeavor in order to find its significance and implications in a context such as the foreign language classroom.

In order however to place power in context I need first to bring forward the ideology of power, in order to fully situate the classroom instruction from U.S. society's historical perspective. The concept of ideology, in the Marxist and Neo-Marxist, Gramscian tradition, is most of the time associated with power relations that are made to appear as if they are **normal** or are evaluated as good or bad. This normalization allows for an easier identification of relationships that are represented in a "legitimate" but controversial system. Once framed this way, one can more easily move on to understand the agent role of power in the context in which it operates. Thus, in the foreign language classroom context, according to Osborn and Reagan (2002), power and language ideology may play an extremely important role in shaping students' identities and achievement. Unfortunately, such research is insufficiently or rarely discussed locally in the foreign language classroom context itself between teachers and learners.

One of the most difficult tasks in putting together an understanding of power to explain systems of knowledge at the societal level and also at the classroom level, was for me to decide how to represent the multiple interpretations on power that were given by researchers over the year. One of the first steps I took was to map the work that was done in the different theoretical and research areas to cover this concept. Because power is often a complex epistemological interpretation of the world, I decided that representing it in relation to how Foucault sees it, is how it was going to frame my understanding too. As a result, in Figure 2 the representation below is a conceptual map that I put together and used to investigate the concept of power as it appeared in different theoretical and research arenas.



**Figure 2 – Representation of the Concept of Power (as it was discussed by various researchers from different fields)**

Historically, the concept of power became important because of Karl Marx' contribution to the sociology field. As a prominent sociologist and philosopher of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Marx set the stage for the critical stance in the new capitalist world. Marx's understanding was that all power is **economic** power, and people strive for power only to **enrich** themselves. Marx believed that power was exercised in every group, social

practice and relationship, as a system of **dominance** that one group exerts over another at the macro level. For him the **state** is often the **dominating group** (Marx et al., 1967). I am taking from Marx the existence of classes as social groups, and the conflict between them (although it is not generated by economic interest).

In contrast with Marx, I take the poststructuralist position that groups do not have fixed identities (Foucault, 1972). The way I see this conflict, and the power generated in such a system is not fixed. In my classroom context, as a microcosm of the world, power circulates among groups through student- or teacher-generated discourses, and can be configured differently each time a new discourse is used (Foucault & Trombadori, 1991). I am also looking at how there are going to be conflicts of interests inside groups of students, teachers, administrators, or policy makers even when they belong to the same class (Foucault, 1972). Marxism and neo-Marxism are also relevant to my study because of the macro structure of society and its relevance to the issuance of language policies. In my research, I problematize the legitimacy of the state's interventions, as those pertaining to a dominant class, that positions non-English languages as irrelevant. In this vein I am also using Althusser's, Gramsci's and Hall's theoretical positions to look at discourses that are not necessarily going to be in the interest of the group that is generating them. I am looking at class issues that are constructed through the people's relationships to each other and to the group.

In the attempt to formulate the basis of this review of literature on power, looking at Marx alone was not in itself the theoretical stance that I planned to operate from. Understanding only "why" power occurs was not enough. Adding additional layers of meanings to the concept of power seemed essential to understand "how"

power occurs. Therefore, bringing Foucault, as a scholar who dealt with the concept of power, and who attempted to reshape with it the meaning or lack thereof, of truth and reality, was a necessary step in gaining a full understanding of what power was. For that reason, my entire position on power in this literature review is based on the conflicts and merger of ideas as they present themselves through the work of these two fundamental sociologists and their positions on power, and on the fact that they allow for great insight into the nature of institutional discourse and its relationship to wider society. For Foucault, discourse is a group of statements united by the same object of study, and one can achieve meaning only through discourse (Foucault, 1972).

For Foucault, “power” was central and he considered it worth explaining; however, no theoretical system could ever manage to account for power (Foucault & Trombadori, 1991). Foucault saw power only in the discourse itself, joined directly to knowledge; therefore, for him, power only exists in social relations. It can be constructed and deconstructed because there is no absolute truth. Knowledge is linked to power because it has the authority to make itself true. A relationship between power and repression is explained by Foucault with the following:

"Do the workings of power and in particular those mechanisms that are brought into play in societies such as ours, really belong primarily to the category of repression? Are prohibition, censorship and denial truly the forms through which power is exercised in a general way, if not in every society, most certainly in our own?" (Foucault, 1982)

Although he does not directly respond to the question, he cites Marx, (without quotation marks), and disagrees. Power works through a net-like organization, and we are all caught up in the circulation of power relations, whether we are oppressors or oppressed. For Marx however, power is exerted as a result of clashes between social classes. Although Foucault did not disagree with the existence of classes, he believed that the issue could be unpacked or reframed if one only formulated the conception of relations between what constitutes knowledge and the exercises of power (Foucault, 1972). For Foucault none of the major discourses that were produced about society were convincing enough to be trusted, concurring on this idea with Lyotard's position, who made a case as well that the value of knowledge does not result any more from generating general truths. Society has no longer the ability to produce *grand narratives* or universally true discourses, since they have lost their power to legitimize knowledge (Browning, 2000).

Since I am operating from assumptions in critical theory (a combination of critical with post modernism), all macro structures are replicated at the micro level, and in the case of the foreign language classroom, the "truth" about language learning at the society level seems to have fallen in the same pattern of systematic de-legitimization. In order to be able to transform power relations in which language ideologies and identities are developed, and that continually de-emphasize the foreign language "truth", many researchers as classroom practitioners (Hendrix, 1999; Kazmierzak, 1994; Patthey-Chavez, 1995; Wallinger, 2000), promote practices for students that require them to explore their own immediate community and to transform everyday relations. Of course that, such practices are also encouraged by the Foreign Language Standards

(whether at the state or at the national level). These are legal documents committed to “straighten out” any misunderstandings about the importance of foreign language instruction.

Operating from Foucault’s stance, the question is not of **what** power is or who has it but is more a question of **how** it occurs. Power is everything and it comes from everywhere, is fueled by resistance, and as a mode of action, it appears to be a label we give to societal strategic situations. Everyone has power by which he or she is able to control everybody else. People exercise power over other people because power operates throughout society; it does not have location or origin, and it is not owned or possessed. Although Foucault deals mostly with power at the macro level, he acknowledges that power operates also at the micro level. Continuing to analyze Foucault’s interpretations of power and political power, and replacing it with the notion of **governmentality** (*gouvernementalité*) – as a strategic field of power relations which are mobile, transformable and reversible, one can then find that the relations of power or governmentality operate also in self, in relation to self or in relation to others (Foucault, 1972). Using Foucault’s notion of governmentality, I explore how students internalize centralized classroom power by becoming part of the normalizing force as legitimate members of the “webs of power”. In other words, I extrapolate Foucault’s analysis and his interpretation of the notion of “gouvernementalité” into the foreign language class, by arguing that the students have the capacity of self-control and of control over others, and in doing that they configure the classroom politics.

Another significant scholar who researched the concept of power at the macro level was the sociologist Bourdieu. For Bourdieu, power operates at the macro level and

the micro level. Bourdieu examines symbolic power at the societal level of the “fields” and the local level of the “habitus”. For him, “habitus” is a mental structure as a result of one’s “positioning” in the social world that affords comprehension of the “field” (social world). The relationship between “habitus” and “field” for Bourdieu is in a way, similar to the relationship between micro and macro, or between action and structure (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). He even tried to adopt a hybrid approach between micro and macro structures by stating that social structures are reproduced in everybody’s lifestyle. Bourdieu sees power created through discourses, in a linguistic relation, which calls on a whole structural process of linguistic and social change in “habitus” when interaction occurs. Bourdieu's metaphor of power is the well-established now, concept of “linguistic capital”. The “economics” of talk here take a metaphorical interpretation in order to visualize “a symbolic relation of power” (Bourdieu, 1982).

Bourdieu, like Foucault brings the linguistic dimension in the power structures I problematize in my study. Acquiring additional linguistic capital in relation to the language of power or the official language represents the main struggle feature in the foreign language class. Gaining a different economy (ex. acquiring standard Spanish) that parallels one’s own initial linguistic economy (ex: maintaining/using standard English), leads to potential conflicts that are seen as threatening, replacement acts, even though the new economy does not carry the same weight. The correlation between acquiring “linguistic capital” and the ability to co-construct power is a venue I explore in my study, specifically the “habitus” in relation to the “linguistic capital”. For the students in my class and for myself as a teacher, the “habitus” represents a sense of one’s place in the classroom, the formation of a socialized subjectivity oriented towards



practical functions that exist within the classroom members, and also that are adopted through upbringing and education, a capacity to generate thoughts and express orally or in writing, perceptions, expressions and actions. The “habitus” is the product of socialization during which concepts and principles are internalized, and are becoming further capable of perpetuating themselves even after teaching has stopped. It is a habitual condition that generates practices. Bourdieu’s particular thinking on this topic is very much aligned with Foucault’s position on the role of the classroom. Foucault states that the classroom is much more than the place where academic learning occurs. It is the space where moral instruction occurs, classification, division, and hierarchization of people takes place. Moreover, its final goal is to normalize the principles that will further permeate society as a whole. For this reason, Foucault sees schools as prisons, and prisons as schools, as a sort of normative order coordinated by social (institutional and personal) power relations (Foucault, 1982).

For the students in the foreign language class the relations of power are also expressed by Scollon (1998), in a study done among bilingual university students in Hong Kong (R. Scollon, Tsang, Li, Yung, & Jones, 1998). He investigated the students’ practices in the appropriation<sup>1</sup> of text as a semiotic field. By analyzing the student written text, the researcher revealed that in producing this text in a foreign language class, the students appropriate voices<sup>2</sup> from both languages. In this way, by making use of polyvocality in their text, the students are actively using their linguistic capital, which is its turn a form of discursive power in a market where this may be valued. Although the degree of appropriating one language versus the other can not be clearly determined, I think that it is important to acknowledge such polyvocality as an essential

discursive power and identity builder for the foreign language student. In this dissertation, by examining similar classroom practices like journal writing or any other form of written text produced within the foreign language class, and by questioning which discourses are circulating, by whom and how, in these practices, I will show which are the indicators of power that are invoked by the students' use of polyvocality<sup>3</sup> as well as how they draw on their linguistic capital when appropriating a text; a similar position with the one established in the literature on bilingual education(LatCrit<sup>4</sup>, etc.) .

Understanding how power circulates through discourse and attempting to define the discourse itself, is illustrated in Gee's theorization of the literacy process as well as his discourse theory. Gee makes a distinction between the types of discourse that circulate in society. His big "D" and small "d" discourse theory is related to issues of literacy and globalization. Little "d" discourses are vernacular, conversational type of language, and Big D" discourses are language and other elements. The other elements are included in Gee's definition of Discourses as "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting in the `right' places and at the `right' times with the `right' objects" (Gee, 1999). These Discourses shape our relations with people in complicated ways that go beyond word meanings. "It is sometimes helpful to think about social and political issues as if it is not just humans who are talking and interacting with each other, but rather, the Discourses we represent and enact, for which we are `carriers'"(Gee, 1999). Gee's Discourses involve language coordinating with the choice of clothing, values, beliefs, technologies and perhaps non-verbal symbols.

In an attempt to fully understand how power works one must also examine the research that has been carried out interpersonally and interactionally at the micro level, because at these levels power can operate through silence or it can allow voices<sup>5</sup>. Although silence is often brought up in the analyses done in this paper, its meanings are not investigated at length. Silence, like speech, can convey meanings that have the possibility of being very powerful especially in educational settings. Teacher and students often find it fitting to stay silent at times, so that they can develop their own thoughts, or use the time to search for adequate cultural resources, prior of hearing the thoughts of the other speakers, or simply act use it as a resistance act (Deirdre Boden & Zimmerman, 1991).

Molotch and Boden (1985) theorized, after analyzing the Watergate hearings, that the concept of micro-domination is the “capacity to deprive another of the grounds of talk”(Deirdre Boden & Zimmerman, 1991; Molotch & Boden, 1985). Following this definition attempt, Willer, Lovaglia & Markovsky (1997) redefine power once more in its relation to influence. This time their definition is a “structured potential” to obtain payoffs in relations where interests are opposed (Michael Lovaglia, 1997). In other words, they define power as a struggle between competing interests whereby the prevailing interest is considered “powerful”, or a power advantage over a weaker interest. It is interesting to note that a slippery, esoteric concept such as power needs to be structured in order to operate in well-defined relations for Lovaglia, unlike Foucault’s power that needs to occur, to circulate through (re)use of discourses. I am taking from Lovaglia the idea of power differences based on changing opportunities to gain dependence and status, since in the classroom, students strive to use different

levels of power in order to attain a certain status or identity which is dependent on their relation to others.

Foreign language classrooms are rich places for the study of power relations in classrooms and yet these classrooms are rarely selected for such study. In foreign language classrooms communicative interaction is highly constrained by the students' lack of competence in the language, professional discourses about the nature and purpose of interaction in these classrooms, and macro discourses in the U.S. that position non-English languages as irrelevant, all of which shapes the kinds of power relations that are possible to construct in these classrooms. This is especially important in foreign language classes where issues of power and language ideology are rarely discussed. In their study "Power relationships in the classroom", Kramarae and Treichler (1990) scrutinize the notion of power in the classroom. After conducting an exploratory study the two researchers argue that the nature of the structure of power in the classroom can be examined by listening to students and teachers speaking of their rights and duties, privileges and problems in the classroom. In this study students address the questions and comments to instructors rather than to other students. Instructors in their turn assumed the role of knowledge keepers and provided answers more than invite discussions. The two researchers noted that teachers tend to talk for longer periods of time and more frequently. In their study gender appears to play also an important role in determining the power relations in the classroom. The study revealed that topic is dictated by gender and can be imposed in a classroom setting (Kramarae & Treichler, 1990). The relevance of this study in my research is related to turns of managing the floor and decisions that are taken in the name of knowledge of the topic

frequently employed by teachers. In terms of success and failure of students in the classroom, relations of power may also play an important role.

The study further problematizes the effectiveness and success in classroom interaction that can often be substituted for power. Instructors often portrayed this by marking down statements unclearly conceived by students in open discussions. Students, in their turn, were concerned with their inability to participate constructively to the discussion and so would decline to join the discussion, and implicitly give up any attempt to establish a claim to power, as it existed in the class interaction.

The authors also studied the amount of student talk and the role of power played between teacher and students and between the students themselves. The general perception is that teachers establish and maintain power and control; they ask questions but do not truly entertain them. The study has great relevance to my research in this respect particularly in the analysis of classroom routine events. Other findings were that males are more likely to talk as individual beings, while women's talk is permeated by the awareness of their gender and their social status, male dominance is taught therefore in the structure of the classroom itself. The limitation of this both quantitative and qualitative study was the unilateral perspective on power. While the researchers analyzed language use in academic setting, they failed to problematize these uses in relation to wider academic practices within the university.

Bloome and Willett (1991) reinterpret the notion of power once again, and look at the power relationship in the classroom not as the common conception of *power over* but *power with*. The relationship of domination becomes redefined as the relationship of co-agency. According to Bloome and Willett's definition of power is the

“relationships of cooperation, mutual support and equity” (Blase, 1991, p. 208). The relationships of co-agency are applicable to student-to-student relationships in today’s classroom. These important theoretical issues result from a qualitative study of a multicultural community in an elementary school. In their study the authors conclude that although the teacher has the majority of I-R-E sequences (teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation), one needs to study the micropolitics of classroom interaction in order to see in what discourses the teacher uses are powerful, and in what discourse he is not. The unit of analysis employed in this study is the IRE sequence. This unit of analysis was first employed by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) in a study of discourse analysis in an English classroom (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

In Bloome and Willett, the discourses where the teacher is powerful are dominant in teacher initiation. Instead of assuming that the teacher is dominant and powerful, one should perhaps look for the manifestations of power found in “mutuality and co-agency”, which is “harder” than to note struggle and conflict. The authors are following Foucault’s steps, and for a good cause, trying to explain what collaboration and co-agency is. Their assumption is that by using a micropolitical perspective to achieve their personal goals, teacher and students cooperate in the classroom. This perspective on the interaction of classroom members can be very useful when considering learning in a democratic classroom.

Extrapolating from here in foreign language classes teachers should listen to students’ problems and work with them to formulate answers to these problems: what students say, what is the job of a teacher, how students react to this, etc.

Issues of democracy in the classroom and social equality for teaching and learning are also the purpose of Pennycook's work (Pennycook, 2001). The author is using a critical framework to describe what is going on in the classroom. Through critical interpretations and suggestions, Pennycook views the classroom as a domain with relations of power and societal context in which learning takes place. Pennycook's view of classroom power is of Marxist origin. The author operates from the critical neomarxist paradigm and he is positioning ESL classes as part of the social system that emphasized language competencies suitable for low paying jobs. Pennycook views social and cultural relations occurring in the classrooms as "domains embedded with relations of power"(Eggington & Hall, 2000). Pennycook relates the social relationships in the classroom to the larger social context. Its applicability to my study stands out in terms of the larger context of the pedagogical practices employed in the name of the students' learning.

Freire, like Pennycook, approaches teaching in a similar aggressive way. Freire's work offers connections with cognitive science and education reform. In his "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970), power is not enough to prompt social change. Power must be rediscovered and gained by all in the first place. It must be conquered in schools, in jobs, in everyday lives, at all the levels of the masses. (Freire, 1970). I am bringing up Freire in this literature review not as much because it supports my study, but because I acknowledge his tremendous influence in the re-definition of power. For Freire, power is the currency of social change.

Torres (1997) examines language and power in Puerto Rican narratives by looking at two case studies. Although the term *power* is discussed in the paper, it

permeates the text by the frequent references made to English language and Spanish language as means of success in communication (Torres, 1997). A dominant language thus becomes legitimate in the school setting and proves to be a legitimate, powerful tool in accessing good places to live. While some participants accept the power of the dominant language group discourse, others reject the racist dominant discourse. This critical study revolves around issues of sexism, racism and discourse through the lens of power in society. However, we must not forget that oftentimes it is the implementation of a certain language policy that empowers or disempowers students in the classroom (Freebody & Welch, 1993).

In looking back at all the attempts to define power it is interesting to see how elusive the concept is, how easily it gets constructed and deconstructed, how chaotic, self-organizing and dynamic researchers characterize it, especially when examining the different morphological categories that they assign to the concept in their use of it. This semiotic analysis of power that looks deep into the social constructs or conventions (Schroeder, 1998) of a group, allows for a comfortable level of polisemy. Examining each use of the word in context, I found a wide range of categories: power as a **noun** in Marx (*state*), Foucault and Lovaglia & Markowsky (*influence*), Reagan and Osborn (action leading to *identity*), to power as an **adjective** in Marx (*normal, economic*), Foucault (*discursive*) to power again as a **verb** in Foucault (*to have control*), in Marx (*to enrich*), in Molotch and Boden (*to deprive/deligitimize*). Thus, it becomes increasingly difficult when analyzing aspects of daily interactions between students and teachers, to ignore the fact that power could indeed be functioning in every exchange! From this perspective I will frame my position on power as part of the foreign language



learning in the classroom context, based on Foucault's relational process. I see power as a self-regulation, relational mechanism that shapes and is being shaped by the circumstances in which it occurs, not as "goods" or "acquisitions" that can be accumulated, but more like maintaining a relation between participants, as members of a global society. In a classroom, teacher and students confront each other in a field of power where there are human interaction opportunities and constraints for all parties involved. In other words, foreign language instruction and learning may occur when teachers, parents, students collaborate to create a context in which "foreign language" acquires the status of "knowledge", and establishes itself as an authentic "truth". This truth then, becomes meaningful to their lives through the production of commonly-agreed discursive practices that occur within the set of self-regulating rules of the foreign language class, within institutions, and within the global society. Therefore when looking for instantiations of power in foreign language class, I will search and code data that represent instances of power being enacted, both through the acceptable use of discourses as well as the acceptance of consequences of using those discourses, and as a result, that leads to the maintenance of a social status and/or, the acquisition of a new identity.

### **Motivation**

Another factor that may play an important role in the complex equation of student learning is motivation. Motivation, as a concept, has been extensively researched and classified. A plethora of scholars (Dornyei, 1990; Ellis & Newton, 2000; H. Gardner & Lambert, 1972)<sup>6</sup> tried to link motivation to the success of learning a foreign language and to the attitude towards that language.. However, the question

"Why go through a difficult struggle to learn "other" languages?" has not been answered to the satisfaction of thousands of students worldwide. This is due mostly because this question expects a person's declaration for "truth", "reality" and "identity", and these are concepts that vary greatly in people.

### **As a Psychological Construct**

For years researchers hypothesized that what drives individuals and groups to manifest a certain social behavior or identity is based either on external or internal motivation (behavior vs. attitude). Later on another acceptable classification of motivation was (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) to consider it as integrative or instrumental, where motivation is related to attitude (H. Gardner & Lambert, 1972). When language socialization theory was developed and connected to SLA (Second Language Acquisition), the research field on motivation expanded. As a result, some scholars, one of whom is Schumann (1976), started to link motivation in the learning of a foreign language, for example to the social distance and acculturation, as primary functions that it facilitates.

Other previous studies of attitude and motivation in second language learning have connected macro societal discourses on language ideology to individual motivations for learning languages and viewed it mostly as an effort made by the learner (H. Gardner & Lambert, 1972; E. Hall, 1990; Ryan & Giles, 1982; Schumann, 1979.), but how these connections are constructed in specific communities of practice<sup>7</sup> in foreign language classrooms has rarely been examined (Eggington & Hall, 2000; Grillo, 1989; Wardhaugh, 1987). This research has been limited to research situations where teachers encourage students to explore their beliefs about their own language,

and along with this, teachers help create social interactions that can later on map more clearly how motivation occurs (Agar, 1994).

### **As Agency**

Since "motivation" as a term falls short of accounting for individuals' actions in a wide array of social situations with others, researchers once again established a different approach to this problem by adopting the constructed term of "agency". *Agency*, started to replace motivation in the research literature, especially since it incorporated in its definition (in contrast with the passive *motivation*), the purposeful action to facilitate changes (Giroux & McLaren, 1994). The use of agency began to gain ground especially due to research on the newly acknowledged relationships between power and identities. From this perspective, to accomplish learning a language meant an assertion of one's identity to be an agent organizer, a user reflective of learning. This process can be represented by building sustaining relationships in the classroom as students interact in order to achieve learning: *identity* → *agency* → *power* → *learning* (Giroux & McLaren, 1994). In my interpretation of the relationship between these concepts however, the discourse is used to shuffle, interchange, interplay the above concepts in a new relationship every time that it is used or produced by the participants.

A more complex approach to agency and meaning however can be found by looking at Giddens' (1991) theory of structuration. For Giddens, human agency and social structure are in a relationship that consider social action as a way to achieve learning. Relying heavily on Goffman's work of "positioning"<sup>8</sup>, Giddens' structure has three dimensions: interpretation, morality and sense of power in action (Giddens, 1984). For Giddens structure and agency are mutually constructed. As far as the production of

meaning is concerned, people use semantic rules. For morality, they produce norms and values, and they achieve power through the use of resources. Building on Giddens' approach to agency as a "capacity to act and be acted upon by social forces", Dirkx, Kushner & Slusarski (2000) maintain that in order to increase student motivation to gain knowledge, learning must be conceived in an enhanced manner. This can be done by including the educational content "to the specific contexts of learners' lives and interests, and with situations or issues that are meaningful" to learners (Dirkx, 2000).

Simultaneously with the creation of agency as understood above, Quigely (1987) looked at it as a form of resistance to education. His research showed the need to understand this resistance, by viewing a passive stance, as an active capacity to act and be acted upon. This way, his position is taking a sociological perspective, which differs greatly from the majority of the research that was done until then on motivation. Student resistance to education, in other words, his/her lack of involvement in learning, is a new perspective of looking at student motivation as a response to lack of agency, or the creation of an "agency" that does not accept imposed subject position.. This sociological perspective shows that learners' lack of participation may be, in fact the result of a choice for power, to not engage in social interaction especially in adult education, and that would mean the agency to engage or not (Quigley, 1987).

### **As Investment**

Starting from the premises that people are complex social beings who employ multiple discourses throughout their career as learners, Peirce (1995) rejected the dichotomous psychological notions of instrumental and integrative motivation that, she thought, fell short of describing the learner's subjectivity. Peirce believed that the

learner does not have a static identity and a single desire to learn, and used the concept of *investment*, a notion which contrasted vastly with the traditional notion of motivation. When people speak they are not only exchanging information, they are reorganizing their identity, and how they connect to the social world. For some, if they are investing in a second language, for instance, it is in order to get access to resources such as education. As a result, the concept of investment was used to explain the construction process of a desired identity. According to Peirce it was through investment that people could acquire cultural capital. The acquisition of cultural capital was the pay off for time and effort invested in certain activities. Peirce therefore, pointed out the importance of examining social identity in successful language learning to gain insights on how investment operates (Norton Peirce, 1995). Once I explored Norton Peirce's assumption that people are complex social beings who employ multiple discourses throughout their careers as learners, I began to slowly move to use a financial connotation in the effort to explain what drives students in their action.

Another researcher who explored this venue was Ullman (1997), who dealt with the notion of motivation in the target language again as investment, to complement the motivation theories. In his research, classroom investment can be constructed through a learner's engagement in specific classroom applications such as: dialogue journal writing, small group conversations, large group discussion, etc. In his opinion, all these language and literacy practices help recreate the individual identity through different types of discourses (Ullman, 1997). In other words, by investing and engaging in specific discursive classroom practices, learners continuously (re)construct their identity.

After careful examination of the different forms that motivation can take in the various research literatures, I tried to put the pieces together. It seemed that in looking at the present context of rapid construction and deconstruction of meaning, in particular in the foreign language class, motivation as a construct, as it was previously defined, does not explain appropriately student learning. Throughout my research I strived to contribute to the field by exploring a different venue when looking at the present conditions of foreign language education and understanding how student learning is constructed.

However innovative these perspectives are on their understanding of the concept of motivation, whether they interpret it through a psychological lens, a social lens or a combination of the two, they fail to fully conceptualize an acceptable theoretical framework to support these positions and therefore, to explain how learning occurs. For the most part, I believe, the main reason for failure is the situating of micro and macro social structures within their discursive boundaries. In other words, the lack of access for learners, to certain social structures prevents them to appropriate discourses that would situate them as users of, and active participants in those discourses. My approach to motivation is to reconfigure it so that it can accommodate a wider scope of social practices and show transitivity between discourses and social practices. I believe that there is still room to research and develop new insights in the field of student motivation, and in view of the work in this dissertation and my current research interests, my approach toward the reinterpretation of motivation is to acknowledge all that has been done so far, as ground work, and to open a new path in the field.

## Identity and Classroom Practices

Whether or not my research situates agency as an outcome or a process related to identity building (Giroux & McLaren, 1994), or investment as the construction of (multiple) identity (Norton Peirce, 1995), or even motivation in relation to their linguistic identity (R. Gardner & Lambert, 1985); it is clear that they are all interrelated and emphasize the fluidity, the multiplicity and the contradictory nature of the process of identity construction.

### Identity

Perhaps the most widely recognized approach to identity building is how Foucault conceived the self through his theory of identity construction. Foucault theorizes that by imposing a specific truth or knowledge on individuals, power is used by the truth generators to control individuals. Therefore, schools, prisons, hospitals, institutions in general, afford building identities because individuals in these institutions build discourses around them, and view them as accessible, symbolic sites to exert power. He goes further to discuss that the reason for which people change/build/reconstruct their identities is because “power is tolerable only on the condition that it masks a substantial part of itself”(Foucault, 1978). Foucault hypothesizes that the goal of individuals is to “...attain a certain state of perfection, happiness, purity, supernatural power” (Foucault & Rabinow, 1997). It is this goal that motivates individuals in creating their own identities.

Working with the social identity construct, much like Norton Peirce (1995), Willett (1995), to account for the process of second language learning, examined teacher-student and student-student interactional strategies used in a first grade ESL

class. Through a thorough ethnographic approach (field notes, interviews, participant-observations) related to social and academic life of the classroom, school and community, she was able to identify the roles of varied discourses employed by students and teachers to construct their identities. Her findings pointed to student-teacher interactions that were short and controlled by the teachers, as opposed to student-student interactions that were playful, involved longer responses, and a longer negotiation of meaning. This was due, according to Willett, to the limited interactional role between adults and children that is in place in school, and not to children's limited English proficiency (Willett, 1995) .

In what follows I will examine identity building through the literature that pertains to language pedagogy. I want to understand what identity entails in the context of foreign/second language pedagogy, through an examination of the literature that pertains to classroom events. I will look in particular to specific classroom routines (homework check and journal writing), in order to understand student identity and how it relates to student motivation/investment/agency.

Additionally, the review of literature that follows on specific routine classroom practices is also angled to include pedagogy research where educators promote practices for students to explore their own immediate community and to transform everyday relations in close connection to class assignments and activities. Since the ever-changing webs of power in the classroom contain the spaces where the language ideologies and identities are developed, I have decided to look at homework check and journal writing as two events that have the potential of allowing existing discursive power relations to transform and reconfigure the foreign language class. I have decided



to select this specific review of literature because in my classroom, I set up these routines not only to “reinforce” language teaching concepts, but more importantly, to create spaces for students where they can build an identity and from here construct meaning to complete the assignments. Homework check and journal writing are two rich contexts that permit this kind of endeavor because students can construct power relations to use the language to mean what they want to mean, to play with language and to experiment with the language. These are important issues to consider when trying to understand how students construct learning.

As a limitation to this review of literature, I acknowledge that in I did not include studies that look at for instance, establishing a relationship between the quantity and frequency of homework and student success. Moreover, the homework act itself is only tangentially related to the homework check event that is located in the classroom.

### **Homework Check as a Practice Site for Identity Construction**

Homework in foreign language class was and still is a very controversial issue in the pedagogical literature (Channon, 1970; Cooper, 1989; Laconte & Doyle, 1986). In an attempt to link and make meaningful school assignments, several researchers (Hendrix, 1999; Kazmierzak, 1994; Wallinger, 2000) looked into the concept of homework and how it relates to student learning. Wallinger (2000) researched the relationship between homework and learning a foreign language. Through questionnaires, interviews, and quantitative analysis she conducted a study among a group of 20 French I college student. The study was aimed to determine if the total homework that foreign language teachers assigned their students impacts achievement. The evidence that homework either contributed to, or detracted from the language

learning process, was inconclusive. The author also problematizes homework in terms of the complexity of the assignments and their length, agreeing that when higher order thinking skills are involved, only high-level foreign language students, in fact benefit from them. This perspective suggests that identities created in such high-level classes afford for only certain students opportunities to develop an effective learning process while others are positioned as incompetent. In my study I used the insights of sociocultural theory to frame assignments in a way to reflect the role of social interaction in students' learning process. Therefore, such assignments were given not only to advanced students, but also to beginning students. As far as the practice of checking the homework completion and correctness in class is concerned, it was a practice that I already had in place in my classroom, and I used it as a springboard to explore further student learning.

Habedank Stewart and Roper (2001) conducted a qualitative and quantitative study with a group of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, in a pull out class format. In order to research the effects of reading homework on students who showed inconsistency in achievement, the researcher established a link with the home and examined the issue from both the classroom perspective and the home perspective. Across two points in time she measured the quantity and meaningfulness of homework given in school in the home context. The findings of the study emphasized the need for a collaborative effort from the part of the teacher, parent and student in order to make homework an effective strategy. In the same vein, including parents and home environment, Nuzum (1998) focuses her research to present different points of view on the meaningfulness of homework. Parents as well as some teachers are concerned mostly with time spent on

homework, but this should be the least of worries. She advises based on her classroom experience, that meaningfulness should play a major role in assigning homework, emphasizing mostly on the thinking skills to be developed in a student. A great majority of teachers give homework to students and believe that it contributes to the advancement in the target language as a vital component of success, however the researcher advises to focus on meaning above all (Nuzum, 1998).

Although the complexity of the homework assignments varied according to variables such as foreign language abilities, few teachers did more than simply check to see if the homework was done or not. By not placing an emphasis on the correctness of the assignment done, no clear conclusion could be drawn to see if homework indeed helps or not the language learning process. This could count as participation in a language class but little is revealed as to what this participation would achieve. This is problematic because it can send mixed messages to the students.

A significant year-long qualitative study was conducted in 2001 by White to research the homework event as an important connection between students' school success and family involvement in student learning. Building on the notion of multiple literacies, the researcher examined unequal power relationships between school and two Australian families. An important finding that resulted from the study was that in trying to accommodate school literacies in the home setting the relationship of parent-child changed to teacher-student that in turn affected the normal course of home-based literacy (White, 2002).

Other researchers focused on practices in which students explore their own immediate community and everyday practices to transform relations ((Patthey-Chavez,

1995; Ron Scollon, 1998). My interest is in the homework check episodes in the classroom that are common routines employed by a vast majority of educators. I was not able to find significant research on these practices is scarce and inconclusive<sup>9</sup> in terms of how it can impact, as a contextualized setting, issues of power and motivation (Kazmierzak, 1994; Laconte & Doyle, 1986; Noam, Biancarosa, & Dechausay, 2003). Additionally, there has been very little research on the practices of talk, which teachers use to construct homework check and to provide students with feedback on errors or assist them to correct these errors (Alleman, Brophy, & Educational Resources Information Center (U.S.), 1991). Although this is a different aspect of homework that does not focus as much on the meaningfulness of assignments, it points to the direction that practitioners may not allot too much importance to this type of social interaction. As of April 2004, no research has been conducted in these contextual practices to explore a possible relation of power to motivation/investment/agency.

### **Journal Writing as a Site for Identity Construction**

Another rich context that allowed me to examine issues of identity in relation to student motivation is journal writing. Journals and dialog journals have been widely used to discover learner anxiety and analyze learning strategies (Allwright, 1991; Nerenz, 1990), but overall language teachers have been unsatisfied with student writing. Contrary to this view, I believe that student journals are valuable tools to present the new language to students. Journals represent spaces where a tremendous “linguistic capital” can be sought and accumulated, and further be used by the students to participate in classroom “transactions”<sup>10</sup>. By allowing the students to create their own boundaries of the topic to be discussed and developed in the journal, teachers

potentially ensure a social nature to the event as well as allow the students access to linguistic and cultural capital that is going to be used primarily for the construction of meaning and accumulation of more linguistic capital. The advantage of this approach is that if the process proves to be cumbersome, the students may co-construct their own capital based on their own understanding, and use it in the group structural dynamic, by developing personalized codes for the transmission of message.

The next section concentrates on how researchers have used journals in their studies. It is important to note here that research and instruction do not view journals in the same light. As a teacher researching practices in the light of this literature, I use journals to make available to the students poststructuralist discourses that can enable them to situate themselves comfortably in the midst of the new language. These are discourses that emphasize that knowledge does not flow in one direction but is constructed in spaces that are created by the type of relationships established.

A frequently used form of exploring rich, social contexts is through dialog journals that have been widely used to discover learner anxiety and analyze learning strategies (Allwright, 1991; Nerenz, 1990). From the language teacher's perspective however, who is interested in developing writing skills in students through the use of journals, the above researchers found a degree of dissatisfaction with this type of student writing. Perhaps this would count as what Bloome (1989) calls "procedural display,"<sup>11</sup> which accounts for little depth in learning but more emphasis on getting the lesson done according to pre-established procedures (Bloome, 1989). On the other hand, Sandler (1987) argues that lowering the standards, especially in journal writing events, helps students become more comfortable in the new language, and encourages them

develop sensitivity to tone in reading foreign-language literature. For more advanced students, Hewins (1986) argues that writing in a foreign language can be used to improve written expression, if writing is approached as a process, in other words, using consistently strategies like prewriting, first draft, feedback, second draft, proofreading, and final draft. Improvement is considered when students' writing skills in a foreign language advance in terms of fluency and accuracy of transferring meaning to the reader. In this instructional article, she recommends assigning challenging and relevant topics that include students' interests, identities, and experiences (Hewins, 1986). In doing so she suggests that language skills can be connected to students' lives. I believe it is important to link here this statement to Foucault's position of foreign language. Foucault (1983) states that we do not know what it means to know a language due to its non-static, but dynamic nature. According to Foucault, language is perpetually changing and "the confrontation with a foreign culture is a dialogue process" that can not be successful without the personal engagement of the learners (Dreyfus, Rabinow, & Foucault, 1983). A foreign culture does not reveal to the learner without the learner's active participation. However, this is not a peaceful relationship. On the contrary is quite "agonistic", a term that Foucault uses to express the relationship between opposed forces of power. It is interesting to note that Foucault paraphrases here motivation to learn a foreign language as "personal engagement", and therefore also links language skills to learners' engagement in the learning process (Foucault, 1971). Similarly, in a journal writing situation, learners are required to engage in a dialogic process with the new language that can be an opposition of forces, but as long as there is "engagement" there is learning.

Additionally, the use of journals as effective tools in the foreign language class is nevertheless assumed to benefit learners. In writing in their journals, students find that new aspects of their identities emerge when they are writing with a peer, as opposed to the teacher, or an imaginary pen pal. By the same token, they can explore a certain topic better with one classmate than another (Peyton, 1995). Peyton studied the writing development of six deaf students who used computer network to write in the journal and conduct discussions. He found a positive effect on students approach to learning based on this instructional approach. With this research on issues of identity and dialogue journals, Peyton shows one more time how important is audience in building identity.

Bailey (1991) researched second language learning and teaching using student journals as data. The findings in this study proved useful for teachers and students alike since journal writing promotes, according to the author, awareness of learning as social, and strategic processes and is not merely an act credited or valued by the instructor (Bailey, 1991).

A more socio-cultural approach to journal writing is taken by Peirce (1994). She explores language learning and social adaptation of immigrant women learning English. Peirce analyzed diaries to reveal the critical dialogue that occurs in social adjustment making visible subject positions or agency (Peirce, 1994). Again, in this research, by using co-constructed discourses in order to access society's resources, participants endorse certain advantageous social processes that could offer significant returns, such as learning a second language. In this ethnographic study, Peirce uses qualitative research procedures such as interviews and fieldnotes and participant observation to get

at the exchange value of learning another language. In a two-year involvement in the lives of five adult immigrant women in Canada, Norton paints detailed individual portraits of the ways in which opportunities to practice speaking English were socially structured for them. The study ended with further questions that could prove to be essential in understanding the issue of identity. One very intriguing question is what resources are learners of a foreign language accessing, in a context where the new language is not the language of the resources that need to be accessed.

These consistent, informal exchanges that focus upon the learning of a new language, place the learners in the midst of multiple discourses. This idea also concurs with Foucault's views on the existence of multiple levels of discourse. In my study, I use the idea and look mostly at student interaction in the classroom as the process of frequent formal exchanges that focus upon learning as well as at the effect of language policies on student learning. In doing this, I acknowledge that the system or network that the students are part of is much wider than the classroom, and as a result the process of building identities in the classroom originates in many levels within the society. Although I will not go in depth with this, due to limitations of time, I acknowledge that family and community **are part** of a student's wider network, and that multiple levels of discourse intersect in the actual student classroom interaction. Using this theoretical framework when unpacking student learning, I acknowledge that I explore other systems and networks that may be present in the apparently restricted student classroom interaction.

Examining how these systems flow from one another, renders student learning more complex and more situated at the same time. In general, the majority of the



discourses used so far in the foreign language class emphasize proficiency, communication competence, and the use of a detailed acquisition process. These approaches are only meant to constrain the learners in a narrow discursive practice where they are neither comfortable nor fluent. By finding out how power instills itself in the participants within certain foreign language practices and contributes to their identity building, I hope to develop a better understanding of this process and implicitly the foreign language learning. I believe that this can be done by offering new opportunities for learning to students, such as frequent reflections of class activities (through journals), descriptions of home events that are enhanced by school acquired skills (using the new language to complete home tasks) and obtaining feedback from students on school related practices (through personal discussions). Another approach would be to acknowledge upfront that foreign language instruction must be reconfigured differently. For instance, in an immersion situation, teachers should be prepared to relinquish control and allow students to make choices if the established procedural norms are not explicit to certain learning situations. Since students have their own values and beliefs systems in place, there should be procedures in place that allow transformation from student to teacher when meaning is not easily established. This approach could be very beneficial to student learning because of the space created for reflection.

### **Foreign Language, Globalization and Language Policy**

In the third part of this chapter I will examine the literature on globalization as it relates to the past and current state of the foreign language education in the U.S. and abroad. I will also look at how policy-making is occurring in practice and how this

policy is impacting the students in the classroom. First, I will research existing definitions and classifications of foreign language education, as they pertain to the U.S. foreign policy practices. Second, I will examine some of the official foreign language documents issued at the local, state, and federal level. Finally, I will review some current, competitive education language policies in the E.U. as well as in the Far East that may offer alternatives in creating viable options for a long-term perspective of foreign language education in the U.S.

### **Foreign Language**

After concluding my ethnographic study conducted in 2001 in an urban public school, I decided to expand my literature review to language policy. I considered that such a review would help me advance in understanding the broader context of the foreign language class. Looking critically at the past and current state of affairs of the foreign language education model in the U.S. and abroad, I tried to see how policy-making is occurring in practice and how is impacting student learning.

The following poststructuralist positions explain how policy about language is inconsistent worldwide and why it is permanently breaking apart and re-attaching in new combinations.

1. If language works through us, then this intertextual weaving creates political relations when two people encounter one another.
2. Socially, policy makers promote ideological stances through cultural assimilation or language pluralism that are later conveyed through language policy.

3. Educationally, students' own feelings are shaped toward language and their progress toward that goal is closely monitored. For this reason learning how language is used to protect and convey social status should not be overlooked (Reagan & Osborn, 2002).

There is no quick or easy answer as to why a foreign language is learned but what foreign language learning illustrates is the spread of languages beyond their national and cultural boundaries. In order to understand what foreign language is, one must look at the definition of language first. I will search for this definition one potential model in a geographical area that is a multi-ethnic society with 398 languages: India, a country that attempts to respect multiple languages. Defining language here allows me to investigate what is a definition in relation to a multitude of others. According to the Indian Census of 1951 the definition of "mother tongue" is "the language first spoken from cradle"; therefore, the acquisition of a subsequent language may be called second or foreign language (Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 1991).

When languages coexist within the same physical boundaries there is a need to further distinguish the users of such languages. Such distinctions will greatly differ from country to country. A person who only speaks the mother tongue is monolingual. A person speaking two languages in the United States for instance is considered bilingual. Here, bilingual education is an umbrella for instruction in non-native languages which is most frequently "Spanish". In the European Community however, the term bilingual was not favored, and was consequently changed to "plurilingual"(Grin, 2003). Grin explains that this decision was done in an effort to be

more inclusive and incorporate a larger diversity of nation states and ethnic groups. Although along the years “foreign language” has come to be known mostly across time as (“world language”, “second language”, “international language”, “national language”) due to political pressures, the most dominant term has remained “foreign language”.

In trying to understand and frame foreign language worldwide, perhaps looking at how English language works, can shed light on the ambiguous nature of languages in general. The process of extracting meaning from one language can become a challenging task even for its native speakers. So, before labeling a language as “foreign” one should perhaps examine his/her own language and maybe understand the fluid and esoteric nature of how languages are learned. Harvey’s (1989) statement about English in the “Condition of Postmodernity”, that for language, there is no tight and identifiable relation between what is said and what is meant, can be extrapolated to other languages. Within this perspective on language, there is a visible increase in the incidence of naturalizing inequities, and promoting imprecise language values, and as a matter of fact in (re)defining identity. Such biases in English are spread across languages and occur through the use of a plethora of ambiguous words, for example in English “mankind” or “men” when referring to people in general, the use of “she” and “he” instead of always using “he”, or constructing sentences in the plural instead of the singular, so that “they” or “them” can be alternated.

### **Globalization**

Globalization, a wide-spread phenomenon that impacts in varied ways, nation after nation, could be responsible for many changes that occur at different levels of

society out of which education is no exception. According to Harvey (1989), globalization has impinged the individuals' lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century beyond the availability of goods and services. Globalization produces phenomena that vie for normalization in the society, and as Harvey (1989) notes, one of the most important influence of globalization on the individual is "the compression of time and space" (Harvey, 1989). Time and space become sources of social power in today's capitalist society. From education to economy or politics, time is redefined and redefines the lives of people around the globe. It is used in transactions that are not bound to any fixed spaces any more. In its turn, space is often interchangeable with time and helps redefine today's understanding about the world. Infiltrating virtually all the fields, globalization's impact is redefining many dimensions of today's post-modern society concepts of time and space.

In terms of education, for instance, online instruction, a growing manifestation of globalization that transcends the national boundaries, is what many learners begin to consider more, when deciding to start, or continue their education as a means to step up the social ladder. This modus operandi allows the learners membership in desired professions, with the promise of additional benefits and access to society's goods while operating in a personalized system of time and space.

Recently, more literature is written about the effects of globalization and technology on teaching. In an article about globalization and teaching foreign language, Kramsch (2001) discusses the power relations that shift when factors like technology may interfere. Internet access had redefined the foreign language learner who can now communicate in a target language in a contextualized, real-world, authentic

environment. For Kramsch, the students who own personal computers and e-mails may impose globally their style of communication onto others who may lose theirs, paying the price to maintain membership in a social group. As a result, the communicative competence, an outcome desired in a foreign language class, may be severely affected due to an inappropriate communication style or genre (Block & Cameron, 2001).

Narrowing the topic of globalization to its impact on language teaching and learning, Block and Cameron (2001) state that globalization redefines the space as well as the conditions under which learning takes place. In this era, where everything can become a commodity, language learning is no exception. The authors go on and hypothesize that, although globally the status of certain languages such as French and English has been upgraded to the most advantageous position, out of all languages in context, this is not the situation with other less favored languages (Block and Cameron, 2001). This position can be challenged though, by looking at the rise in interest in learning Chinese or Arabic. The demand for these languages, threatens to end the lengthy domination of French and English. Preponderantly, they note, English and French are currently creating sources of information and discourses that permeate national boundaries and create the need for learning of such languages.

In this review I did not include the research literature that has been written on the spread of pop culture among the school age children. As a result it is unknown however, to what degree the phenomenon of globalization has managed to impact the lives of learners of foreign language in general, and of middle school learners in particular in the context of the United States.

However, a key point to remember is that what globalization affords language learners around the world is most likely different from the conditions that it creates in the U.S. While language learning remains a highly desired outcome in most of the nations that fall under the globalization umbrella due to political and economic domination of industrialized countries and interests, in U.S. using the United Nations convention of World Languages it has remained an outcome mostly at the diplomatic level, or at the level of information in written reports that assess the state of the nation in terms of deficit in foreign language instruction (Education, 1983). Most recently (October 2004), however, the ACTFL 2004 conference held at the University of North Carolina has issued an American plan for action to address the issue of a National Language Policy (ACTFL, 2004).

Examining government sources in Switzerland, Grin (2002) as well as judging the proficiency levels of foreign language learners in other countries (Eurydice, 2001), it seems that the desired outcome (highly dictated by geographical, economic and politic factors) of language learning and of being proficient in another language, has been heavily internalized by the privileged learners in these non-English speaking countries (TESOL, 2004).

Examining globalization's impact on language practices for the U.S. students poses a serious challenge since it represents an unexplored area and it may be difficult to conceptualize without first having answers to questions like: How do these students take up language practices from other places? How do they see language from other places as it may appear in the day-to-day pop media? And how significantly are their lives impacted by economic forces from outside that use other languages? In contrast to

language learning in U.S., one might speculate that there are great differences between what globalization of language practices means for Burundi, Romanian, and Indian, Malaysian or Colombian students who learn English in contrast with their counterparts, if any, in the U.S. who learn the languages represented by these countries.

Although many language policies, both private and public issued by the government as Fulbright, Hays Act, etc., have struggled to promote learning of other languages than English, the goal of foreign language education set by the educational system in the United States is in a Catch-22 misfit situation, with the current language practices and the critical literacy needs of this highly globalized economy. Nevertheless, there is progress. In light of the National Language Policy Summit held in January 2005, many educators and policy makers unanimously acknowledged through the declaration of “2005: The Year of Languages” that the education system in the U.S. has been struck by the real need to implement a national language policy that promotes an active learning of foreign languages. As a result of this national effort initiated by ACTFL, it is hoped that many local, state and national policy makers will begin to examine the role of languages in American schools. It is maybe a matter of time to start making the connection between larger issues in society like globalization, and local policies that still govern conservatively a comfortable restricted linguistic status quo.

Another problem that schools struggle with as they are being impacted by globalization is the notable discrepancy that is created by projected needed skills for future jobs and actual curricula implemented in schools. Largely, schools still prepare students for mastering skills that are not aligned with economic needs. Public education is still struggling to balance a curriculum with larger discourses in the society. In



general, schools portray to students jobs that are different from what students envision themselves acquiring. As a result, it becomes a permanent puzzle for the educators, when school sponsored-skills and knowledge are no longer favorably regarded by larger and larger groups of students. The present crisis in literacy nationwide is a perfect example of this phenomenon. Many researchers proclaim student ownership of learning as the direction education should take for today's students. Knobel (1999) reports that exercising a brokerage role to promote and emphasize the many "literacies" that exist through the student discourses is an encouraging path (Knobel, 1999).

Unfortunately, this is a battle that is far from over. In today's classroom young men and women are only responding to specific learning practices that are construed to position them as educated individuals for future jobs, as defined by the globalized technological discourses (Bourdieu, 1998; Burbules & Torres, 2000; Giroux, 1988; Harvey, 1989; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). This type of relationship in the learning process conflicts in schools that offer currently training for jobs designed for the past. And with this issue we move to the controversial field of globalizing education that haunts today's school reform.

The purpose of bringing globalization in my research is not to discuss it as an abstract theory, and most definitely not to give it the front seat in my research. I will not look at how globalization enters in a student discourse in general. I will look to find instantiations of it through discourses drawn upon by students in the classroom. Since instantiations of globalization like "pop culture" or "fashion" are becoming more used by foreign language text book authors and publishers when designing chapters, I will use it to examine how certain topics selected for the foreign language instruction are a

representation and imposition of the influence of globalized practices or products, over students' discourses and their social practices. It is understood that instantiations of such representations can go well beyond music and fashion, and it can certainly show its political, economic and cultural face anywhere, not just in the classroom. However, in my research I want to acknowledge that it has the potential to affect student discourse and interaction in classroom practices, and I want to examine the local meaning making process that is created to understand it.

### **Language Policy**

Much like Foucault's *governmentality*<sup>12</sup>, the language policies are reforms that rearrange parts of the webs of power. The metaphor of a web becomes an approximate one that suggests politics, action and power. Being "too political", "doing too much" and showing "excessive management" can shatter the flexible but breakable webs of a reform. Recent events, particularly international political conflicts (War on Terror) and economic crises (oil crisis), have raised red flags for education policy makers: the current level of incompetence of U.S. "Americans" in foreign language reveals a flawed position in solving major international problems, not even interculturally or interpersonally (Page, 2004).

However, none of the documents published in the last 20 years that mention foreign language education issued at the federal level that I have examined, obligate the states or the local districts to offer a foreign language curriculum. On the contrary, there are laws that rather restrict the use of other languages, for example: Proposition 227 (California), Proposition 203 (Arizona), Question 31 (Colorado), Question 2 (Massachusetts), etc. More over, there is no historical reference to language education

in either the Declaration of Independence (1776) or the Constitution (1789), which means that the responsibility for education is officially placed in the hands of the individual states (Dutcher, 1995). Due to the fact that reform discourses circulate unevenly across the states, literacy in English, not plurilingualism has become the focus in education reform discourses nationwide.

Additionally, education reform discourses have created many conflicts in the process of implementation. For instance, in terms of standardization and constructivist approaches, many schools are faced with responding to contradictory education strategies. While standards-based education use a mainstream approach and basic instruction, where there are tasks and objectives aligned with standards, in constructivist approaches, learning occurs by helping students become builders of their own knowledge structures (Rosenbusch, 1991). When one considers "student centeredness" this discursive practice becomes pervasive not only as it has been used in foreign language programs, but for a matter of fact in many other subjects. The programs that seem to have taken into consideration students' interests however are presented only on a small scale to the public (Curtain, Pesola, & Savignon, 1988). They are mostly private, and promote particular philosophies and views on learning, for example, Montessori programs, or Curran's education model of the seventies called "Counseling-Learning", which is a humanistic approach to Community Language Learning.

Another contradiction specifically to language learning and teaching is related to offering a variety of foreign languages for beginners only, versus offering a language consistently and sequentially throughout the school for the purpose of achieving proficiency. As a result, in the last 20 years school administrators started to show

concerns about these inconsistencies. These concerns fluctuated according to the ever-changing local policies that struggled to either reflect state requirements or to comply with federal regulations in order to qualify for foreign language grants.

In spite of relatively recent efforts to recognize the importance of foreign language education, the United States is still lagging behind other nations when it comes to high-levels of foreign language competency. For example, in Japan, Japanese language policy makers argued that English is an international language, thus determining the parameters for the language that would be designated important in foreign language teaching. This policy was justified with argument that English leads to international understanding, one of Japan's main objectives in international policy (Kubota, 1998).

In contrast with the Japanese system, the American system as well as the U.K or the Australian school systems offer little membership once the students finally master the foreign languages (Clyne, 1991). Bilingualism or foreign language planning in these geographical areas are phenomena viewed as attempts more to transition than permanence, and they are considered by Bianco (1991) as texts issued by the state to give or take away a voice. Furthermore, according to Ager (2001), motivation to learn a language depends on multiple factors such as ideology, image, integration and instrumentalism. However, the most powerful factors remain the creation of global and social identity, as they continue to be key elements in language policy motivation (Ager, 2001). Acknowledging that global identity is a desired outcome in language learning, one of the unofficial, yet identifiable goals of language policy is to create spaces in order to index class membership, particularly with the increased migration and

immigration patterns worldwide (Byrnes, 1997; Spindler & Spindler, 1987). This particular issue relates to the students in my class because I have a large percentage of students who come from Puerto Rico, enroll in public school for a few months, where they participate in ELL programs, after which they return to the island according to their parents' migration patterns. These various bilingual groups living in all over the U.S. are mostly migrant workers who identify themselves with membership in working classes. While in U.S. their rights to another language are challenged by dominant groups' ideology that comes strongly across as an assimilation policy such as English Only Movement (Banks, 2001). More predominantly however, social class issues arise if we examine previous beliefs concerning populations that had high status and an international character inside and outside the U.S. borders as a result of mastering a second or third language. These issues are readily identified as more like belonging to upper middle classes. Even today such beliefs persist, yet public bilingualism has been long contested by dominant groups.

In terms of overall achievement, foreign language programs in U.S. report a current 50% dropout rate of students from one year to the next, either in a high school or college (International Security, 2001). Other countries like U.K. report also a high rate (not as high as the U.S.) of student drop out from foreign language program (Aplin, 1991). It is unknown to what degree this alarming rate is the result of locally driven curricula, or if it has wider societal implications. In any event, it is a highly contrasting picture with the case of Japan, where the drop out rate is as low as 5% at the college level (Kubota, 1998). But curriculum decisions in most European countries as well as Japan and some Asian countries are made at the national level versus local district

decisions that still govern the U.S. public and private schools. This brief discussion of learning other languages in U.S. versus other countries is being brought up here merely to identify international set ups of educational systems as possible products of globalization.

According to Bergentoft (1994), English is by far the most predominant foreign language learned in school in Europe and Japan(Lambert & Bergentoft, 1994). More than 80 percent of students in Japan, Spain, France, Sweden, Germany and Finland at the secondary level study English as a foreign language (Grin, 2002). Additionally, curriculum choices as well as evaluation methods and standards in all countries of the Council of Europe are prepared at the national level.

Another competitive foreign language policy is considered in E.U. where the costs and benefits of language learning are taken much more seriously. Grin (2002), using economics<sup>13</sup> as tools of analysis, looks at the values of language learning and teaching. According to Grin, with their current language policies, European societies create globalized nations that are not becoming lost in the search for the perfect language valued at the expense of others. European societies recognize the “plurality of European nations, of all those who live in this space, as a condition for collective creativity, and for development, a component of democratic citizenship, through linguistic tolerance, and therefore as a fundamental value of their actions in languages and language teaching” (Grinn, 2002). In sharp contrast with this picture, a U.S. website advertising “Why Learn a Foreign Language” entertains discourses that appeal to a particular type of learner by offering personal reasons like tourism, business travel, or maybe a job, which seek to address the highly individualistic character of the American

society. This reinforces one more time what Reagan (2004) said regarding the frequent confusion that educators make between the benefits of language knowledge with language study(Reagan, 2004). Part of the problem could be the fact that teachers and students are speaking of different returns and investments that are often incompatible in the class economy. Receiving material returns (grades) in exchange for mental investment (learning) is often a process that becomes too personal when the evaluation of the investment is not fine tuned with the nature of the return. Thus, education can be seen as a bank where students make deposits and investments (mental, physical, values, space, time), and wait for later financial, cultural or social returns. Unfortunately, this approach to foreign language instruction is a far too common discourse in numerous layers of the American society which is not an indication of "broadening our international understanding"(Page, 2004).

### Conclusion

What I am taking from the discussion in this chapter is a new perspective on the ontology of classroom events; the way I, as a teacher, construct opportunities for students to learn during classroom practices. Deconstructing my practices, analyzing them with my conceptual framework of the redefined notions of power and motivation, coding the data and reassembling them based on instantiations of these concepts in order to frame new practices, I hope will shed a new light on understanding how students can learn other languages in this globalized society.

In looking back at all the definitions of power examined, "a system of dominance", "a capacity to deprive", "a structured potential of a linguistic exchange", I believe that the working definition that I was able to construct for the concept of power

in the context of foreign language classroom, is a viable, strong understanding of how it can be applied in the education field of today. Power is the sine qua non, reflexive and impersonal capacity that participants in the classroom discourse strive to use in order to acquire necessary capital to participate in classroom "transactions". If this is not possible, individuals will co-construct their own power relations based on their own understanding of what is required in order to produce their own "truth" or "reality", and to participate in the group structural dynamic. Thus, foreign language students, similar to students in many other classes, become the legitimizers of the "classroom transactions" and of the classroom rules and regulations when they identify themselves as foreign language students. Whether they are investing or not in the foreign language program, or the foreign language classroom rules, students are permanently in the business of using their "buying and selling" power, to "endorse", and to "invest" in discourses that offer returns in identity building practices.

Following Bourdieu's tradition, who believed that talk is an "economic exchange", it makes sense to continue using financial terms, and say that student motivation in this context is an endorsement of learning or an investment in learning. In conclusion, my conceptual framework as a result of this literature review allowed me to produce the following working definition of motivation: Endorsement, an extension of motivation, is a process that creates for the students socially-constructed spaces to claim ownership of a certain learning process, it is meaning making. Endorsement is the effort to make a mental investment in a transaction that is material in nature, for instance, achieving knowledge about introducing oneself in a target language in exchange for a grade.



Finally, these reviews of literature on relations of power, issues of motivation and investment as well as specific language pedagogy events, issues of language planning and globalization, helped me shape additional working definitions of other concepts that surfaced as a result of this research. I am making reference specifically to “student resistance” that will be discussed in depth throughout this dissertation, as a term that emerged from “student endorsement”. With the help of these definitions I will also attempt to investigate the conditions of learning a second language as an economy that is affected by world events and policies that perpetuate certain languages, restrict others and cultivates more policies to back it up. In the next chapters I will investigate how specific Discourses<sup>14</sup> on power, globalization and language policy shape student learning in the foreign language instruction setting of my class as well as further develop and examine a metaphor of motivation: student "endorsement". To quote Fairclough (1992), “in any discourse, knowledge, social relations, and social identities are simultaneously being constituted or reconstituted”(Fairclough, 1992).

## Notes – chapter 2

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for definition.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix a for definition of term

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for definition of term

<sup>4</sup> LaCrit is a scholarly movement that has at its core the welfare of Latina communities. Using a critical theory approach, this movement aims to raise awareness about the inequalities that exist in such communities.

<sup>5</sup> See definition of “voice” in Appendix A

<sup>6</sup> (Dornyei, 1990; H. Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Quigley, 1987)

<sup>7</sup> see Appendix A for definition

<sup>8</sup> (Ditton, 1980; Goffman, 1967; Goffman, Drew, & Wooton, 1988)

<sup>9</sup> Kazmierzak, (1994) conducted a quantitative study on homework and the effectiveness of a homework checking system among a group of 13 high school students. The study's findings showed that when homework was checked and graded, 25 % of the students who participated in the study achieved a grade of a point higher than in the semester when the homework was not checked.

<sup>10</sup> In view of my intent to seek for new interpretations of motivation I am trying out new terms that may resonate with other fields (banking)

<sup>11</sup> Bloome (1992) ‘procedural display’ is a technique used in teaching and learning of literacy in middle schools. He defines it as: “*the display by teacher and students to each other of a set of academic and/or institutional procedures that themselves counted as the accomplishment of a lesson. Procedural display might not necessarily be related to the acquisition of academic content or to learning cognitive strategies. Simply put, procedural display occurred when teachers and students were primarily concerned with displaying to each other that they were ‘getting the lesson done’; whatever academic learning occurred was, at best, secondary or accidental*”

<sup>12</sup> See definition of term in Appendix A

<sup>13</sup> See definition of Terms

<sup>14</sup> I am using the notion of **discourse** extracted from the work of the sociolinguist James Gee, who defines it as:

"a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group ... or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role'." (Gee 1990:143 )

In other words acquiring a new **discourse** means becoming able to take on a new social identity - one of a number - and a new view of the world and the things that are important in it.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

Although this ethnography appears to be located in my classroom, it has wider ramifications that extend past the classroom, to the school, the district, the community, the state, and ultimately touches upon globalization issues. Some of the participants discussed in this study are only ideologically present, as embodied in discourses, in materials, in notes, in documents etc. Others are physically present as embodied in people's discourses and ideologies. The discussion that follows covers participants in the foreign language class and in the study, modalities of collecting data, and approaches to data analysis as well as a discussion of the limitations.

#### Data Collection

The data collected for the purpose of this dissertation comes from my own foreign language classes (either French or Spanish) as well as from outside the foreign language class. More specifically this research includes: 1) a review and analysis of specific recent legislation that is interpreted and enacted in the foreign language program of a local school system, 2) data collected through interviews with students and administrators, 3) class observations from within a local school system as well as, 4) relevant citations from policy texts issued or published at the government, district and classroom level. These data were available from videotaped class interaction, audio-taped interviews outside the class, sampling of student work and legislation texts.

In order to answer the research question proposed, I collected data in my classroom that I took from specific written and oral events that occur usually in foreign

language classes. This process alone involved unpacking several micro structures as much as possible at the classroom level (from selected routine events), that seemed to have an impact on how students proceed to draw on various discourses situated outside the foreign language class. In addition to this, I examined discourses outside the classroom, in texts from different language policies as well as their possible implication in the construction of student motivation, for the purpose of demonstrating how my theoretical framework can explain a wider range of “normalized” learning practices.

To better understand how student endorsement operates, I performed extensive analyses of class events on selected routines such as checking student preparedness for class, or on episodes of routine journal writing events and homework check events, as they will be discussed shortly below. In doing so, I argue that by looking at events that have already acquired the status of routines, I was able to capture a form of discursive interaction that students in general, tend to display more naturally. Since their rhetoric is already embedded in an array of previously meaningful and verifiable experiences, they just perform the transfer of symbolic events into the current discursive practices.

The research presented in this dissertation is a compilation of several interconnected ethnographic studies that I conducted in and out of my classroom over a period of four years. The study that I conducted out of my classroom expanded to the school district where I teach. Although I looked at the whole district, special emphasis was placed on the foreign language department, and on the respective offices that are authorized to implement language policies relevant to foreign language education. I chose to study this district because it is a relatively large size school district (27,000 students)<sup>1</sup>, with an urban population that encompasses a diversity of races and economic

and social statuses. In addition, in this district there is a relatively wide variety of foreign language programs (19,000 students enrolled) that, although are experiencing both difficulties related to motivational issues as well as language policy changes, it offers a great opportunity to conduct an ethnography at a time of significant changes in the curriculum and in school philosophy.

During this study I intended to collect and analyze data from written and oral interaction events in order to generalize my findings to discourses that are widely circulated in foreign language class. In addition to this, examining power relations in different discourses as well as their possible implication in the construction of student motivation, I thought, would give a more complete view on how a theoretical model of elements might apply to a wider range of instructional and learning practices.

I teach in a large, urban middle school with a population of students equally divided between sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. As is the situation with other educational settings in the city, our school is functioning over capacity, bringing the number of students to a total of 1,200 instead of 1,000 for which it was originally designed to hold. This urban, public school located in Massachusetts has an equal proportion of Hispanic, White and African-American populations. The socio-economic strata where the students come from range from middle class, to lower class, but a significant percentage comes from economically disadvantaged groups stricken by poverty, violence, and drugs (Foster, 2003; Gelinas & Gelinas, 1973; Ginsberg & Fiene, 2004).

The physical corpus of data was collected in and out of my foreign language classes and consists of:

1. Audiotaped interviews with students, teachers, and administrators of approximately 44 minutes each.
2. Written surveys given to the students in school of approximately 30 minutes in length.
3. Field notes taken by me that cover a period of approximately 9 months between 2001-2002 school year. They are:
  1. taken in the classroom (during class events)
  2. taken out of the classroom (during teacher meetings and conferences)
4. Student written samples as text during classroom events, such as:
  1. Journal events (usually 10 minutes daily)
  2. Student notes (written during 1 class period, occasionally)
  3. Essays (written in class of approx 30 minutes in length)
5. Audiotaped and videotaped student oral text – taken from homework check episodes during class (usually 5 minutes each)
6. Language education policies related to:
  - classroom management,
  - local district,
  - national and international documents

In reviewing my previous ethnographic studies I decided to frame all my analyses of the written data in the context of my research question. As a result I organized my data in guiding categories that helped focus and build in coherence for my interpretation. Below is one of the systems I used to collect and classify data (Table 1). This chart is by no means the only analysis tool, but merely a heuristic system to show purpose of data in answering the research question. This grid is a way of putting the data together, not necessarily to analyze it. In fact, there is movement back and forth across the entire grid. In this study, although I am starting from a previous ethnography and preliminary findings, I adopted an inductive approach and as a result of the collected and analyzed data, I reached an understanding of a theoretical model on how classroom practices in foreign language class facilitate the construction of meaning for the students who exert membership in this classroom.

The purpose of the Data Collection Sheet was to systematically guide data collection according to my projected categories. For instance, I used an interview format (see Appendix G) to discuss with students and administrators (Appendix H) in formal and informal settings, issues that seem to be central to the current foreign language education trends, such as: What do students need to know and be able to do in order to be considered foreign language students? What kind of a relationship is there between writing in the journals and learning French? What kind of learning scenarios do you think are facilitated by the implementation of the national standards? In student interviews I positioned myself as opened to dialogue about my practices. This offers me a chance to see how my students perceive the class behaviors, when they are outside of the classroom. In the administrators' and teacher' interviews I positioned myself as a



researcher. These are questions that helped me answer the larger research question outlined in this study: What is the nature of student resistance that affects the endorsement of foreign language education in public schools?

For the purpose of class observations I collected information pertaining to the same research question, this time with a focus on time and context. As mentioned previously in this dissertation I used field notes that I took in 2001 in my 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish class as well as data that I collected (in 2002, 2003 and 2004) in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade French classes that I taught. In the text<sup>2</sup> category I included official local and national documents such as policies, memos, and action plans that seem to create a connection between the outcome of the instruction and how the foreign language curriculum is expected to reach the student in the classroom.

Under the same category of text, I included oral and written text that I have been collecting over a period of four years during my foreign language classes (September 2001- June 2004). The written data is represented by journal writing episodes, student notes as well as whole lessons. The oral data is represented mostly by homework check episodes in the classroom. These data are located on recorded videotapes of six hours each that captured continuous class interactions, and six audiotapes of two hours each that captured segments of class interactions. They were recorded once a month from October 2001 to February 2002. The purpose of examining this text is again focused toward answering the research question. The last subcategory of text is the international text that refers to a selection of articles and pieces of legislation that pertain to the foreign language instruction abroad. This type of text was retrieved online, from February 2003 to April 2003.

<u>DATA COLLECTION SHEET</u>		<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>					
<u>Interviews</u> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>With students</td> <td>With administrators, teachers</td> </tr> </table>		With students	With administrators, teachers	With students in 2001 With administrators in 2004-2005	With students out of the classroom on school grounds (my office)			
With students	With administrators, teachers							
<u>Text from language and education policies</u> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>classroom</td> <td>local</td> <td>national</td> <td>international</td> <td>international</td> </tr> </table>		classroom	local	national	international	international	In 2003-2004	<u>Local</u> – memos from the superintendent, director of F.L. <u>National</u> – legislations such as NCLB, Hayes Act, etc. <u>International</u> – various articles on language policies in Switzerland, Japan Australia, England,
classroom	local	national	international	international				
<u>Field Notes, Class Observations, Reflections</u> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <u>In the class</u>  (during class events) </td> <td> <u>Out of the class</u>  (during teacher meetings or conferences) </td> </tr> </table>		<u>In the class</u> (during class events)	<u>Out of the class</u> (during teacher meetings or conferences)	In the class – during 2001  Out of the class – during 2001 - 2002	In the class – in my French and Spanish classes Out of the class – on school grounds during team meetings or parent teacher conferences, usually in the same classroom			
<u>In the class</u> (during class events)	<u>Out of the class</u> (during teacher meetings or conferences)							
<u>Surveys</u> (with students)		March 2001	classroom					
<u>Student Written text during class events</u> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Journal writing</td> <td>Student notes</td> <td>Student essays</td> </tr> </table>		Journal writing	Student notes	Student essays	2001-2004	classroom		
Journal writing	Student notes	Student essays						
<u>Student oral text during class events</u> (homework check episodes)		November 2001 – March 2002	classroom					

**Table 1 – Data Collection Sheet**

\*Throughout the data collection process I observed the occurrence of the seven factors that became the object of the literature review (motivation, endorsement, identity, foreign language education, language policy, power, and globalization).

\*\*The question I focused to answer was: What is the nature of student resistance that affects the endorsement of foreign language education in a public school system?

In my attempts to isolate instances of endorsement and power that circulates in different discourses, as patterns of occurrence in the foreign language classroom, I have found useful to employ James Gee's concept of Discourse. This enabled me to use critical discourse analysis as a tool to look at the world of foreign language classrooms through the discourses that students draw on. Therefore, in framing the oral data, I used theoretical insights such as the "six building tasks" and "situated meanings from Gee (1999)<sup>3</sup>, and I tried to produce the description of the classroom routine events using an inductive method of analysis (Gee, 1999).

As far as the written data is concerned (student essays), I performed discourse analysis using Scollon's approach. I drew on his use of "voice" in particular, and "polyvocality" that students use to appropriate discourses. This helped me situate language as social action that contributes to the construction of student endorsement. I also used Fairclough's three tasks<sup>4</sup> to examine the relationship between the properties of texts (in student notes), the features of this discourse practice (produced and consumed in class), and how they connect to a wider sociocultural practice, as a pattern of socio-political power. Using the same approach I examined the instantiations when students' power and endorsement co-occurred whether in the micro structure, at the classroom level, or when appropriated from bigger discourses such as language policy or globalized education. For this purpose, I continued to use Fairclough to examine how

the students and I negotiated meaning in written events such as journal writing. The participants' interaction with each was also analyzed in order to capture how this practice of discourse reveals the traffic of power as well as its networking in the classroom. When examining the data in the form of interviews, I also drew on Fairclough to conduct a discourse analysis of oral interaction with administrators on language policy implementation. This approach was especially useful for me because it allowed an identification of a power agenda within established social structures and ideologies that constitute the process of foreign language education.

During the data collection and examination represented through the language use in written texts, I employed a discourse analysis method to look for linguistic, social and cultural connections to the formation of students' subjectivities, and thus gain insights on the process of their identity building in foreign language class. The choice of discourse analysis here over critical discourse analysis was done for the purpose of identifying more precisely the localized sociocultural practice that students use in order to build their identities and establish a network of social relations. Understanding early in the study that participants used symbols as actions/reactions to these language policies gave me more opportunities to effectively draw conclusions and classify the data. My coding practices evolved as data was managed and analyzed.

### Participants

The participants in this study for the most part are my students, but I also included three district administrators and one elementary foreign language teacher. Because this was a longitudinal study that extended over a period of four years, the

group of students who participated in this study was constantly changing. The overall number was approximately of 100 students from both my French and Spanish classes in grades 6, 7 and 8. The students varied in age between 12 and 14 years old. In every class I focused more on three participants that in addition to being treated as the rest of the class when I administered surveys, or I assigned essays, were also interviewed by me outside the class, on school grounds. A more detailed description of the students' profile is included in the section "The Students" under the subchapter "Foreign Language Classroom Participants" in Chapter Four.

In conducting this research I moved away from the structuralist, static and unidirectional theoretical concept of power as something teachers have over their students, and looked at power as an elusive factor that participants in the classroom (teacher and students alike) are continuously in the business of producing and bargaining (Delpit, 1995).

In terms of methodology, many changes occurred for me when I established that foreign language students and teachers are not the sole active, or shall I say "present", participants in these classes. Although, initially, I thought that since my concern revolves around foreign language discourses, I should focus my attention on what happens in foreign language classes, and in particular in my classes, I soon discovered that the foreign language class is not an isolated, idyllic space, created in schools for the purpose of selecting membership in a group that confers membership worthy of investment. These classes foster the presence of many other individuals that use outside, dominant or emerging discourses, and that speak for groups that occupy key positions in the societal system of power. Acknowledging that such groups have highly permeable

borders, and therefore sometimes even overlap, acknowledging that their members are in the continuous business of seeking membership in groups with higher returns, I argue that at any one time, in the foreign language class there are several more or less definite categories of participants that have a regulated group participation and membership to the foreign language class based on their outside discursive positions.

Examining such groups or individuals I focused my research and analysis on the following categories:

- **Adults and institutions** that have devised unlimited access to the class using powerful activities such as:
  - Designing language legislations in order to correct certain societal problems as well as allotting the necessary funds (*legislators/state*),
  - Disseminating and interpreting the legislation for the masses (*social filters like many forms of media, textbook companies, etc.*),
  - Actively supervising the implementation of these legislations by occasional class visits (*school officials, supervisors, principals, curriculum specialists*),
  - Delivering the designed instruction by higher ranking officials (*teachers*). As the teacher in the classroom, I am an equally powerful participant in the foreign language class. I often claim to decide how the class will evolve, or what discourses the students may have access to.

I have performed no direct research in my students' families and all the insights that might reflect my students' life outside the school are my personal reconstructions

of their lives based solely on the data retrieved from my students' text. However, due to previous research in this field (Knobel, 1999; Lankshear, Gee, Knobel, & Searle, 1997; White, 2002), parents and communities were often times considered as participants, as important links to school and the students education. Families represented a strong decisive factor that have the privilege of teaching and delivering to the students, the "survival" discourse which could prevail throughout a student's life.

Oftentimes, the discourses that the above mentioned sub-groups employ in order to gain access to the foreign language class, and consequently exert more influence and power, are disconnected from each other, but nevertheless, come down with such a force and to such an extent, that their coexistence in the foreign language class becomes often incomprehensible for the students. After becoming aware of these incomprehensible moments that students experience in the class, and determining that they are "critical" to their meaning-making process, I started to look for patterns of occurrence of these moments. During these occurrences I noticed that students must make sense of the world they live in but are denied the tools to do so. Instantly, their discursive power is voided of value and their social endorsement of the foreign language instruction comes to a halt. One possible interpretation of the occurrences of such patterns is that sometimes, when students are deprived of options or choices to make meaningful connections with their own life and identities, they begin to form what is perceived by me as resistance, a new form of power that can change the rules by which the instruction takes place. Another possible interpretation of the pattern is that students construct a space to build new learning that is more compatible with their

investment or identity. These are the first steps that I took in my approach to look and examine the data collected from my participants.

- **Students**, as visible participants in the foreign language class are
  - *Investing* at will in the class instruction. When critical moments occur in the class (discursive clashes), my students will often use resistance in order to remain active, transforming classroom participants. By devising their own terms of participation, the students gain momentum, and endorse an instruction that creates tools only accessible to them. Such active means of participation in the foreign language class, relevant to the students' group only, construct relevance for the rest of the class. From this perspective, endorsement, as an extension of motivation in the foreign language class, becomes the process by which students create social spaces to claim ownership of a certain learning process.
  - Appear to be *resisting education* in the absence of a common discourse to be shared with the other participating groups and sub-groups in the foreign language class. They all lead a parallel coexistence, and develop exclusive discourses relevant only to the groups that generated them. It is my belief that it is for this reason only, that currently used discursive practices in the foreign language class make



impossible the facilitation and generation of common purpose among all the participating members.

It took a long time to identify the groups that make their presence known in my class through their discourses. As a result of this research, I consider that in order to ask the question: “Miss, do we really have to pass this class?”, one has to have been exposed, and maybe unconsciously forced to revoice or ventriloquate a multitude of discursive practices from the groups that make their presence known in the foreign language class, or even from groups that are not yet identified.

In order to understand what kind of relationships existed between the participants in this study and the data they produced as well as how they constructed their social practices vis-à-vis the foreign language class, first I needed to reassess/identify who the participants were (Table 2). What follows is the original grid that I used to keep track of who were the participants in my class.

<b>FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS</b>						
<b>Visible participants (classroom-based)</b>		<b>Invisible participants (out-of-the-classroom based)</b>				
(Initially the participants in the study)		(Later became also participants in the study)				
students	teachers	parents	media	administrators	legislators	other teachers

**Table 2 – Participants in the Foreign Language Class**

Although initially the participants in my study, and in the foreign language class, seemed to be just the students and me, in looking more carefully, the foreign language class ended to be a rich environment where multiple participants were interacting. Initially, between the participants in my study and all the participants in a foreign language class there was a fine line. That line slowly disappeared, and, teaching and learning foreign languages was not an intimate relationship between my students and me, but an event that took place in a public space where many “outside groups” shaped my students’ identity and beliefs. It was the space where one could sample many layers of the society and the social power associated with them. As a result, the process of interdiscursivity became obvious when discursive practices of these invisible participants affected the students in my class.

As I was making progress in my research, the line started to disappear at times, and the distinction did not seem important any more. They all became just participants. The participants in my study and in the foreign language class seemed to constitute a space, the foreign language class that ended up being a rich environment where multiple participants were interacting. This was a crucial moment in my research since I knew that I was going to use a form of discourse analysis to look at the data produced by the participants. At that time, CDA became a strong option since CDA is very dependent on its prior categorization of its participants and I felt that it was an important decision that I was taking upfront.

After examining the entire corpus of data, I produced Table 2B in Appendix H in order to classify and better visualize the distribution of the participants in the foreign

language class. It was the moment when I realized that the lines between visible and invisible participants had disappeared. One of the reasons for this disappearance was because by overlapping the means of collecting data with categories of participants in my class an obvious reflexivity occurred. This particular table was providing insight into the relationship between me, the setting, the data production and the future analysis. Another reason for the disappearance was to better see the weight, and the preponderance of validity of the data collected from participants. This new theoretical contribution and approach to examining the relationship between data and participants offers invaluable insights on the areas that still need further research or development. I think it is important to see that in the category of students the means of collecting data are exhaustive versus the category of Media, for example, where the data is collected for third parties, and fit only in two boxes out of eight.

For clarification purposes in this research I use two notions of participants. They are serving different purposes. The most widely used understanding is the definition provided by Levinson and Goffman: *One who has the role of: speaker, addressee, or intended audience* (Goffman, Drew, & Wooton, 1988). After collecting and examining my data I had to reconsider this definition, and I assembled something different in order to be able to understand the complexity of my data. A participant became an individual, a group, an organization or a social structure that uses a defined discourse to pass along, impose, enact, or regulate socio-cultural practices that underpin specific ideologies, and through their overt interaction with a certain individual, group, or organization it aims to alter the values and behavior of the individual or group they interact with.

Understanding this way the notion of participant, it became easier for me to see that in

the foreign language class, there are invisible participants that interact with the foreign language students and teacher through specific discourses. This interaction contributes to:

- Shape students' identities, and
- Determine the degree of endorsement or resistance that students display in the foreign language class

By examining discursive practices of participants who willingly agreed to take part in my study, I was faced with the decision of forcefully including additional participants that I never had the opportunity to officially invite in the beginning of the research. As a result of their overt implication in the corpus of data, part of the invisible participants in the foreign language class, are treated and remain undefined representatives of macro social structures, but nevertheless participants in this study.

Although I am not a new teacher any more, and I am closer to retirement years than to college years, every time before the first day of school I am nervous, and I wonder what kind of journey my students and I are going to take that year. Maybe due to this temporarily awkward situation, through many years of experience I see the need to introduce routines in my classroom early in the school year, so that the students and I settle quickly into activities that will constitute the foreign language class, and at the same time help the students take important steps toward independent learning. My goal is to create "participant structures" for my students, active spaces where they can participate in the class activities, as opposed to simply be passive recipients of information and ideas developed by me or others. Some of these routines are given at the beginning of the year and are reinforced throughout the year. They include class

behavior rules, class preparedness requirements, starting and ending class routines, such as homework check and journal writing as well as student and teacher reflections on learning. These routines form norms of behavior and interpretation that are my expectations. The degree to which students also take them up or not, or how I negotiate these with them, can be seen as mutual alignments. When these mutual alignments do not occur, it creates disruptions. Resistance in the classroom is therefore the use of disruptions to not comply. Other disruptions are parody, irony, Bakhtin's "carnival" moments (potentially every social moment is a carnival), or Gee's mushfaking<sup>5</sup>.

Almost all the students in my classes adapt themselves to my class routines. Some of them even develop social skills in the range of what Bloome defines the **procedural display** (Bloome, 1989). This process is characterized by the teacher and students that display to each other social and academic procedures that "count" toward accomplished lessons/events. However, a more profound analysis of these particular "event structures"<sup>6</sup> reveals a lack of academic content. However, my intention of selecting routine events for the present research was not as much to examine the social skills developed in the "procedural display" process, as to merely capture how moments of student resistance are shaped, and how they affect student investment and endorsement of the foreign language class.

### Data Analysis

Through a discourse analysis of student spontaneous interaction in the classroom, I document the power construction process, and how it affects interaction in the classroom as well as how it shapes the formation of students' social identities

through the discourses they use. I also analyze the impact of language policies operating historically outside the classroom by seeing how language study and goals are identified by participants who implement the language policies, and what kind of ideological positions they promote through their discourse in order to endorse the social practice of foreign language education.

In terms of specific methodology, I use discourse analysis, and more closely critical discourse analysis. My first ethnographic study offered me the basis of understanding that a new discursive space can be created when framing relations of power that have the potential to shape student motivation<sup>7</sup>. In the present dissertation I use this approach to examine data collected in an ethnographic study that looked at the implications of local and national language policies in the foreign language class, student learning and endorsement.

In view of this belief my epistemological stance is poststructuralist in nature and through this paradigm I construct a model of claims based on truths that I co-construct from the subjects that I interact with. My role as a researcher in this ethnography is partly a participant observer (as classroom teacher, and as a direct agent for the implementation of new legislations), but also an outside observer (when interviewing subjects from the administration of the school system or interpreting disseminated legislation).

In order to work toward complex interpretations of classroom events, I use a theoretical framework as a working reference during the analysis and interpretations process. For instance, in my interpretation of different participants' responses to the interviews on the implementation of different policies, I triangulate and explore further

the students' interpretations on how these policies are understood and implemented in the classroom as well as what are the expected results and the actual results.

My involvement in the study as a participant observer, became even more complex since the access to certain participants (for example: media) was available only through other participants' texts (students and administrators), and so, the use of instances of intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and intertextual chains<sup>8</sup>, became even more obvious and necessary in order to examine political and ideological implications of discourse practices across all participants (Fairclough, 1989). Consequently, by examining discursive practices of participants who willingly agreed to participate in my study, I was faced with the decision of forcefully including additional participants that I never had the opportunity to officially invite to take part in my study in the beginning of this research endeavor. As a result of their overt implication in the corpus of data, part of the invisible participants in the foreign language class, remain and are treated in this dissertation as undefined representatives of macro social structures, but nevertheless participants in this study. An example of such incidence follows, where a participant (the student) elicits information about another participant (media), and with this the student is establishing an undisputable "truth" about how the coexistence of these two participants in the foreign language class is drawing on mutually agreed channels of discourse.

...If you write to someone in the Middle East, where we know they don't have as much technology as us, then we can teach them about ours. We could even send them a couple things like a walkman or a television set. We can also send them a camera with film and directions so they can send us pictures of themselves. We can also brag about how our army could kick their army's butt because of all the better technology we have.....

(Derek, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish Student)

Another important aspect I had to look at during analysis was the need to uncover the social matrix of the participants' discourse, that conditions their "habitus" and with this, to establish the origin of their social identities, and how they connect to wider systems of knowledge and beliefs. Being able to do that was essential in my understanding of how relationships of power operate in a social practice such as the one in the foreign language class. For this purpose the juxtaposition of the participants' table (Table 2 A), over the method of data collection (Table 1) was a real eye-opener that contributed to expose the role of intertextuality in how discourses of invisible participants (legislators, media, etc), become available in discursive practices of visible participants (students, teachers) (see Table 2B in Appendix M). Table 2B was in fact my first attempt to classify globally the participants in the foreign language class and understand how diverse or restricted methods of data collection can elicit information about the fluid nature of discursive practices belonging to all participants.

In terms of coding the data, my first attempt was in the direction of examining the way students are portrayed by other members of the foreign language class, and what identities are expected to be assumed by them. Across the board "good students", "obedient students", "conforming students", "unruly students" were some of the identities available that students were expected to take during the learning process. Therefore, coding occurred according to these categories.

Initially, in analyzing the data coding I tried to follow two rules of thumb in terms of questioning:

- **Why am I reading the passage this way?**



○ **What features produce this reading?**

For example across data and across participants, assuming the identity of a “good student” is captured in:

- 1) student notes
  - a. Josh: “I don’t want to fail French again”
- 2) Interviews with students
  - a. Ashley: “I normally **do** do my homework”
  - b. Denise: “motivation is to actually learn something”
- 3) interviews with administrators
  - a. Rita: “good teachers empower students”
- 4) Parent conference
  - a. Meghan’s mom: “she is so good at writing”
- 5) Student essays
  - a. “we do not want to appear as juvenile delinquents”

So by answering the questions above I was able to confirm my coding and move forward towards identifying the patterns of consistency and variation across the initial codes. Looking at the initial coding of student identities, “good”, “studious”, etc. prompted to examine what students and other participants understand by these definitions. For myself I know that I incorporate “prepared” and “unprepared” in the definition of these identities in order to ground it in student school discourse. In addition, by also identifying the instances of “prepared” and “unprepared” students across routine class events, I was able to link it to acts of student endorsement and

student resistance. This was an essential step in establishing the significance of the patterns of consistency of the codes across data.

Continuing to look across data, I began to see identity building as an important factor that helped me describe and understand social practices and social actions in my foreign language class. The connection between social practices and social actions was also strengthened by the multitude of available identities that students were assuming as a response to larger socio-political discourses such as “Springfield Culture of Achievement” where “all students can succeed”, or NCLB that starts from the premise that identities are allotted to students by those in power for the social benefit of the community.

The last step in the methodology process was to establish validity. As I mentioned before validity for me was established by using the juxtaposed Table 2B. Additionally, acknowledging that all research presents an incomplete approach to understanding the data, I tried to use confirmation techniques that allowed the most thorough interpretation possible using these data. Because of the small size of the student population observed in its social milieu, I was able to use reflection and triangulation methods with the participants to validate my claims. In this way, I examined multiple interpretations and perspectives.

An important coding was made for “prepared” and “unprepared student”. This was done across participants and across data. This coding occurred in:

- 1) student notes

“To be prepared for class means to come with all materials and ready to learn”

(Mariah, 7<sup>th</sup> grade French student, 2004)

2) administrator discourse

..”Or go to other teachers when a kid had not been prepared...Most of kids in school are poor you already know that. Teachers are sort of middle class they have money, so what is a good thing for poor kids to say?” I don’t have money”, But when you look at they sneakers....And they do not have money to buy a dictionary?”

(Dr. Beach, 2004)

During these instances the students/participants were getting their words from a common linguistic pool, from “utterances” that were related to their genre or style, a sort of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1986). By reassigning new meaning to original utterances, students were in fact engaging in a dissident process of reclaiming my terms/words/discourse and then use it in a powerful critique of my practices.

“I don’t want to spend my money on things like a dictionary for French, and I don’t even need one if I have one in the back of the book”

(Josh, 8<sup>th</sup> grade French student, 2004)

As a result of searching preparedness instances among data and across participants it occurred to me that being prepared or not for class had to do with an ideology that was embedded in the context of production:

Administrator B: “what is a good thing for poor kids to say?”

As a result, assigning identities and predicting results is what an administrator suggests that it is all about. This contradictory view undermines the “Culture of Achievement”<sup>9</sup> that was spread with the NCLB Act. In this case, a system of values and beliefs explains how a group economy might work. For the group of “poor kids” this process is seen as a social matrix that allows them to buy expensive sneakers, but not invest in a French dictionary.

From this initial category of “prepared” and “unprepared”, the students helped me create subcategories to show partial preparedness and demonstrate that they do want to belong to the “prepared” group of students. This also made me think that there were in fact some students who were buying into certain practices, but not others. This heteroglossia was in fact the initial moment when I started to think about the concept of endorsement. Finding these moments was important since they lead to the construction of another important conceptual relationship: power and endorsement, power to endorse. Students were endorsing the instruction or not by showing their preparedness, their conformity with class rules or with lesson objectives.

As I said before using CDA became particularly important as I started to isolate instance of how discourse promotes one group’s traffic of power in others. Therefore, having and using a theory of power across participants and data became important. Coding for power as an overarching medium of production was my next step in categorizing the text.

As I have previously acknowledged, I am only viewing partially my classroom, namely the events that involve routines. Even within this limited viewing, in my class the students have a wide range of options within these events. The fact that some are “acceptable“, and others are not, does not prevent the students from selecting them. Some of the options that students take during these events are alternate routes to “excuse notes” that shows that they wish to engage in a minimal “procedural display” that does not take them past the stage of obtaining credit for class. Or maybe the routine of writing “excuse notes” is no longer meaningful for them, and drawing on some other class discourse that I am not aware of, they “know” that the notes are just giving the

**false** impression that their opinion counts. Such alternate activities are initiated by the students because they “worked” in other classes, such as copying a page of vocabulary, or writing a sentence many times to fill out a page. These alternative options that are not “acceptable” in my class are frequently tried out by the students throughout the year. In some instances, by taking advantage of other options available in the class, and building counter narratives, my students demonstrate that they are able to construct power relations that can allow them to endorse only selected parts of the foreign language instruction. Such options, like offering a written explanation of their “unpreparedness” for class, may present more meaning for the students and, in fact, could help them take up a more compatible identity with their real investment. Unfortunately, my students’ choice of these options, leave little room for the other class participants to see foreign language instruction as **engaging**.

Another coding was for “I don’t know” (as answers chosen by students to avoid a confrontation of power), or “silly” or “dumb” (as such as buying a dictionary) as an alternative to select different options to instruction, than engage in the acts of FL class. Other patterns, discussed more in detail such as “no work but still work” follow in Chapter Four. Looking closely at these patterns of coming back consistently from a state of endorsement into a state of resistance was a constant indication for me that power was fluid and engaged in its movement important other concepts essential to student learning.

This discussion of the nature of student *resistance* that affects *endorsement* taken up by students during foreign language instruction is based on my analyses of instances of how these two concepts are instantiated, a) in classroom discourse

(between students, and between students and teacher), b) in the institutional discourse of language policies, and c) in administrators' discursive practices out of the classroom. I selected these instances from the following: 1) student oral and written text produced in my foreign language classroom, 2) interviews with students and administrators conducted outside the foreign language class, and 3) texts that were widely circulated and available to teachers from local and national language policies pertaining to foreign language education and distributed widely by the local district.

The tool of analysis of such data was discourse analysis (Gee) for the socio-cultural aspect in the data, and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough) for the addition of ideological and political aspects. The choice of one versus the other was made upon availability of the medium of production (oral or written text) in the corpus of data. Examining the type of production (genre) of text across data, for example the text produced by students that is usually a counter narrative and the text produced by the administrators that use a declarative style, produced a pool of traces of ideological and political aspects in addition to the socio-cultural aspects. Examining these occurrences across text revealed that the use of such a combination of methods was viable and necessary, and at the same acknowledged the existence of networking of social practices between multiple participants. For example administrators are bringing in political aspects that are analyzed with CDA, students are bringing in more localized socio-cultural practices that are analyzed with CA. There are places where these two tools of analysis overlap, and in those instances I use the tool that is most appropriate for the type of text I have. An outline of the methods used follows:

**1. Gee (1999) "6 building tasks" – oral data (used with student HW)**

The discourse used in the oral data was analyzed through the **tasks** that were used by the participants to construct what **Gee** calls the situation network. Here are the **six tasks**

I used:

- semiotic **building** (sign or communicative systems that are relevant or irrelevant in homework checks).
- world **building** (situated meanings and values regarding “reality” that are attached to places, times, bodies, objects, artifacts and institutions relevant to homework checks).
- activity **building** (the larger or main activity in the homework check episodes as well as sub activities, such as inquiries of homework strategies employed at home)
- socioculturally-situated identity and relationship **building** (relationships and identities with participants’ personal, social, and cultural knowledge and beliefs, feelings and values that are relevant to homework check)
- political **building** - social goods – such as status (in the classroom), power (to use personal linguistic capital), acquiring grades or recognition or just checks that are relevant in homework checks)
- connection **building** - connections with past (home practices) and future (expectancy for a grade), within and across utterances and large stretches of homework check interaction

Even though building tasks can be applied to any discourse situation or speech event according to **Gee** (1999), with my data I found the most applicability with the oral text (student homework), although I also used it with the written text (student essays).

In order to establish a facet of language as social action and cultural resource, Gee defines a situated meaning as an image or pattern that participants assemble at the same time as they communicate in a context, and based on how they construe that context and on their previous experiences

## **2. Scollon & Scollon (1998) “voice” and “polyvocality” – written data ( used with student essays)**

Students’ writing displays considerable intertextuality and interdiscursivity, they are capable of managing the multiple voices from their own discourses, and social practices of textual appropriation.

## **3. Fairclough (1995) – three dimensions of analysis - written data (student notes and interviews)**

### *1. discourse practice*

- Interdiscursivity, Intertextual chains, Coherence, Conditions of discourse practice, Manifest intertextuality ( Discourse representation and presupposition)

### *2. text*

- interactional control, cohesion, politeness, ethos, grammar, transivity, theme, modality, word meaning, wording in general, and use of metaphors.

### *3. social practice*



- social matrix of discourse, orders of discourse, ideological and political effects of discourse (systems of knowledge and beliefs, social relations, and social identities)

To describe and analyze the power structures, ideologies, images and metaphors of the messages, discourse analytical methods are applied. Discourse is here understood as the use of language as a form of social practice, and discourse analysis is understood as analysis of how texts work within the sociocultural practice (Fairclough 1995).

Critical discourse analysis looks to establish connections between properties of texts, features of discourse practices (text production, consumption and distribution), and wider sociocultural practice (Fairclough 1995, p. 87). The method of discourse analysis thus includes linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationships between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes (Fairclough 1995, p. 97).

### **Discussion of Limitations**

This ethnographic study is limited to one school district. Within the district I only interviewed three administrators who represent the core of the foreign language education in the district, one foreign language teacher and 10 students. The interviews were used to check and confirm the results of my interpretations from class events. I took field notes from four of my own foreign language classes over a period of four years. I only examined parent notes, student notes, and interoffice memos that were directly addressed to me. I collected oral and written text from approximately 120

students who were all my foreign language students between 2001 and 2004. Within the oral and written text, I only collected data from homework check episodes in the classroom, journal writing, essays prompts and surveys given to students on language learning. I used student journal entries with various topics, mostly selected by students, in order to analyze students' investment in the foreign language class and how they construct their access to power. In addition to journal entries and homework check episodes I also look at student notes and student essays that are regarded as routine events in my classroom. Therefore, by looking only at routines I excluded from the scope of my examination other events such as the introduction of new material, lecturing and assessment events.

During the study conducted for the purpose of this dissertation I negotiated a stance of an active participant observer, a full-time foreign language teacher researcher with approximately 120 students in grades six, seven and eight. As the group's French teacher I used my own abilities to teach French; therefore adopting an overt role, and making my research intentions known to the group. I did that in order to secure and maintain active relationships with the students who helped me during the interviews to interpret accurately the significance of what I was observing.

While examining discourse in the written text, I noticed that the author (my students) and the audience (other peers or I) use the written word to act among themselves, although separated by time and space. By looking at the written text of the language legislation this way, and using a modified approach of Scollon's appropriation of voices in combination with Fairclough's three dimensions of analysis to look at power in the written text, I acknowledge that it is a unique way to examine student data.

In a way, this could limit the scope of the findings due to the use of a methodology that was purposefully deviated from a conventional method of analysis.

In other instances, however, this approach proved to be very effective in my case in understanding instances of how wider discourses are used as resources, make their way down to the classroom level, and appear as available resources that students make use of in the foreign language class. Additionally, through this approach, issues of identity, resistance and endorsement were examined as they surfaced in the specific contexts of journal writing episodes and oral interactions of the foreign language class.

In performing the microanalysis of the oral data at the level of the classroom, I used mainly Gee's approach to look at data. However, I found useful to alter slightly this methodology too, and add elements of conversation analysis from Goffman (1967) as well as traces of interactional sociolinguistics from Bloome (1989), especially his approach to "procedural display" (Bloome, 1989; Goffman, 1967). As with the written data, I acknowledge that this modified approach to data analysis could pose some problems of conformity to an established approach but I found it useful not only in the classroom but also when examine policy making events and the moment-by-moment interaction in which language ideologies, identities and power relations are developed. This also allowed me to look more specifically not only at the content that is presented but mostly at the form in which the data is presented, which has the potential to offer a more accurate picture of instantiations of language policy and globalization issues in discursive practices of face-to-face interactions.

From this angle of the text, therefore, my analysis of power structures can be identified and determined by analysis of local contextualization cues that are aligned

with text and work together. In looking at this particular interpretation of the data, I could argue that power relations shift according to multiple social factors such as context, cues, nonverbal behavior, status/identity that exist in the classroom. Power relations are constructed here by all participants visible and invisible, including myself and contribute to enact a unique social interaction.

Starting from the premise that the tools for investigation of what is going on in the text and context require an analysis of the words, the group of words, the clause and the discourse unit, I tried to establish patterns in these units of texts across events. I also tried to examine these patterns at all levels of analysis. As mentioned previously, as a main tool for analysis, I will use Gee's six building tasks: semiotic, world, activity, socioculturally situated identity and relationship, political, and connection. I will use these tasks to systematically identify and examine key themes that emerge in oral interaction. Thus, the discourse analyzed is regarded therefore as a complex system that looks at the themes that occur with the change of subjects' positions in the different contexts that exist in the foreign language class. Thus, these positionings become units of analysis.

To better understand and analyze excerpts of transcribed classroom interaction, as I mentioned before I used a modified approach and included a sociocultural lens, as outlined below, in order to better describe how co-participants handled their respective background assumptions and how they co-constructed situated interpretations. In these social interactions the students and I negotiate while performing within the social context of the classroom, for the purpose of conveying certain aspects of our identity.

Although I draw on larger discourses to shape the context of our interactions, the students use the same approach and search for resources in wider discourses too.

In analyzing this social context, I incorporated the participants' own understanding about these events. Drawing on theoretical insights from interactional sociolinguistics (Bloome, 1989; Goffman, Drew, & Wooton, 1988; Gumperz, 1972; Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2001), I believe I better captured and described classroom events and the moment-by-moment interaction in which language ideologies, identities and power relations are developed. This method of breaking down classroom discourse and events into more manageable bits helped me establish coherent units and examine the relationships between these units.

In order to illustrate how this type of modified methodology helped me perform the analysis of my written data, I include in this chapter a transcript selected from the category of written classroom text and more specifically "student notes". Here I perform episode analysis to study how a writing task is accomplished, instantiated and terminated, how students construct their identities as foreign language learners and what kind of policies they endorse while they are in the classroom, what kind of power relations take place, and what kind of identities are shaped. This is a description of how students' subjectivities toward foreign language are shaped in the classroom, and how they also have the potential to contribute toward the endorsement of the foreign language program. By understanding these local manifestations of wider discourses, my research highlights significant factors that can be relevant to a wider population of foreign language learners, in particular when trying to explain how policies can affect foreign language learning and teaching.

### Notes – Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup> Information retrieved from the director of foreign languages in the district where I work

<sup>2</sup> See definition of terms Appendix

<sup>3</sup> Through the **tasks** we use language to construct what **Gee** calls the situation network, and the **six tasks** include:

- semiotic **building** (semiotic (communicative) systems)
- world **building** (situated meanings regarding “reality”)
- activity **building**
- socioculturally-situated identity and relationship **building**
- political **building** (establish what is social goods – such as status and power)
- connection **building** (concerning past and future connected to the present)

<sup>4</sup> 1. Analysis of the discourse practice (at a macro level) – intertextuality and interdiscursivity of discourse samples 2. Analysis of texts (plus micro aspects discourse practice) 3. Analysis of the social practice of which the discourse is a part

<sup>5</sup> Term used by Gee in discourse analysis, applicable to foreign languages to denote learning of new information from an original context

<sup>6</sup> see definition of terms – Appendix A

<sup>7</sup> Motivation is being replaced by the endorsement of the foreign language learning

<sup>8</sup> Technical terms used by Fairclough to define the interrelationships between discourses and texts.

<sup>9</sup> *Culture of Achievement* is the thread that underpins the NCLB Act of 2001

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

In the Methodology chapter I outlined my approach to examine patterns of occurrence of the seven factors presented in Chapter Two, in conjunction with the categories of foreign language classroom participants as outlined in Chapter Three. The following discussion of the selected occurrences of student endorsement and student resistance as well as of the occurrences of circulating power in the classroom, represent a model of patterns established within and across the categories of participants in my foreign language class.

By examining closely the methods of collecting data from Table 1 and Table 2B<sup>1</sup>, I was able to document that there are two categories of participants in the foreign language class instruction: first, there are the participants who are visible (such as students and teachers), and second, there are the participants who are not so easily identifiable, but nevertheless, are active, and contribute indirectly to the level and nature of endorsement that students display in foreign language class. The latter category of participants, whether they are individual adults (family members, administrators, etc.) or remain nameless and unidentifiable under the umbrella of institutions (media, government bodies), leave traces of their presence in the classroom and are identifiable in student text (see analysis later in the chapter). By continuously interacting with the foreign language students through well-established channels, these participants also shape students' identities in a complex way, thus contributing voluntarily perhaps, to the level or degree of resistance that students take in the foreign language classroom (see Table 3 for how the degrees of Endorsement/Resistance are determined).

I first became aware of the presence of invisible participants in my foreign language class, after I analyzed students' texts excerpted from various routine class events such as homework check, student notes, and journal writing entries. In these routine events, participants like policy makers were actively informing my practices, and to better understand the nature of how they operated in my classroom, I decided to further look at official foreign language legislation texts. Whether these texts originated at the national or state level, they had deep roots in my practice. Evidence of how policy makers were guiding my practices is captured in several instances throughout this document. The first one presented below is taken from a homework check episode in my Spanish class. This is evidence of how I demonstrate an internalization in my practice, of the foreign language guiding document for the state of Massachusetts: "Foreign Language Standards". In this direct interaction with the students I "show student work" for assessment purposes.

I : Vamos a ponerlo en la pizarra....OK? (...) We are going to line them up here on the board (...) so we can take a look at all {clearing her throat}...see which one is going to be more appealing. ..to go...and do some volunteer work...

(Homework check, January 2002)

The second example is taken from my personal reflections at the end of a Spanish class. In this example I reflect on the use of "Agenda"<sup>2</sup> in class as an internalization of the "backwards planning" concept, as well as connect the "learning outcomes" with the teaching and student leaning process:

"...as the students walk in the classroom and take their assigned seats, . they begin to copy the agenda from the board. I heard unhappy questions from the students as they were copying the agenda. "This is the same hard homework", "Why do we have to make flashcards?", and so on. In the future, I have to be more careful, when I give homework, to vary it, and it seems that



every new activity in the classroom need to start with "...we are doing this because..." They need a purpose. But it has to be short and concise."

(Personal reflection, 11/11/01)

In this short excerpt I have captured evidence of internalization of the RBT<sup>3</sup> techniques widely promoted in our district through a series of professional development sessions.

After the initial coding and categorizing of the student text, I became aware that in the student text there were traces of supervisors', principals' and curriculum specialists. Their presence there was meant to ensure that students were performing to the established state standards. To understand their relationship with my classroom, I started to look closely at their memos to me and other foreign language teachers as well as at the foreign language curriculum maps. These were the same participants who worked diligently in professional development workshops outside the classroom, so that foreign language teachers like myself, internalize the steps that needed to be taken to implement in the classroom a specific foreign language instruction, shaped to fit state guidelines. To understand their relationship with my classroom and student endorsement of foreign language education, I left the classroom and interviewed these participants in their offices.

Finally, when analyzing students' notes explaining their unpreparedness for class, I noticed that in my classroom were also present invisible parents who were telling the story of how they raised their children, and what values students and parents were sharing. My reaction and response to these notes was for a while of silence. In a way I think that I needed the time to create spaces to accommodate these new,

unfamiliar home practices, so that by first knowing that they are out there, I could later respond in a culturally appropriate way to these notes. I needed to understand their situated identity that was different from the one that I had assigned them when I had given out the homework, or when I had established my class policies. Operating only from my worldview was not an option any more. Then, I decided to examine more closely a range of “excuse” notes from parents, in conjunction with students’ notes, to verify how they position themselves relative to student endorsement of foreign language education.

As I have mentioned at the beginning of Chapter Three, this ethnography conducted mostly in my classroom, has wider ramifications outside the foreign language class. It touches upon school, district, and community discourses and even on discourses constructed by wider layers of society. The networking created by the coexistence of such discourses is visible in the foreign language class through social practices that normalize foreign language education. The power relations revealed in the structure of these institutions, groups or individuals are the result of a complex networking of visible and invisible participants who have devised strategic approaches of using discourse and situate themselves in my class. The discussion that follows begins with the group of visible participants in the foreign language class. Although in the end this ethnography is a personal reflection of my transformation as a teacher, I decided to begin this discussion with the “students” as classroom participants, as a sign of gratitude for my students who made this transformation possible.

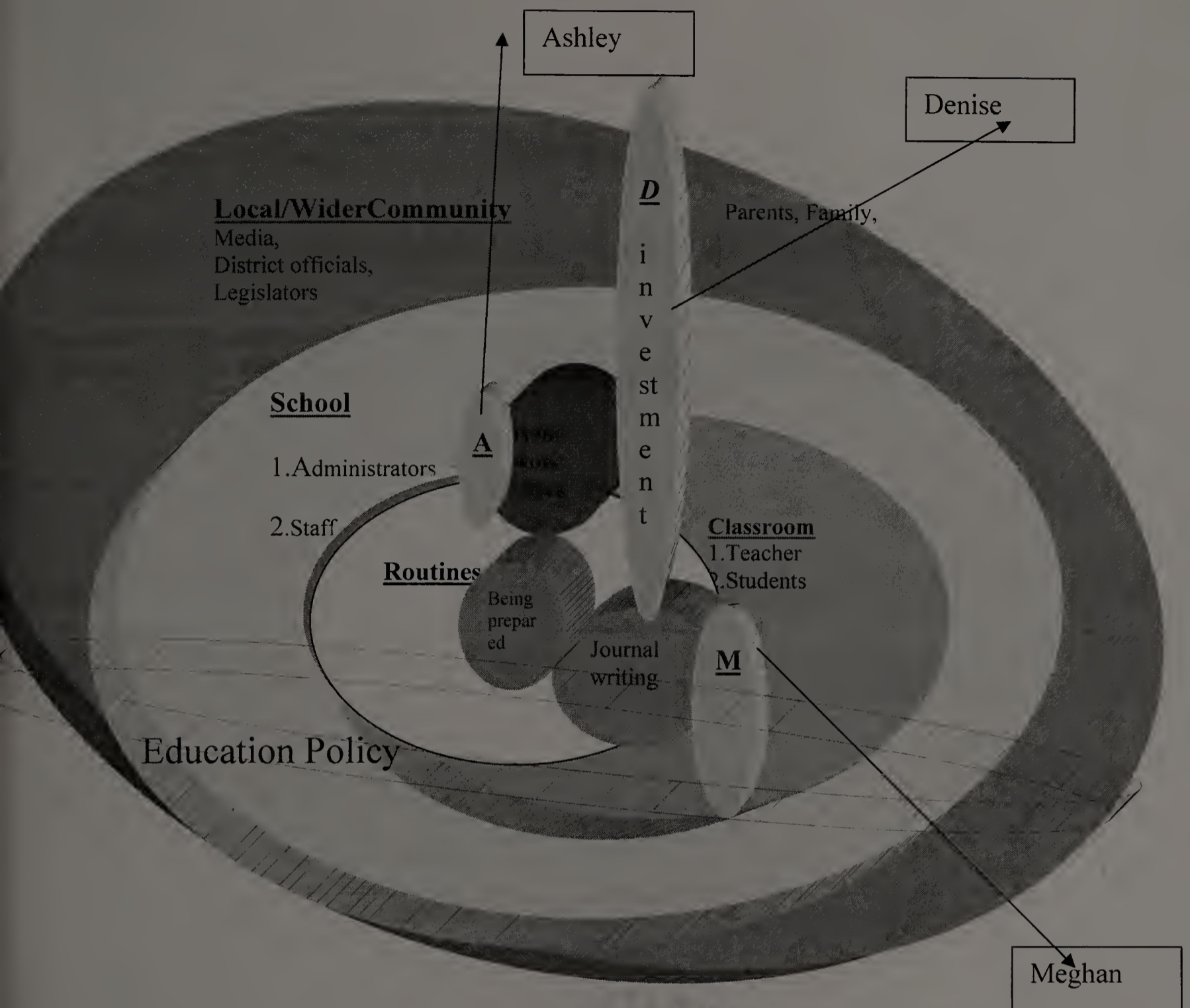
## Foreign Language Classroom Participants

### The Students

Every September, I receive new groups of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in my Spanish and French classes. They remain my students until the end of the school year in June. The students I refer to in this chapter are in their first, second or third year of studying either Spanish or French language, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and, 8<sup>th</sup> grade respectively. Although occasionally, I have the same students in my class in all three grades, this is not the case with any of the students referred in this chapter. Over a period of three years I taped 10 such mixed foreign language classes, and I selected oral and written text produced by some of these students. The selection of these students, was solely based on the type of texts they produced during routine events, however, as a result of this initial categorization, certain student identities emerged more clearly than others, thus helping me better understand and focus on examining how my students construct levels of resistance in the foreign language class, and how this in turn affects their endorsement of my class.

The samples of text presented throughout this chapter represent “critical moments”<sup>4</sup> in student classroom interactions that I initially identified, then coded, and finally was able to understand the patterns they formed. In these moments my students must make sense of the world they live in but are denied the tools to do so by me or other non-physically present participating adults. These are moments, coded as “student resistance”<sup>5</sup> that are ironically shaped in the spaces created by me for the endorsement of foreign language instruction. These spaces also afford my students to assume new identities to help them make sense of flawed learning transactions<sup>6</sup>.

After examining routine events both in my French and Spanish classes, over a span of three years, and looking at data collected across all three grades, I was able to understand “critical moments” that reveal student investment, cross the boundaries initially assigned to the routines. A simplified representation of student investment that crosses boundaries in relation to established class routines, classroom, school, and community, is illustrated below in this chapter in Figure 3. The diagram is a representation of several circles that symbolize spaces where visible and invisible participants exist. The ellipses represent my students’ investment in relation to these spaces. The positioning of the ellipses vis-à-vis the circles was determined from evidence presented in the student data. My general assumption is: the wider the investment that a student produced in texts across circles, the higher is the student’s endorsement of the foreign language class. The shorter the investment that a student extends across circles and less anchored in routine events, the more likely it is that the student will build resistance to compensate for the lack of meaning of the foreign language class. In looking at the data represented in this way, the relationship between endorsement and investment becomes visually clearer.



**Figure 3 – Representation of Student Investment.** This configuration was done in relation to the spaces claimed by the invisible participants to the foreign language class. This illustration was initially founded on the diagram of student placement in the content/form relationship based on *procedural display* theory.

**Legend:** Circles=participants/spaces  
 Vertical ellipses=students' investment  
 Horizontal ellipse=education policy

Ashley, Denise, and Meghan are three students in the same Spanish class. The text they produce and that is discussed below is similar to other participants in my study. All the examined texts are selected from routine events (homework check and journal writing). The text produced by Ashley is taken from her oral interaction with me in a homework check episode in November 2001 (the routine is described at length below). The texts produced by Meghan and Denise are taken from entries in their Spanish journal in 2001. These entries are directed to other assigned classmates. These data were triangulated a month after they were produced with additional data taken individually from the same students in out-of-the-classroom interviews. The texts produced by Josh, Mariah, and Jordan, students in different French classes are retrieved from their notes written to me as excuses for being unprepared for class. These texts were analyzed in conjunction with my field notes from teacher meetings in 2003.

In order to validate my claims as identifiable patterns (“prepared student” “unprepared student” etc.), across routine class events, and link them (using a “connection building” task) to acts of student resistance and student endorsement situated in time, I examined and analyzed written texts produced as a result of students writing notes to explain their unpreparedness for class, with similarly produced text from journal writing events, and oral texts from homework check episodes. I also examined at length my students’ history of ongoing participation in alternative activities (writing “excuse” notes for being unprepared) instead of “regular” assignments such as cooperative learning type of activities in conjunction with the procedural display<sup>7</sup> theory. Then, I overlapped the diagram above, of participants physically present in the foreign language class (the ovals) with traces of invisible participants (the circles) that

were found in student texts extracted from routine events, with the purpose of finding a relationship between non-visible participants, and visible participants. The general thinking pattern was that if students' text presented Discourses of interaction with invisible participants coming from the outer circles, then, I would interpret accordingly the levels of student endorsement in the foreign language class, to reflect such relationships. The traces of interaction are identified by how common intertextuality is manifested in the participants' discourse. Such intertextual links are discussed at length, below in the *Routines* section. One major issue in this representation was however, the potential "reading" that *participants = space*, and therefore, that all *use* in student text of the invisible participants' *discourse = student endorsement*. As a result, in order to avoid this unwarranted claim I decided to frame it in the following modified relationship: the higher the student investment in the "circle spaces", the more likely and higher the dialogue with the invisible participants and at the same time more normative with the circles.

### The routines

Over time, after the first 2-3 years of teaching I began to develop a "style" of teaching that incorporated the use of class routines. Usually by the end of the first month of school they are already in place although, I never stop teaching them. The routine events described in this dissertation were collected beginning with October of each school year (2001-2004). I was able to capture this interaction when I watched and analyzed how students entered in the daily routines of checking homework, or wrote the mini essays for missing assignments. In those events, they were able to function within an internalized routine, to the point where no verbal communication was needed

between us (the visible classroom participants). This observation prompted me to draw the conclusion that body language and non-verbal communication are students' preferred tools for classroom transactions that are mutually constructed and accepted. In these situations my students engaged readily in expressing their rationale of a missing assignment, for instance. Additionally, they demonstrated that as foreign language classroom members, by working out with me within an already established routine discourse, they have access to a powerful tool to communicate their values and beliefs. They are also able within these discourses, to promote outside practices that are equally powerful and transforming for them. As a teacher, I want to see my students be successful and pass my class. This message is deeply internalized by my students, and for those who have been with me for more than a year, they are even socialized to know this and eagerly explain it to my hypothetical next year students. In these events they perform a task for the new students that corresponds to what Gee calls "connection building". That is, they use intertextual links to point by looking backward and/or forward to connections that are made within and across utterances and large stretches of interaction (Gee, 1999). This last journal entry was written at the end of June for upcoming students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish class. I gave this assignment to one of my Spanish classes as an evaluation tool of my practice. The entry counted as a regular journal entry although was written in English. Here is an excerpt from the last journal entry in Matt's Spanish journal:

*"Dear \_\_\_\_\_ next year, future, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that will be in Mrs. Alexandru's class next year and will write in their journals for the first 5-10 minutes of each and every class.....How are you doing? I am doing good. Writing in the journal isn't all that bad. , It is kind of boring, I have to admit though. It is a good learning experience that will help you out in learning the*



*Spanish language. I warn you though, you are going to need a dictionary, though...and you will have a partner..."*

Finally, finding patterns in these routine practices made it possible for me to identify early in the process how my foreign language students acquire the necessary capital to participate as competent members with discursive power in the economy of our foreign language classroom.

### **Homework check**

The first routine that I want to discuss here is the event when the students and I engage in homework check. This event, usually lasts between 5-10 minutes, and takes place in the beginning of almost every foreign language class. As mentioned previously I make use of routines in my classroom in order to allow the students to take steps toward creating independence toward their own learning within my class expectations, and also for personal reasons, such as to prevent actions that could potentially conflict with the agenda of my instruction. These reasons reflect my use of routines as social controls. By initiating this routine at the beginning of class, I acknowledge that I claim hierarchy and status. I do this alphabetically, as I take the roll. The students' responsibility is to report back to me if they did homework or not in front of the class, with class participants listening and watching. If they did homework, I may ask for a response to be read from the homework notebook. I may also ask some students more questions than others, if I determine that more clarification on the homework assignment is needed. I seldom miss this opportunity to reinforce the class rules in terms of turn taking, and therefore to perform a control check of how students respond to the policy.

After looking at 10 homework check events between November 2001 and February 2002, and coding certain moments within the events as “I don’t know”, here is a typical “critical moment” in the homework check<sup>8</sup> routine that exemplifies this category:

- 83 I: Ashley
- 84 Ashley: ( como esta?) ( xxx)
- 85 I: ))¿Puedes leerlo?.. <¡Le::elo!> Read it!
- 86 Ashley: en la.... (Starts reading the text)
- 87 I: No! Read the title!
- 88 Ashley: I don’t want to ( ) I just ( ) it I can’t ( ) it
- 89 I: <Which one?>
- 90 Other student voice overlappings: ( ayudar.. ayudar )
- 91 Ashley: I can’t say it! ( )
- 92 I: <Which one?>
- 93 Ashley: I ( )
- 93 I: What is the word in English?
- 94 Ashley: ( I don’t know )
- 95 I: Is this yours?
- 96 Ashley: Yes.
- 97 I: And who chose the words?
- 98 Ashley: I did.
- 99 I: HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE WORDS?
- 100 Ashley: °I looked up in the dictionary.°
- 101 I: And what is that word?
- 102 Ashley: I don’t know. . I don’t remember.
- 103 ( )
- 104 I: And do you want credit for this homework?
- 105 Ashley: Ahm?
- 106 I: Why?
- 107 Ashley: ( )<sup>9</sup>

In this excerpt Ashley and I observe the rule of taking turns in our conversation, and consequently there is no overlapping except for line 90 where overlapping of turns occurs due to the intervention of other students in the class. The above excerpt is an exchange of rapid turns between me and the student labeled “A” in the above diagram of student investment (Figure 3). In this excerpt Ashley, (labeled “A” in figure 3), is well anchored in the routine event, but her “voice” and chosen identity at the time, do not help her move out of the routine space into the classroom space to seek other resources, in spite of other students’ attempts to “help” (line 90). Additionally, in this episode, Ashley becomes incapacitated, and there are no traces of Ashley’s dialogue or relationship in reference to the invisible participants to the foreign language class, who situate themselves in outer circles of the discussed routine. Her intertextuality is kept to a minimum. This critical moment unfolds as follows: “A” becomes deprived of access to class resources, due to the fact that in line 93, I silence the class to be able to hear the student’s answers and to reinforce my routine for the rest of the students: (question addressed to Ashley – line 93) *What is the word in English?* (Verbal warning to the class – same line 93) *{shhh:::}*. Ashley slowly begins the resistance process that will replace the initial investment she had started the routine with (line 84). It is unclear though if this shift is due to that fact that her initial investment in the homework check was different in nature than the one I was expecting of her, and this realization on Ashley’s part contributed to the beginning of her resistance. Or, it is possible that by making my intentions clearer to her as to what type of investment I expect (mental, to demonstrate learning, and a completion of task), she just decided that she was no longer going to do it. At that time the return of her investment (the credit for homework) was

perhaps incompatible with what she was willing to give. In doing so, Ashley left no room for the endorsement of the foreign language instruction and by the end of the episode, ex: line 94, 102 - *I don't know. . I don't remember*, Ashley filled the newly discursive space created with what I perceive to be resistance. Another interpretation is that she attempts to gain more time by showing a genuine mental block that places her temporarily on the defensive side in lines 94 and 102. Unfortunately, her use of time during her turns does not produce any acceptable resolution to the conflict.

In spite of her apparent lack of resources, Ashley employs multiple discourses and alternate voices within the same conversational turn. When I use the term “voice”<sup>10</sup> I refer here to “a particular assumption about the relationship between appearance, reality and language.... A specific normative order” (Mishler, 1984). As a result, in line 84 Ashley is using the “obedient student” voice, a coding that led to what I initially considered to be “student endorsement in the foreign language instruction”. When this is no longer a successful discourse for her, she switches to the “rebellious/cool girl” voice (maybe a sub-discourse employed in the circle of friends or social network) for all subsequent lines (Gee, 1999) . This new voice/discourse will help Ashley build by the end of the interaction in line 102, what I perceive to be, “resistance” to the instruction. At this point, as represented in Figure 3, Ashley has left the routine borders and negotiated her placement in the classroom space where no active participation is required.

As Ashley's teacher I have precise ideas about how each homework assignment should be completed, and there is little – if any – student negotiation involved in this routine. During this conversational face-to-face interaction with me, I perceived Ashley

to project the image of a student who openly resists schooling and authority as well as peer correction (line 90).

90 Other student voice overlappings: ( *ayudar.. ayudar* )

Her peers' attempt was maybe not intended to correct Ashley, as much as they were trying to position her as incorrect. Her investment to do well in class at this point is becoming less apparent as well as her power to keep face. Ashley's identity as a "well prepared student" is challenged, and is forced to begin an aggressive face-saving practice<sup>11</sup> in which she is attempting to neutralize my intrusive threat of power lines 84, 88 and 95 (Goffman, Drew, & Wootton, 1988).

Ashley's "face-saving" practices are in disagreement with routines, and as a result, disagreeing with this situation and in an attempt to correct it, I take advantage of my status established at the beginning of the routine, and use rapid repairs of student disruptions to bring the class discourse within the narrow and constrained voice of education, ex: lines 83, 87, and 89. The disruptions were created as a result of class confusion as to how to proceed with the routine as a result of a student being absent and unable to account for his homework. In this episode, the "critical moment" of "I **don't know**", placed Ashley only in a tangential endorsement versus the homework routine, as it is represented in the above diagram. Although she did the homework, and therefore endorsed my policy of having to do foreign language homework in exchange for credit (a classroom transaction that leads to endorsement in my understanding as well as Ashley's)), she was not willing to read it out loud, and demonstrate that she understood it. With this symbolic act, Ashley appeared to have openly resisted specifically the

district policy of rendering the students competent in speaking, understanding, reading and writing in a foreign language. This incident event was added to 10 other similar events occurring during the same homework check routine over a period of four months.

In general, outside of the practice in class, in an interview with Ashley outside the foreign language class about homework practices employed in our classroom, she acknowledged that she always **did** homework and that she **liked** the practice of having to do it in the notebook, (and then correcting it in class), because “then, you get to go back to it and if you see that something’s wrong in Spanish you can change it... and then go back to your notebook and, like, further see and review it again”. (Appendix D – starting on Line 5)

In the same interview Ashley also mentioned that the previous year’s practice (Ashley had a different teacher) of turning homework in and not seeing it back, was not a very beneficial one for her, due to the fact that she never knew if she had the right answers or not. The information provided by Ashley was very useful. On one hand it confirmed the fact that she wants feedback, but perhaps not the humiliation in public that I thought I had used during my whole-class homework check events. On the other hand it opened up a different interpretation. Because I tried to redefined myself Ashley’s positioning in the interview as a compliant student was due perhaps to the fact that she still considered herself in a student-teacher relationship with me, (although we were not in the classroom, but in an office, and the time of the interview was not during the Spanish class, instead it was conducted during a social studies class). Perhaps Ashley was trying to paint a portrait of herself similar to the students she knew that I

valued: “prepared” and “compliant”. This message was very accessible to the students through the many opportunities I have in the classroom to present my teaching style and philosophy. Another possibility was that perhaps Ashley, at that time, was making a personal choice to construct a power relationship with me through her discourse that could mean future access to material “goods” such as good grades. By her positioning in the interview in which I opened myself up for criticism, Ashley showed a good knowledge of what constitutes advantageous positions in the school context and in relation to their teachers.

After analyzing Ashley’s interview and her perspective on my homework practice in this Spanish class, Ashley’s endorsement of the foreign language class shapes in a different light. By using the “trial and error” strategy in the practice of Spanish homework, Ashley is fully endorsing the district policy of having the students review their work in order to get a better understanding of the Spanish material. Simultaneously, she also appears to make a good use of her writing skills in Spanish. Thus, Ashley’s endorsement of the foreign language class, as it surfaces through her beliefs, and her choice of discourse appropriation, is in sharp contrast with the resistance (perceived by me) that she displayed in the homework check episode presented above. Additionally the lack of student participation could also be interpreted as resistance on the part of the teacher not just the student.

When asked later on in the interview if she had ever been in a situation of not doing homework, and having to account for her assignment out loud in class, Ashley responded that this did not happen to her because she did homework most of the times:

64: ...if I didn’t have the homework it was ‘cause I didn’t understand, cause

65: that's mostly when I did not do the homework ....but I normally **do** do my homework.

(Interview with Ashley, March 2002)

Looking back at the way Ashley figures my practice of assigning homework and checking homework, it is interesting to note that her "reality" is: that it is a good thing to endorse my homework practice because it will help "*you learn what you did wrong*". At this point Ashley is performing an attempt, to comply with the district policies of becoming competent in Spanish as well as to use a discourse widely promoted and recognized in the School and Classroom circles (Figure 3). In the interview face-to-face, this is in contradiction with the lack of endorsement of district policies as it appeared from the classroom interaction event analyzed before. My attempt to triangulate this homework check event through the interview with Ashley was done a month apart, and revealed that outside discourses intersect in the classroom creating instantiations of what Fairclough describes as, the transformative process of discourses penetrating new domains, in this case new spaces. This also revealed how they are appropriated by its receivers: "the entry of discourses into new domains,..... the diverse ways in which they are received, appropriated, recontextualized in different locales, and the ultimately unpredictable outcomes of this process."<sup>12</sup> (Fairclough, 2003)

Taking apart Ashley's interview further, allows me to reach the core of how in Ashley's reality and power relations become explicit, in certain events. Outside of class and face-to-face with me, Ashley's discourse in the following excerpt reproduces the hegemony of my social practice, and with this she unrestrictedly joins me in labeling and assigning social identities to class participants (line 14, 15, 16).



1. **I:** .....OK let's see ..Do you know how, I, most of the times, try to check homework at the beginning of the.. of the class...how I talk to the students individually?
2. **Ashley:** Yeah..
3. **I:** I call their names and sometimes I ask them questions..
4. **Ashley:** Yeah you ask them a question from the homework and they have to give you..their answer...
5. **I:** What do you think about this procedure?
6. **Ashley:** I think that's is good because you could just ask if they have it and make it lie to you.. and they could say they did do it, and just do it on like a week end, so that it's in their notebook, But this way you know that they are actually doing something instead of..saying "Do you have your homework?"and they're saying "yeah"
7. **I:** How about that time when I have a few seconds or you know, a minute, half a minute with each individual student ...what do you think about that moment? Is it ...Do you feel you are being put on the spot? Do you think it', you'd rather not have it? How does that.. How does that affect you?
8. **Ashley:** I think it is affecting people in a good way and in a bad. Good because you learn what you did wrong, and in a bad, 'cause it kind of puts them on the spot, sometimes, like, if they really understand a question and like they just made up an answer.
9. **I:** ahm
10. **Ashley:** it puts them on the spot. But I think it's fine with me.
11. **I:** Did you ever feel like you've been put on the spot?
12. **Ashley:** Not really.
13. **I:** OK..Ahm.... Do you know of anyone who felt they were put on the spot?
14. **Ashley:** Maybe Greg .. hah...hah..
15. **I:** He said that?
16. **Ashley :**Well.. he acts and stuff, because he like takes 10 minutes to like look at the paper, so probably Greg....

(Interview with Ashley, March 2002)

Line 10 is of particular importance for the construction and understanding of Ashley's endorsement of the foreign language class and the homework check routine: "it puts them (the students) on the spot. But I think its fine with me." Although aware of the potential negative effects of this practice for students, Ashley assures me that this practice is acceptable to her (line 10), and that she is "endorsing it" based on her previous analysis of how this practice could affect "people" in the class. In line 8 she had just demonstrated how endorsement of this practice worked for her, and what

personal benefits she and the class could draw from it. In the same line (10), Ashley attempts to give me another option for consideration of this practice. In doing that she also reveals how “procedural display” works in case that the students are put on the spot but want to keep the class conventions unaltered.

Relevant to the analysis of the interview is the deviation in interviewing technique that I performed in line 7. My use of rapid fire to ask questions was not only as a result of an endeavor to avoid leading questions but also, more importantly, it was a controlled effort to recreate for Ashley the homework check episode that occurred a month earlier. Discussing and analyzing my homework check practice with Ashley, also illustrated in Figure 4, below, is a particularly revealing moment for me because it sheds a new light on the “**I don’t know**” type of “critical moment” analyzed above. Ashley’s acceptance and agreement with my practice of putting students on the spot while checking their homework, for the benefit of their foreign language education, is a new “reality” for me.

In Ashley’s direct interaction with me in the homework check excerpt presented above in this document, she appeared to have attempted to use an outside discourse in the homework routine. This action placed her at the time in the class context, of “rebellious/cool girl” category, and simultaneously gave her access, or maybe an awareness of the availability of other handy identities that are challenging to education. Therefore, initially, after the homework check episode, Ashley, appeared to be invested more in identities that were not compatible with my understanding of how student endorsement should be represented, due mostly to the conflicting discourses that she used during the event.

My relationship with Ashley analyzed above, in its turn, when I was controlling the register of the *voice of education*, strips away the life contexts of students and their problems, treats them as objects and depersonalizes them (Mishler, 1984). Later on during the interview, in reflecting with Ashley on the homework check practice, allowed me to re-evaluate her positioning in the student investment/endorsement diagram (Figure 3).

In analyzing this interview I realized that Ashley pointed to me the creation of a space where sharing values are important to foreign language education. This became the new “truth” for me: for example: “you learn what you did wrong” (line 8). This use of metacognition discourse on Ashley’s part speaks to the fact that Ashley does in fact, endorse my foreign language homework check practice, and implicitly the foreign language instruction with it. Not only that she endorses, but also is open to offer valuable insights of what appears to be important to the foreign language students, and possibly to the teachers, in the foreign language class, for example: “they are actually **doing** something in stead of..saying (line 6).

The stress on “doing” is without a doubt, in Ashley’s version of what counts, the key to a successful homework practice, as it is also a reflection of her “activity building” process. She is pointing to me what is the larger or main activity that is going on in this discourse event, and what sub activities compose it. A visually clear organization of thoughts (although the information appears to be produced intermittently rather than in a steady flow), regarding the current year and previous year homework class practices according to Ashley is represented in the diagram in Figure 4 (page 146) . Although it could be read as a forced reflection on intertextuality on

Ashley's part of this practice, I think that through this diagram it is also visible an entire set of "dos and don'ts" for a successful Spanish language education, which speaks to how deeply the state and district guidelines for foreign language education have penetrated in Ashley's discourse: "if you did something wrong you can change it", "you can review it every time", "you had to translate the words with the dictionary, you do not need your brain for that". (Figure 4, page 146)

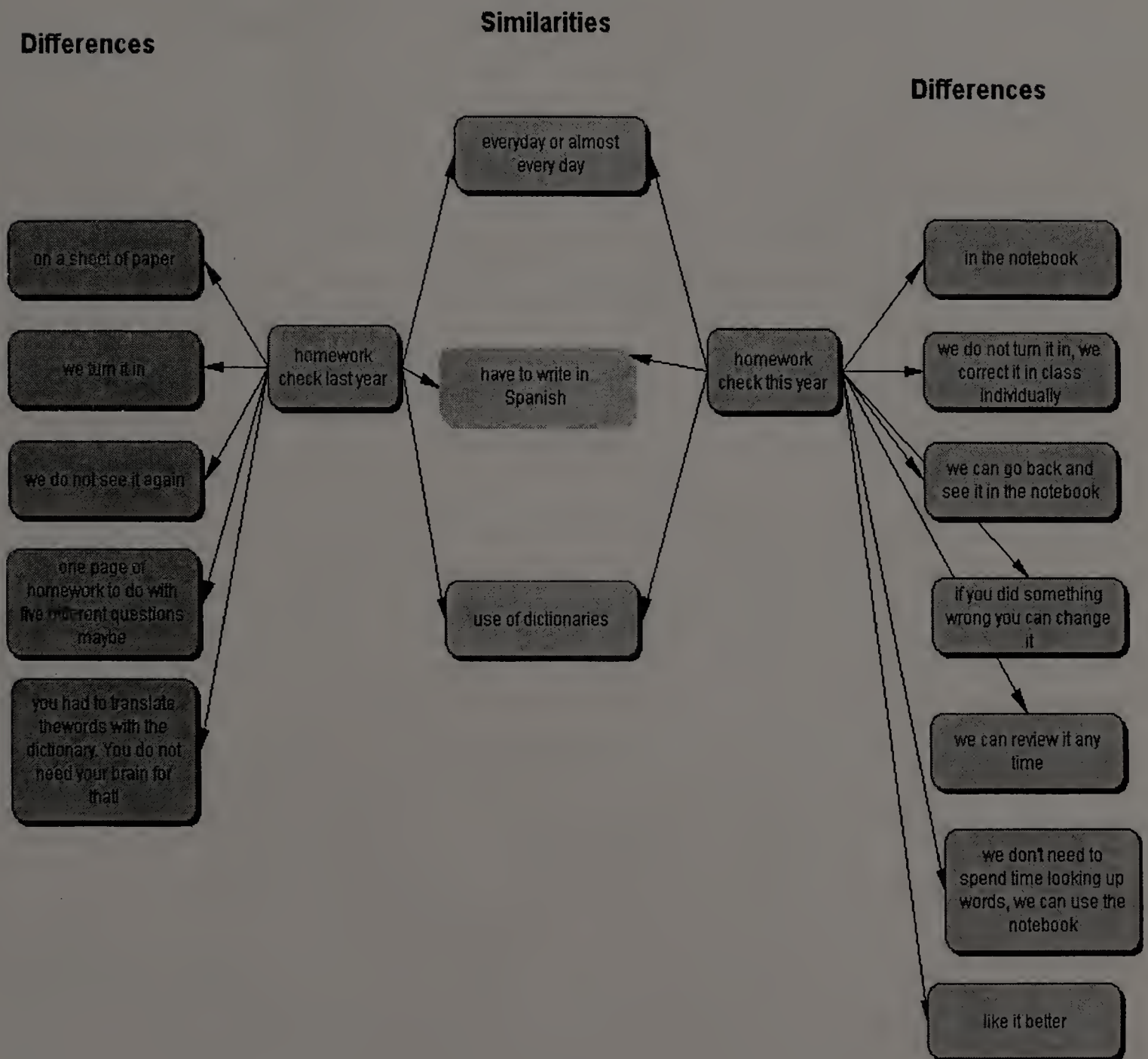
Compared to Ashley's interaction with me during the homework check episode, this time, in the interview episode, Ashley's use of discourses coming from outside the homework routine circle, allows me to examine her active network of discourses. In the interview, Ashley is using a social network that is wider than her circle of friends, wider than our routine practice, and strongly embedded in language policy discourses that were brought in our classroom by the invisible legislators.

In the above excerpt taken from Ashley's interview, she is also offering valuable insights on how "procedural display" might work in our foreign language class: "...you could just ask if they have it and they could lie to you.. and they could say they did do it, and just do it on, like, a week-end, so that it's in their notebook,..". (line 6). It is difficult however, to infer from Ashley's comments that if by sharing this possible practice in our classroom, she is making use of a discourse she borrowed from her friends, in the Spanish class, or other classes. What makes her comment interesting though, is the fact that she is willing to share it with me, and even offers to interpret further her peers' actions for my personal understanding of certain classroom practices: for example: "Well.. he acts and stuff, because he, like, takes 10 minutes, to, like, look at the paper, so probably Greg..." (line 16).

Although Ashley and I were both present in the class during these occurrences, I did not perceive Greg's delay as an unusual response to report on his homework. However, this would require further verification to see if Greg's delay in providing answers could be due to being put on the spot or not. This interpretation of Greg's response to homework check, according to Ashley, could lead to further speculation that maybe other students in the class had to go through this "embarrassing" process of being put on the spot.

Due in part to these practices, in general, these students, according to Ashley, "have little respect for the teacher and their own education", or even worse, they could say that they did the homework, when in fact, they did not do it, and therefore, no learning occurred. With this, Ashley has just provided a typical example of Gee's "mushfaking"<sup>13</sup> that takes place in school. Because perhaps of my new footing with her as someone who is interesting in learning from her this allowed me to access this information in a non-threatening manner. It may also show Ashley's desire to show superiority by criticizing Greg. Nonetheless it points out the existence of "ways" to do schooling that are known and practiced by students well-socialized into discourses of "success".

## Ashley's interview on homework



**Figure 4 – My Representation of Ashley's Understanding of Homework Practices in Spanish Class**

## Journal Writing

In my foreign language classes journal writing events take place at the beginning of class. The students have a section of their notebook reserved for writing journal entries and engage in this activity usually after homework check event. The topics are either assigned by me or the class or are free entries. The proportion is usually equal between these categories. This well-established routine in my foreign language class is characterized by the time when the students engage for 5-10 minutes, in writing in their Spanish journal on a topic. In these journals entries the students have journal partners, and the entries are addressed to their assigned peers. It is understood that once every marking period I would read their journal for purpose of assigning a grade. The grade is not based on grammatical accuracy, but instead on length and use of language.

Looking from the perspective of another classroom routine practice to see how Ashley uses discourses to make sense of the Spanish class, and in order to better understand her endorsement of foreign language class, I examined her Spanish journal. Ashley's journal entries here follow a unit on clothing and entertainment. Reading Ashley's journal reveals that she is a girl who demonstrates self awareness, and likes to wear jeans and a sweatshirt or sweater, as a favorite outfit for school. For parties, Ashley' sexuality awareness is translated into a preference for long dresses in order to "tempta a los hombres"<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, when Ashley came to the Valentine school dance in February, she had a long black dress and plenty of make-up. Putting together the information collected about Ashley from my observations as well as from oral and written text produced by her, leads me to the conclusion that the "circle of friends" is very important for Ashley. She is using discourses promoted in the Spanish textbook (a

foreign language objective), to plan her outfits in order to enlarge her social network and include the boys too (a favorite discourse outside the class maybe).

Ashley is a short and plump young girl with eyeglasses and curly, shoulder-length, light brown hair, tied high in a ponytail. She sometimes lets her hair loose, and her childish figure comes out of the brown curls. Ashley has blue eyes and likes to wear oversized sweatshirts and large pants. In fact, I do not remember seeing Ashley in school in any other clothes except sweatshirts with hood and loose pants. Interestingly enough, according to her Spanish journal entry, if Ashley had one million dollars she would spend it buying clothes.<sup>15</sup> I think that her favorite color is blue because most of her outfits are in tones of blue. According to her journal entry, her bedroom is also blue. Ashley is the only child in her family. In her journal Ashley shares that she likes to play football, soccer and she also likes swimming. She likes to go to the movies, one of her favorite being "The Mummy". Ashley does not like school very much. It is interesting to note that all her ideas revolve around the verb "gustar" (to like), as an indication perhaps that in the task of building her identity she positions herself depending on affect more than on values and beliefs.

In class she is often talkative and frequently, more than eager to monitor other classmates' actions. She has several good friends who like her, and enjoy her company, especially her approach to leveling out conflicts in the classroom. During the daily team meetings (50 minutes each) with five other teachers (math, reading, science, history, and English), I took notes as we discussed different learning circumstances. These notes were also used by me later on as field notes to collect information about the students that were participants in my ethnography. Searching for information pertaining to



Ashley, I found that toward the end of the school year Ashley's teachers often referred to her as "lacking concentration". At that time they evaluated the quality of her work as being under the class average. In Spanish class however, Ashley had a "B" average for the first part of the school year. Toward the end of the school year her grade dropped to a "C" average and she began not to turn in the homework on time any more.

In the same class with Ashley, are Meghan and Denise, the other two students represented by ovals in Figure 3. These three girls correspond to different types of students in terms of study skills, performance and investment in school life. They belong to a Spanish class mostly made up of girls. This particular group of students is made up of 15 girls and 10 boys. There are three African American students, six Latino students, one Native American and 15 Caucasian students. As far as the linguistic background is concerned, they all speak English at home and three of them speak also Spanish. Due to tracking strategies employed by the school to locate gifted and talented students, this group of students was selected based on mathematical skills and cognitive abilities determined prior to the beginning of sixth grade.

Additionally, the three students belong to a homogeneous class who successfully appropriated the required display for classroom behavior. All the students in the class range in age from 12-14 years old. Unlike other students who are shuffled and redistributed in new groups at the beginning of each new school year, these three young girls are part of a group of students who was identified as "gifted and talented" and stayed together since grade six. In fact, they are enrolled in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade level mathematics class, and their score in reading often exceeded 12<sup>th</sup> grade level according to the Stanford standardized tests they took at the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Meghan, Denise and Ashley are also familiar with the "procedural display" as it applies in the foreign language class. However, analyzing deeper the content mastery, for these three students, I was able to identify variations of the display that Meghan, Ashley, and Denise chose to master. As a result of these variations, I argue, the power relations in the classroom that I construct with Denise are different from the ones I construct with Ashley or Meghan. With Meghan and Ashley I display relations of power over, as seen in the homework check episode, while with Denise I display power with, as seen in her journal entry. Additionally, the nature of Ashley's investment in a "social student" identity is different from Denise's investment in a "good student" identity (Foucault, 1993). For each of my students these identities bring different returns.

This preferential treatment influences the types of investment and display that students have in my Spanish class. I treat students differently according to how they mastered the classroom discourse. By not mastering the expected classroom discourse the students trigger teacher strategies that are in line with Grice's implicature - implying *that student may not be reading her own homework* (Davis, 1998). This results in classroom conflict due to my lack of understanding of the displayed investment. While Ashley is invested in making a good impression, therefore investing in procedural display, Meghan is invested in exploring her social life in her journal and classroom interaction may not be of value for her. Each of these three students, build relationships of power that are shifting with the nature of their investment. However, when students have to relinquish the power, the space vacated must be filled quickly with something else which is often perceived by me as resistance.

Megan is a slim, tall girl with large brown eyes. She has braces and sometimes wears glasses. She is usually very quiet and serious in class. Meghan occupies her time in class mostly with writing. She also likes to decorate the back of her hand with complex designs using different color pens. Meghan also likes to color her hair in shades of red, and paint her lips with dark lipstick. Usually, when class is over she immediately engages in lively conversations with her friends, especially other girls. Meghan's family consists of divorced parents who established equal rights in parenting and child rearing, by alternating the days when the parents get her. Meghan has an older sibling, who was also my student two years before I had Meghan. In my interview with her out of the classroom, life seems to revolve around Meghan's father, who is conducting a home-based business, and who allows and encourages Megan to help him in his E-Bay Internet transactions. Her parents come to school often to check on her progress.

According to her English teacher, Megan's attention to detail is "outstanding", thus making her one of the top students in English class, a "highly talented" girl who enjoys reading and writing. In her Spanish journal Megan begins with a description of herself. The prompt was to write in English, information about self so that I, (as well as their partner) can get to know them. These entries as I said before were only read by me or the journal partner. Here Meghan writes that she is at her happiest when she is:

....all alone or with a friend and just talking (even to myself) or writing, so I get everything out. Night is the best time for that. My biggest fear is death; because life is so fun and such a challenge I would never want it to end. I love to write and take photos. I plan on writing many books about an expedition I plan to take to Egypt. The book will have all of the best photos I have taken. That's my dream I picture myself in 10 years living on a farm, my house full of Egyptian artifacts, books and my frame photos...on the wall. The house will be bright and

colorful. I will have 3 big dogs and a rare iguana. I don't want kids, but I may adopt one. My favorite kind of music is rock.<sup>16</sup>

From the above class observations and journal entries, it appears that Meghan is a student invested in many out-of-classroom and out-of-school activities, and that her strongest connection with school is writing. Her present membership and investment in the Spanish class is not aligned with the expectations outlined in various documents issued at the district level regarding student performance in foreign language classes.<sup>17</sup> According to these documents students are to perform adequately in the target language studied in reading, writing, speaking and understanding. By developing only writing skills, Meghan is only investing in one out of four areas that are recommended in district documents as outcomes of student learning.

When asked why she was studying Spanish, Meghan responded that:

I think we study Spanish as a way to explore other languages and cultures. This is how we learn history, grammar, reading skills, math and maybe even some science. I think Spanish teachers say that will help if we ever happen to go to a Spanish speaking country, but first of all a lot of people don't and second of all there are such things as "The Translator"<sup>18</sup>.

From an interview with another foreign language teacher (conducted in August 2004, and analyzed at length later in this chapter under the sub-chapter "The Administrators"), after relating Meghan's view of the rationale of learning Spanish, I was given the following answer:

...another point that has to be brought up to the student is that, where are you in this action? How do you feel when somebody else has to do the job? Do you have the feeling that your sentence is not being communicated? That maybe they are not doing it properly or maybe that they are not doing it at all.

This answer confirmed one more time what Reagan (2004) argued concerning the confusion that many teachers make when they speak of the benefits of learning a foreign language (Reagan, 2004). It seems that this is the case here, and by not seeing that there should be a distinction between the benefits of language knowledge versus language study, we, the language teachers promote an epistemology that is not advantageous to the advocacy of including the study of foreign language in the general curriculum of students. Maybe it is also about having a piece of the pie, or having access to power through language. But the interpretation of the Foucaultian equation “language is power” is taken ad litteram here.

After examining tens of student journals (in French and Spanish) over a period of 2 years, I found that entries such as the ones presented here are common. The entries presented below are taken from Meghan’s journal as a result of her dialogue with her journal partner Meg:

Querida Meghan,  
¿Como estas? ¿Como es tu novio? Me gusta tu camisa. ¿Te gusta Dan o Josh mas? ¿Como es tu semana?  
Adios, Meg

A typical response to this entry would follow the content thread closely, and pay little attention to the grammatical form. Here is the answer to the entry above:

Querida Meg,  
¿Como estas? En el viernes, yo voy la baila con mi novio y mis amigos. Mi amiga Jessica va en mi casa en la noche. En el sabado, nosotros vamos en la Northampton para la día. ¿Y tu?  
Adios,  
Meghan

Querida Meghan,  
¿Que asiste en la noche de Halloween? Yo no fui para bonbon en la noche de Halloween porque yo llevo el bonbon de mi hermanita. Ella es estúpido! ¿Tu?

Saludos,  
Meg

Hoy es miercoles, el 7 de nov. Del 2001

(5) Querida Meg,

¿Que hiciste ayer? No muy ocupada ayer. ¿Tu? ¿Fiesta? ¿Ques fiesta vas? No me gusta la clase de espanol. No hablo mucho.

Saludos,  
Meghan

I find the above entry particularly interesting because it contains a direct reference to the Spanish class: “No me gusta la clase de español. No hablo mucho”<sup>19</sup>. Meghan does not like the Spanish class. She does not talk very much. As discussed before she is only endorsing the writing part of the Spanish class. It is unclear from the data if her low profile in speaking in Spanish class is due to her avoidance to be positioned in the category of students who might feel “embarrassed”, or to her sociocultural identity that seems to place a high value on affect. If this category of “students who are put on the spot” because they need to talk in front of the class, is a category of students whose current discursive power is temporarily suspended when they need to participate orally in the foreign language class, then probably, their social endorsement of the foreign language instruction comes to a halt when they are deprived of options or choices to make meaningful connections with their own life and identities. It is possible that Meghan’s option to assume an identity of “Spanish speaker” during Spanish class is giving her a positioning that she is not comfortable taking. This condition ends quickly when the Spanish class is over. Her entire demeanor changes and she turns into a smiley, chatty student eager to renew her ties with her friends. As a result the pattern that I notice is that students choose to display a certain behavior (employing silence in this case) that helps the students overcome unpleasant events. In

my teacher interaction with the students I perceive this as attempts to resistance, a new form of interactive power that changes the rules by which the instruction takes place.

In an interview out of the classroom (my office) with Meghan, approximately one month after she wrote the journal entries included above (December 2001), at the question “What does it mean for you to have power in the classroom?” she replied:

**M:** To have power in the classroom doesn't mean very much to me because first of all I rarely receive any, and second of all when I do have any, I can only go along with the way the teacher tells me to, so that's not exactly power anyway... I mean, to me, it's the teacher still in power, controlling what I do.

This statement indeed unpacks Meghan's relationship with the Spanish class. Her low investment in Spanish class is only visible in the journal writing routine. Her passive resistance to participate orally in class prevents her to endorse anything else but writing in the journal to her friends, which is fueled by her passion to write in general, and her investment in a social network of friends. (See Figure 3) Analyzing and interpreting students' journal entries in general is a complex and cumbersome task since much of the meaning making is difficult to decipher due to the fact that students write by making use a second language with resources from the first language.

Hoy es lunes, el 19 de noviembre del 2001

(10)

Querida Meghan,

Mi novio es bueno, pero nosotros golpeamos un punto tosco. Escritor con tres estudiantes? Me gusta Jessie pero tres? Me gusta musica roca.

Saludos

(Meghan, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish student, 2002)

An excerpt from a class survey that I administered to Meghan's class in March 2002 revealed that according to Meghan the only relationship between writing in the journal and learning Spanish is that:

Maybe the more you write in Spanish in the journal then have other people read it helps your Spanish grammar, because you can see your own personal mistakes.

(Meghan, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, 2002)

This statement in itself places Meghan in the same category with Ashley who aligns with the district discourse that states that a foreign language grammar will be mastered as a result of personal mistakes that are made available to you and your peers. Although State documents place a greater importance on the communicative aspect of a foreign language instruction, Meghan is still struggling with grammatical accuracy (morphology building task).

Denise is also a member of this 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish class. She is medium built, with long straight hair and brown eyes. Denise is of Chinese descent. Denise is a typical compliant student, particularly well prepared for class, very interested in school and academics, very committed in her endeavors to succeed in school and beyond. Denise's father, a doctor, is presently re-married to a Caucasian woman who adopted Denise and her older sister. Denise has now two stepbrothers, who were brought in the family by her stepmother. Denise's greatest passion is to draw animals. In her Spanish project that involved the illustration of a "corrida"<sup>20</sup>, she turned in beautiful graphics. Denise likes to listen to all types of music, and is herself an accomplished musician, who plays the clarinet and the guitar. Denise states that she likes Spanish and all her other subjects, as a matter of fact. In her Spanish journal, Denise often mentions her mother, and the things she does with her mother such as shopping for books, going to the movies, going out to eat, or going out to watch various performances at the Symphony Hall.



Denise recently cut her long hair in order to donate it to cancer patients who cannot wear synthetic wigs. Denise is a regular church member and attends all religious events throughout the week. During the weekend she enjoys doing homework, working on school projects or reading books. She always takes advantage of all the extra credit work offered in Spanish class, and enjoys working on it. Although she never needs the extra credit, since she is a straight "A" student, Denise is very dedicated to her schoolwork. For Denise learning is no longer grade-related, learning is a way of life: "...like the motivation to do well in class, and get a good grade, and to actually learn something..."

I placed Denise in the chart of student investment across all circles, since her texts revealed traces of invisible participants from all the spaces surrounding our classroom. (Figure 1)

In my interview with Denise conducted in the same office that I use in school, after we talked about the Spanish class and the homework check and journal writing routines, I asked Denise what she thought about student motivation. The discussion unfolded as follows:

1. **Teacher:** I'd like to talk a little bit about motivation. What do you think that is motivation in the Spanish class?
2. **Denise:** When...it's when, like, the students are more interested in the work, like, work gets done... work gets done to... work, like the motivation to do well in class, and get a good grade, and to actually learn something. That's motivation and then also in the different projects, it also catches more students' interest.
3. **Teacher:** ahm..
4. **Denise:** .. And then if they are very anxious in the projects as well as learning something new then, that adds motivation that they have to do the work
5. **Teacher:** Where do you think this motivation is coming from? Ahm.. What do you think that....ahm ... makes the motivation takes place in a student?

- ahm.. How..how does it happen? Do you think it can be ... it's something you can feel, that you can handle that you can control?
6. **Denise:** Yeah, you can control it, and sometimes, motivation comes from within the students, Sometimes comes from other classmates, and if, like, other classmates are doing well, an individual student might want to progress in a subject as well....
  7. **Teacher:** Can you recall ahm.. any event in the Spanish class when you felt that you were being motivated?
  8. **Denise:** In the projects that we were doing with different countries... Hispanic countries, I liked that, 'couse I got to study another country other than the United States.... and its cultures and I was interested in that, so I tried harder on that,..... and with Spanish food festival, like I think that it caught a lot of people's interest, and then like, most of the people made the food and brought it. Then, as they made the food, they were brought back into their own historical culture and how that food represented the culture....
  9. **Teacher:** OK ahm...OK... let's see ...ahm

(Interview with Denise, April 2002)

Examined from Denise's perspective, endorsement could be as an extension of motivation in the foreign language class, could be a process by which students create socially-constructed spaces to claim ownership of a certain learning process as part of the economy of the classroom. Although she produces in line 9 stereotyped cultural information, Denise agrees that student motivation can be controlled, it is subject to one's power to act, to transform, and from here, to relate oneself to a social and historical milieu (line 9) With this, I am claiming that Denise reconfigures motivation within the power, truth and language triangle, assigning it investment features, and ultimately appropriating discursive practices that align motivation with endorsement. For Denise motivation is the power to search one's culture for truth and share it with others:

“Spanish food festival (project), like, I think that it caught a lot of people's interest, and then like, most of the people made the food and brought it. Then, as

they made the food, they were brought back into their own historical culture and how that food represented the culture....” (Line 9)

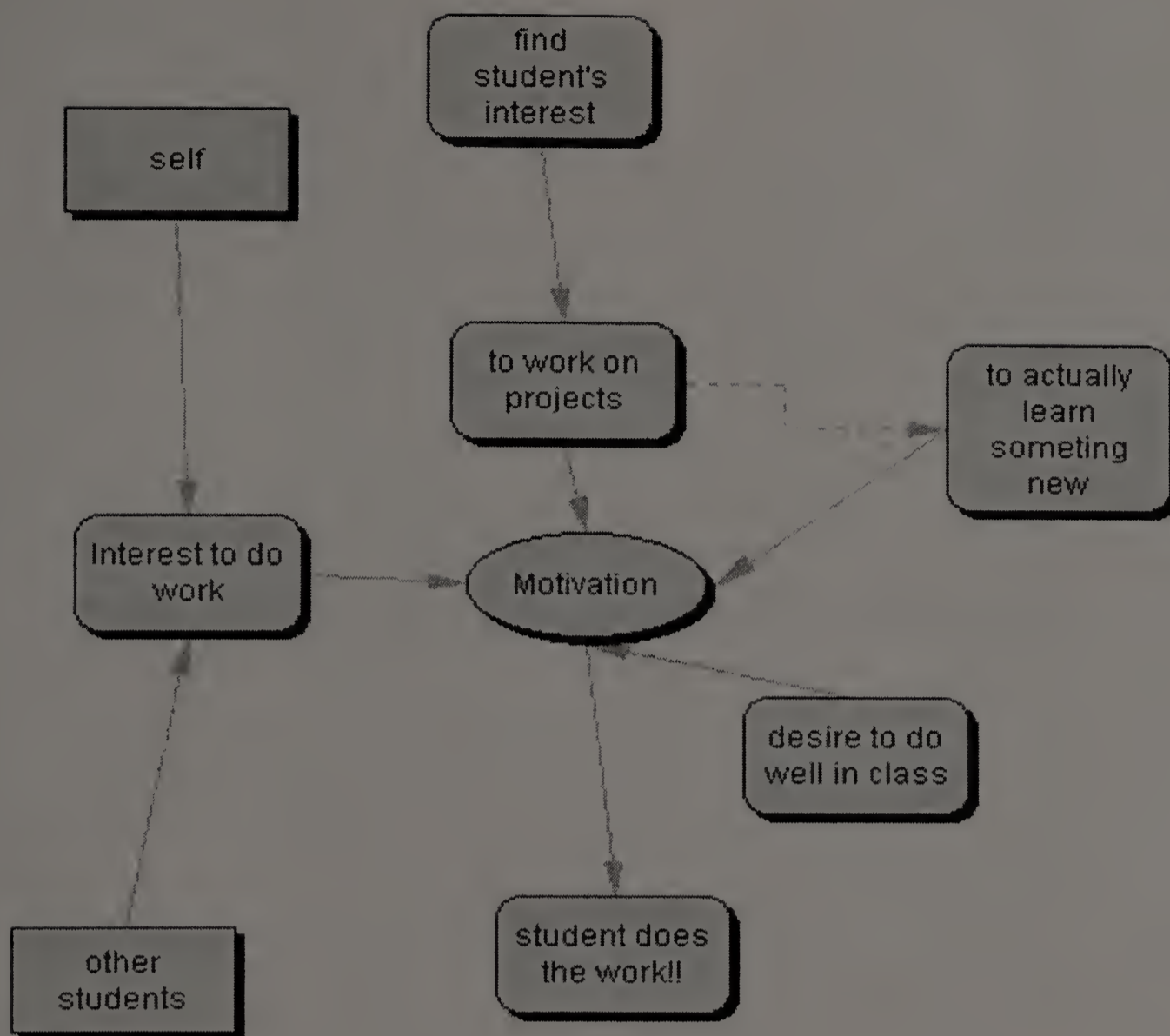
For Denise, finding evidence of how this process occurs in more than one event becomes a complex course of action that affords students to decide in advance which class practices to engage in, and what sociocultural identity to adopt that seems to be relevant to the discourse situation in order ...to actually learn something. That’s motivation (line 2). Deconstructing Denise’s discourse allows also to understand the configuration of how students enter into a relationship with the invisible participants to the foreign language class (the community in this case), how they debate what discourses (family, community) need to be employed in order to best represent their investments “to actually learn something” (line 5) (Figure 5)

Denise’s example makes the process of student choice to engage a transparent one. Her powerful claim to learning sheds light on the nature of the permanent relations of struggle in the classroom, and how in their turn they strengthen, validate or invalidate the existing macro structures at the level of the micro interaction. To” actually learn something” is a situated meaning that anchors for Denise “reality”. Her “motivation” is pushing her well beyond procedural display, and allows her to assemble a rich context of resources that will situate her in a position of power to construct a certain deep understanding of reality.

...comes from other classmates, and if, like, other classmates are doing well, an individual student might want to progress in a subject as well... (Line 7).

In an effort to represent her meaning making of the concept of motivation and how this could elicit information about student investment, I put together as graphic organizer as a result of her interview with me.

**The rest of this page was left blank on purpose to accommodate Figure 5 on the next page.**



**Figure 5 – Denise’s event flowchart on Motivation**

### Student Notes

The last routine examined for the purpose of determining what constitutes students’ choice to engage is the process of explaining unpreparedness for class through “Student Notes”. This routine is characterized by student responses to my ritualized, routine request to explain their unpreparedness for French class. In order to still receive

credit for the class, the students must produce a written explanation (in essay form), as to why they lack materials or assignments. The notes examined are taken from my French classes because in that particular year (2003), my workload included only teaching French. My purpose in requiring these notes is to offer students, opportunities to explain themselves using the essay genre (employed in State standardized testing format) as well as to encourage students to draw on discourses that are indicative of existing structures outside the foreign language class, where students belong to, and identify with, such as their family or the wider community. This procedure implies that students will have to use a pre-set linguistic pattern that requires the use of a specific style and language in order to produce meaningful texts and convey a message that can help them also produce coherence between self, class, school, district and state education policies.

This approach becomes in my class an instrument to demonstrate an ideology and a value system that are consistent with what “preparedness” and “doing homework” means for student learning according to district and school guidelines. For example, learning that when you come unprepared to French class, you need to write an essay, is a pattern that my students need to explore as part of my classroom policies. It is through this format only that they can rationalize their transgressions and account for their unpreparedness, and subsequently get class credit. Although my students are not restricted in their selection of reasons, as it is noted below, each approach that they take is an available option for them that can be translated into a specific social pattern and situated meaning. It is also an indication of how they use their resources in the class economy.

I examined multiple samples of “student notes” text that allowed me to identify specific “critical moments” in student classroom interactions. As it is the case in “Homework Check” and “Journal Writing” events, in “Student Notes” the “critical moments” are characterized by the fine process of student endorsement slowly fading into student resistance. In most cases, this process starts to unfold at the moment when the students’ current discursive power is temporarily suspended. Dispossessed of options or choices to make meaningful connections with their own life and identities, my students slow down their social endorsement of the foreign language instruction, and begin to form a new form of interactive power that changes the instructional format of the class: student resistance (see Table 3 – Degrees of Endorsement, and Figure 7 – visualization of the concept of Power).

By introducing the concept of resistance in relation to endorsement, I conscientiously situate these concepts in a relationship of power on the part of the student, who is now able to customize ways to opt out of the predetermined foreign language instructional format. Regardless of the nature of their account to the act of coming unprepared to class, some of my students adopt this classroom practice more often than others, as an acceptable classroom practice or option, and create systematically for themselves, alternate routes out of the foreign language instruction. An example of such conscientious effort to find an alternate route to class routines is in the following example: “I did not do the homework because I did not know what the pages were, because I was doing the workbook assignment in class when you gave the homework” (Jacob – 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, 2003).

It is interesting to note that in these critical moments, several of my students chose to endorse classroom practices that were not meeting the definition of successful foreign language instruction, as constructed and construed by other visible and invisible classroom participants, including myself. Coding these instances as “no work but still work”, helped me understand that the choice of alternate routes that students made, was in fact a pattern employed by my students with the purpose of introducing new, and more resourceful and advantageous forms of communication in the foreign language class.

These critical moments were encapsulated in a variety of delivery forms, varying from student to student, but a preferred approach by some of my students is the use of metaphorical humor. Although it seems to be a somewhat special discursive form, the use of humor does not change the category where the text falls into. The message of “Not having a book for class”, but delivered with humor, does not change the fact that it still goes in the coded category of “no work but still work”. In these instances, my students chose to use humor as an innovative tool. It is unknown however, to what extent the humor was conscientious. In the context of accounting for their unpreparedness, students’ responses appeared to render more complex their system of resistance, and add new meanings to the notion of student power in the classroom.

Examining these moments I built an understanding of resistance in the foreign language class as a complex, interactive power exchange. Here is an example of humor: “Mon livre est solitaire. Il a été dans la classe d’Anglais avec Mme Pearson. Il a crié. J’ai allé et pris il. Maintenant, il est très heureux et il/ a un petit sourire. J’adore mon livre de Français”<sup>21</sup> (Mark, 2004)



As I performed a deeper and deeper analysis of these “student excuse notes” events, I began to realize how my students by deconstructing the class, find resources and make choices from the opportunities presented in class. Whether they chose humor or not, by operating in a perfect class economy, my students exchange the values that I present in the instruction, with values that they construct themselves, or that originate in discourses that come from outer circles (Figure 1), that may be more pleasing and meaningful to their adopted identities, or just give them more social returns.

« Je ne avoir un dictionnaire parce que mon mère travail tout jour et je ne avoir des un prendre moi. Aussi je avoir autre choses faire de. C'est importante aimer mon les devoirs d'Anglais et matematique et social studies et fin science. »<sup>22</sup>

(Jordan, 8th grade French student 2004)

After identifying potential acts related to the foreign language class that my students refer to as “dumb” or “silly”, such as buying a dictionary, and after coding these acts in the appropriate categories of “dumb” or “silly”, I was able to understand these events were patterns of endorsement and resistance, where the students again, select alternative options, rather than engage in what can become for them the “silly” or “dumb” act of foreign language instruction.

This interesting process of putting meaning into events that are part of students’ school life, perhaps, helps them overcome what Bakhtin calls a “neutral and impersonal language” environment (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). The outcome of seeing the patterns of the apparent shift in students’ endorsement, from investment in the instruction to what appears to be resistance to my foreign language class, helped me realize and understand that resistance, as a new form of power, that can be equally effective and

transforming interaction, and it can shape new rules by which the classroom is operationalized.

The following is an excerpt for a student “excuse note” to not having a dictionary for class: “The reason why I don’t have a dictionary is because there is no store near my house to go buy one, and I forgot to tell my mom. And I don’t even want to go buy one; I don’t want to tell my mom or DAD.” (Josh, 8<sup>th</sup> grade French student, 2003).

Going even further with the analysis of such patterns, and taking apart the moments of student resistance, I was able to document that resistance can take many forms according to the different acts that take place in the foreign language class. The consequence of seeing these patterns as the act of coming unprepared for class is an example of how students resist the school district discourse which values foreign language instruction, and is looking to potentially render the students competent in a language.

At the same time, the students may show endorsement of my class policies that say that if you come unprepared you have to write a note and present a rationale in exchange for class credit. Here is Josh’s response: “The third reason I think I don’t need a dictionary for French is because French is just a language and I can still pass if I don’t pass this class and I don’t like French because last year I failed French and I don’t want to fail it this year” (Josh, 2004).

As observed in previous instances of student produced text in notes for lack of student preparedness, the preferred pattern that I use to explain class policies is the use of discursive format. In my practice this becomes a tool to demonstrate an ideology and

a value system that are consistent with what “preparedness” and “doing homework” means for student learning. This school ideology, coming from outside my class, maintains that by demonstrating their knowledge of class policies, by being able to provide a rationale for being unprepared, by being able to produce “acceptable” answers to the homework check event, students respond to a wider school discourse that requires teachers to maintain a good classroom teaching practice. I, as a teacher obligated, enforce, and provide surveillance so that the teaching occurs as such. This discursive pattern also reveals that if the student complies with this policy and comes prepared to class, will give me (the teacher) compensation by learning to be a successful student. In this instance the benefits of following and complying with such a practice offers apparent benefits to both the students and I. Examining this issue further, I also realize that I use this exchange, this practice, while motivated by my professional identity, and also in a conscientious effort to comply with, or fall into the accountability discourse which is wider and carries consequences to both of us.

Reflecting back on this classroom practice I realize that I am potentially also incorporating Fairclough’s (1989) “emancipatory discourse”<sup>23</sup> notion, where students are able to develop a practice (with guided instruction) for purposeful discourse that allows them to function outside the dominant conventions (Fairclough, 1989). In achieving this stage, the students are likely to acquire a language awareness that will more easily reveal what subject positions<sup>24</sup> or discourse types are available to them. Wanting to be free from any controlling influence, the act of writing notes becomes my goal of making available to students emancipatory discourses. It also helps me also

determine to what degree the choices that students have, engage them in the foreign language instruction when they choose to display one discourse or another.

Additionally, examining closely the economy of power in my classroom that occur between visible and invisible participants represents a “political building” task of determining the existence of certain social goods, and affords an easier identification of the different language policies that occur outside my classroom. From this perspective, it is fascinating to see how my students’ identity can shape as a result of policies that are more subtle and distant to them (originating from invisible participants), versus policies that are visible with immediate consequences, such as my class policies. This process becomes even more transparent when I group the “critical moments” into acts of resistance and endorsement, or acts of “overlap” where there is resistance to district policies, but endorsement to classroom policies. In view of the above considerations, the issue of identity of the foreign language student as a result of circulating power in the classroom economy can be seen to be very complex and challenging. Identity appears to be formed through power units, when students take advantage of opportunities or form resistance.

For me the significance of such classroom practices also represents my ability to be a successful language instructor as well as wanting to be responsible in the classroom. To demonstrate successful classroom practices, as emphasized in professional development workshops, I enact classroom policies that set boundaries around the foreign language class, and determine the format for the foreign language instruction. I give the class rules to the students to enable them to articulate the class policies as a result of the internalization of these policies.

On the other hand, the request for the students to write their understanding of class policies is an act of surveillance from my part as a teacher, a repressive act, a deterrent for students who do not fall in the pattern of “well prepared students”. Simultaneously, this is also a confirmation for me that students use successfully the “essay” format (since it is a requirement of various state tests like MCAS and Stanford) as well as to ensure that students are able to convey meaning in a real life situation, (explaining in the target language why they are not prepared for class), as a valid instructional goal.

The three samples of text that follow are student responses to my routine request to explain unpreparedness for French class. In order to still receive credit for our class, I told the students to produce a written explanation as to why they came unprepared.<sup>25</sup> In this class I am the teacher and my intention as a researcher is to offer students opportunities to produce texts. Through an examination of these texts I find out power relations that occur in the micro interactions in the classroom. The contexts of production of this type of text are overlapping layers of different paradigms that intersect and co-exist in a natural blend between student, teacher and researcher. As a teacher, I am using a system of values that holds this instructional practice in high regard. In order to account for successful classroom teaching practice, I enact class policies that set boundaries around the foreign language class, and that introduce the format for the foreign language instruction. I give class rules to the students to enable them to articulate language policies as a result of the internalization of these policies. This is also a sort of verification if students use successfully the “essay” format in writing their notes (since it is a requirement of various standardized testing), and to

verify if the students are able to convey meaning in a real life situation in the target language (a foreign language goal). Finally, I employ such class policies in order to demonstrate an ideology, and a value system, that are consistent with what “preparedness” means for student learning. So, by demonstrating their knowledge of class policies, by being able to provide a rationale for being unprepared, students are able to respond to the wider school discourse that account for my good classroom teaching practice. They support my image of “good teacher”. This regulation of wider school practices through a normative discourse also states that if the student is able to come prepared then, he or she will learn and be successful. The practice employed by me here motivated by my professional identity, belongs in the larger social category of accountability discourse. This larger social discourse refers to how to make meaning of certain social structures, and at the same time guides and reveals for the reader the rules by which social formations take place.

In following this practice, I was able to determine what degrees of endorsement of the foreign language instruction students choose to display when using a discourse or another. This practice also revealed the interplay of micro-politics of power in the classroom, and from here, their connections with the different language policies that occur outside the classroom.

According to my management plan introduced in the section Data Collection under Chapter 3 (partial table reproduced below), the samples provided in this paper come from the text retrieved in the classroom written interaction. My data are coded several times in order to facilitate an inductive way of analysis, and as a result, after I gather the data, I use it to build concepts. These samples come from the second year of

collecting written research data in the same urban middle school. Initially, I categorized the data into “prepared” and “unprepared” students, which would have translated into “initial endorsing” and “not endorsing” foreign language education/instruction/class.

DATA COLLECTION SHEET	Text from						
	Government	District		Classroom			International
		oral	written	Oral	Written		
					Student essays	Journal entries	
Resistance						X	
Endorsement							
Power							
Identity							

**Table 3– Data Collection Sheet – written text**

Collecting my data, I realized though that selecting two clear-cut categories would not reflect accurately the overall endorsement situation in my classroom. I then decided to sort the data into “degrees of endorsement” instead of just “endorsed” and

“not endorsed”. These data come from the initial category of “unprepared” and coding at this time is used to further refine my understanding of endorsement. This coding is called “level 2 coding”. I continue to level 3 coding once specific theoretical claims are made on the data.

<u>Degrees of endorsement</u> (From resisting to endorsing)	<u>Prepared students</u>	<u>Unprepared students</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> level		Students are <i>not prepared</i> for class with any of the materials required. They refuse to write the explanation note and do not receive class credit.
2 <sup>nd</sup> level		Students are only partially <i>not prepared</i> . They write the note but it is obvious that they do it because it is part of the class rules and are looking for class credit. Text is in English.
3 <sup>rd</sup> level		Students are only partially <i>not prepared</i> . They write the note but it is obvious that they do it because it is part of the class rules and are looking for class credit. Text is in the target language.
4 <sup>th</sup> level		Students are only partially prepared for class, they write the note and the discourse used to write the note reveals an awareness of the benefits of the foreign language instruction. Text is in the target language.

**Table 4 -Degrees of Endorsement**



### Sample 1

(Name) omitted...../ 10/1/03

Aujourd'hui c'est mercredi, le premier octobre deux mille trois.

1<sup>st</sup> The reason why I don't have a dictionary is because there is no store near my house to go buy one, and I forgot to tell my mom. And I don't even want to go buy one; I don't want to tell my mom or DAD.

2<sup>nd</sup> The second reason is because I don't think about school when I am out of school and I don't want to spend my money on things like the dictionary for French, and I don't need one if I have one in the back of my French book.

3<sup>rd</sup> The third reason I think I don't need a dictionary for French is because French is just a language and I can still pass if I don't pass this class and I don't like French because last year I failed French and I don't want to fail it this year.

\* The student used the front of the paper for the rough draft and the back of the paper for the final draft. Both drafts had the paragraphs numbered.

### Sample 2

(Name) omitted...../ 10/2//03

8 Blue (name of the team that the student belongs to)

3 French paragraphs

10/2/03

Je ne avoir un dictionnaire parce que mon mère travail tout jour et je ne avoir des un prendre moi. aussi je avoir autre choses faire de C'est importante aimer mon les devoirs de Anglais et matematique at social studies et fin science.

### Sample 3

(Name) omitted...../ 3/8/04

The **reason**\* I want a piece of paper is because my note book is filled and I don't want to buy another **because**\* I don't want to get one. I can't because have no person bring me to place get note book **for**\* this class cause mom's too busy and I can't walk there.

\* Student emphasis by adding extra ink to the words

In doing this discourse analysis I mainly follow Fairclough's guidelines to identify the three areas of analysis that apply to critical discourse analysis from the theoretical perspective that I chose to operate from.

1. Analysis of the discourse practice (at a macro level) – intertextuality and interdiscursivity of discourse samples

In order to find out what genres students are drawing upon in the samples above and what type of interdiscursivity is manifested in their text, I looked at how the samples were produced, distributed and consumed. The three samples above were produced in the conditions and constraints of my eighth grade, French 1 class. These students belong to an inner city middle school with an equal population of Hispanics, African American, and Caucasian students. In this school, the foreign language (French or Spanish) is offered only to students who read above grade level. The students who read below grade level are enrolled in Reading classes. At least part of the information above is reflected in students' texts as products of discursive practices (employed by students or other adults in and out of the classroom). The production, distribution, and interpretation of these texts while they are incorporated in an intricate montage of social practices is confined to the French class. In other words the complexity of examining the interdiscursivity manifested in my students' text is a well established class economy where I, as the designated audience, am in charge with the consumption, and the distribution (as the control factor). The students are in charge with the production of texts.

In looking at the first sample, the student's choice of narrative (structuring and prioritizing the reasons for not complying with the class requirements) indicate that as

far as French is concerned his investment is flexible (“I don’t like French because last year I failed French and I don’t want to fail it this year”. – Sample 1) according to the type of discourse used and the type of identity taken. Since the student produced the text in duplicate, a first draft and a second draft, I conclude that it is quite innovative in relation to its interdiscursive properties. Examining both sides, the content of the “excuse note” is identical, so I assume that the reason for copying it again is another manifestation of the English class practices that ask students to follow a strict writing process (writing, revising, editing, etc.), and therefore conform with wider discourses of MCAS or other modified standardized testing. Another interpretation is that the text is subject to deconstruction: re-writing and re-reading, and therefore it should not be treated as accurate or flawed representation, just look at it as is. Finally, another interpretation is that the student was using the “excuse note” space to opt out of participating in the French class with the rest of his peers or just to avoid teacher interaction.

Throughout the length of the first sample there is evidence of a macro discourse (teaching students to write essays for testing purposes - MCAS) that the student appropriates in this task. Therefore, in relation to my research question “What is the nature of student resistance that affects the endorsement of foreign language education in public schools?” and based on this text alone, I argue that, by producing text that reproduces unequal power relations (contradictions between school discourse and wider discourses) in the context of its production, the student is passing off assumptions about the institutional aspect of school as mere oppressive, coercive discourse, ineligible to match with the other possible discourses he acquired out of the classroom, for instance

at home. Here is Mariah's answer: "The **reason**\* I want a piece of paper is because my note book is filled and I don't want to buy another **because**\* I don't want to get one. I can't because have no person bring me to place get note book **for**\* this class cause mom's too busy and I can't walk there" (Sample 3 - Mariah, 7<sup>th</sup> grade French 1 student, 2003)

In his attempt to decide which practice to endorse (getting a dictionary or not), Josh finds out that the home discourse, (a discourse that students may consider their own) is much more powerful and trusting than the school one, because "there is no store near my house to go buy one" (sample 1), "parceque mon mere travai tout jour et je ne avoir desun prendre moi" (my mom works every day and could not take me to get one) (sample 2 - Jordan ), "because have no person bring me to place get note book for this class cause mom's too busy and I can't walk there" - (sample 3 - Mariah). This discourse tells the story of the impossibility to do homework due to lack of dictionary, the lack of places to buy it, and the parental time constraints that are directly reflected on the student lack of access in general to resources.

The dialogicality of this text is based on the assumption that I was taking for granted that such resources (proximity to stores, parents working minimum hours, etc), were accessible by everyone, and after finding out student rationale, now I know the "truth". I should realize that the location of impossibility is defined by outside factors I should maybe conclude that it is not "Maria's fault" and perhaps take pity on her situation. In order to validate this claim as a pattern across texts, I juxtaposed this text with similarly produced text either from class events such as journal writing, or from

homework check episodes in the foreign language class. What follows is an entry from Meghan's Spanish journal:

Querida Meg,

Mi novio es bueno, pero nosotros golpamosto punto tosco. Escritor con tres estudiantes? Me gusta Jessie pero tres? Me gusta musica roca.

Saludos  
Meghan<sup>26</sup>

(Meghan, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish student 2002)

By questioning my request to maintain two journal partners at the same time, Meagan is using a letter genre to evaluate the social and cultural resources that are available to her, and as a result, to be in a position to decide if this should be a foreign language practice to endorse or not. Therefore, she falls in the same category with the student in Sample 1 presented above, when prior to deciding which class practices to endorse, the students question how my decisions could be employed to best represent their investments: "Escritor con tres estudiantes? Me gusta Jessie pero tres?"

This becomes a powerful claim that sheds light on the nature of the unequal power relations in the classroom that in their turn perpetuate, strengthen and validate the existing macro structures at the level of the micro interaction. Additionally, this creates a space for the student to voice an opinion that eventually was going to reach me, and potentially change this classroom practice that lack meaning. Examining the frequency with which such type of discourse occurs within a particular group of students is a very important issue. Out of a total of 25 journals examined, only three presented evidence of discursive practices that question existing practices in our foreign language class.

Similarly, out of 30 student and parent notes examined only three presented similar evidence.

In terms of examining the intertextual chains presented in the text, I noticed that the students' readiness to conform to the requirements of the task is also playing a role in the way they decide to position themselves as resistant students with many facets. The discourse in sample Two undergoes intertextual discursive transformations that start with the compression of the three required paragraphs into one paragraph while treating the three sentences in the paragraph as paragraphs with separate ideas. The transformations continue with the interchange of languages French with English, rendering this text relatively unstable vis-à-vis its anticipated audience. Since I consider myself as part of the audience, it is hard not to ask the questions: Why do I have to know (as a French teacher), that French is not as important as English, social studies, math or science? ; Why is the French student accounting for his lack of paper or dictionary if the subject matter is not important? ; What are the contradictory intertextual chains of discourse that students have to weave in their subject positioning in order to juggle an adequate status? Part of the answers to these questions is provided by the first student. He begins his discourse from a student social identity perspective, and ends it with the same chosen identity. This identity unit allows an interesting analysis because in between, however he decided to display the entire capital of identities that his entire arrays of discourses allow him to access: time spent out of school, spending money habits, dealing with a family, etc.

In terms of coherence of the text, the three samples present ambivalence for different readers. For me, as a classroom teacher the texts present subjects that construct

themselves with some investment in French class and French instruction. They are subjects who buy into the classroom practice, adapt it or transform it, in order to make known other voluntary or involuntary types of investments that may affect their subjectivities. For a parent, such a text may be a distorted view of family life, a non-existent discourse at home, or it may be a reproduction of well-established discourses at home, or in the community. I had the opportunity to confirm this when I made my call home to verify the student's claims.

In terms of conditions of discourse practice there is a dialectical relationship between this discursive event (text produced while accounting for "unpreparedness"), and the situation or social structure in which it is produced. Not only that the students are complying with the task (doing the writing), endorsing my class policies, and as a consequence, being shaped by the institution's context (classroom) but they also shape in their turn my classroom practice, by setting their own rules of writing.

For example, all three samples are presenting all the aspects of **the students'** decisions on what kind of discourse they are to produce in order to complete the task. Sample 1 starts with French text, then changes into English immediately after the date. In sample 3 all conventional, discursive rules are ignored and the student produces text only in English, ignoring all stylistic and grammar rules of producing formal written text.

In terms of manifesting "intertextuality"<sup>27</sup>, the student's "emancipatory discourse" presents other texts that he draws upon, and that manifest on the surface of his original text. These texts contribute to the student's claim of systematically attempting to transform the existing orders and conventions, to de-structure and

restructure new orders. This can be seen in his choice of using verbs in the negative form in the beginning of all his paragraphs (“I don’t have”, “I don’t think”, “I don’t need”), which shows a migration toward a different identity than the obedient student that is presented in the beginning and in the end of his sample. This student, Josh as well as Michael (discussed later under the subchapter “student essays”), are appropriating an ideology that is meant to give him the tools to produce new power relations between him and existing school practices.

I hate projects. They are a huge waste of time. There should never be any projects ever. Presentations are dumb. I had to do one in reading about Lance Bass from NSYNC and I did really bad.

Michael, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish Student (2002)

In Josh’s case this is a direct discourse representation of context (there is a dictionary at the end of the book therefore I do not need to buy one). By using three negative verb forms in a row, the student also takes up a clearly marked discourse that has the purpose of trying to convince more intensely of the reason for the absence of the dictionary. This also suggests that the presuppositions cued in the text are polemical (because of the way the text ends): “and I don’t like French because last year I failed French and I don’t want to fail it this year”.

The text also shows traces of metadiscourse which can be easily coded: Last year I failed French. (therefore) I don’t like French. This year I don’t want/like to fail French (therefore) **I will perhaps go with your conventions and re-write my essay on the back (three paragraphs, supporting evidence, etc) and perhaps using a**



**“procedural display” I will not fail<sup>i</sup>...** In Michael’s case the labeling of giving students to do projects is a clearly “dumb” strategy.

Did the student/s change my practice using this “emancipatory discourse”? I would have to say “yes”, in a way, because although I am still requiring the students to buy a dictionary, and I am still requiring them to write a three paragraph essay if they come unprepared to class, I have decided since then, to purchase a classroom set of dictionaries that I keep handy, and allow the students to use them as needed. Consequently, I have demonstrated through my own practice that a space can be created to merge fundamentally different discourses from different sources, that originate outside the foreign language classroom, and that can be construed as a dialogue between some classroom participants, and where new learning can occur.

2. Analysis of texts (plus micro aspects of the discourse practice)

In terms of interactional control my students are apparently in control throughout the entire length of the sample. This can be seen in their choice of language, style, and narrative. Although it seems that the sheet of paper I give the student is an indication of the power and freedom he may get once he embarks in writing, taking a closer look however, to the interaction, it is a power negotiated to a certain extent with other existing participants (present – me, or absent – parents). The simple presence of “my DAD”, my mom” in the text, is an indication that the student is not alone in his text interaction and his choice of discourse. The simple fact that such participants are mentioned and made present in the text, is an indication that power relations that occur in this text are brought from far outside the context where the text is produced, for the

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<sup>i</sup> Unwritten words but perhaps implied by the student

mere purpose of balancing the “injustice” of the task. Part of the student reasoning repertoire is the introduction of topics. In all three samples students are consistent in their ideology that introducing earlier in the text, or in the concluding sentence, family member(s) as valued testimonials, represents using an authority outside of class (a resource), that surpasses the institutional, scholastic one.

In terms of cohesion, all three samples present a pattern of connectivity of sentences and clauses that is heavily relying on coordinating and subordinating conjunctions like “and” or “because”. Even if the samples differ in terms of protocol on how to begin and end a sentence, the structure of the text suggests a rhetorical mode that resembles argumentation (sample 1) and narrative (Sample 2 and 3). Sample two is a truncated French version (with many lexical and stylistic errors), that ignores all the writing conventions of formal paragraphs or sentences. However, the form in which the text is produced is irrelevant to the writer who is only focusing on the content and its significance to his daily life (...”aussi je avoir autre choses faire de C’est importante aimer mon les devoirs de Anglais et matematique at social studies et fin science”).<sup>28</sup>

In terms of politeness strategies used, the text producers employ, for the most part, a “neutral” politeness that suggests that the type of social relations existent between the participants (the text producer and me) remain in a phase of impartial status, that also implies a constant “low” or (1), general level of endorsement. As I continued to establish further evidence, I was able to provide and develop clearer pictures of “low” (1) and “high” (4) endorsement in relation to students’ social and power relations.

In building the self, the “ethos” in Fairclough’s terms, the students take an active role in building their multi-faceted identities. Therefore, in sample 1, although French is not an immediate priority for the student, he is aware that by not being a complaint student he is jeopardizing his student status. Since he does not want this to happen, he starts his text by complying to write the note in French as required, and he also ends the text by re-stating that he does not want to fail French again. The nature of his resistance is not easily revealed to the reader. He appears to not want to communicate with his family his school needs, nor purchase a dictionary. He appears not to be willing to connect school discourses to family discourses, and there is no compromise he can see because he does not see any connection between the two. His resistance is social in nature, context-defined, and in permanent transformation as he employs preferred discursive practices. He uses discourses that are continually re-shaping his “ethos”, as if his self is under constant pressure to change “...I don’t like French because last year I failed French and I don’t want to fail it this year”....In doing that, he seems more reasonable and willing to obey as “good students” do.

In terms of theme, the samples present thematic structures for subordinating clauses that suggest that certain assumptions about how knowledge is structured are in place. For example, sample 1 shows that the student is making a conscientious effort of not “thinking about school” when he is out of school. By doing this he is not relating achievement in school with the construction of knowledge according to imposed classroom or school practices. Or he is just deconstructing “reality” into equally valued pieces that are his interpretation of the world. As a result, one way to contest these practices is to refuse to purchase a dictionary. This refusal is a similar indicator to

bringing or not bringing the texts home to work on, buying or not buying notebooks and pencils as part of “being prepared” (another school requirement), and in general, accepting silently a forced one-way connection: **school to home**, at the same time with coming to terms that the supposedly two way connection: **school to home / home to school**, cannot work in reverse, and therefore will be a discursive practice that will not count.

In terms of Modality, in this analysis I also argue that writing becomes for the student a medium where he can communicate things that he would not otherwise mention. Continuing to unpack the student text becomes clearer and clearer to see that he is using the language as a “camera” to frame situations in time and space that together are making up a mosaic of scenes, and that simultaneously give new meanings back to the language used. These “situated meanings” are helping him frame situations that he can easily change. He keeps them handy in case he needs them further. Here are some of the frames used by the student in Sample 1:

- political (presenting/interpreting the truth in a favorable light – (there are no stores near my house), by engaging in the writing, this indicates participation in the practice yet taking up a resistant stance
- language policy (passing classes), compliance with my rules
- business management (managing money in appropriate ways),  
“...and I don’t want to spend my money on things like the dictionary for French...”
- decision-making (not telling parents)

In terms of wording by bringing other discourses in his writing, by beginning and ending his argumentation as a member of the French class the student in Sample 1 attributes himself a subject position that **endorses** the French class rules ( a partial investment), but ignores the wider discourse of the foreign language district policy. In looking at the text this way, I can see that the student is trying to transform classroom micropolitics (requirement for a dictionary) using different rules, based on self-evaluation of necessary requirements (there is a dictionary at the end of the book). From here, there is the inference that a **new endorsement level** (higher) might occur, if new rules (his) are going to be taken into consideration. In fact, what the student is doing at this point, is trying to level out micro discourses (classroom-based) with macro-discourses (community-based).

### 3. Analysis of the social practice of which the discourse is a part

In terms of social matrix of discourse, the students sum up the values, beliefs, perspectives, and ways of speaking that they shares with the home community. In constructing their argumentation the student uses *primary and secondary discourses*. (Gee, 1990) In terms of *sub-discourse*, the student is able to make a clear distinction between institutionalized discourses (being a student) and the social conventions, (being a student in an urban setting with a great deal of independence). I will argue here that the student is using his student discourse as a primary discourse while he is accomplishing his apprenticeship. At the same time he is also bringing an institutional secondary discourse (community discourse - as a set of socially situated and constructed narrative practices) as a clear indication that he is able to switch between the two in order to use language effectively (Knobel, 1999). In terms of *social network*, he is

dissociating himself from the school network (at least for the middle portion of his text), and remains without affiliation throughout his entire argumentation, in order to better express his common set of interests, and out of school activities, although in the end he is upholding alignment with “good student” identity (Gee, 1992).

In terms of order of discourse, compared with the second sample, where the student presents her arguments in a slightly different way, still resistant, but more passive to the task, the first student seems to be investing in events that take place outside the classroom. He is using community discourses to build his arguments (there is not store near his house), and even larger discourses that shape today’s school realities (what is needed/not needed to pass school). In terms of ideological and political effects of discourse, the student retrieves a different discourse from his “cultural capital”, while completing the written task. With this he is situating his *identity*<sup>29</sup> both as a compliant student and one who has a voice from outside the class. In doing so, the student is drawing his discourse from an entire system of available discursive resources: home, school, community (Fairclough, 2000). He does that by recalling previous personal experience or voices heard, and he appropriates them to form a situated meaning in the situated context of the written task.

In the same sample, I can also identify Fairclough’s “power over discourse”, since the student shows the capacity to control and change the basic rules of the discourse he was supposed to follow. In this respect the use of English instead of French is a clear example of change of rules, or an attempt to finish the task quickly.

Much work remains to be done in the direction of the complexity of material and of the degree of investment that students display in these classroom routines. In trying

to label what is happening however, and by investigating and understanding how the D/discourses that teachers and students bring with them to the classroom, I realize that I can get a better glimpse at how these discourses shape the construction of meaning in specific practices in the classroom if I continue to work in routine events.

According to Gee, (1990) effective approaches to language and literacy practices begin with scholarly experiences that students are familiar with, like homework practices, discussing projects, etc. (Gee, 1990). According to Gee, this should be done before students are introduced to more conceptualized language practices (such as aspects of the new language that relate to more complex understanding: (grammar or vocabulary). Knowing this sequence in language practices, of course, affected my research on the relationships between practices and policies accordingly.

A close analysis of students' discourses in the routine class events discussed here revealed that my foreign language class is a continuous shaping factor that has the potential of critically redefining students' identities, and consequently affecting their choice of activity in the foreign language class. The three samples presented above are understood as patterns of how students opt out of endorsement and take up resistance.

In examining the above samples, I was able to also verify my original definition of power: "The sine qua non, reflexive and impersonal capacity that participants in the classroom discourse strive to use in order to acquire necessary capital to participate in classroom "transactions" (Alexandru, 2003).

Thus, operating in the limited economy of the classroom, my foreign language students, similar maybe to students in many other classes, use as capital their resistance

to a variety of shaping factors that are present in the classroom, by constructing a specific kind of talk. This "talk" turns out to be an "economic transaction" where they miss out on parts of the "scope and sequence" of the foreign language instruction, in exchange for other valuable returns. Such returns could take the shape of prized identities as: "being cool" among friends, "being rebellious", "being a challenger"; being a person that others could look up to, or earning the fame of breaking the rules with little or no unpleasant consequences (such as Ashley in the homework check episode, or Mike in the "student essays" that follows. Other returns are more material such as grades, or other credit for schoolwork. Assuming these identities in oral interaction is a process that involves the use of a "checklist" by the students. This "checklist" includes: eye contact, gaze, and facial expressions in general that are used by my students to confirm to me and other class members that they are in the process or that they have already assumed a new identity.

As analyzed in chapter 3, this kind of talk represents an exclusive discourse that allows the students to become the legitimizers/owners of brand-new, future "classroom transactions". In doing so, they claim the right to participate in already existing classroom rules and regulations, by adding new ones or modifying old ones. Whether students are endorsing or not the foreign language program, or the foreign language classroom rules, they are striving to earn their place in the midst of a competitive business of "buying and selling" power making use of the resources or options available to them in the classroom. In the three samples presented above the patterns of occurrence of their discursive power as a result of their skilled use of resources or

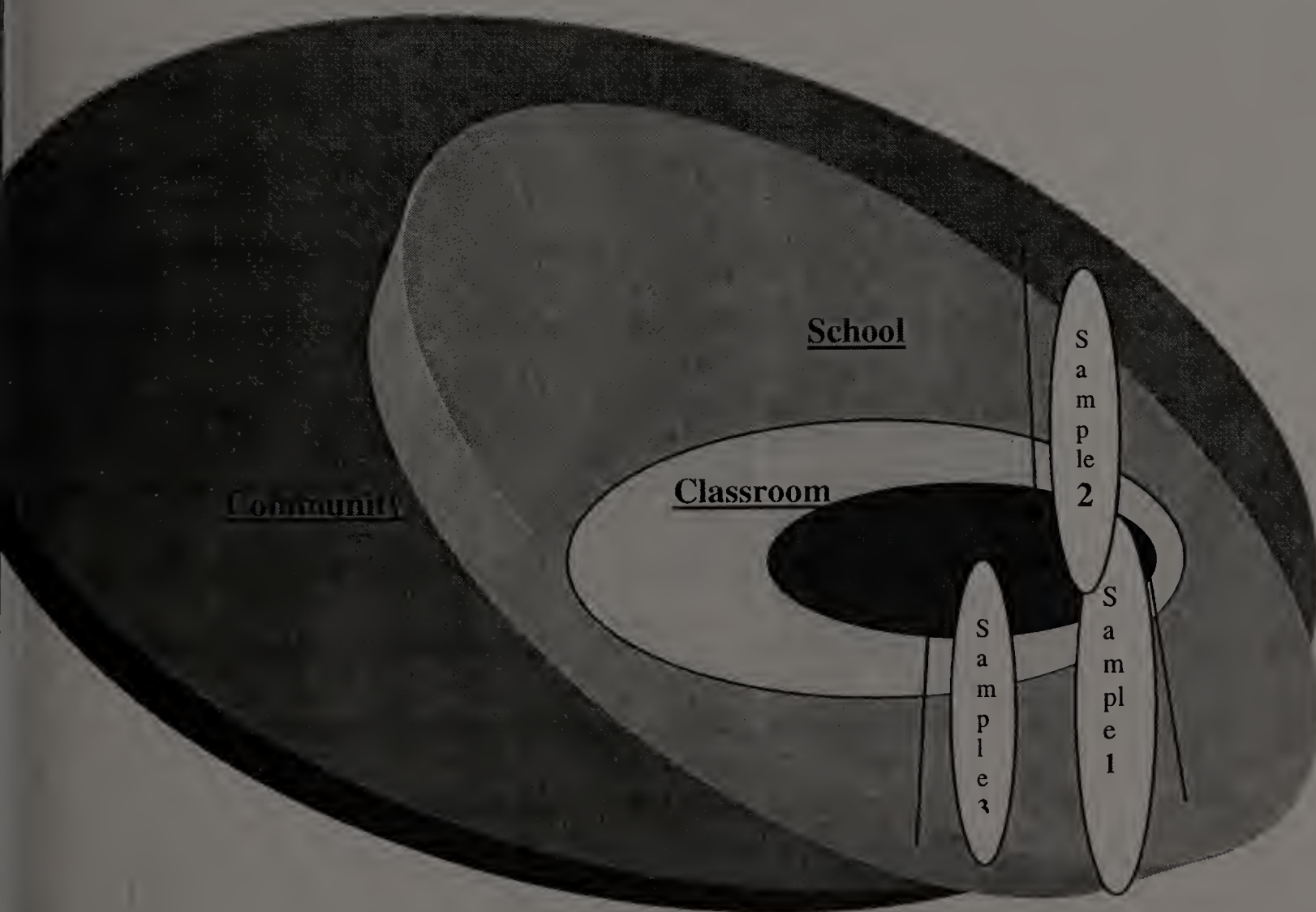


options presented in the classroom, have the potential to shape their endorsement, or resistance to the foreign language instruction.

The discourse analysis performed in these texts followed Fairclough's guidelines to identify main elements and considerations that apply to discourse analysis from a poststructuralist theoretical perspective. One other important consideration was to identify the different language policies that are initiated outside the classroom but make their presence known in student text. I argue that, by producing text that reproduces similar, unequal power relations (contradictions between school life and home life) in the context of its production, the student is passing off assumptions about the institutional aspect of school as mere oppressive, coercive discourse, ineligible to match with the one he has at home. In his attempt to decide which practice to endorse (getting a dictionary or not) the student finds out that the community discourse is much more powerful and trusting than the school one because "there is no store near my house to go buy one" (sample 1), "parce que mon mere travail tout jour et je ne avoir desun prendre moi" (my mom works every day and could not take me to get one) (sample 2), "because have no person bring me to place get note book for this class cause mom's too busy and I can't walk there" - (sample 3). In this case, community discourse is a discourse that states what type of stores are located in the neighborhood, what are the practices that parents employ to raise their children, and that economic conditions do not allow the family to have a car and travel at a greater distance at will. Another possible interpretation is that by creating an image of "victim" the students intensify the representation of poverty conscientiously or not. In any case, what is achieved as a result is a solid connection with an outside discourse (community), and a

connection with a negative perception (of classes). Additionally, by placing themselves in an image of poverty the students reveal how discourse works through people and allows them to position in a network.

The diagram below illustrates the origin of the discourses that my students employ in the three samples of notes (marked by arrows). It is also a representation of how invested students are in their schoolwork or Spanish class. While some arrows indicate a link between the routine and the community directly, sample 2 presents elements of school discourse and classroom discourse. To me this is an indication of how the text appropriation occurs in different student notes as well as the direction that endorsement takes for some students.



**Figure 6 - Student Appropriation of Text - in “student notes” and endorsement of outside discourses in classroom routines**

### The Teacher - Myself

Another visible participant in this study is the teacher. Myself! In order to describe myself I will use one of Denise's entries from her Spanish journal. This description is part of a series "Describe your teachers" and was given to the students to practice the use of adjectives, and their correct agreement with the nouns. Although Denise produced this entry to describe me, this excerpt speaks also about Denise, as a Spanish student and Denise as a compliant student. Visible in this entry are the use of lexical items in Spanish with English constructions, the use of intertextual texts, the polyvocality of voice, the choices of language, and the choices of engaging in practices for class economies. In this entry, Denise selects events that happened in the Spanish class that are relevant to her, and that project her as compliant to the classroom and willing to engage in the economy. Furthermore, this entry is built to be read by me, and it produces on me the effect of an enhanced, idyllic, practice in the classroom.

Señora Alexandru es nuestra profesora de la clase de español del octavo grado. Ella es una maestra buena y me gusta señora Alexandru para una profesora....Ella enseña las clases de español y frances. Senora Alexandru tiene mucho ingenio. Puede hablar, escribir y comprender tres lenguajes o mas, los lenguajes de ingles, español y frances. Señora Alexandru es una profesora amable. Ella hace trabajo mas divertido. Me gustan los proyectos que ella nos da. Por ejemplo, me gusta « La fiesta de la comida », el proyecto de un otro país, y el proyecto de las historias de matadores y toros. Me gusta cuando ella da canciones de español a la escuela para sus clases....Ella es alta y tiene pelo negro y ojos grises.<sup>30</sup>

Denise, Spanish student, 8th grade, March 2001

Due to the rotation schedule in our school as well as due to the lack of adequate classroom space, I teach in other people's classrooms during their prep time. The

Spanish class where Denise, Meghan and Ashley belong to, for instance, meets in the science classroom. There is little technology in this classroom. However, there is an overhead projector, a VCR that I use often, and five computers, used exclusively for the Science class.

In this physical space I construct my teaching based on norms of behavior that my students and I subscribe together through classroom routines. As discussed in the previous section of participants, my students are not passive recipients of identities assigned to them by the school or other institutions. Although they may make use of the discourses and identities promoted by these invisible participants, my students actively engage in personalizing their discourse, which sometimes might be a combination of primary and secondary discourses<sup>31</sup>. This is being done for the purpose of creating and making available new and more affordable identities. What follows is an excerpt from a student's response to a survey<sup>32</sup> on power in the classroom. Although Matt is reciting back my class "grading guidelines" presented to the students in the beginning of the year, he is also personalizing his discourse to reflect beliefs that he acquired through his life experiences in and out of school:

"To have power in the classroom means somebody that is smarter, or better at a subject than me. In Spanish class, people that speak Spanish have more power than me because they at least have a clue of what the teacher is saying. I understand most of the time, but have a hard time answering questions. That is where I lose some of that "power". If you understand the questions, can answer them, and answer questions frequently, then, that person has more "power" than someone that is shy, doesn't understand questions, and can't talk in Spanish"

Matt, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish student (2001)

In this process of identity building, my participation in the foreign language classroom is mainly to understand the process by which my students appropriate social practices and identities through the use of discourses, and to help them become aware of what resources/options are available, and how to use them in constructing a social identity that they believe to be important to them. My approach is to make available to students language practices that abound in experiences they are familiar with. Such examples include but are not limited to homework check (for linking home with school), discussing projects (for linking personal contextual experiences with the new language) and journal entries (for handing over the power of delivering the instruction in the hands of the students).

In general, I try to pay attention to micro discourses that are relevant to foreign language instruction but are highly constrained in the communicative interaction. At first glance, I cannot say that I am particularly successful in the whole class approach of homework check event, and in trying to pay attention to the students' competence in the language. In other words, by not making use of a constructivist approach to teaching, I am aware of purposefully passing by the "student-centeredness" benefits to offering feedback through student initiated responses. Therefore, in a different class routine such as journal writing, I try not to patronize relationships by overcorrecting their grammar, thus not impeding on the main purpose of the routine, which is the conveyance of message.

I argue that this is also the space where the student investment in a foreign language classroom can be shaped. To me, this brings immediately the notion of *power* and power relations that are possible to construct in these classrooms. In my

relationships with my students, I also noticed that my students and I negotiated very different kinds of power relations in routine classroom events. In an attempt to better understand how my students and I frame reality in the classroom, and how they use discourses employed outside the classroom, I administered a short survey on different concepts unpacked in this study. This survey contained five questions, and it asked the students to write a paragraph for each of the questions. The first three questions were:

1) Do you think that there is a relationship between writing in the journal and learning Spanish?

2) What does it mean for you to have power in the classroom?

3) Why do you study Spanish?

The survey was given to approximately 100 students in 2002, and it was analyzed based on the positions on power that the students took. Here is an excerpt from such a response. It is an excellent example of failure of instrumental motivation:

**I:** Why do you study Spanish?

**Meghan:** I think we study Spanish as a way to explore other languages and cultures. This is how we learn history, grammar, reading skills, math and maybe even some science. I think Spanish teachers say that will help if we ever happen to go to a Spanish speaking country, but first of all a lot of people don't and second of all there are such things as translators.

(Meghan, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish student, 2002)

As long as the competing discourses that clash in the Meghan's text presented above, do not unpack sufficiently for her, big D (here media and community discourses) will prevail. The other present discourse, small "d", belonging to "Spanish teachers" (as

visible participants in the classroom), is easily dismissed by the student with the help of the big "D", a more powerful discourse (as an invisible participant).

The counter narrative used by Meghan in the above text is also indicative of how the dominant cultural narratives of language teaching are challenged, and although articulated in isolation, nonetheless draw on common meanings: "... but first of all a lot of people don't and second of all there are such things as translators".

The following excerpt is taken from my interview with Denise on motivation. Here, Denise is framing the social motivation that I isolated and analyzed in its relationship with power.

**Denise:** Yeah, you can control it, and sometimes, motivation comes from within the students, Sometimes comes from other classmates, and if, like, other classmates are doing well, an individual student might want to progress in a subject as well....

....., like I think that it caught a lot of people's interest, and then like, most of the people made the food and brought it. Then, as they made the food, they were brought back into their own historical culture and how that food represented the culture....

(Denise, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish student, 2002)

In identifying and articulating the nature of her investment, Denise helped me understand my own teaching and how her investment situates itself in relation to my teaching and in our class economy. The type of deconstruction that Denise performs on her own learning, takes apart my teaching practice and her learning process into individually distinct parts. She makes these parts visible to me not only to account for her own learning but for the learning of other students too. She offers insights on how some students construct investments outside my classroom, and how the different

identities (my labels) that they assume: "good students", "social students", "studious students", "amusing students", "rebellious students", "students who want to be challenged", help them also form a "voice" and understand motivation as a social factor and substitute it with investment. Therefore, understanding from Denise that student investment plays a major role in appropriating the content, my desire as a teacher becomes to make the content available in such a manner, so that my students can access it with the inquiry tools (investigation, reflection, etc) that they acquired **in** (Denise) or **out** of my class (Meghan).

Additionally, I argue that if students' investment occurs through their identities that are shaped in and out of my classroom, it became just a matter of "seeing" how these identities also afford the construction of the different "facets" of knowledge that my students accessed in my class, and how this knowledge is sifted to reflect a closer or more distant match with a "reality" or discursive practice that they can relate to. This is illustrated in Sample 1: "2<sup>nd</sup> The second reason is because I don't think about school when I am out of school and I don't want to spend my money on things like the dictionary for French, and I don't need one if I have one in the back of my French book". ((Josh, 2004)

Nevertheless, the reality of my routine classroom events discussed above, ended up to be a fascinating space for me that captured the intersection of multiple truths brought by many discourses weaved into the elusive power relationships of all the visible and invisible participants in the foreign language class.

I consider myself as part of the foreign language community, and the above findings may further our understanding of foreign language learning in ways that we did



not understand before. I still have many questions that remain unanswered, but now I am much more aware of the complicated discursive webs that students use in the classroom. In my field, an answer to the following questions may still be needed: When checking homework, do other teachers in foreign language classroom focus on whole class or small groups? And if they alternate the two, how do students know which discourse to use in these events? How is the student weaving the classroom discourse with other accessible discourse? And how do students have access to these discourses, or how do they decide when to use them? Do teachers know how students select their discourses, and do they know how to incorporate such discourses in their teaching in order to validate multiple ways of learning? However, the above questions may elicit answers that pertain to a more localized understanding about language learning. There are other questions could search for answers that question the very existence of certain practices when compared to: How does homework shape students' assumptions about learning a language? Or how does engagement impact their desire to continue or not?

In terms of power in the classroom, when teachers use one questioning strategy versus another because they wish to maintain control over the discourse, does this approach assure the learning task? Are teachers' utterances exclusively done to maintain control over the turn taking system, the turn size, the form and the content of the discourse? Many more questions could still be asked at this point but what stands out without a doubt as a result of my investigations, is the fact the multiple meanings that are generated in a foreign language class are jointly constructed, shared and developed in a synergistic way through the multiple discourses made available by all classroom participants.

Investigating and understanding how the Discourses<sup>33</sup> that teachers and students bring with them to the classroom shape the construction of meaning in specific practices in classrooms, is a necessary foundation for teachers who must meet the needs of students on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, findings such as the ones in this study, although are limited to a few tens of students who participated in this research, reveal a direct relationships between student investment and student power. Conceptualizing and identifying power in these instances revealed also direct relations with the level of resistance that affects student endorsement of the foreign language instruction. (Table 3 – Degrees of Endorsement)

### **The media**

An active but invisible participant in my foreign language class is media, as a member of the Community (Figure 1). Through the use of newspapers and TV news, local media in different communities flashes reports on foreign language education as if the community (my students included) is watching the stock market: “Schools poised for more layoffs” (foreign language classes will be cut, as will be administrators, teachers...), “Bilingual education championed” (..a time when it ignored the needs of children who spoke foreign languages..), “schools to expand foreign language classes” (..for the first time the school department will expand its foreign language classes...), “language requirement reviewed” (..a task force to see if the school can afford to follow a state requirement to teach foreign languages...), “school desperate for foreign language teachers”.

The media is also offering itself to mediate and even to take charge of the struggles that shake violently school districts across the nation, due to the need to balance instruction with budget. As a result of such practices, in my school district, the students in their turn are jumping through the budgetary hoops generated by the changing policies when it comes to foreign language instruction, news that is again facilitated by media. Here is an example of such a decision in a small sub-urban district: "French, Spanish decision to stand" (*...the School Committee yesterday voted to uphold its decision to cut six grade foreign language classes*).

Soon after the Foreign Language Assistance Program was implemented in 1988, my district started a booming foreign language program citywide, K-12. It was the golden decade of **foreign language for all**. In conjunction with this policy, the role of media was to continuously advertise apparently the recent news based on research that there are long-term benefits of early foreign language instruction. Many state-sponsored language programs as well as private language program started to boom. As a foreign language teacher who believed in the benefits of early foreign language instruction, I was also swept away by this enthusiastic wave, and in 1995 I opened a private after school program to be offered in communities that did not have a K-12 sequence in foreign language instruction.

Using my experience in public schools I was trying to avoid some of the pitfalls of such instruction in the private program that I was offering. Although I still manage this program today, I can see that the issues that currently face public instruction, and affect foreign language education, such as budget, testing, accountability, etc., are also present in the private schools and programs. As far as media is concerned, while it

dropped the slogan of the benefits of the early foreign language instruction due to probably lack of political support, it picked up on the issue of lack of funds, and therefore started to promote a discourse that became (ironically) acceptable for the public, to represent foreign language instruction as a disadvantaged subject.

In the late 90's, due to increased budgetary constraints, districts like the one where I work in, began to tailor the foreign language program according to a substantially reduced budget. As MCAS, (a state-wide assessment high-stakes test required for graduation), gained more support from the policy makers, foreign language education (not part of the tested subjects), started to be offered only to children reading at grade level. In some districts even, graduation requirements for high school were reduced to only two years of foreign language study, and in others there are no requirements for foreign language study. Districts were debating to either, be faithful and continue to reflect state requirements, or to comply with federal regulations, and qualify for more foreign language grants, and thus supplement their budget based on "merit", or "need". During this time media remained a silent witness and never thought to stand for the (previously advertised) students' interests in foreign language education. On the contrary, during this time, concerns about the sequence in learning, or consistency of study within one language began to fade away according to the ever-changing local education and language policies (Beach, 2005).

Through these times of change, it became more obvious that media was just serving the language policy agenda to disseminate and interpret the legislation for the masses (**textbook companies play the same role as the media**), and as a result of these macro structures affecting foreign language class, student language conceptualization

started to present distinct characteristics (Henry, 2000). This would become visible in the student text produced on a routine basis in the classroom. In order to examine this phenomenon closely and find out how student investment in education relates to media, I decided to investigate a specific student writing task. Although initially in approaching the student data my interest was to explore how my students think and write about language using James Paul Gee's approach to discourse analysis, (the six building tasks), later I shifted my interest to how my students appropriate in a text, voices from a social context like media. Examining additionally the strategies that my students used to conceptualize language that was not routinely part of our student curriculum, a practice commonly used in my class, interestingly, brought me around the role of media, and how it relates to student endorsement of language learning.

According to Bakhtin's work, there is a dialogical consciousness in everyone derived from the social nature of the mind (Alexandru, 2002; Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). Therefore, when I started to examine the student text, I had in mind that students permanently build and rebuild meaning when they communicate orally or in writing. In looking at both type of text, in a way, I found that writing is even a more complex and challenging of a task for my students than speaking because it vacates the social cues from the context, and it forces them to conscientiously think about what is involved in the act of communicating their thoughts. Examining further the strategies that my students resorted to in order to communicate a message successfully, I noticed that they drew from different discourses and social languages that were part of their cultural capital.

If you understand the questions, can answer them, and answer questions frequently, then, that person has more “power” than someone that is shy, doesn’t understand questions, and can’t talk in Spanish.

Matt, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish student (2001)

At the same time, their writing presented characteristics of a liberator factor, since the dialogue they engaged in did not require them to respond to any restrictions or limitations that could have emerged in oral text through the conventions of a formal active dialogue. Therefore, framing language for my students when dealing with written tasks presented both characteristics of language use as a restrainer or as a liberator. This opens up another interesting alternative interpretation for this particular text. Matt’s interpretation of “power” in the classroom situates Ashley’s homework check episode analyzed above, in a student discourse about learning Spanish that is more “authentic” than the homework check interaction. This type of assignment elicited reflexive features of student discourse on classroom practices that shed light on how meaning and understanding is constructed in the classroom by the students.

Thus, finding traces of media discourses in a student text thus became also the process of deconstructing my students’ identities. It was easy to do that oftentimes since they visibly used multiple discourses during the same task (including informal discourse), to better express their situated identities. One preferred strategy that my students were using in order to recall previous discourses, like personal experience or “voices” heard, for instance, was to engage in the process of situating meaning in a situated context of the written task. As it is presented below, media discourse in this case, becomes an excellent tool that allows the students to search for the availability of resources and strategies to appropriate and conceptualize meaning.

In my undertaking to capture how media, as an invisible participant, builds relationships with my foreign language students, I decided to look at the Bakhtin's concept of dialogicality<sup>34</sup>, as the premise that the students' thoughts are only as effective as the words they use to describe their ideas to their audience. During this process my students first established a dialogue with outside voices to outline their ideas, and then, I argue, they implicitly reevaluated their identities. Next, they continued to shape subsequent concepts by being greatly influenced by the voices they had already internalized from the contextual messages that they constantly acquired as well as by their readiness to conform to, and endorse a school task.

The following two sample essays discussed here were selected from a total of 100 samples produced by my 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the year 2000. While I recognize that written texts usually carry considerable visual information, such as: handwriting forms, page layout, typography, accompanying drawings and illustrations, etc., (which can be very important for interpreting the meaning of text), I acknowledge that visual information of such text was not extensively analyzed here due to lack of space. To compensate, I paid additional attention to the relationship between semantics and written expression in the text in order to gain a more complete understanding of how students appropriate texts from invisible classroom participants like the media.

This assignment was given at the beginning of a Spanish class without a great deal of preparation. However, during the Spanish class, I often used to expose my students to a variety of facts pertaining to Spanish or English culture (with the discussion being conducted in English), in order to broaden their understanding of the language and culture studied. Therefore, I consider that similarly to my approach

toward class routines, my students were not taken by surprise when this task was given to them and it did not pertain directly to language instruction. I told my students that they were to write in English their understanding of several concepts written of the board. They were given 15-20 minutes to complete this task, and they had a choice of either elaborating on each individual concept or integrating them in a persuasive essay. The concepts were intercultural communication, project, presentation, pen pals and technology.

#### Task

Write a persuasive essay in English, or make a presentation for a college admission board with the purpose of getting admitted into this prestigious institution that promotes and fosters values of intercultural communication. Discuss your understanding of one or more of the following terms: intercultural communication, technology, pen pals, projects and presentation.

#### Sample 1 – excerpt

Pen Pals are people that write back and forth to each other..... You should usually write to a person of the same sex and different race. They should also be a different nationality. That way you learn more about things around the world.....If you write to someone in the Middle East, where we know they don't have as much technology as us, then we can teach them about ours. We could even send them a couple things like a walkman or a television set. We can also send them a camera with film and directions so they can send us pictures of themselves. We can also brag about how our army could kick their army's butt because of all the better technology we have..... We want to present ourselves as well brought up young people. We don't want them to think we were juvenile delinquents like we really are. If they thought we were juvenile delinquents, then they would be too scared to ever write back to us..... You would have to set a good impression or the person might not want to write back..... If I were trying to get into a college where I had to prove my beliefs on intercultural communication I would read everything on the paper before this.

Derek, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish, 2002



Sample 2 – excerpt

Intercultural communication happens a lot every day. Intercultural communication is when people of two different cultures talk. Pen pals are the greatest. A cool pen pal would be David Cassidy. He is the greatest person to ever live. I would want to know all about his life. Especially the Partridge Family.....Multicultural communication doesn't matter. I don't think about it much. As long as you can communicate it's all good.

To prove this, you can play tic-tac- toe.

x x x	x o x
o	x o
x o	x o

Mike, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish, 2002

I consider these two samples as “critical moments” in the dialogue that my students established with media, as an invisible participant in the foreign language class. In framing this dialogue I discuss here questions that focus on the mechanics of how language is used as a “camera” by my students, to capture a certain situation in time and place, and how that snapshot will be later recalled by them to redefine language, to provide new meanings in new contexts.

In looking at their texts, I noticed that my students' discussion of concepts in their essays was based exclusively on **situated meanings**<sup>35</sup>. They recalled “the snapshots”, or shaped them further to demonstrate how they deal on a daily basis with ideas that are not part of the teaching curriculum in school, (at least 8<sup>th</sup> grade level), and how they recall “voices” from the media to complete a task successfully. According to the definition assembled by Gee from other scholars (Agar, 1994; Barsalou, 1992; Clark, 1996; Hofstadter & Marot, 1997; Kress, 1989; Levinson, 1983), a situated meaning is “an image or a pattern that we assemble **on the spot** as we communicate in a

given context, based on our construal of that context and on our past experience” (Gee, 1999). These situated meanings of the concepts that my students chose to discuss (pen pals, intercultural communication), lead in the end of the essay to individual, customized **cultural models**. A **cultural model** being the result of a series of “connected images”, like cartoon strips, shared as “informal theories by people belonging to specific social or cultural groups” which in their turn will make up the bigger picture of the way students may organize their thinking and conceptual practice (Gee, 1999). Thus, borrowing a situated meaning, my students shaped their own cultural model, and in the process they also allowed for glimpses to their identity building. In the process of borrowing situated meanings, students also use “borrowed identities”<sup>36</sup> to reflect a cultural process that is refracted through gender, race, and class (Kelly, 2004)

In sample 1, the situated meaning of pen pal, for instance, may only be validated in a certain group (although carries connotations of universality according to the student). Here is the pattern the student develops: Pen pals are people you might never meet, “of the same sex”, “different race” and nationality, engaged in an enjoyable activity of writing. This situated meaning will lead, for the student in sample 1, to a cultural model of “dos” and “don’ts” when dealing with pen pals, this in turn reflecting the standards of the group he is representing, either as a foreign language student or a member of his community:

- write only to people of the same sex and different nationality,
- do not meet them,
- these people are easily scared and therefore might not write back

- send sample of your technology (cameras, walkman, TV set) to be able to brag.
- brag about your invincible, superior army that could destroy everything in its path, including them, your pen pals,
- set a good impression of yourself
- present yourself as a well brought up person, even if you are a juvenile delinquent

In this case, the student built and rebuilt the semiotic meaning of the “pen pal” repeatedly until he achieved the image comparable to his cultural standard (acquired from a variety of discourses as presented below). His word bank is permanently busy searched for better matches: “write to a person of the same sex and different race”, later he adds “different nationality”. He builds and builds the identity until there is a dramatic “happy” ending to this pen pal relationship: “you might be able to marry each other and have lots and lots of babies and have a wonderful life until you die with each other”.

Nevertheless, the relationship could also deteriorate if “they” (pen pals, Middle East people, or inhabitants of Third World countries, etc...) found out the “truth”: “they would be too scared to write back” if “they” find out that “we were juvenile delinquents”. The student is indirectly projecting the “socially-situated identity” of a juvenile delinquent in his attempt to establish a more accurate situated identity for “pen pals”. This leads him also to establish the conclusion that there is no parity between the student and pen pals. Although ideally they could end up marrying each other (same sex marriage idea is not fully developed by the student though, maybe because of lack of time), the “different race” and “nationality” issue offers the student further opportunities

to discuss political conflicts between nations, thus drawing from a pool of media resources that are presented to him globally through the coverage of world events. As a result, the student will continue to draw from an available cultural capital offered by the media and will apply the embedded language, to build his own political, economic, social meaning of what pen pals are. In terms of intercultural communication, sadly, this message of a need for an international understanding has a different value when examined in one of my students' texts:

Multicultural communication doesn't matter. I don't think about it much. As long as you can communicate it's all good.

(Mike, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, 2001)

It becomes evident how the student is drawing from an entire system of available discourse resources (Fairclough, 2000) . Here are some of the most frequently used:

- political (presenting/interpreting the truth in a favorable light, war coverage),
- judiciary (juvenile delinquent),
- business management (send sample technology for future investments),
- popular media (soap operas – The Partridge Family),
- Advertising (you should do this ...if you want to achieve this...).

Examining this type of text through the findings of previous research conducted by Scollon (1998), reveals also the fact that students' writing often expresses intertextuality and polivocality (R. Scollon et al., 1998). The cultural model discussed above triggers a series of images for the student in sample 1 ("good impression" → "marry" → "lots and lots of babies" → "wonderful life" → "die"). A "happy ending"

cultural model, in this case affords for the 13 year old student, the use of a discourse (“lots and lots of babies”) that is perhaps the sign of intertextuality with Health class. During the time that this assignment was given to the students, in Health class the students were presented with concepts such as “egg babies” (Appendix F). This project involved carrying an egg at all times in school and at home, and act as if it were a real baby. The rationale behind this project was to have the students acquire early awareness of sex and parenting skills and responsibilities.

This process of expressing ideas through writing proved to be a liberating experience for the student who never once thought to use the context of the Spanish class and mention issues about Spanish language or Spanish culture since the task was taking place in the Spanish class. It is interesting to follow how quickly foreign language instruction was interpreted to be by the student as an opportunity to redefine language and to endorse a practice in the foreign language class that would bear heavy media discourse.

In sample 2 the concept of *pen pal* is not extensively developed. There is little semiotic building in this text as the writer in sample 2 quickly finds a comparison widely accessible by those who are part of the television audience. Since, probably, according to the students, most of the people should be part of that audience he assumes that additional elaboration is not needed. Therefore, the situated meaning of David Cassidy, chosen from the TV network, allows an easy access to understand the semiotic meaning of “pen pal”. In this case the system of knowledge the student in sample 2 is using, is limited to the TV experience as he makes it overtly known. In short, pen pals “are the greatest”! Television sex symbols like David Cassidy are assumed to be

acceptable “cultural models” and to fulfill all the requirements for a pen pal. The personal value the student attaches to David Cassidy as a pen pal is highly prized by the student because “he is the greatest person to ever live”. Therefore, the ultimate goal is to have him as a pen pal.

Interestingly enough, the cultural model of the pen pal in sample 2 although takes a definite gender, is not leaving U.S. borders. In this case the pen pal is not of “a different race” or a “different culture”. This pen pal is geographically closer but maybe, as unattainable as the one in the “Middle East” from Sample 1. David Cassidy is a TV hero and therefore, it is not easy to communicate with him. The cultural model for a pen pal in this discourse is indirectly “tagging” the 13-year-old student, as striving for masculinity, sex, fame and power. The student will evoke a certain social language in producing this utterance about pen pals, and in turn the social language will shape what his voice can say about his own identity.

The student in sample 2 will switch later to a not so pleasant topic, “projects”. Although he was also given the choice to write about one or more concepts listed on the board, he decided to produce an utterance that gives him an identity he is better prepared to discuss: the one that defines him as a student! Although he decided on his own to speak of “projects” too, his discourse starts to stagger from the beginning. “Fame, sex and power”, ideally incorporated in the pen pal “situated meaning” are fading away and we witness the beginning of student resistance that gets built with the help of several outside cultural discourses.

I hate projects. They are a huge waste of time. There should never be any projects ever. Presentations are dumb. I had to do one in reading about Lance Bass from NSYNC and I did really bad. I hate presentations. They are as bad as

projects. Usually when you do a project you have to give a presentation too.. It's really dumb.

( Mike, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student – 2001)

Initially, in this case student resistance is not overtly channeled to foreign language instruction or my class policies. It starts at a point outside the foreign language class, but carries connotations applicable to educational practices in foreign language too. His resistance starts to form, I argue when comparing an ideal cultural model with the reality of being a student, and with it the restrictions imposed to students. Therefore, I argue that by continuously interacting with my foreign language students, media, through well-established channels, (TV shows targeting teenagers) shapes students' identities and contributes directly to the level of resistance that students take up in school.

For the student in Sample 2, in this case media has helped build a cultural model that could pass as an acceptable construal for the concept of pen pal. At the same time, media has also given my student a voice to express an opinion about oppressive school practices. Giving students projects to research based on their assumed investment outside the school, (ex. NSYNC music, or other media topics) may not be such a good idea according to the student in sample 2. It also seems that school practices of combining school related events with out-of-school events could generate reticence (to say the least) of using available discourses by the students to construct acceptable meanings. Although in the beginning of his discourse he was inhibited by other peoples' voices (according to his reaction when he had to make a presentation in reading class), however, by the end of the text he was able to enter in a dialogue with his previous

utterance and finalize his resistance, thus constructing a point of view, based on personal experience.

Following Mikhail Bakhtin's **theory of dialogism**, where culture, or even existence itself, is inherently responsive, my student's reaction to a school practice is in reaction to what has gone before, and in expectation of what is to follow (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). Now he is not on task anymore. His discourse shifts into a complete disagreement and rebellion against the situated meaning of "projects" and implicitly my task. "I hate projects...". The student enters in a process of dialogicality with the invisible listener (perhaps the teacher who is going to read it (me?), perhaps David Cassidy, or perhaps the initiator of the project in reading class. "There should be never any projects ever." The dialogicality here is between the student and the expectation of what is to follow. He is taking the opportunity to let me know that a school or teacher policy had caused him discomfort, in addition to being void of value ("It's really dumb").

The multiple discourses that Student 1 and Student 2 use to integrate language with thoughts, allow them to recognize and embody themselves in different identities to be able to make meaningful connections in their construction and utterance of concepts.

The concepts of "project" and "presentation" potentially offer the student a chance to challenge the hegemony of the teacher over the student in school, by denying the constructive or educational value of these activities: "I hate projects. They are a huge waste of time. There should never be any projects ever. Presentations are dumb.... I hate presentations." (Mike, 2002)



The student in Sample 2 is in a process of rebellion, building resistance against the authoritative discourse of the teacher imposing these assignments, against the whole educational system and its concepts, and school practices! As a result his discourse here turns into a dissident text constructing a particular social identity for the student. I see this as a perfect opportunity for many students to construct for themselves spaces to resist, if they disagree with the authoritative school discourse. It is often assumed by students that changing school practices is the process where they have to place themselves in a position of power to express disagreement with such practices. "They are as bad as projects. It's really dumb." The degree of internalization of the term project, in this student text, is based on his personal experience again, and his reasoning in writing may help him reevaluate his values and possibly change classroom practices.

"Intercultural communication" is definitely not a term taught in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. However, it is often referred to in other terms in foreign language class. For this reason, in our Spanish class my students are presented with fragments of "pictures" that act as puzzle pieces for them in the process of constructing the meaning of this term. In this example however, intercultural communication, generally a term strongly associated with foreign language, has become increasingly re-defined by media, as seen through these students' texts, to the point where conceptualization of language by students becomes a process highly controlled by invisible, apparently outside members of the space where the situated meaning is discussed and framed. Intercultural communication is also a term clearly defined by policy makers. As a result of recent international political conflicts and economic crises the policy makers have raised the red flag: the current incompetence of "Americans" in foreign language is in no position to help solve

major international problems as well as to help communicate interculturally (International Security, 2001).

The “situated identities” Student 1 gives to himself and his audience through his discourse juggle between “you” and “we” and one instance of “I”. “You” and “They” or “Them”, are for the student the basis that starts the process of comparing and contrasting conflicting or unclear information. This becomes a preferred strategy the student uses to complete his task. He positions himself as an unidentified person, neutral, in a group throughout the entire discussion of the terms. When defining the terms he uses the entity “You”. “You should” do this or “You should” do that. If his statements need reinforcement due to a certain standard he has or cultural model he need to compare against, he will use various resources and even place himself on the audience side sharing the same beliefs and values.

However, when the time comes to discuss the Task from a personal point of view, he switches to “I”, the applicant to the college. This transformation is only minimal, and is done only to strengthen his relationship with the group he was representing before when he started to share its values and beliefs. However, the pronoun change, assumes here the change of audience in order to offer more specificity. In doing so, the student switches to authoritative discourse taking charge of the strategies and methodology used to prove his beliefs in front of a college board: “...if I had to prove my beliefs on intercultural communication, I would set up a class of 10 students... I would have them do everything I said before...” (Derek, 2002).

In his attempt to define the terms he uses “teacher”’s perspectives to express his construal of the terms. (“Technology can be part of teaching too...”) It is interesting to

notice that the student is using in almost half of his text, the term(s) “teach” and “teacher”, to arrive at an acceptable sequence of images in the construction of meaning of his terms. His images change rapidly from friendly “pen pals”, to potential mates, to poor Middle East inhabitants, and it escalates to potential enemies.

The identity of “You” and “We” changes as well. From “You” an invisible and impersonal audience, to “We” the chosen few (or many!), to “we” the rich and the benefactors, and culminates with “we” the powerful, the conquerors, that “they” should have as friends!

By using the same strategy of comparing/contrasting the entities “you” and “them”, the student will orient his dialogism toward parody. The **army** topic raises here a very interesting aspect of the social language used by Student 1 in his definition of technology. He is using the situated meaning (that conferred personal value “We”, “our”) of the army, to exemplify the superiority of American technology (“**our** army”, “**their** butt”).

I can only hypothesize that the student in this case, appropriated the information about the success of the army, from the frequent media updates presented every time an international conflict would arise, and a military intervention or invasion was required on the part of the USA (i.e. Gulf war, the Bosnian war, Iraq war, etc.). On this note, I further suspect this is a clear example of a boy’s discourse appropriating voices from the media context. In doing so, I also follow Wertsch’s ideas that action is mediated and cannot be alienated from the milieu in which it is carried out (Wertsch, 1991).

It is interesting to note the process through which my students appropriate information they absorb from the media, and the technique they use pass the newly

constructed meaning in the school context, as valid and reliable information. It is without a doubt that the situated meaning for “technology” for instance, as it is presented in this student text, is in its turn shaping the political discourse that the student is appropriating. Additionally, the preferred status that the army had acquired through numerous political discourses appears to also confer privileges to the social level of the life of the citizens it serves. This high-level of power in a nation (achieved as being the beneficiary of such a powerful army), allows student in Sample 1 to place himself on the part of the audience, and therefore, use informal language in writing (“our army could kick their army’s butt”). In doing that, student in Sample 1 embodies Boudrieu’s principle that the more power one possesses, the more able is he to manipulate others (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991).

The idea of cultural capital that I brought in the analysis of these texts originates from Bourdieu’s theories of culture, and it argues that its cultural production derives from simplistic social theory. To exemplify this in Sample 1 the student is using his subjectivity and practices acquired in the classroom and outside the classroom, to convert the situated meanings into forms of cultural capital. Therefore, it becomes clearer that the access to a particular discourse that he wants to recall is made possible only by the fact that he is able to previously recall information stored in this cultural capital of Middle East issues. Therefore, the level of literacy that media offers, as illustrated in this case, is constructed from reasonable available sources of cultural capital. For students in this case, the cultural capital of Middle East acquired through media sources, makes room for the reconfiguration of the “American discourse” they can use in schools.

In conclusion, some social languages (discourses) that are employed by students to accomplish certain tasks/actions in school are more available than others, and this is mostly due to the fact that these discourses coming mostly from outside the classroom, manage to keep an active relationship with powerful invisible participants to the foreign language class, such as media. It is in this aggressive way that I perceive the presence of media in the space where the students and I conduct our daily learning transactions. Thus, many learning decisions taken by my students or me are, as demonstrated above, the direct result of this forceful media interactional dialogue that claims its space in the student learning process.

### **The Administrators**

Foreign language students, teachers, media and perhaps legislators are not the sole active, or shall I say "present", participants in these classes. Although, initially, I thought that since my concern revolves around foreign language discourses, I should focus my attention on what happens mostly in my foreign language classes. I soon discovered that my foreign language class also fosters the presence of many other individuals or groups that use outside, dominant or emerging discourses, and that speak for a group or institutions that occupy key positions in the school district system of power: the administrators.

Perhaps that one of the most powerful invisible participant in the foreign language class is the administrator. During my extensive study, conducted in Spanish language classes to determine the students' investment in foreign language learning, I noticed that a significant part of the findings pointed to students' attitudes and opinions

that reflected their lack of investment in the foreign language class due to the inconsistency of foreign language policies at the district level.

In the pages that follow I will discuss this group of participants that claim membership to the foreign language class, or simply are involved in the foreign language class as outside participants as well as the patterns of the occurrence of their discursive power that has the potential to affect student endorsement or student resistance to the foreign language instruction. This group of participants implements language legislations in order to correct certain societal problems as well as to allot certain funds. I argue that this participating group plays a decisive role in understanding the context of an essential question an eighth grader asked me in 2003: "Miss, do we really have to pass this class?"

These adults (school officials, supervisors, principals, curriculum specialists) represent an institution that has devised unlimited access to my class using a powerful platform: actively supervising the implementation of education legislation. Within this group of participants, its members belong in select spheres of influence with highly permeable borders. Occasionally, their power sometimes overlaps, acknowledging that they also, are in the continuous business of seeking membership in groups with higher returns. I argue that at any one time, in the foreign language class the presence of these adults is felt as an oppressive group that has regulated a forced participation by classroom visits, scheduled events, or evaluations, and formal observations that are meant to reinforce the supervising feature of their role in the foreign language class based on their outside discursive positions.

In the following pages I will discuss my findings related to the nature of student resistance that affects endorsement taken up by students during foreign language instruction as a result of several interviews that I conducted with the Assistant Superintendent, the Foreign Language Director (at the time of the interview, but currently working in a different district), the former Foreign Language Director (currently retired after 30 years of service), and a Spanish teacher who works in an elementary school in the district. I included the text produced by the Spanish teacher because I thought it was an essential link in the discursive network that administrators establish with the students in the classroom.

The corpus of discourse samples that I will refer to in the following pages is the result of my coding of the spoken discourse by the type of questions asked in the interviews, and the “moments of crisis”, that occurred across data or misunderstandings that required repair of a communicative problem. One of the most frequent “moments of crisis” that occurred at the time of the interviews was when the concept of “student resistance” was brought up. In all four interviews, as distinct cases of problematization of the discourse practice, participants showed significant intertextuality and interdiscursivity at the macro level. This led me to draw conclusions of specific social practices. In particular, on how those particular discourses were defining the social practices. In all four samples the participants construct their text similarly. At the question involving “student resistance” the pattern in the response involves a general understanding that they knew the answer, that it was just a matter of listing a list of reasons or circumstances. Therefore, structurally all four texts show the same pattern of providing the reasons that each are embedded in their social or historical context. It

struck me that although the content of the text presented differences in all four samples, the general idea was that, **that** was the “truth” worthy to be taken into consideration. For example: Sample 1 – starts with:... **such as** (takes place of the reasons): “Do their friends take a foreign language? ..... their parents speak a foreign language at home..... students speak a foreign language at home. Where are the children seeing the benefit of learning a second language? Is there anywhere in the curriculum a history or science that shows that there is a benefit for learning a second language?”

This rapid fire of rhetorical questions is meant to perhaps put the interviewer (me) at ease by showing a comprehensive list of causes for “student resistance” and placing the blame outside the student and on outside influences.

In Sample 2 the same format is used to present the answer: “There are several factors that contribute to the situation. First and foremost I think that ... not all of our teachers are highly qualified.” This time, in addition to a list of random reasons, the author has a prioritized list in terms of importance to the “student resistance”.

In Sample 3 although the format of the text remains the same it is framed in the larger picture of education before a list of reasons is presented: “I think that when you say reluctant learners, I don’t know if I would say that students are any more reluctant learners of language than the same student may be a reluctant learner of something else. I think that what makes the language piece more challenging is maybe in the minds of some people, language learning is not important enough and therefore a student hears that, hopefully not from the language teachers, from other teachers, from other adults, both school connected adults and other adults...”



This general framing is also observed in Sample 4, before the reasons are given out: “Student are not resisting just FL. Students are resisting learning, period! They are resisting English, Math, everything.”

Here is the question that generated the responses presented above, and on which the analysis of the “moment of crisis” was done. The concept of **student resistance** was later employed by me to formulate categories:

“Some students are reluctant learners of a foreign language in the district. What do you think that contributes to such a situation?”

Although the term “resistance” was not overtly offered to the participants because I decided to use a more distant term “reluctant”, the participants quickly decided to substitute it with others more appropriate:

### **Sample 1 - excerpt**

**B:** I would not use reluctance; they have outside exposure such as: Do their friends take a foreign language? ..... their parents speak a foreign language at home..... students speak a foreign language at home. Where are the children seeing the benefit of learning a second language? Is there anywhere in the curriculum a history or science that shows that there is a benefit for learning a second language? Even for students who are highly capable and go to colleges; Do the colleges require a language to get in? Do you need three years in high school?.....That is part of the community. You also took a music lesson, belonged to church, babysat, and went to scouting... So there are the expectations of the community. But I have the same issue about Algebra. Why would I learn Algebra as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, why am I going to learn French? In the Spanish case, it is more difficult because.....  
.....you do not want to be identified with Latinos, and in their adolescent mind they think that it would identify them with a different population.....It has to do with value..... what are the benefits of learning a F.L.?..... Students are curious but they are also looking for benefits. There are jobs and business but I don't know if kids make that connection.....if it is required do they find it difficult? If they get good grades it is because they are either good at, it or the work is easy. A foreign language is an unknown. How do I get help out of school? .....

(Dr. Beach, 2004)

Reluctance in this sample was immediately replaced by “outside exposure”, where “outside exposure” was defined as: friends, parents, other students. Additionally, foreign language instruction was also treated as a potential economic transaction, a capital or a value in itself: “where do children see the benefit of learning a FL”? and how, if this is a real benefit, it is coming across in the curriculum, or in college or high school requirements. The situated meaning of “resistance” was quickly assembled by this administrator under the image of “outside exposure” and “capital”. This reference to capital is a direct relation to Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital, although for adults like this supervisor, capital is more economic in nature:

**B:**...English is something you have to have. There is a capital, an undisputable value in speaking English

**I:** ...as a foreign language?

**B:** As something you have to have. English is the language of finance

(Dr. Beach, 2004)

Another important aspect of the “outside exposure” was the community: “That is part of the community. You also took a music lesson, belonged to church, babysat, and went to scouting... So there are the expectations of the community.” Since students are an integral part of their community, so far, as seen through this text, there is little that students and implicitly their teachers can do to determine a child’s approach to foreign language education.

A further “outside exposure” mentioned by this administrator is the group membership idea and the concept of identity. This was quickly brought up in the context of an immediate social benefit: the need to identify yourself with a social group and not the other: “they don’t want to be identified with Latinos, and in their adolescent

mind they think that it would identify them with a different population,..” (Dr. Beach, 2004).

Through this text learning a foreign language such as Spanish is framed and angled to a wider social problem that underpins values and beliefs that distribute people unequally across classes and groups, and gives them or not the power to enjoy the benefits associated with that membership.

Although this administrator acknowledges that as a result of such education there are both short-term social benefits that give high returns to the students, and long-term benefits, the potential long-term benefit that the study of a foreign language could bring to the students is however, dismissed. According to this administrator, students are to blame because “kids do not make this connection”, perhaps due to their “adolescent minds”.

In conclusion the two “repairs” that were brought up to correct enunciation on the problem of “student resistance” were of a strong social, but also economic nature. Identity, membership and student investment, were linked with immediate rather than distant benefits.

As a result the theme that appears at various points in all four samples is the approach to a discursive practice that dismisses perhaps the psychologically-related term of “reluctance”, and replaces it with a form of intertextuality from the social and economic arena: “outside exposure”. This speaks to the fact that in this case, through the eyes of this invisible participant in my foreign language classroom (assistant superintendent), “student resistance” is a social practice that results perhaps due to

hegemonic conventions that exist at the school or at the community levels as part of wider social structural practices.

**Sample 2 - excerpt**

**R:** There are several factors that contribute to the situation. First and foremost I think that ..... not all of our teachers are highly qualified. Most of all, I believe that if a teacher uses the target language in an inviting classroom that is realistic, hands-on and real life then the child is more likely to succeed in the classroom and have a better appreciation of the class..... the opposition that is faced in the district is also due to other teachers in the district whose mindset doesn't believe in a foreign language, .....make comments at the middle school level to the children "Why are you studying that?" After a while it begins to wear down the children.

**I:** So you think it is mostly on the teacher side...

**R:** No, I also think that ..... a parent, who may not be fully aware of the benefits of learning a foreign language, their mindset over the years being that you don't need a foreign language to succeed. The mindset of the community that looks upon Spanish in particular, as why don't they learn English? All these things begin to wear down the child. So, if you are a really strong and engaging foreign language teacher, those children seem to be more motivated to continue the language. I've seen that first hand at the elementary level..... So, I see it as the factors surrounding the child, the parent, the community the teacher that may distract the child from taking the language and liking it. But if a child has a strong teacher who uses the target language, with good knowledge of the target language, and uses the target language effectively, they could often win that child over.

(R. Oleksak, 2004)

In this second sample, although there is no immediate correction to the enunciated problem, the emphasis is placed both on social and psychological factors that surface throughout the sample as a thematic structure of the text, an outline to what student resistance should be defined as. The answer is manipulated to follow the pattern:

- 1) blaming the teacher ("not highly qualified"), but

2) praising a selected instructional technique (“using the target language all the time in class” in order to ensure success), the author uses presupposition as if there are no alternatives to this educational issue.

The correction to the “resistance” problem appears a little later in the text as the “things that wear down the child”. So, again, we have outside factors (social practices) that contribute to student resistance, but one of the most decisive roles in the resistance is played by, unlike in the previous sample, the teacher, ironically the **foreign language** teacher. For this administrator, although parents, community, and legislation contribute perhaps equally to “student resistance”, if there are no visible “benefits” to foreign language instruction by the students, then, the majority of the burden is carried by the teacher, and especially by the one who is not “highly qualified”<sup>37</sup>, and who does not “use the target language in an inviting classroom that is realistic, hands-on and real life”.

Interestingly enough, in this text as well as in Sample 1, foreign language education is portrayed as a transaction that could yield benefits to the students. The visibility of the benefits is placed in direct relation to the qualifications of the foreign language teacher who should overcome potential social or economic hardships that might also impede on as successful foreign language education.

Among the most obvious properties of the text emphasized by this administrator is the wording and rewording of what constitutes acceptable, successful approaches to correct the problem of “student resistance”. The intertextual chain with the legislative and political discourse shapes this text to revolve around the definition of “highly

qualified teacher”, wording that originated in the recent NCLB law that guides districts in their budgetary and curricular decisions.

... But if a child has a strong teacher who uses the target language, with good knowledge of the target language, and uses the target language effectively, they could often win that child over. ...So, if you are a really strong and engaging foreign language teacher, those children seem to be more motivated to continue the language. I've seen that first hand at the elementary level.....

(R.Oleksak, 2004)

Placing the blame on teachers' lack of qualification seems to be the result of the larger discourse of **No Child Left Behind** Act that pressures the districts and stresses the importance of a quality education for all students. This law mandates that in every classroom there should be a highly qualified teacher for the purpose of educating the students. The Act has practically infiltrated in every corner of the education arena, and as a result, NCLB discourse is not only a practice present in administrators' discourses, but also in my own, as a classroom teacher.

In looking back to my previous comments in Chapter 2, I cannot fail to see that they were made in relation to the district practice of replacing qualified teachers in the classroom, with uncertified educators. My comment had deep implications in how this law affects the composition of the work force in schools and how it implicitly affects the students in the classroom. At the time, the purpose of advancing two qualified teachers to the rank of resource teachers in order to take advantage on behalf of the district of a grant stipulated under NCLB became irrelevant however, when faced with numerous budget cuts and program adjustments. This strategic approach that translated into the qualified teachers' replacement with inexperienced teachers was a practice that

speaks to the fact that as a larger discourse, NCLB made its way down to the classroom in a very erratic manner.

In light of the above discussion, the emphasis of this administrator on key words such as “highly qualified teachers” and “using the target language effectively”, are words that have a local and political significance. This specific wording of a term that is considered essential to the understanding of the problem by this administrator is an indication of a text that reveals important micro aspects of her discourse and social practice. These aspects could also be a signal perhaps of the need to make a strong connection to what some legislations emphasize regarding how success and achievement should be measured in schools.

Another discursive connection in the text is made perhaps with the polemical presupposition that “the mindset” of other people, (a more psychological aspect), could contribute to this condition of “student resistance”. As a result, I argue, the discourse types brought together in this sample reflect an interdiscursivity of social and psychological nature that is a strong indication of the origin of the text production.

In all four samples, in addition to the framing of the text to present the content (the reasons for student resistance), the authors foreground something or somebody that is to take the blame for such a situation: “outside influences” in Sample 1, “the teacher” in Sample 2, “adults” in wider society in Sample 3, and “the students” in Sample 4.

### **Sample 3 - excerpt**

**R:** I think that when you say reluctant learners, I don't know if I would say that students are any more reluctant learners of language than the same student may be a reluctant learner of something else. I think that what makes the language piece more challenging is maybe in the minds of some people, language learning is not important enough and therefore a student hears that, hopefully not from the language teachers,, from other teachers, from other adults, both school

connected adults and other adults .....

.....  
unlike some of these other countries that you have listed here<sup>38</sup> that have national education systems and therefore in many instances there are policies about whatever, and there are also national curriculum requirements in what ever subject you might mention. And part of the controversy over the national standards in any content area was the tremendous resistance on the part of some that that was becoming a national curriculum, and in the US education, is a priority of the state government, and the state delegates it to the local authorities.....

**R:** so the whole idea of language being viewed as something as part of the general education for all the kids, is just that is not historically true in the US, and certainly is not historically true in Springfield. And then you get the typical reaction of the kids coming needier and needier and school being in the position to offer compensatory programs.....People are saying well, we do not have time to do this other stuff. So in the past you were fighting the best and the brightest belief, now even if you have people, who say that yeah I think that FL is important, however it is not as important as X. And X is what the test is going to measure, and X is the pressure point. So, you have an implementation attitude and I think that trickles down to the students. They hear it in school; they maybe hear it at home as well. And then this kid is not going to college. It is kind of a carry over from the past, where language is something that students who went to college did, but not others. So, it is a lot going on to the kids not necessarily thinking that language is that important. And I think that that is what contributes to them being not as engaged. Because, even if they don't like math, it does not matter. They don't have to like math, they don't have to do well, they don't have to like their math teacher. They don't have to like anything about it. You are taking math: period, end of discussion. So you have the things that are part of the general curriculum that reluctant or not, you're going to be there. And then there are the other things that "well, if you really don't want to do it maybe it is not important.

(Dr. Riordan, 2004)

Sample 3 starts with a redefinition of the term "student resistance", more precisely, the "transitivity" property of this text surfaces to reflect the fact that the agency or the attribution of responsibility has to be extended to areas "outside" the foreign language realm. Therefore, the clarification serves the purpose to reconfigure, to reposition the relationships that students have with their other subjects that they should not be considered only reluctant in foreign language but also in math, English etc.



There are, according to this former administrator, degrees of resistance based on people's attitudes (teachers included), or based on national and state education approaches, and more specifically on language policies, that at the level of the administration are often transparent.

According to this administrator, the issue is more of viewing learning foreign languages as a valued capital and not as a language per se: "language is something that students who went to college did, but not others. So, it is a lot going on to the kids not necessarily thinking that language is that important. And I think that **that** is what contributes to them being not as engaged". (Dr. Riordan, 2004)

The topicalization in this sample is foregrounding "language" to the level of a transforming agent that can enable power and status in the participants, and also give them a system of reference. This topicalization is also placing the students as passive recipients of capital, but nevertheless again, in a transaction formula.

In terms of comparing education systems across nations, this administrator believes that decisions taken in a centralized education system appear to be more efficient, than in a country like the US, where education is the responsibility of individual states. The attempt to bring the state policies<sup>39</sup> in line with a common core of guidelines becomes just a suggested, voluntary "framework" or "standard" in order to address certain societal deficiencies in a field like education. According to this former administrator, these circumstances historically provided a different "mindset", in the approach to foreign language education, which was not possible to change in such a short time.

The text in this particular sample shows signs of interdiscursivity at the macro level of the society, more than any of the other two samples presented before. Frequent references to how (foreign language) policies are implemented, how often they changed, how much resistance they faced among adults, who transferred it down to the students, are the basis for the concluding statement that places this text production in the vicinity of an ideological investment of a discursive convention that endorses the "historical truth".

The use of the word "historically" from the perspective of this former administrator's 30 years of service in a school system, and in many committees, associations, guiding documents, and generally as an active militant in the foreign language arena, placed the construal of the "student resistance" at a different level. As a result by using recognition and reaffirmation of past discourses in changing times, the author in Sample 3 creates a theme that organizes the text from a different perspective.

The ideological and political implications of this discursive practice are that in addition to "reading" "student resistance" through the personal system of knowledge and beliefs of this speaker, the term is also defined by her through the social relations that she has with the other participants in this social practice. Interpreting students actions as a result of their extensive exposure to altering economic, ideological and political factors, gives this invisible participant (although retired) a central seat in the category of invisible participants that define a foreign language social practice where the students are mere objects acted upon by hegemonic political forces.

It becomes often critical to understand that from multiple levels of the administrative group of participants, the practice of objectification of students (as

numbers on paper), or personification of documents (No Child Left Behind) appears to grant them rights to reinterpret the very fabric of what foreign language concept is made of. It almost seems that in the absence of a direct interaction with the students these participants construct their own understanding of the role of students.

#### **Sample 4**

Although the following sample is not text produced by an administrator, but an elementary foreign language teacher, I thought it was relevant to present in terms of offering a close resemblance with the other samples when examining some of the text properties that existed in the samples produced as a result of the question that generated “student resistance” discussion. After identifying the “blame the teacher” theme in a previous sample, and in a way, in order to connect one of the supervisors’ comments that teachers have the burden of creating endorsement opportunities for many students in foreign language classes, I interviewed this teacher and modified my initial question to the following:

**I:** Are teachers the main reason students learn a foreign language, or continue the study of a foreign language? Are they the motivators?

**G:** Student are not resisting just FL. Students are resisting learning, period! They are resisting English, Math, everything. And just the fact that they put a label on FL, now it is exploratory, now it is special, a prep teacher. I am a prep teacher? A prep teacher?

(Interview with G. McKenzie, 2004)

So, from this excerpt, the message is that yes, students resist learning but it appears that it is not as much the problem of a selective resistance, as it is the problem of an induced resistance. As suggested in the other samples through the text presented, the induced resistance in foreign language instruction is a concerted and complex effort

of social, economic, political, and ideological forces that are embodied in people's actions, discourses and social practices that set up the students in these positions of defense. Foreign language students are situated by their own teachers, families and community in social positions that allow and endorse resistance.

**G:** It is related to policy, to labels to the fact that you have classroom teachers saying: right now you have the prep time teachers coming. Do we need anything? No, you do not need anything for special teachers. And then your job is really hard because of classroom teachers, because they have a classroom. I am a teacher too, but I am not looked upon as a teacher. I went to the same school, I went to do my Masters, and I have the same working time as they do. And thus, a lot of the responsibility for your subject is taken away. And students see that and they are not going to care either.

(G. McKenzie, 2004)

Although this text bears on the surface the manifest intertextuality of teacher's frustrations for not having a room, and therefore being under-looked, the majority of the thematic concentration in this discourse sample revolves around equity, fairness, and suitability of a unilateral approach on learning. This perhaps, is subconsciously afforded by the discursive practice of the text generated by the NCLB law that says that all subjects are core to learning and education except for home economics and physical education.

Overall, across the texts of the samples there is the theme that student resistance is not generally unique to foreign language class. Although it is perceived as student resistance, it is not a student originated resistance. It is mostly generated as a result of the effects of the discursive contribution of the adults, specifically the invisible participants in the foreign language class, who act on the social practice that is taking place in the classroom.

On the other hand, the cause of the problem, as it is perceived by other invisible participants in the class, is due to the need of teachers who must be sufficiently skilled and “engage” students in the process of foreign language instruction if any change in the students’ response to the instruction is expected.

Technical issues of achievement or success, and results in learning, are only approached tangentially, in terms of policy and the accountability toward that policy. The part that is disturbing in the sample above is the obvious framing of students as objects, again, in the learning process, as insignificant contributors to their own decisions, as entities emptied of individual thinking and lack of merit for what they are.

Deprived of any social value in their endorsement of the foreign language instruction students’ learning comes to a halt. Additionally, lacking options or choices to make meaningful connections with their own life and identities and using powerful societal discourses, students begin to form what is perceived as resistance, a new form of power that will change the rules by which the instruction takes place.

In these instances I define power as the sine qua non, reflexive and impersonal capacity that participants in the classroom discourse strive to use in order to acquire necessary capital to participate in classroom “transactions”. Thus, foreign language students, similar to students in many other classes, will resort to resistance by constructing talk that instantly becomes what they need that is an “economic transaction”. This “talk” represents an exclusive discourse that allows them to become the legitimizers-owners of **new** “classroom transactions”. In doing so, they claim the right to participate in already existing classroom rules and regulations.

Whether students are endorsing or not the foreign language program, or the foreign language classroom rules, they are permanently placing themselves in the business of using their power for social exchanges, “endorsing”, and “investing” in new transactions.

It took a long time to identify the groups that make their presence known in my class though their discourses but I consider myself much better prepared now to understand that in order to ask the question: “Miss, do we really have to pass this class?”, one has to have been exposed, and maybe unconsciously forced to adopt and adapt to a multitude of discursive practices originating from many layers of the society.

In the absence of a common discourse, the participating groups and sub-groups in the foreign language class will lead a parallel coexistence, and will develop exclusive discourses relevant only to the groups that generated them. It is my belief that it is for this reason only that currently used discursive practices in the foreign language class make impossible the facilitation and/or generation of common purpose among all its participating members. Thus, the foreign language class takes a defined character. It becomes the **absolute** space where students have to decide which discourse to use from the multitude presented to them. What the students mostly opt is to combine discourses and claim a polyvocality that further shapes and redefines the foreign language class and its members, making it difficult, if not impossible for macro discourses originated outside this class, to establish and maintain a single acceptable ideological system that relates and maintains an integral identity of the foreign language class and its members.

Due to this cacophony of discourses, students have also the option of *endorsing* versus appropriating, at will the instruction. Therefore, when critical moments occur in

the class (discursive clashes), my students will often use resistance in order to remain active, transforming classroom participants. By devising their own terms of participation, the students gain momentum, and endorse only an instruction that creates accessible tools to them. Such active means of participation in the foreign language class, relevant to the students' group only, construct relevance for the rest of the class. From this perspective, endorsement, as an extension of motivation in the foreign language class, becomes the process by which students create socially-constructed spaces to claim ownership of a certain learning process.

“Miss, do we really have to pass this class?”

In my attempt to provide an answer, even a tardy one, to an essential question that one of my former 8<sup>th</sup> grade foreign language students asked, I thought it was my duty as her foreign language teacher, to search, to look further, to investigate, multiple societal discursive levels of interaction where foreign language instruction surfaced as a social practice. In my experience of teaching foreign languages for over 20 years I had found out that whether you were teaching it in the United States or Romania, you became part of a system of relationships that encompassed beliefs, attitudes, social identities, social forces, and tremendous discursive power that makes the very fabric of the foreign language instruction ontology.

What made this research endeavor worthy to pursue over the past five years, was the fact that I wanted to know and have a much broader understanding of how, when, and why foreign language as a societal occurrence can become a need, as a reflection of active social, political, economic, and ideological layers of a society.

Since the above question asked by my student, left me quite perplexed at the time, and unable to articulate an immediate response, I realized later that as a classroom teacher I was about to miss the very significance of my students construction of knowledge in the learning process. In my busy daily schedule to continue a robotical existence of a practitioner who had answers to almost all the questions, I was missing the most important one: Does this matter?

If all my efforts throughout the years amounted to such serious doubt, then I either completely failed to pass along essential information to my students, or there was someone or something else in the classroom with us, more powerful, and more significant than us that was surreptitiously sending contradictory messages to my students. In this case, could it have been that the question was not meant for me, and it was therefore not my job to answer it? The semantic and symbolic meaning of "*Miss*" could have been used to address anybody in the educational system to shed a light and provide some guidance in the process of achievement of meaningful actions for my student.

Further, if I wanted to acknowledge my **passive** part in the complex educational system, I suppose I could have said: "Sure, you have to pass foreign language class. It is part of your overall education. You have to pass all your classes, and all your classes count." I could have said all those things and even more, but how could this have helped my student see **all that** in her daily life? How could my statement become validated in her daily quest for meaning and truth, when other participants in the classrooms, such as the administrators, know and say different? Statements such as the ones below are not



just reflecting secret, interior beliefs that people may have about the foreign language program. They are part in this case, of this administrator's identity and actions.

**R:** Historically S..... viewed foreign language as a program for the best and the brightest, not all the students. That was the thing in S..... and in most other places.

(Interview with Dr. Riordan, 2004)

Or in another statement:

**R:** ..so the whole idea of language being viewed as something as part of the general education for all the kids, is just that is not historically true in the US, and certainly is not historically true in S.....

(Interview with Dr. Riordan, 2004)

If after 25 years of loyal administration in the service of foreign language education in a large school district, an administrator admits a social practice, as a historical truth, then it becomes a legitimate message that we pass on to our foreign language students.

The excerpt below is a similar example:

**B:** ...then you have to lend them a dictionary, if it is **that** important to you.. (Dr. Beach, 2004)

Important to me? Was the foreign language instruction, all about me, and I erroneously thought it was about the students?

Or in the fragment below:

**B:** .....No, sequence is not something we look at, other than a data set. Here is where foreign language gets a negative hit. We have reduced the number of foreign language teachers in the buildings....

(Dr. Beach, 2004)

Do the administrators (who view education as a war) know that these calculated “negative hits” are heavily interfering with my messages to students (that foreign language counts), and therefore are directly contributing to the endorsement that students may show in foreign language class? If I am to mix and match the data that I have then the above statement is a complete match to my student question: **“Miss, do we really have to pass this class?”** And why isn’t proficiency thought as important? Why are we working toward data only, and not toward proficiency? Why is the richest country in the world reducing the number of foreign language teachers so that only some students get the instruction, and not others? How come that in other countries like Romania, a developing country, the general education of their students includes sequential instruction of up to 12 years of a second, and a third language? Is it because of budget, because of a centralized system, or is it just how meaningful this is for all the members of a nation or a social class?

In my research I did not expect to get an answer to the above questions because maybe the answers are not there yet. Maybe the concept of “backward planning”<sup>40</sup> that is being promoted now in schools is not transferable in sociology.

Let us consider the following excerpt:

**R:** I asked the heritage speaker teacher what they (students) do after they finish the Spanish 2. They said nothing. I asked “Why don’t you offer Spanish 5, AP, IB (international baccalaureate). Let them jump into a higher course.”

(Interview with R. Oleksak, 2004)

Whose responsibility was that? The teacher’s or the administration’s? Obviously the statement: “No, sequence is not something we look at, other than a data set”, was not made known to this foreign language director, who is as puzzled as I am about the

disconnect in student foreign language education and lack of sequence. What kind of messages do my students get on the topic of sequence from these two administrators? Evidently, one more time the legitimacy of the question “**Miss, do we have to pass this class?**” starts to make more sense now.

But it is not just the administrators who have their own perspective on the topic. The ordinary foreign language teacher seems to understand it differently too:

**G:** I think that it (**foreign language education**) is nationally overlooked and that people don't know if it is important.

(Interview with G. McKenzie, 2004)

“Nationally overlooked”? How about “deliberately overlooked”, because “nationally” is addressed by NCLB legislation. This is what matters nationally in terms of language education for this administrator:

**B:**...English is something you have to have. There is a capital, an undisputable value in speaking English

**I:** ...as a foreign language?

**B:** As something you have to have. English is the language of finance

(Interview with Dr. Beach, 2004)

Teachers may very well be unaware of these discourses, as I was prior to conducting this research. In summarizing the relevant findings of this research are related to an understanding of how the concepts of student identity, student resistance and power, and student endorsement can form new relationships. By being able to see how these constructs are orchestrated by all the class participants to produce meaning in a class economy, I realize that the main lessons I learned through this research are that the students and I as well as many other perhaps invisible, classroom participants are all

positioning ourselves to coexist in a well-defined, dependent, socio-discursive relationship of power.

## Notes – Chapter 4

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I

<sup>2</sup> In my classes the “Agenda” is a short list of activities that are going to happen in the class that is about to begin. The primary purpose is for students to have access throughout the class to the information about the homework assignment

<sup>3</sup> RBT stands for Research for Better Teaching a teaching methodology founded in 1979 that is recommended across disciplines and it emphasizes the improvement of teaching and learning

<sup>4</sup> See definition of terms appendix A

<sup>5</sup> see the definition of terms in the appendix A

<sup>6</sup> see *student endorsement* in the definition of terms – appendix A

<sup>7</sup> Procedural display theory was used initially in this diagram to illustrate that in some routine cases, students are completing them at a very superficial level for the purpose of just showing minimum compliance. Others display “deep participation” through complex involvement in the routine as well as by making use of multiple discursive resources.

<sup>8</sup> This particular homework assignment required the students to create a poster in Spanish to promote cleanliness in the city

<sup>9</sup> TEACHER: Ashley  
 Ashley: ( how is?) ( xxx)  
 TEACHER: ))¿Can you read it?.. <¡Re:ead it!> Read it!  
 Ashley: in the.... (starts reading the text)  
 TEACHER: No! Read the title!  
 Ashley: I don't want to ( ) I just ( ) it I can't ( ) it  
 TEACHER: <Which one?>  
 Other student voices: ( to help...to help )  
 Ashley: I can't say it! ( )  
 TEACHER: <Which one?>  
 Ashley: I ( )  
 TEACHER: What is the word in English? {shhh:::}  
 Ashley: ( I don't know )  
 TEACHER: Is this yours?  
 Ashley: Yes.  
 TEACHER: And who put words there?  
 Ashley: I did.  
 TEACHER: HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE WORDS?  
 Ashley: °I looked up in the dictionary.°  
 TEACHER: And what is that word?  
 Ashley: I don't know. . I don't remember.

<sup>10</sup> see the definition of terms in the appendix section

<sup>11</sup> Face-saving practice is part of the Face Negotiation theory, and it involves that a practice of defending personal autonomy and keeping intrusion to a minimum (Turner, 1974).

<sup>12</sup> Critical Discourse Analysis in Researching Language in the New Capitalism: Overdetermination, Transdisciplinarity and Textual Analysis (Norman Fairclough, Lancaster University)

<sup>13</sup> term defined earlier under the "Students" subchapter.

<sup>14</sup> to tempt the men (in Spanish)

<sup>15</sup> Information was collected from the student's Spanish journal

<sup>16</sup> excerpt from Megan's journal in Spanish

<sup>17</sup> see the section on language policies

<sup>18</sup> Here Meghan makes reference to different software available on the Internet that helps translate texts from one language to the other.

<sup>19</sup> I don't like the Spanish class. I do not talk a lot.

<sup>20</sup> Spanish for bullfight

<sup>21</sup> *My French book is lonely. I left it in the French class with Mrs. Pearson. It cried. I went and I got it. Now, it is very happy and has a little smile. I adore my French book*"

<sup>22</sup> *I do not have a dictionary because my mother works every day and I do't have anyone to take me. Also I had other things to do. It is important to like (I believe the student meant "To do") my homework for English. Math, Social Science and finally Science. (French text)*

<sup>23</sup> The term "emancipatory discourse" is used here to denote a struggle for attempting to empower students to take part in the process of the construction of their meaning or learning.

<sup>24</sup> Subject position is a term defined by Davies and Harre as follows:

*A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location ... Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned... (Davies, 2000)*

Although I apply this understanding to the term when I use it, I also believe that there are multiple, precarious, changing subjectivities within people that allow them to better position themselves within their social milieu.

<sup>25</sup> Although the legitimacy of this instructional approach was vehemently disputed by one of the administrators during the interview conducted for the purpose of this dissertation, I consider that it helped in fact elicit valuable information that can contribute to the understanding of how students learn and how they use dominating ideologies to construct viable discourses in the foreign language class. In fact the dispute itself was a great opportunity for me to document yet one more time, the great disconnect between administrators' and students' discourses. The specific objection brought by this administrator was the use of the interrogative pronoun "Why" instead of "What are you going to do to make sure you come prepared next time?" When analyzing the interview, this objection contributed significantly to my understanding that students' subjectivities are prematurely altered within the educational system to

reflect dominating cultural patterns that are consistent with “American” culture of “doing” as well as its orientation to the future. With this episode, I was able to document how decision making adults use their power to deliberately ignore any possibilities that some students may hold different values and beliefs acquired outside the classroom.

<sup>26</sup> Dear Meagan, My boyfriend is good, but we were rough and hit each other... Writing between three students? I like Jessie but three? I like rock music. Greetings Megan

<sup>27</sup> See Definition of Terms Appendix A

<sup>28</sup> I have other things to do It is important like to do my homework in English, Math, Social Studies and finally Science

<sup>29</sup> See Definition of Terms

<sup>30</sup> Mrs. Alexandru is our Spanish teacher in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She is a good teacher and I like Mrs. Alexandru as a teacher. She teaches French and Spanish. Mrs. Alexandru has a lot of ingenuity. She can speak, write and understand three languages or more, English, Spanish and French. Mrs. Alexandru is a kind teacher. She makes the class fun. I like the projects she gives us. For instance, I like the “Food Festival”, the project of a Hispanic country, and the project of the history of the Bullfight. I like when she gives us songs in Spanish. Mrs. Alexandru is tall, has black hair and gray eyes.

<sup>31</sup> Reference is made to Gee’s notions of primary and secondary discourse as variations of “d” and “D”

<sup>32</sup> This survey was administered in school to all my classes in 2001 (100 students approximately). It contained the following questions: What do you think it means to have power in the classroom?, What is motivation?, Why do you study Spanish? and, How do you think that journal writing is going to help you (or not) to learn a foreign language?

<sup>33</sup> See reference note no. 31

<sup>34</sup> See list of terms Appendix A

<sup>35</sup> See list of terms in Appendix A

<sup>36</sup> The term is used in the literature to indicate that self is in a constant flux, made up of a multitude of borrowed identities and performed in spaces of reality and fantasy.

<sup>37</sup> Reference is made to NCLB Act



<sup>38</sup> The interviewee makes reference to the list of questions that was emailed to her prior to the interview. See Appendix H

<sup>39</sup> reference is made to Massachusetts State Frameworks for FL education

<sup>40</sup> Concept developed in education and made known by Wiggins and McTighe (2004) in the book "Understanding by Design"

## CHAPTER 5

### REFLEXIVITY: LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Reflexivity

If I found myself unprepared not only to produce an answer, but most importantly to grasp an epistemology that was the foundation of knowledge, reality and truth for the student, then I knew, I was in serious trouble. In a frenzy that this could be true, that I could be leading such a parallel life with my students that we would never actually “meet” in the classroom, I began the tedious process of collecting, classifying and analyzing text produced by my students in their direct or indirect interaction with me, and with their peers.

After a while, I began to realize that indeed, as I suspected, in my classroom there were others present. The examples presented above are my testimony to that statement. They were the people or institutions, who thought it was their right to communicate, to shape, to alter, to act upon my students’ discourses and actions through their classroom visits, requests for data, scheduling of tests, writing the curriculum, hiring and firing foreign language teachers, offering and withdrawing courses, caring or not about sequence, and generally helping make education so uncertain, so ambiguous, and vague for the students and the entire teaching staff. How discretely were those people and institutions participating in my classroom, became my long term task that would continue long after this dissertation is over.

In the process of including as much as possible in my research of what was going on in the classroom, I discovered that deconstructing classroom events that established themselves as routines turned out to be the most rewarding effort. To my

surprise, even in these events, that occurred, I thought, as a result of my sole decision in the classroom, I found out traces of macro structures of our society. Those macro structures (media, community, legislations) turned out to be the genuine carriers of important social messages that my students had free access to. They used the discursive power of these messages to participate as legitimate members of a social practice that was the foreign language instruction. Those were my first moments of “Aha’s”.

Reconstructing later these routine events to fit my new understanding of what was actually happening in my classroom, made me aware that there was a lot of baggage hidden behind my students’ actions. In the friendly, familiar safe foreign language classroom, we were producing different truths and realities as they were brought in from multiple layers of society. The students and I as the only visible classroom members as well as the other members in the classroom, the administrators, the media, the parents, the legislators, had each access to different discourses. The lack of accessibility to common discourses by all classroom members is the reason why we construct different pictures of what meaningful should be. When classroom participants interact, those “situated meanings” overlap, and any discrepancies that result are the cause of misunderstandings, and discursive accidents among participants. If our normal daily life is based on meaning, relevance, and significance, then my student’s question “**Miss, do we really have to pass this class?**” was a far cry for help, that signaled that something was wrong and meaning was not yet established for this student. From that moment on I began to see that this was not **student resistance** to foreign language instruction as I originally thought:

101 I: And what is that word?

102 Ashley: I don’t know. . I don’t remember.

103 ( other students voices )

104 I: And do you want credit for this homework?

105 Ashley: Ahm?

This daily routine of checking homework was an **endorsement** of a foreign language practice, not a resistance but the participants (the students and I), were operating in completely different realities.

“Ashley: ...but I normally **do** do my homework.....”

While in my interaction with Ashley I doubted her work based on what I knew a homework routine should be, she was not bothered in the least, since she knew she **did** do her homework. Thus, doing homework not for learning but for “procedural display” in particular for a “less worthy” enterprise as foreign language education was the ultimate parody. In addition, for me this brought the issue of power, and the process of constructing identities, in a close proximity. If we use our identities of “good students”, “cool students”, “teachers”, etc., to promote certain discourses that promise access to what Geertz (1975) called “webs of significance”, then the above interaction was nothing but a legitimate way to construct multiple points of reference that we can make accessible to others if the correct social transaction is enacted (Geertz, 1975). How do students get the message that only certain identities give access to power? The students get this message straight from the adults. It was perhaps more than this administrator who allowed Ashley to be different, to be an “adolescent”:

“..... and in their adolescent mind they think that ..... “

“Adolescent mind” as opposed to always the correct and right adult:

**I:** So, it is the adult’s expectation, a factor in student achievement...

**B:** Absolutely!

**I:** ..and adults are defined as..?

**B:** Teachers, parents, counselors. For students it has to be an adult. Or an adult that believes in a student enough to make him learn.

“An adult who believes in a student to make him learn”. is the statement “I believe in you, just do it, you can learn” said by an adult, going to stir up learning for that student? Perhaps then, education specialists should hire Nike Company to sell magic shoes that can help you “just do it!” And if you do not succeed, it is not even important as long as you followed the steps. This is what education is about! “Just do it!” I am not sure why it does not work that easy. All children have an adult around them, and all adults tell them “Just do it!”, but how relevant is it for the students? Is this a clear transaction for the students? What are they getting back? And do they have the tools to “Just do it”? Where are the magic shoes?

### Lessons Learned from the Process of Doing Research

#### Discussion of Terms

Initially, in this research I started to work with seven concepts that I discussed in my literature review: power, motivation, endorsement, identity, foreign language, language policy and globalization. Throughout the process of articulating my findings however, I narrowed them down to only four: endorsement, resistance, power and identity. These four concepts as well as the relationship between them became extremely vital to understanding the phenomena that were happening in the classroom. What follows is a concluding summary and discussion of these four concepts as they became interrelated and relevant to my foreign language class.

### Motivation/Endorsement/Motivation

In addition to re-interpreting power, in this study I am using a certain financial and economic rhetoric that was associated in the past with the concept of banking education. However, I believe that one of the purposes of the hermeneutics behind this ethnography is to liberate such rhetoric from a fixed understanding of how we make the connection between the signified and the signifier. Therefore, I believe that by constructing and deconstructing relationships of power in the classroom, participants define their relationships with society and ease their access to social "transactions". These "transactions" in their turn define participants' identity and help them settle on what is the final object in the learning process. Since the participants in the visible transactions in the classroom are students and teachers, they will each struggle to position themselves favorably to become the ones that dictate the terms of the "transaction".

I started from the intersection of critical perspectives between power and motivation at the micro level that I was able to initiate in a previous research (Alexandru, 2002). Then, I continued to research with identity building in connection to motivation, agency and investment. It seemed a natural course to research, to continue to find answers to student language learning, and examine foreign language in the context of language policy. Building from Norton Peirce's notion of investment and her multiple identities, I extend the concept of investment by aligning it with the notion of power. The result was: *student endorsement*.

Although both the concepts of investment and endorsement carry a heavy economic and financial connotation, I preferred to use these metaphors in my study as

purely social concepts that grew out of the need to redefine student interaction within their social environment and their use of discourses. In trying to define student discourse, I drew on Harvey's idea of social import of discourses as well as on Lankshear's (1996) 'cultural brokerage' idea. According to Harvey, "a discourse internalizes everything that occurs in other moments". This statement matches the Lankshear's idea that language is used as a 'broker' that acts as 'an agent' on behalf of the interests of its users (Lankshear et al., 1997). Therefore, in trying to define discourse I would say that a discourse is a set of linguistic, cultural, and political norms that allows a group to construct social norms of behavior by which social action is understood.

In addition to Harvey's idea, I also embraced Fairclough's position that "post-modernism unsettles the boundaries of social life", and as a consequence, the line between economy and culture is getting dimmer and dimmer. Subsequently, using economic terms in discourses that are not necessarily economic in nature is a sign of the fact that "discourses are porous with respect to each other" (Harvey, 1989).

Therefore, what are the conditions for student endorsement? Endorsement occurs in a social network, and is enacted and defined exclusively by its members. Although the object of endorsement resides mostly in the materialistic or ideological realm, its exclusive use in social networks by its members makes it a high-status social concept.

When participants make a social statement, they act upon certain attitudes and beliefs that proclaim access to specific truths, and using that particular statement, they "endorse" the premises, and ensure their membership in a select discursive network. In

a year-long ethnography conducted in an urban setting with a group of 25 Spanish students I was able to research the students' investment in foreign language learning as it related to power relations in the classroom. Starting from those findings I was able to construct working definitions. One of the definitions was related to the notion of (student) "endorsement". According to my attempt to define endorsement, I started to put together the initial scaffolding for this concept. Endorsement became a social concept is "a metaphor of motivation, and a socially constructed opportunities that creates spaces for the students to claim ownership of a certain learning process" (Alexandru, 2002)<sup>1</sup>. From the same study I was able to establish that there is a relation between the notion of power and the notion of endorsement. Student endorsement of the learning process may lead to the acquisition of power in certain discourses created in the classroom. This process is not fixed and could be reversible: acquiring capital to participate in certain classroom transactions may open opportunities to create spaces for learning processes with consequences for student learning (Alexandru, 2002). In this study I was able to isolate a few examples of free circulation of power in events like journal writing as well as in homework check instances.

**Denise:** When...it's when, like, the students are more interested in the work, like, work gets done... work gets done to... work, like the motivation to do well in class, and get a good grade, and to actually learn something. That's motivation<sup>1</sup> and then also in the different projects, it also catches more students' interest..

**I:** ..ahm...

**Denise:** .. And then if they are very anxious in the projects as well as learning something new then, that adds motivation that they have to do the work



In this event, Denise constructed discursive spaces for learning based on her access to a network of resources independently from each other.

Overall, although in today's society capital continues to remain the hard currency that moves ideas, goods and people, under the globalization umbrella, it is construed to fall more and more in specialized, restrictive types of endorsements. From this perspective on globalization, I am arguing to use the concept of "endorsement" in issues of learning to replace traditional motivation, and to offer a possible explanation that links desire to learn languages, to larger discourses that redefine priorities in education (Alexandru, 2002). If endorsement is potentially a new transaction that individuals' learning can be understood by, Gee's notion of literacy becomes very affordable when looking at how the new globalized technological capitalism creates discourses about what kind of students should be in schools (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). There is no doubt that the type of identities that these discourses shape (more empowered students in schools, who work well in group, who think critically) are features that contrast daily with many public schools' idea of controlling with traditional, direct forms of power, i.e. MCAS and other standardized testing. This social imposition of control is in no way going to create a solid partnership with the student body, and will remain a unilateral, superficial priority in education due to the fact that it meets a serious resistance on the part of the students and teachers alike. However, the national effort to endorse standards across subjects remains a powerful sign of a society that is in the process of redefining its principles and priorities.

Student endorsement requires a different understanding of why students learn. In my research it appeared as a socially-constructed practice, an opportunity, or a process, that affords the creation of spaces where students can perform learning transactions and can construct identities to support their investment in learning. Endorsement accounts for the appropriation of knowledge by students who construct their own power relations as part of a larger discursive network. It enables them to participate in classroom events that utilize familiar discourses.

There is a multitude of activators or participants who intersect a student's life in the spaces defined by the: classroom, school, district, such as state education policies, media channels, community, etc. In these spaces student endorsement occurs as a result of a normative dialogue established with the participants who afford these spaces. Once this space is created, and the dialogue is established, power flows toward certain discourses in the classroom that help the students to connect with symbolic, meaningful capital in order to participate in classroom transactions. From my observations and analyses of the data produced by Denise, Ashley and Meghan, it also seems that the more extensive their investment was in circles that are external to the class routine they participate in, the stronger and more normative their endorsement becomes in those routines.

Endorsement is when students have ownership and freedom of learning. This endorsement is different from Bourdieu's habitus, because it does not refer to social space, or the space of social positions, or the space of lifestyles. Endorsement here refers to the space for learning and for transformation. While I cannot say that after having done this research my students were transformed or not as a result of my

practices, due to the reflexive approach that I took in this study, I can say that I was the one that transformed the most. First, I was transformed in my approach to class routines and their weight in my understanding of student learning. Second, I was transformed in my understanding of the roles that my students and I played in the creation of power relationships that conditioned the existence of our identities of foreign language classroom members.

### **Resistance**

From this research, student resistance emerged as part of a macro system of classroom **apparent** “hegemonic” conventions; a social action performed by students within the selected boundaries of a class event.

One can also look at student endorsement as a metaphor of motivation that allows students to claim ownership of the learning process. That unmistakably leads the flow of power towards certain discourses in the classroom, and vice versa, facilitating the students to connect with symbolic, meaningful capital in order to participate in rich classroom transactions. A visualization of this concept in relation to power and resistance is presented below.

The diagram in Figure 7 illustrates how resistance may occur in the learning process. This diagram illustrates how resistance may occur in the learning process. **The arrows** above and below represent the flow of power heading toward a classroom discourse, where students’ identities emerge (**the red sun**). **The parallel red dots** heading toward the blue ball represent the space created by the student endorsement of the learning process. **The blue ball** represents a conflicting message that interferes

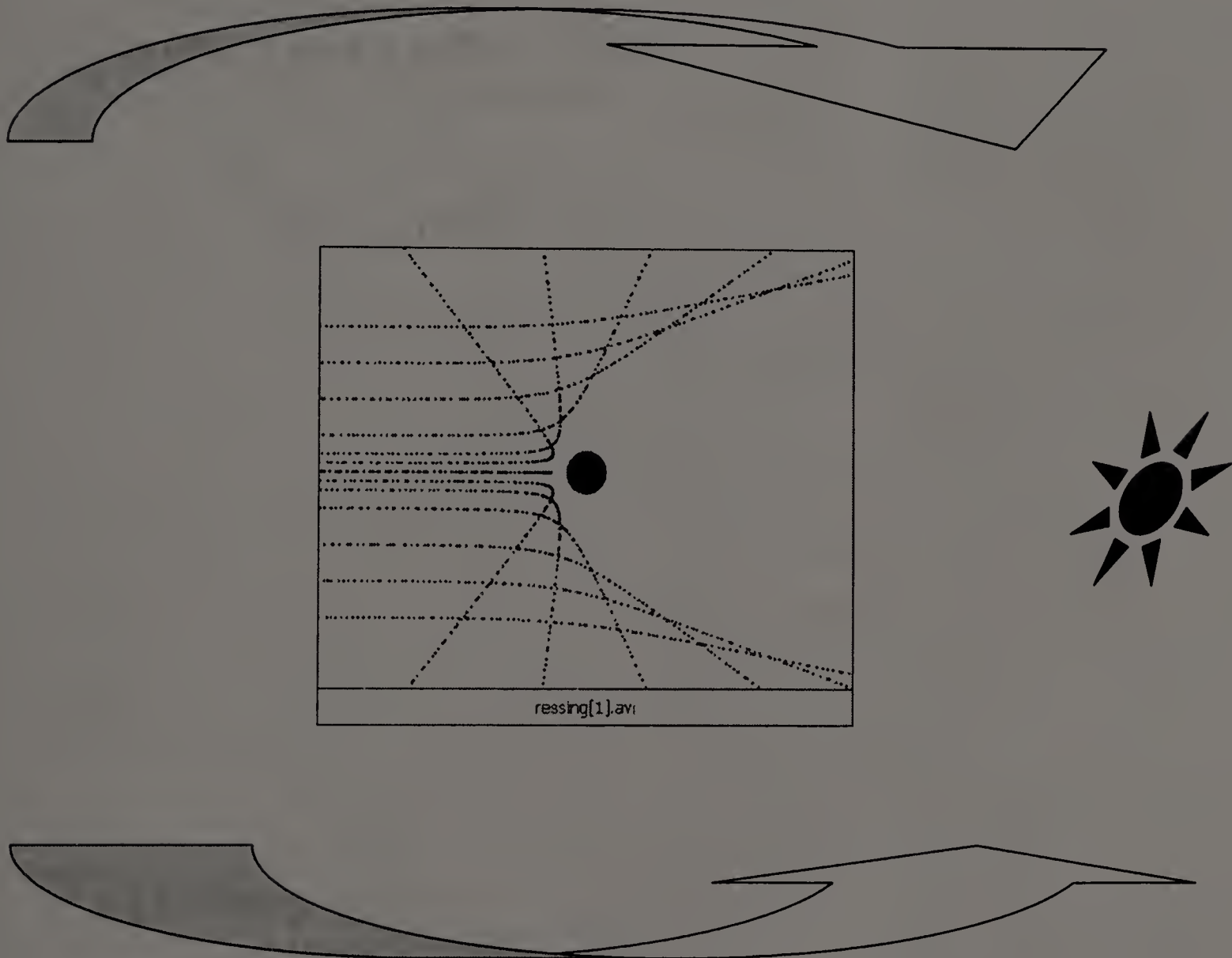
with the learning process and creates student resistance, represented by the diverging red lines. Every diverging red line has the potential to create similar representations in different directions which makes the entire process multidirectional and theoretically perpetual with options for learning and identity building. Originally this diagram was initially developed from the field of Physics, namely electricity: Differential section of scattering (Rutherford's formula). I retrieved the original representation from: [http://physics.nad.ru/Physics/English/res\\_txt.htm](http://physics.nad.ru/Physics/English/res_txt.htm) . Later I enhanced the diagram to this final form to better represent the relationship between the concept of power, endorsement, resistance, and identity as a result of this research.

Student resistance is a social act performed within selected boundaries as a result of:

1. Participants using incompatible discursive practices, unfamiliar to the space where they are utilized (Mike's resistance to NSYNC project in reading class),
2. Investment in values and beliefs that belong in a time and space established by the student as being outside the classroom event, (Mariah's "unpreparedness" for class related to home circumstances) or,
3. The creation of new identities that help the students make sense of flawed learning transactions (Ashley's refusal to account for HW).

I would like to add that there are no established relations of power without resistance:

“.. resistances... are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised” (Gore, 1997).



**Figure 7 - Visualization of the concept of Power in relation to Endorsement and Resistance**

## Power

None of the definitions of power as they were previously researched in the literature review chapter fitted the context of the foreign language classroom: "a system of dominance", "a capacity to deprive", "a structured potential of a linguistic exchange". However, once I was able to examine student text as a result of my research, the concept of power acquired a more significant meaning. Power becomes a *sine qua non* element in the classroom that participants in the discourse strive to use. Power is inseparable from the participants' discourse. In my classroom participants use power in order to acquire various forms of capital to participate in the classroom "transactions". If power is not easy to identify and construct by the individuals, in order to create a more significant impact of its existence, individuals will co-construct their own power relations based on their own understanding of what is required to participate in the group dynamic.

In general, the notion of power in the classroom context is mostly associated with lexico-semantical tags like "more" (turns), "faster" (thinking process), "better" (grades), "wiser" (students or teacher), but also around qualifiers like "destructive" (behavior, atmosphere), "annihilating" (effect), etc. Thus, power implies at least a binary relationship because it can serve a purpose or it can undermine it. Throughout this study however, the notion of power emerged as a non-structural factor exercised in relations that are not fixed and that produce knowledge that is constantly altering the power relations just created. An example would be my understanding and Ashley's understanding of doing homework. While in the class interaction of homework check, I was pressuring Ashley to admit that she did not do her homework, exercising my

discursive power supported by my classroom rules, in the interview with her, Ashley appeared not to have been bothered in the least, because her daily routine related to school homework is to do homework, and therefore construct in front of me a new understanding of the event:

“..but I normally **do** do my homework”

In terms of classification of power, I was not able to find degrees of power in interaction as it was the case with more conventional concepts of power such as: obvious vs. obscure, direct vs. indirect, or depending on the context. However, when students or other participants in the classroom construct webs of power through their discourse, they use the context, the resources and the capacities they have, as real collaterals to achieve or participate in the desired classroom transaction. This way, new forms of student ownership of learning like journal writing with partners, group work and project-based assignments could be a manifestation of how motivation is constructed in the foreign language classroom.

Power is inseparable from participants' discourse. While in the classroom my students strived to use power to acquire various forms of capital and participate in the classroom transactions (initiated by me or their peers). In my study power emerged when students positioned themselves in webs of power through their discourse, their context, or the resources they had available. Determining how this positioning affects students' investment to use language in the classroom, and to see it as something more than an exercise, becomes the task of determining how significant the power web is to all the participants. In this process, I noticed that my students also constructed power relations based on an understanding of what was required in order to produce a certain

“reality” in the classroom (Mariah’s explanation for lack of notebook) . Thus, students become the legitimizers of the “classroom transactions”, and of the classroom rules and regulations, when they identify themselves as “participants” in the foreign language class. While in the classroom power was used by students for social exchanging, whether they were endorsing or not the foreign language program, or the foreign language classroom rules. Power resulted out of the discourses that offered students significant returns in the process of their identity building.

### **Identity**

Once I was able to identify who the participants in the classroom were, the concept of identity began to develop more around the area of student discourse and student voice. For me it became also more an issue of ownership: who had what identity, and how that identity was encouraging the students to use the language in the classroom. The identity patterns with distinct discursive features that I found in these groups of participants, helped also shed a light on the previously discussed concepts, but made a more meaningful connection with student resistance in the foreign language class. The findings in this study challenge claims such as young people’s role in the construction of their identity, and how they use the power to modify the classroom discourse in the foreign language class. Additionally, teachers have the opportunity to observe how in the process of affirmation of identity, students use the spaces created in routine events such as homework check and journal writing, to build new learning.

Traditional approaches to formal education assume that students take learning identities that are school-based. The identities that students take out of the classroom are not of major concern for educators. However, overwhelming evidence, captured by this



study too, points to the direction that students frequently assume socially-constructed identities shaped traditionally out of the classroom, while in the classroom, and vice versa. Identities constructed in the classroom by the students, are often taken out of the classroom context. This process alone explains a major potential conflict that gives students and teachers different epistemological and ontological stances.

Identity emerged as a concept developed around the idea of student voice and student discourse. A big part of it is based on the issue of identity owner, and how identity building was encouraging my students to use the language in the classroom. My students used identities as passwords that allowed participation in certain social groups. During routine events I had the opportunity to observe how the process of affirmation of identity occurs. Specifically, my students used the spaces created by homework check and journal writing, to build new learning and experiment with new identities.

My students frequently assumed socially-constructed identities shaped out of the classroom, while in the classroom and vice versa. This process alone explained for me a major potential conflict that gave me and my students, different epistemological and ontological stances. For instance, assuming and making known one's identity as "liking boys" may be of value (powerful negotiation tool) in school-based context, and it could easily prevail over the identity of an agreeing participant in a Spanish class. By the same token, assuming the identity of a "Spanish learner" in a context out of the school, could be a powerful transformation tool in contexts that traditionally would require only assuming identities of simply "liking boys"<sup>2</sup>. This was a powerful negotiation tool in the school-based context, and prevailed over the identity of an agreeing participant in a Spanish class. A similar identity case was to assume the identity of a "Spanish learner"

in a context out of the school, (Meghan's use of Spanish on Ebay), that was a powerful transformation tool in contexts that traditionally would require only assuming identities of English users.

Many times I found myself at odds when I encountered the phenomenon of students juxtaposing their identities and using intertextuality of contexts. However, the role of other participants was crucial in certifying that their identity has a legitimate, powerful, recognized value. Many of my students who invested in out of the class contexts/circles, (Josh or Mariah), chose to take their individual investment with them in the class, and based on the resources available in the classroom, they endorsed a learning that aligned with their investment (ex. Meghan's interest in writing in the Spanish journal, Josh's use of essay format in writing "excuse notes"). However, when students displayed investment that did not fall in my range of expectations, or I was not familiar with it, then the classroom ecology was disrupted. This generated new opportunities for students to use power relations to construct new identities as well as spaces for resistance (Mike's opposition to the practice of projects, Ashley's refusal to read), or endorsement of unfamiliar (to the class) identities or practices (Derek's notion of juvenile delinquent).

In fact, what we have in front of us, as educators in the classroom, is the authentic process of students "writing" their own autobiography. In order to understand the notion of student identity, one must understand the multiplicities of self, by how students position themselves as participants in classroom events at different coordinates in the context (Harre, 1990). Investing in identities that reposition students in niches of power, is a process that allows students to select and configure desirable fragments of

their identity. As teachers, understanding this learning process is essential in facilitating student endorsement of classroom learning events. This particular reflection as a result of this study is a valuable one that I intend to pursue as I further frame my research agenda. In the future, I plan to frame my research by examining other foreign language classes where I only take the role of participant observer and not the teacher. I hope to be able to focus more on how students respond to other opportunities that appear in the classroom interaction, during instruction, or other events and result in student endorsement.

### **Implications**

Although conducted over a period of 4 years, the studies presented in this dissertation appear to be in a continuous research stage. However, the findings that emerged so far indicate that the theoretical framework presented earlier in the literature proved to be a starting point that allowed me to further develop and fine tune essential concepts to look at student learning in foreign language class from a more nuanced perspective. I argue that this theoretical framework will also facilitate and further foreign language teachers' construal of student learning in ways that we did not understand before. Additionally, the findings presented here suggest that the implications for the foreign language field as well as for all the participants in the foreign language class are important considerations when effects of classroom instruction are taken into consideration. An outline of these implications follows below.

## Foreign language field

Students' membership to the foreign language class is coordinated by multiple discourses. As a result one has to look at the social structure in which foreign language education takes place for possible understanding of lack of participation in the classroom. Spending time in the classroom to establish routines, gives participants opportunities to construct power relations that can structure new language learning opportunities.

Giving students time to write or talk about how routines (homework or other classroom events) are constructed in the class, or how they are accepted by the rest of the class members, might empower the students and create spaces for them to endorse new instruction, understand more readily, and contribute in their turn through active inquiry to the construction of meaningful class assignments.

According to Gee, (1990) effective approaches to language and literacy practices begin with experiences that students are familiar to, like homework practices, discussing projects etc., before they are introduced to more conceptualized language practices. (Gee, 1990). Therefore, creating transactions in the classroom where students are encouraged to use familiar discourses to endorse the instruction is an essential step that should be taken into consideration. The types of discourse that students can use in these transactions should not be limited only to the ones that value the normative and regulatory role of schooling that works to produce certain types of students (Luke & Gilbert, 1993). I believe that in today's foreign language class, many teachers (including myself) strive to achieve objectives that ignore unfortunately, the discourses that students have available and that are willing to use. Foreign language classes, as

probably most other forms of education, view students as passive recipients of identities assigned to them by the school or other institutions. Additionally, a large majority of the curricula ignores that students prefer to use their own discourses, which sometimes might be combinations of primary and secondary discourse, and try to adopt in the learning process, social identities that they believe that are important. Sometimes using home discourses are problematic for foreign language students when in the home foreign language learning is not a shared value. Nevertheless, it can become a constructed value if all participants (teachers included) contribute to raise the awareness of such values.

When I look at the foreign language classroom I see a delicate and harmonious ecological system of power that contains participants' linguistic and cultural patterns in permanent motion (Bateson, 1972; Bowers & Flinders, 1990). The use of ecology here implies the complex relationships of culture. It involves the roles of individuals, groups and possibly technologies. Such ecologies often focus on the use of power and accumulation of material (wealth). They emphasize the way in which individuals are largely constituted by networks of social and/or information exchanges. These are the dynamics that allow for mutually constructed classroom routine practices like homework check and journal writing that are inevitably influenced by the classroom discourse, the participants' social network, and primary or secondary discourse students and teachers use to construct their identities. But these classroom events are not the only practices that are contributing to the process of affirmation of students' identity. Exploring relationships of practices that combine opportunities for students to build on

new learning not only reproduce well-established practices, should be on the foreign language education agenda.

If the ultimate goal of the foreign language class is to achieve meaning and communication adequately, then one should look at all the events that might foster these opportunities. Examining other practices such as the use of technology in and out of the classroom and its impact on learning, and looking at this practice through the new configuration of power and motivation, could offer unexplored scenarios that might become a topic for another research. By learning to isolate instances where power relations can structure the new language and language learning opportunities, by understanding and selecting those events that generate students' investment, foreign language class may indeed become the place where teachers' goals converge with students' goals, if they are allowed to make decisions that matter to them.

If in real life context is a collateral until substance is successfully delivered, in the classroom, (a simulated setting of real life), many students are deprived of meaningful reasons to talk, and forced to deliver a substance that is not grounded in a real application. By co-constructing knowledge students and teachers could share the context created together and identify the nature of classroom interaction, taking the first step toward endorsing a new and more meaningful learning process.

Student investments as they are presented in this dissertation, come from many layers of society, and when they are brought to the classroom allow the students to form "webs of significance" that will facilitate the construction of students' social identities. Thus, the fabric of students' investments is made up of students' narratives, sentiments and attitudes, and once you deconstruct student investment, I believe that teachers can

more easily understand and address why participants position themselves in the classroom as: "good students", "social students", "studious student", "amusing student", etc. Students may adopt several faces (identities) during class because they invested in different identities.

### **Foreign language teacher**

Since social and interpersonal relationships are regulated equally by student and teacher discourse when they interact, or build opportunities to interact, teachers must understand that in spite of this apparent truth, they do not entirely control the structure and content of the classroom. Invisible participants to the foreign language class are an equally influential force that decides foreign language learning experiences. Perhaps, if these decisions are independent from each other, as we have seen so far in this study, if they do not draw on a common pool of discourses, chances are that they will not serve the same goal. The goal of the foreign language classroom interaction could be mutually constructed by all classroom participants, and it could be based on meaningful and purposeful links established between teacher and student discourses on one hand and by the concerted efforts of all invisible participants to the foreign language class on the other hand. Additionally, teachers could take into consideration the fact that continually trying to maintain control over their discourse will not ensure the teaching task, but on the contrary, will distance the participants even further to the point where parallel existences of classroom participants will continue to be the end result of the foreign language class experience.

Investigating and understanding the effects of classroom routine events like homework practices is a necessary step, in my opinion, in planning adequate teaching

techniques. This may be especially important for those foreign language classes where a balance must be found between different factors that contribute to the foreign language learning motivation, such as power relations and identity within a social group. What I saw in the homework check episodes examined, was a power struggle between myself and the students with me attempting to uphold my power and the student refusing to submit to it. As a result, despite my initial attempts to see the homework check as an example of allowing students to bring their real lives into the classroom, and to change power relations by giving them the control of topic (as the pedagogy literature says), the findings in this dissertation point to the fact that the underlying power issue, that I have control of my students out of school lives, was not changed. The relationship analyzed in Ashley's turn indicated that by me controlling the register of the *voice of education*, striped away the real life contexts of my student and her problems, and treated her as an object and depersonalized her. (Mishler, 1984).

Perhaps events like journal writing, which is done in class, gives the students a better sense of using the target language to have some agency because they can still select an identity that is meaningful to them and do it in the target language as part of the agreed upon transactions of the classroom.

By continuously searching to problematize how various teaching practices affect foreign language class dynamic and structure, is a much more meaningful effort, I consider, than just "bringing the standards to the classroom", or merely transferring legislation discourses in this space. By the same token, understanding the bigger picture where foreign language tends to situate in society should be done before teachers arrive to the classroom. Debates such as to focus on form or content, or if open-ended



questions should be used miss the boat when at issue in prevailing discourses is the value of foreign language in itself. In a country that increasingly sees languages as identity markers (nationalism), teachers of foreign language need to engage in dialogue with students, parents and administrators about their joint efforts to collude with, or work against these wider discourses, or even plan actions to become multilingual. To do otherwise continues the game of “doing” language study versus the “becoming” users of a language.

### **Legislators**

The work in this dissertation is relevant for the groups who propose, discuss, evaluate and vote the education legislation because it unveils a substantial lack of awareness of how symbolic intolerance present in most discourses found in education legislation, are not important to the groups that the legislation is intended for (the students). This research shed light for me, on how learners make sense of particular classroom events, and made me look differently at the way we, as foreign language teachers, implement the education policy that impacts student learning, in and out of the classroom.

As outlined in this dissertation, policymaking does not always have to work from outside in. Although the problem of the foreign language instruction in the public schools in the United States seems to be one of large scale, issues of language planning and language policy can also take place at the district level, at the school level, and all teachers implicitly or explicitly, whether they are teaching foreign language or not, are involved in the implementation of these policies. Since the very existence of foreign language educator depends on language policy decisions, I think that understanding

what happens at the micro level by the policy makers should offer sufficient ground also for an education policy from inside out.

In view of this belief my epistemological stance is that there is no one universal way, to approach foreign language instruction, contrary to what we have seen through the most recent legislations (NCLB, MCAS, etc). There is a multitude of means that are dictated by all the participants to the foreign language class, and that need to be taken into consideration. As long as we continue to have room only for one approach in our instruction of foreign language and ignore what is happening at the level of student understanding, however supportive some legislations may seem to be, they are not going to meet their goal of raising awareness among US public for the need to learn and find out other languages and cultures.

Additionally, assuming that we can reach all learners, it becomes more and more obvious that this will become a euphemism since political landscape keeps changing. Unfortunately, it takes more than political efforts to reach this goal; it takes economic efforts and ideological efforts as well. As one of the administrators put it:

*..... looked at the South and understood that the perception of the South was that their educational system was lousy. Therefore, they could not attract the kind of business (American companies, but particularly foreign companies). So, when they wanted to attract the Germans or the Japanese auto makers to go to Tennessee or to Georgia, they knew that they had to have schools that were different than the schools they had. So you saw huge sums of money in the Southern States being put into the school systems from their State government, and standards being created at the state level that were very rigorous because*

*they wanted to change both the perception and the reality. They wanted to be able to assure the foreign companies, that they were producing workers, that were well educated, and who could work in this new environment in this both high-tech, but also culturally different work setting. And they put their money where their mouth was.*

(Dr. Riordan, December 2004)

Knowing from Bourdieu (1991) that distribution of power in a society is largely unequal, and knowing that the economic and social condition of the process of acquiring linguistic capital by the students is in direct relationship with the forms the legislations that are implemented at all the levels of the society, should constitute the basis for our policy makers to understand that the accessibility of such discourses should not exclude the students who are to endorse such a learning process (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991).

In addition to these thoughts, I also believe that state and federal government needs to take a more involved role in foreign language education, and develop a more coherent approach to language teaching in order to create increased opportunities and equity among all United States' students.

### **Media**

Media seems to be a perfect medium to influence language choice decisions and to deliver a strong message about the importance of foreign languages. However, as seen in this research too, in general, media events are part of the unspoken major societal discourses that frame the foreign language clearly in an unfavorable manner,

and perpetuate a continued lack of endorsement of one of the most salient feature of mankind: multilingual communication and social interaction.

The implications for media as a result of this research are reinforcing previous studies on the effects of media on young people (Altheide, 1985; Altheide & Snow, 1991; Barak, 1994). Although social approaches to foreign language and literacy learning may involve the use of more and more appealing technology, computers, TV, etc., they may on the other hand impede an authentic construction of knowledge by the students, and may favor the consumption of knowledge already framed and manipulated.

Although in this research media appeared as a participant only through student text, I consider that important values and beliefs are shaped by students through discourses that are framed and presented by media. By using a language that employs excessive presupposition and omits or eliminates the existence of alternative views or interpretations especially of world events, media foregrounds a top-down genre that is hegemonic and fosters inequality.

On the other hand media may create membership to new discourses that promote a new type of literacy that might appear to resonate more with young people, and their interests (ex. music preferences). Regardless of what end media ultimately decides to serve more, it is without a doubt that although the discourses produced within such framework are far more digestible and appealing to the young people, they offer the same disconnecting and contradicting message for the student in the classroom when trying to make sense of what is happening in and out of the classroom, in addition to a lack of significance and relevance to his/her own life. Media contributions to student

endorsement of learning have an unlimited potential. Unfortunately, what I have captured in my students text was an idealized worldview, whether it was domestic or international. Several events brought up by my students in their text made reference to world events (the War in Iraq, etc.) that presented a distorted view and understanding of what might have cause those events.

As far as foreign language is concerned, media presented recently (2003) an excellent event that could have been an opportunity to promote the study of French: "Le Tour de France". This international sports event unfortunately portrayed foreign language in a demeaning fashion. The fact that Lance Armstrong, an American, and English speaker, was a former champion of the event and won it repeatedly, was the opportunity that media seized and connected negatively to the fact that English superiority is and will remain uncontested. Unfortunately, this nationalistic discourse does more harm to students taking up the study of the French language and ultimately the nation's resources of people capable of participating in other world discourses.

In addition to sports events that may influence language choice decisions as well as the motivation for learning those languages, recent political events seemed to fit perfectly in the media's agenda to deliver the same strong message about the lack of importance of foreign languages like French, for instance. In looking at the way Iraq's story unfolded on our screens, there was little doubt in the average viewer's mind that there is a vehement opposition between English speakers and speakers of other languages. I am referring to political disagreements between USA and Great Britain on one side and France on the other side, which created opponents' sides, instead of a

unified consensus. All these manifestations of media shape a worldview in students that influence their decision about the importance of foreign language study.

### **Students**

The implications of this research for foreign language students point to the direction that offering alternatives to rigid foreign language methodologies. By constructing meaningful discourses in foreign language classes based on explorations of outside discourses together with the students is a first step in understanding that foreign language instruction is an investment for the students to connect with other aspects of shaping their lives. Hoping to pour foreign language instruction in a strainer and wishing that one of the holes will be clogged, or that the students will invest in the learning process, is a deficient approach to student learning. Additionally, simply because some students are unfamiliar with outside discourses (i.e. political, economic, ideological) should not perpetuate the belief that they are manipulating objects that can be placed in classes and removed from classes, based solely on relevance to invisible foreign language classroom participants.

Perhaps, particularly relevant for the students is the concept of "endorsement". This allows the students to look at the appropriation of classroom events them and work toward developing their own rhetoric for accounting for their own learning. Student endorsement in this case, is a transferring act, a recognition that the particular classroom event is meant for the student, and since the student is the sole beneficiary of such classroom-learning event, he/she can own it. Other practices could be enacted to allow more agency by students.

Having done this ethnographic study in a foreign language class gave me also the opportunity to understand that a new discursive space can be created for the students where relations of power in and out of the classroom can successfully shape student motivation<sup>3</sup> to learn a foreign language. This can be only achieved if foreign language education implemented at different levels of the society allows for access to a common pool of discursive resources.

Although in this research I looked only at one school system and within the system in only one particular discipline, I regarded communication between participants and the learning that takes place during this communication, as the responsibility of teachers and students, but also of the active invisible participants. I also recognized that power relations that are built by all the members involve decisions to use various forms of utterances in an effort to direct the speech or silence of others, creating in this way, favorable opportunities to further shape identities.

When there is a smooth system of transactions in place, endorsement as the final outcome occurs unconsciously as a result of the transaction. Ideologies sneak in and create a sense of "normality". Although I understand the connotations that are attached to this term created by the powerful discourse of Freirean model of banking education, I purposefully chose to use endorsement because it is interactional and dynamic. However, while I make quite often use of banking and economical terms in my research, I do not support the banking education model. I merely use this rhetoric in education to connect to existing macro societal events like globalization and capitalism that are the context in which today's education takes place.

Although I do not embrace neoliberal approaches to education and the use of the term "endorsement" may seem more at home in this rhetoric, I would like to liberate it from such type of connotations and re-define it. In my understanding, "endorsement" positions and frees the students to be able to control their learning, or become partners in learning with their peers, which promotes a Piagetian constructivist perspective on learning. This perspective complemented with the Vygotskyian socio-cultural theory that promotes scaffolding, group processes and the creation of a classroom community, allows for a new configuration and use of the term endorsement in education.

Previously, by itself, the orientation toward social interaction, problem solving, authentic tasks and choice, although remained a growing trend in education today, continued to be heavily challenged by the imposition of curriculum and national standards, that placed the students mostly as objects to be manipulated in the learning process. Additionally, if we are to follow a certain agenda of content in the classroom, most often to the expense of child interests and developmental needs, we are not going to solve the challenging, unsolved dilemma in today's education.

Student endorsement accounts for the appropriation of knowledge by students who construct their own power relations to enable themselves to participate in the classroom dynamics, and perform a multitude of transactions.

Student endorsement is a socially constructed practice that affords the creation of new spaces where students perform learning transactions, and construct at the same time identities to support their investment in a certain type of learning. Student endorsement occurs as a result of a larger network of discursive activators that intersect a student's life: classroom, school, district, and state education policies, media channels,



community resources (family, etc). As a result of a multitude of activators that contribute to this practice, endorsement can appear to manifest itself in different levels according to the preponderance that one takes over the other.

### **District Level Administrators**

The foreign language architecture in U.S. public schools has remained the same in spite of significant efforts toward change in the field of language acquisition, language investment, and establishment of assessment programs and standards. The reason why foreign language programs continue to be scrutinized and criticized is because of their inability to provide a real endorsement on the part of the students. Until further research is done to better explore this venue, all the rest will be just patches to an aging and unresponsive system to the needs of the globalizing schools. This research is relevant to the administrators whether they are principals, superintendents, or curriculum directors. It sheds light on how frail and important at the same time their position is in the educational system. It also sheds light on the elusive sense of power that gives them an appearance of puppetry show on the stage of foreign language instruction as part of the general education of U.S. students.

In my interview with one of the administrators the issue of my instructional approaches was questioned. Although the legitimacy of this instructional approach was vehemently disputed by one of the administrators during the interview conducted for the purpose of this dissertation, I consider that it helped in fact elicit valuable information that can contribute to the understanding of how students learn and how they use dominating ideologies to construct viable discourses in the foreign language class. In

fact the dispute itself was a great opportunity for me to document yet one more time, the great disconnect between administrators' and students' discourses. The specific objection brought by this administrator was the use of the interrogative pronoun "Why" instead of "What" are you going to do to make sure you come prepared next time?" When analyzing the interview, this objection contributed significantly to my understanding that students' subjectivities are prematurely altered within the educational system to reflect dominating cultural patterns that are consistent with "American" culture of "doing" as well as its orientation to the future. With this episode, I was able to document how decision making adults use their power to deliberately ignore any possibilities that some students may hold different values and beliefs acquired outside the classroom.

It is important to connect their discourses not only to the upper echelon in the distribution of power but also to view the process as the multidirectional, live, system of circulating a linguistic capital that encompass much more than data, reports, deadlines and numbers. It encompasses people, and in order to understand how people fit in the system you have to give education and foreign language with it a social dimension.

.....No, sequence is not something we look at, other than a data set. Here is where foreign language gets a negative hit. We have reduced the number of foreign language teachers in the buildings.....The accountability for MCAS is in Reading and Mathematics, or English and Mathematics. In some school particularly in elementary that are not performing at grade level, the students need the total of 5 hours a week to do more Reading or more Math. One of the conversations I had with Rita is: "Do you have some evidence or research to show that taking foreign language is going to help improve Math and Language Arts on MCAS scores?"

(Dr. Beach, Nov. 2004)

Administrators who do not see a connection cannot be expected to support foreign language education. Helping them to see the capital for foreign language remains a challenge until the system of social values changes.

### **Researchers**

The implications for researchers as a result of this study point to the direction that research at the micro level continues to be a valuable tool for advancement in finding out the mechanisms that take place during instruction that lead to student learning. Additionally, the mechanisms at the student interaction level can shed light in their turn to enhanced language learning. Additionally, research at the macro level continues to be valuable, and can shed light over social implications that pertain to foreign language instruction in public school. Much work remains to be done to strengthen the link that was created as a result of this research between macro and microstructures for the purpose of revealing how the construction of power relations at these two levels affect student endorsement of foreign language instruction in public schools. The concepts developed and presented here can be further used to look at education through a new perspective that makes room for a lot more participants in education than students and teachers. An interesting question to pursue from this point of view would be to find out what sets the foreign language apart from other classes in the process of learning and affirmation of the multiple "truths". Answers to this question should be of special value I believe, when curriculum decisions are taken.

Although the diagrams presented in this research focus on presenting a relationship between the concepts developed here, i.e. endorsement, resistance, identity and power, further development of each individual concept will only benefit the bigger

picture that encompasses understanding micro and macro interactions that affect student learning of foreign languages. Perhaps looking in the direction of other routine events such as disciplining students, or looking in the direction of presenting new material to class, can reveal additional information that speaks to the importance of how macro structure, that are present in the micro classroom interactions, affect student endorsement of foreign language instruction.

Conceptualizing and identifying power relations in routine events revealed clear relationships with the level of motivation or endorsement students might display. As a result investigating further and understanding how the discourses that teachers and students bring with them to the classroom shape the construction of meaning in specific practices in classrooms, is a necessary foundation for teachers who must meet the needs of students on a day to day basis. This becomes especially important in foreign language classes where issues of power and language ideology are rarely discussed.

For foreign language researchers it may be of significance to pursue a study where students may engage more readily with foreign language and literacy learning experiences when meaningful and purposeful links are established between teacher discourse and student discourse as suggested by Boden and Zimmerman (Deirdre Boden & Zimmerman, 1991). Finally, finding answers to questions like the next one could shed even more light on the current erratic pattern of discourse construction the foreign language class affords. Are the utterances of classroom participants exclusively done to maintain control over the form and the content of the discourse?

This particular approach of examining from different angles "critical moments" brings also the interesting question of how many endorsements can there be. How many

truths can there be? How can students who potentially define endorsement differently than the teachers, be projected in the same event without finding themselves in a controversial issue that requires further negotiation? What else is there besides the use of discourse from other spaces that affords a type of endorsement versus the other? These are troubling questions that although may not be answered during this dissertation, could nevertheless remain a promising and challenging area of research open for future investigation.

### **Parents**

The implications of this research for parents are as significant as for any participant to the foreign language class. Understanding that the discourses that students bring with them to class are directly related to the discourses made available for them at home or in their community, should also be a realization that power relationships that occur in the classroom, or the decisions that students make during different classroom events such as homework check episodes, journal writing, or writing "excuse notes", are a direct connection or continuation to home discursive practices, intimately connected in their turn with macro societal discursive practices.

This research uncovers constituting discourses in foreign language class that originate from multiple levels of society, and contribute to shape student motivation in this class as well as to construct opportunities for students to learn during various classroom events. Deconstructing classroom practices that show indications of specific language use in homes, analyzing them with my conceptual framework of the redefined notions of power and motivation, and then reassembling the acts in order to frame new practices that facilitate student learning, should offer direct connections on how students

frame meaning and construct reality in routine classroom events like homework check and journal writing, based on constructed knowledge outside the class.

The different “facets” of knowledge that students show in class may reflect a closer or more distant match with the reality presented by the teacher, but there will be a definite match with one or more discourses originating from visible or invisible classroom members. Therefore, a teacher’s objective is to present the content in such a way that students can appropriate it with the inquiry tools they have available. Since the way content is presented to the students has a huge impact on the students’ investment in appropriating the content in question, much work remains to be done in this direction, especially of the complexity of material and of the degree of investment students display in these classroom routines.

I would like to expand the notion of “classroom learning” to the multiple “learnings” that may exist out of the classroom, made available by multiple discourses that exist in the community, or in the circle of friends, or by the media. Understanding where these “learnings” occur or how they are created, might empower parents more and encourage them to value an education or literacies that are not necessarily “standard”.

### **Open-ended Coda**

Having done this ethnographic study in a foreign language class, and knowing now, that a new discursive space can be created where students perform learning transactions and construct new identities to support their investment in a certain type of learning, opens new perspectives in my understanding of how the political, economic and ideological factors can shape the content and the purpose of the foreign language

class. Many times throughout students' interactions in school, we rush to believe that a certain type of talk produced by the students is the product of our direct interaction with them, and forget that we are not alone in the classroom, and that there are other participants who have perhaps equal impact on the students. This polyvocality or heteroglossia that exists in students' discourses becomes visible especially when power relations that originate in or out of the classroom give birth to critical moments, such as the ones presented in this dissertation, and shape the student motivation<sup>4</sup>. Following in the steps of Bourdieu, who believed that talk is in fact an "economic exchange", it makes sense to continue using financial terms, and say that student motivation in this context becomes an endorsement of learning or an investment in learning.

One of the questions that I had throughout this research was to see if power and endorsement exist in a transactional, symbolic relationship, or if the process of learning involves a reversible relationship between these concepts. While I cannot say for sure if they do or not, I can say safely say that through my observations in my foreign language classes, student endorsement of the learning process affords the acquisition of power in certain discourses in the foreign language classroom. The reverse process of acquiring capital to participate in certain classroom transactions was not that easily visible, however, it opened opportunities to create spaces for certain learning processes or for the creation of identities in situations where certain routine classroom events were taking place. I consider that I played a major role in the transactions that occurred in my classroom. I feel responsible for obligating myself to exchange "goods" for "grades" or class credit, and for legitimizing an economy that I feel that was not entirely dictated by me, but understood and constructed together with my students.

This poststructuralist epistemology shed light for me, on how learners may make sense of these particular classroom events, and also made me look differently at the way we, as foreign language teachers, implement the education policy that impacts student learning in and out of the classroom. There is no doubt that conflict arises in the classroom when participants cannot understand the type of investment that each student is making, and the grounds that make each investment legitimate. Since power is shifting with the nature of investment that students make, the entire classroom dynamic is dictated by opportunities students have in discourses that are made available in the classroom. It is easy to see how for instance, students like Ashley who invested in procedural display, and put a good show in the classroom, acquired a social identity that has ramifications out of the foreign language class.

Students like Megan, who invested in exploring their social life in foreign language journals, are more easily identified in the classroom architecture than other students, who do not make their interests known in an overt form as the journal writing event. Teacher can view written symbols like journal writing as valuable contextualization cues, and therefore can devise classroom techniques to address these types of foreign language students. While although almost all students can learn the "procedural display" in the classroom, it is questionable how knowing that can change the fact that content mastery for students in this case is an issue that cannot be addressed yet. On the contrary, knowing what contributes to student endorsement of learning and spotting students who master procedural display but not the mastery of content can be a more affordable alternative to reach a common core of objectives in the foreign language classroom.



Additionally, knowing that power relations in the classroom constructed between teachers and students are constituted differently due to multiple interferences that originate out of the classroom, teachers should be alert to what kind of power they chose to display in student teacher interactions. Although the two most used approaches in classroom today are “power over” and “power with”, there is a distinct approach that should be considered by all the members of the foreign language class regarding how else power can be viewed, and that is:

...power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, ....Power is not that which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analyzed as something which circulates.... And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power .....

One must rather .....see how these mechanisms of power have been...**invested**<sup>5</sup>, colonized, utilized, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc by ever more general mechanisms and forms of global domination.

(Foucault, 1980)

The concept of “power with” that can lead to the idea that meaning in a foreign language class should be jointly constructed and shared and developed in a synergetic way through talk, is equally dangerous since it deemphasizes the circulating nature of power, and its colonialist nature over the human network.

In other words, factoring in as many as possible of the interactions of the multiple layers of society in the foreign language class, is an essential step in being able to respond to troubling questions that arise in the classroom. Being able to set up all the mechanisms for understanding such questions and articulating relevant responses

becomes not only my responsibility as a teacher, to my students but also a common goal between all the participants of the society.

The elusive perception that preferential treatment influences the types of investment students adopt in a foreign language class is illusory. Students like Ashley who invested in a “social” identity, or Denise who invested in a “good student” identity give the impression that they should be treated differently according to how they mastered the classroom discourse. However, this is a very dangerous approach since it can lead to the use of strategies to exert power, and ultimately lead to Grice’s “implicature” (implying that student may not be reading her own homework<sup>6</sup>) (Grice, 1989).

In summarizing I am taking out from doing this research a new ontology of classroom events that accepts it as a fragmented, diverse and, questionable place, where the students and I construct opportunities for learning during classroom practices which need to be continually challenged. Deconstructing these initial practices and their underlying assumptions, analyzing them with my conceptual framework of the redefined notions of power and endorsement, and then reassembling the acts in order to frame new practices, offers the opportunity to see that just like in a Lego play, parts can be substitutes and the emergence of a new model can only add, and facilitate student learning and understanding.

In this research I was a witness on how motivation, taken out of the psychological realm, became the “investment”, the “endorsement”, an empowering force that can easily shape identities and power relationships. In their turn power affected students’ motivation to use the language in something more than a linguistic

exercise, bringing communication and the learning that takes place during communication closer to meaningful acts that are the responsibility of teachers and students alike.

Indeed it is a necessity to investigate and understand how the Discourses that teachers and students bring with them to the classroom shape the construction of meaning in specific practices in classrooms. But if the symbolic power “over” or “with” must be relinquished the space must be filled quickly with something else or both the student and teacher will fall back in their parallel spaces of existence without any hope for ever meeting (J. Hall & Verplaetse, 2000).

### **Epilogue**

“One of the most highly developed skills in contemporary Western culture is the logic of dissection - the splitting-up of people, processes and problems into their smallest possible components. Through the relentless application of rigorous analysis, classical logic, and mechanistic thinking, the world is reduced to smaller and yet smaller bits. If and when the pieces are reassembled, the whole that they were once part of has vanished - along with value, meaning and any sense of purpose”.

Stanley Frielick, 2001

## Notes – Chapter 5

<sup>1</sup> This research is unpublished and not peer reviewed. In this dissertation, the reference to my 2002 research is treated as preliminary, initial steps toward building a model of elements with which to look at student learning.

<sup>2</sup> See my observations in an American airport related to the relevance of FL outside the classroom (p 22)

<sup>3</sup> Motivation is being replaced by the endorsement of the foreign language learning

<sup>4</sup> Motivation is being replaced by the endorsement of the foreign language learning

<sup>5</sup> My emphasis

<sup>6</sup> See the analysis in Ashley's homework check event in chapter 4

*[Faint, illegible text]*

**APPENDICES**

*[Faint, illegible text]*

## APPENDIX A

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Appropriation** – Term used by researchers (Gee 1996, 1992, Hicks 1996, Wertsch 1991) to show that learning is a process that involves participation in, and making use of certain social discourses and cultural tools in a community. This view assumes that knowledge has a social nature that is not fixed.

**Communities of Practice** - Communities of Practice has been suggested as the replacement to models such as speech community and social networks, due to the emphasis on practice (linguistic or otherwise) continually reconstituting the links between the participants, rather than on static models of connections. According to this theory, engaging in appropriate practice enables and reinforces membership in a particular social group in a dynamic fashion, which allows for individual agency and thus the possibility of change (e.g. Lave & Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998, Eckert 1999).

**Critical moments** = Short episodes that are “turning points” in the norm where they occur, and reveal unusual structures that require repair of some sort.

**Dialogicality** – Term defined by Bakhtin and further reshaped by Wertsch to reflect the existence of multivoicedness in an utterance. The presence of the utterance's historicity through two closely related aspects: "1) the relation of each utterance to preceding utterances; and 2) the addressivity of the utterance, that is, its orientation to the other, and in particular, to the other's responsive understanding" (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981; Wertsch, 1991). In my research I use this term to analyze interviews, texts and documents.

**Economics** - The science that deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth, and with the various related problems of labor, finance, taxation, etc.

(Webster's New World)

**Endorsement** = A socially constructed practice that affords the creation of new spaces (3<sup>rd</sup> space?) where students perform learning transactions, and construct at the same time new identities to support their investment in a certain type of learning. Student endorsement is the result of a larger (linear) network of filters made of at least:

1. classroom, school, district, and state education policies
2. media channels
3. community resources (family, etc)

Endorsement is different from Bourdieu's habitus, because it does not refer to social space or the space of social positions, or the space of lifestyles. Endorsement refers to the space for learning.

**Event Structure** = Organization of a social, linguistic, cultural happening that reveals hidden processes that occur and contribute to understanding the history of that particular process or action. Heise (1999) defines the analysis of an event structure as a qualitative methodology for understanding sequential events in a narrative. It examines how events are connected logically and how the events link people and things.

**Govermentality** – Term coined by Foucault to designate the art of government. It is also used to signal the appearance of a specific type of rule that pertains to liberalism and neoliberalism practices, a critique of state reason.

**Heteroglossia** = Concept developed by Bakhtin who argued that as speakers, we do not get our words from the dictionary, but from “other utterances, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style” (1986, p. 87). We hear a range of utterances from many layers of society with varying degrees of authoritativeness, social power, and familiarity—Bakhtin calls such utterances heteroglossia—and we “assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate” them; we unconsciously assign them levels of “our-own-ness” and make them part of our “unique speech experience,” our utterances (Bakhtin et al., 1986). This can be a very subversive process, especially when speakers reclaim the institution's terms and use them in a powerful critique of the institution. Bakhtin calls such a usage a hybrid construction.

**Intertextuality** – I use a postmodernist ((Atkinson, 1992; Game, 1991) construct of the term that denotes the relationships of one text with others, whether they are real or not, and produced or consumed across time.

**Investment** = Social process that consists of adding to one's milieu linguistic, cultural, cognitive, emotional social resources, for the purpose of gaining later returns that will shape future social interactions.

**Polyvocality of text** = The presence of multiple “voices” that can bring distant discourses in the same space of one's self expression, a multi and intertextual involvement of the participants as “readers” of a text.

**Procedural Display** = Term developed by Bloome (1989) that entails the construction in the classroom of social skills characterized by the teacher and students that display to each other social and academic procedures that “count” toward accomplished



lessons/events. However, a more profound analysis of these particular “event structures”<sup>1</sup> reveals a lack of academic content (Bloome, 1989).

**Participant** - A participant became an individual, a group, an organization or a social structure that uses a defined discourse to pass along, impose, enact, or regulate socio-cultural practices that underpin specific ideologies, and through their overt interaction with a certain individual, group, or organization it aims to alter the values and behavior of the individual or group they interact with.

**Resistance** = From my perspective (the teacher), student resistance is a social action performed by students within selected boundaries of an event as a result of:

- the use of discourses that is unfamiliar to the space where they are utilized,
- the investment in values and beliefs that belong in a time and space established by the student as belonging outside the particular classroom event, and
- the creation of new identities that help the students make sense of flawed learning transactions.

**Subject position** = Term defined by Davies and Harre as follows:

*A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location ... Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned... (Davies, 2000)*

Although I apply this understanding to the term when I use it, I also believe that there are multiple, precarious, changing subjectivities within people that allow them to better position themselves within their social milieu.

**Situated Identity** – The concept derives from *selfhood* in relationship with others and how interactions sustain these many interpersonal relationships with others. A concept developed around the idea of student voice and student discourse. A big part of it is based on the issue of identity owner, and how identity building was encouraging my students to use the language in the classroom. My students used identities as passwords that allowed participation in certain social groups.

**Situated meaning** = According to the definition assembled by Gee from Agar, Barsalou, Clark, Hofstadter, and Kress, a situated meaning is “an image or a pattern that we assemble *on the spot* as we communicate in a given context, based on our construal of that context and on our past experience” (Gee, 1999). According to Gee these situated meanings lead to *cultural models*. In my researched I traced these meanings as follows: meaning of doing homework, meaning of doing journal, meaning of doing Spanish as a cultural model.

**Text** – According to Cook (1992) the definition of “text” involves all linguistic aspects in written or oral language, including words used to form the utterance or written text. It could be a word, a sentence, a paragraph, or a longer stretch of language. The information provided by the text must be related to the discourse as a whole (Cook, 1992)

**Voice** = When I use the term “Voice” I refer to a merge of concepts drawn from two scholars. Mishler’s concept of voice, as “a particular assumption about the relationship between appearance, reality and language.... A specific normative order” and Scollon’s definition of voices which are utterances or (communicative styles) in response to various social practices that are characteristic to one’s worldview (Mishler, 1984); (R. Scollon et al., 1998).

<sup>1</sup> see definition of terms

## APPENDIX B

### TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS\*

• CAPS	louder volume over short segment
'	rhythmic accent
..	short pause (less than 0.5 sec.)
...	longer pause (between 0.5 sec. and 1 sec.)
< >	silence (in number of seconds)
:	lengthened sound
/abcd\	overlapping and latching
(ahum)	cough tokens
(xx)	unintelligible syllable
(= )	gloss or clarification of segment
[ ( ) ]	comment
.	(period) Falling intonation
?	(question mark) Rising intonation
,	(comma) Continuing intonation
-	(hyphen) Marks an abrupt cut-off
::	(colon(s)) Prolonging of sound
<u>Never</u>	(underlining) Stressed syllable or word
WORD	(all caps) Loud speech
°word°	(degree symbols) Quiet speech
>word<	(more than & less than) Quicker speech
<word>	(less than & more than) Slowed speech

hh	(series of h's) Aspiration or laughter
.hh	(h's preceded by dot) Inhalation
[ ]	(brackets) Simultaneous or overlapping speech
=	(equals sign) Contiguous utterances
(2.4)	(number in parentheses) Length of a silence
(.)	(period in parentheses) Micro-pause, 2/10 second or less
( )	(empty parentheses) Non-transcribable segment of talk
(word)	(word or phrase in parentheses) Transcriptionist doubt
((gazing at ceiling))	(double parentheses) Description of non-speech activity

\* List adapted from Gail Jefferson list of code taken from the Nixon Watergate TalkBank transcripts that she created

## APPENDIX C

### HOMEWORK CHECK TEXT<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fragment represents the homework check in Spanish class done with the students. The equivalent in time of the transcript is of 5'30".

- 1 TEACHER: >Bien, vamos a chequear la tarea. ¿Cual es la tarea de hoy?<(1.2) > ¿Quién  
2 puede decir?<(1.5) <¿Cual es la tarea de hoy?>(1.5)  
3 TEACHER: Tara  
4 (...)  
5 Tara: ( )  
6 TEACHER: ¿La tarea de hoy?  
7 (ahum)  
8 Tara: ( ) (...) The poster  
9 TEACHER: Sí, para terminar el cartel, necesitamos terminar el cartel  
10 TEACHER: [Sí? What] was it?  
11 Student: [a poster ( )]  
12 TEACHER: It's fine if you did a poster for it  
13 Student: (...)  
14 TEACHER: David?  
15 Student: ( ausente )(8)  
16 TEACHER: (...) ¿Está enfermo David? ¿Quién sabe? (..) ¿Nadie? (.) ¿Está enfermo:?  
17 ¿Sí?  
18 TEACHER: Melan[gh}ie?  
19 Melanie: Sí.  
20 TEACHER: ¿Cual es el tema de su tarea?  
21 Melanie: ¿Quién es ( voluntario )  
22 TEACHER: Hmm.. muy bien.  
23 TEACHER: ¿Brenda? ((teacher notices Melanie's hand up, turns toward her )) ¿Y  
24 dónde está tu cartel? ¿Dónde está? Muy bien!  
25 Brenda: [( sí )]  
26 TEACHER: Vamos a ponerlo en la pizarra....OK?(...) We are going to line them up  
27 here on the board (..) so we can take a look at all {clearing her throat}see which one is  
28 going to be more appealing to go and do some volunteer work  
29 TEACHER: Brenda?  
30 Brenda: (Sí. )  
31 TEACHER: [ Cual es el titulo]  
32 TEACHER: [El titulo].. El titulo.. The title?

33 Brenda: [(¿Por que es importante) trabajar como  
34 voluntario?]  
35 TEACHER: [The title?] Por que es importante  
36 trabajar como voluntario. Bien. Ponelo en la pizara!  
37 TEACHER: Daniel?  
38 Daniel: Tarea pase  
39 .....  
40 TEACHER: Denise?  
41 Denise: ( )  
42 TEACHER: ¿Qual es el titulo?  
43 Denise: ( ) {inaudible}  
44 TEACHER: {repeating after student} Necesitamos a ayudar a la escuela Kiley. Si.  
45 TEACHER: (Meghan?) ( )  
46 (Meghan): ( pass)  
47 TEACHER: ( )  
48 TEACHER: Si. {noise of door being shut}  
49 TEACHER: {calling another student} ( )  
50 ( )  
51 TEACHER: Meghan?  
52 Meghan: ( ... pass ...)  
53 TEACHER: (Do you have) a pass?  
54 Meghan: ( )  
55 TEACHER: Oh, the topic, yeah, yeah, right.  
56 TEACHER: Matt? Leelo!  
57 Matt: ( ) la tarea  
58 TEACHER: bien  
59 TEACHER: Page?  
60 Page: ( Que puedes hacer ) en la clase. , en la escuela de Kiley..  
61 TEACHER: Que puedes hacer en la ( ) en la escuela Kiley para ayudar?  
62 What can you do? TELL!  
63 Paige: ( ) [ ]  
64 TEACHER: ( the word TELL is essentially.. )  
65 TEACHER: Jessie?  
66 Jessie: Si! (sound of door shut)  
67 TEACHER: Karissa  
68 Karissa: Si ( trabajar )  
69 (ahum) (AHUM)  
70 TEACHER: Matthew?  
71 {someone sneezes several times} (ahum)  
72 TEACHER: [Matthew?]  
73 Matthew: I have ( )  
74 {More sneezes}  
75 TEACHER: Josh?  
76 Josh: ( )  
77 TEACHER: Ashley  
78 Ashley: ( como esta?) ( xxx) (looking down))

79 TEACHER: ¿Puedes leerlo?.. <¡Le::elo!>..... Read it!  
80 Ashley: ( )  
81 TEACHER: No! Read the title!  
82 Ashley: I don't want to ( ) I just ( ) it I can't ( ) it  
83 TEACHER: <Which one?>  
84 Other student voices: ( ayudar.. ayudar )  
85 Ashley: I can't say it! ( )  
86 TEACHER: <Which one?>  
87 Ashley: I ( )  
88 TEACHER: What is the word in English? {shhh:::}  
89 Ashley: ( I don't know )  
90 TEACHER: Is this yours?  
91 Ashley: Yes.  
92 TEACHER: And who put words there?  
93 Ashley: I did.  
94 TEACHER: HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE WORDS?  
95 Ashley: °I looked up in the dictionary.°  
96 TEACHER: And what is that word?  
97 Ashley: I don't know. . I don't remember.  
98 ( )  
99 TEACHER: And do you want credit for this homework?  
100 Ashley: Ahm?  
101 TEACHER: Why?  
102 Ashley: ( )  
103 TEACHER: Jonathan?  
104 ( )  
105 TEACHER: Meghan?  
106 Meghan: ( )  
107 {ahum}



## APPENDIX D

### STUDENT INTERVIEW ON HOMEWORK AND POWER

- 1 .....  
2 .....**Teacher:** Can you tell me something about the Spanish class that you had last  
3 year...how did that...you know. What was the structure of the class last year in Spanish?  
4 **Ashley:** Well...I don't remember doing a journal last year, but that's just out of my  
5 head. But that's a different way, the way we do homework is a different way like,  
6 'cause we did homework like...on a sheet of paper and we turn it in and don't see it  
7 again. And the way we do it now we have a section in our notebook and we do our  
8 homework in there so we can go back to it and see, and see what it you've done wrong  
9 or what...  
10 **Teacher:** Ah...  
11 **Ashley:** and you can check on it..  
12 **Teacher:** Ahm...so...you think that this way it helps you with different concepts in  
13 Spanish class versus just turning in the homework and not seeing it again?  
14 **Ashley:** Yeah. I think it does, because then, you get to go back to it and if you see that  
15 something's wrong after about Spanish you can change it... and then go back to your  
16 notebook and like further see and review it again.  
17 **Teacher:** ok...let's see...can you describe to me how did the homework portion of the  
18 class went in last year and then tell me how the homework portion of the Spanish class  
19 goes this year?  
20 **Ashley:** well.. last year, like I said she would give us a sheet of paper and give us like a  
21 page of homework to do. It was like five different questions maybe on it. You go home  
22 and some of the times the sentences were already in English so you just had to write the  
23 Spanish thing that would take less time and that's like a none, a none and you don't  
24 need your brain to think about it 'cause you can just look it up. This year the way **you**  
25 give us homework we can check back so that if we need a word that we forgot about it  
26 we don't spend that much time looking it **up** because we already know it and go back to  
27 where we used it before. So I think Span..Spanish does a better teaching this year than it  
28 has in the past years .....
- 29 **Teacher:** .... In terms of homework you like it better...Ok...ahm...OK let's see ..Do you  
30 know how I, most of the times, try to check homework at the beginning of the.. of the  
31 class...how I talk to the students individually?  
32 **Ashley:** Yeah..  
33 **Teacher:** I call their names and sometimes I ask them questions..  
34 **Ashley:** Yeah you ask them a question from the homework and they have to give  
35 you..their answer...  
36 **Teacher:** What do you think about this procedure?  
37 **Ashley:** I think that's is good because you could just ask if they have it and may lie to  
38 you.. and they could say they did do it, and just do it on like a week end, so that it's in  
39 their notebook, But this way you know that they are actually doing something instead  
40 of..saying "Do you have your homework?"and they're saying "yeah"...  
41 **Teacher:** How about that time when I have a few seconds or you know a minute, half a  
42 minute with each individual student ...what do you think about that moment? Is it ...Do

43 you feel you are being put on the spot? Do you think it', you'd rather not have it? How  
44 does that.. How does that affect you?

45 **Ashley:** I think it is affecting people in a good way and in a bad. Good because you  
46 learn what you did wrong, and in a bad 'cause it kind of puts them on the spot,  
47 sometimes like if they really understand a question and like they just made up an  
48 answer

49 **Teacher:** ahm

50 **Ashley:** it puts them on the spot. But I think it's fine with me.

51 **Teacher:** Did you ever feel like you've been put on the spot?

52 **Ashley:** Not really.

53 **Teacher:** OK..Ahm.... Do you know of anyone who felt they were put on the spot?

54 **Ashley:** Maybe Greg .. hah...hah..

55 **Teacher:** He said that?

56 **Ashley :**Well.. he acts and stuff, because he like takes 10 minutes to like look at the  
57 paper, so probably Greg....

58 **Teacher:** For instance let 's see... Did it happen for you ever not to do homework? And  
59 to be asked if you did homework? I mean when it was your turn to say if you did or nor  
60 homework and a question from the homework, did it ever happen for you not to have  
61 the homework?

62 **Ashley:** Yeeah...sometimes..

63 **Teacher:** OK. .. and ..What did you do?

64 **Ashley:** I, I just told you that I didn't have the homework 'cause I didn't understand,  
65 cause that's mostly when I did not do the homework, cause I did not understand like  
66 what the questions what you gave us

67 **Teacher** OK...and what did I do? ..What happened?

68 **Ashley:** Well, I don't remember 'cause I normally do do my homework

69 **Teacher:** Ok ..All right

70 **Ashley:** I don't remember what you'd have done

71 **Teacher:** let talk now about.....

72

73 .....

74 .....T

75

76 **Teacher:** How about if the student just sits down and says for instance "I don't have my  
77 homework!" looks the teacher in the eye and says "I don't have my homework!" Do  
78 you think that's a moment when there is a power issue?

79 **Ashley:** I don't think so because in that instance is kind of.... well....ahm... I don't know  
80 the right words to say but it's kind of disrespectful. When a student says like, "I don't  
81 'have my homework", if it's not a justified reason, it's kind of disrespectful to just not do  
82 your homework. If someone asked you to do your homework you should probably do  
83 your homework!

84 **Teacher:** Ahm..Aaha...

85 **Ashley:** So the power is kind of taken away from the teacher if the student doesn't have  
86 a justified reason for not doing their homework.

87 **Teacher:** Ah..Would you say that..ah..Why would you say that the students don't do  
88 homework?

89 **Ashley A:** Either they're lazy..

90 **Teacher:** Ahm...

91 **Ashley A:** ...or maybe they...the teacher did not clarify what she or he wanted for the  
92 homework and didn't know what it said at all....it could be a couple of reasons why the  
93 student did not do the homework

94 **Teacher:** Aha...Ah...ok ...let's see what else....

95

96

97

## APPENDIX E

### STUDENT INTERVIEW ON MOTIVATION

1 **Teacher:** I'd like to talk a little bit about motivation. What do you think that is  
2 motivation in the Spanish class?

3 **Denise:** When...it's when, like, the students are more interested in the work, like, work  
4 gets done... work gets done to... work, like the motivation to do well in class, and get a  
5 good grade, and to actually learn something. That's motivation<sup>1</sup> and then also in the  
6 different projects, it also catches more students' interest..

7 **Teacher:** ahm..

8 **Denise:** .. And then if they are very anxious in the projects as well as learning  
9 something new then, that adds motivation that they have to do the work

10 **Teacher:** Where do you think this motivation is coming from? Ahm..What do you think  
11 that...ahm ... makes the motivation takes place in a student? ahm.. How..how does it  
12 happen? Do you think it can be ... it's something you can feel, that you can handle that  
13 you can control?

14 **Denise:** Yeah, you can control it, and sometimes, motivation comes from within the  
15 students, Sometimes comes from other classmates, and if, like, other classmates are  
16 doing well, an individual student might want to progress in a subject as well....

17 **Teacher:** Can you recall ahm.. any event in the Spanish class when you felt that you  
18 were being motivated?

19 **Denise:** In the projects that we were doing with different countries... Hispanic countries,  
20 I liked that, 'couse I got to study another country other than the United States.... and its  
21 cultures and I was interested in that, so I tried harder on that,..... and with Spanish food  
22 festival, like I think that it caught a lot of people's interest, and then like, most of the  
23 people made the food and brought it. Then, as they made the food, they were brought  
24 back into their own historical culture and how that food represented the culture....

25 **Teacher:** OK ahm...OK... let's see ...ahm

APPENDIX F  
STUDENT WRITTEN ESSAYS

*Sample 1*

Pen Pals are people that write back and forth to each other. You usually develop a great relationship with your pen pal. You should usually write to a person of the same sex and different race. They should also be a different nationality. That way you learn more about things around the world. One day you might even be lucky enough to meet them. It might not be the best because you might get a different impression from them in real life.

Writing to a pen pal is a type of intercultural communication if you write to someone of a different culture. You will not only learn about the other person's culture, but you will also become a teacher. I say you will become a teacher because you will teach the person from another culture all about your culture. Technology can also be part of teaching. If you write to someone in the Middle East, where we know they don't have as much technology as us, then we can teach them about ours. We could even send them a couple things like a walkman or a television set. We can also send them a camera with film and directions so they can send us pictures of themselves. We can also brag about how our army could kick their army's butt because of all the better technology we have. Our presentation of the letters we send to our pen pals is very important. We want to present ourselves as well brought up young people. We don't want them to think we were juvenile delinquents like we really are. If they thought we were juvenile delinquents, then they would be too scared to ever write back to us. A good project for pen pals is to try and keep up their writing back and forth and trying to meet each other

in person. If they don't keep writing back and forth they would feel like they lost a friend, because they really did. A get together could also be very great. Although it could be also very bad. You would have to set a good impression or the person might not want to write back. Also if you did set a good impression you might be able to marry each other and have lots and lots of babies and have a wonderful life until you die with each other. If I were trying to get into a college were I had to prove my beliefs on intercultural communication I would read everything on the paper before this. If I had to prove my beliefs I would set up a class of 10 students and have them follow everything I said on the paper before this.

### Sample 2

Intercultural communication happens a lot every day. Intercultural communication is when people of two different cultures talk.

Pen pals are the greatest. A cool pen pal would be David Cassidy. He is the greatest person to ever live. I would want to know all about his life. Especially the Partridge Family.

Technology is making life easier. Computers, TV's pagers, phones, phones, toasters, are all technology. I like technology. Without it life would be a lot more boring and it would be really bad. There wouldn't be any computers, TV's, cell phones, phones, toasters or anything.

I hate projects. They are a huge waste of time. There should never be any projects ever.

Presentations are dumb. I had to do one in reading about Lance Bass from NSYNC and I did really bad. I hate presentations. They are as bad as projects. Usually when you do a project you have to give a presentation too.. It's really dumb.

Multicultural communication doesn't matter. I don't think about it much. As long as you can communicate it's all good.

To prove this, you can play tic-tac- toe.

X X X

O

X O

X O X

X O

X O

APPENDIX G  
INTERVIEW TEXTS

**Rita Oleksak interview — 8/14/04**

**Transcript**

**1. How many students are taking a foreign language in Springfield Public Schools?**

**R:** In the district there are almost 27,000 students and 19,000 are taking some kind of foreign language. That is because we had to scale back the program from k-12 to 3-12. All students in grades 3-5 are supposed to take a foreign language. There is an opportunity for the district in 6<sup>th</sup> grade to see if students are reading at grade level, and if they read below reading level, they may be pulled out of FL temporarily so that their reading score can be brought up.

**2. Some students are reluctant learners of a foreign language in this district. What do you think that contributes to such a situation?**

**R.** There are several factors that contribute to the situation. First and foremost I think that we have some very highly qualified foreign language teachers, but not all of our teachers are highly qualified. Most of all, I believe that if a teacher uses the target language in an inviting classroom that is realistic, hands-on and real life then the child is more likely to succeed in the classroom and have a better appreciation of the class. I also think that the opposition that is faced in the district is also due to other teachers in the district whose mindset doesn't believe in a foreign language, and then make comments at the middle school level to the children "Why are you studying that?" After a while it begins to wear down the children.

**I:** So you think it is mostly on the teacher side...



**R:** No, I also think that there are other factors that a child could come in contact with like: a parent, who may not be fully aware of the benefits of learning a foreign language, their mindset over the years being that you don't need a foreign language to succeed. The mindset of the community that looks upon Spanish in particular, as why don't they learn English? All these things begin to wear down the child. So, if you are a really strong and engaging foreign language teacher, those children seem to be more motivated to continue the language. I've seen that first hand at the elementary level, not that it's just dances, songs and skits and fun, but the perception is fun. I see the teachers using a good deal of the language because at the elementary level there is not so much reading and writing so the teacher has to speak a lot. Those teachers are engaged.

Rarely do I see a child who does not want to be in that classroom. So I see it as the factors surrounding the child, the parent, the community the teacher that may distract the child from taking the language and liking it. But if a child has a strong teacher who uses the target language, with good knowledge of the target language, and uses the target language effectively, they could often win that child over.

**I:** Would you say that the language policies that have been enacted over time could be a source of the...

**R:** for a negative?

**I:** Yeah...

**R:** Yes and No. I see "No Child Left Behind" as a potential negative because the push is on Reading and Math, or English and Math, however FL is considered a core, so FL should have a piece of this national pie. And in listening to Rod Page at ACTFL last year, "FL is part of the core", and we made the comment that is only mentioned once.

“But, he said, you’re still part of the core”. So, very slowly we are trying to change the mindset from a negative one of only Reading and Math. But in that regard we have to work very hard. We are doing that in Springfield and identify things like International Education Week and ask to read a piece of literary selection of a foreign author and then put that on a Show Case. I’m thinking that that’s one piece. The pressure of MCAS without a FL assessment..... that the feasibility of providing such assessment is what the problem is. Now if we are to move forward with “Language Learning Solutions” which we have in Springfield, the department of Ed in Boston is looking at this as a viable means to assess children for an exit exam. And I think that what really has to happen is to chip away at people seeing us as part of the bigger picture. But No Child Left Behind and MCAS in general have more recently have been very strong factors that have hurt FL.

### **3. How do you define achievement in foreign language class?**

**R:** A child who knows and is able to use the language at whatever level they are studying it, who is able to communicate and I think of their personal success. When you were talking to me about your dissertation, I love the notion of sharing power for ownership in the classroom. Because it goes back to the 80’s when the teacher was the facilitator. That’s what it is all about the teacher is the guide, the child is taking responsibility for his or her learning, and to use that, and be effective. So I think that achievement is communication whether is written, in reading, or in spoken word or in the understanding.

4. in your opinion, how significantly are the students' lives impacted by economic forces from outside the school, and how does this affect their learning of a foreign language?

**R:** I think that in Springfield the children are seriously very much impacted by their economic situation and the forces that surround them in the community. Even from, the time I was a middle school teacher and then high school teacher at Commerce, I would often say we have no idea what baggage these children come with. So FL teacher no longer just stand up there and teach like we used to teach in the 80's. It is the person who is all eyes and ears, all those things that you need to be to a child, because for that child you may be the only source of support during the day. To that end, I don't think it affects their learning of FL other than it helps because they see you in a different light. For example if we have children writing in their journals they report things that are relevant of their outside life and we have to turn around and report it. But also it is for the teacher if they choose to write feedback it is an opportunity to comment on those things. Also, on another negative note in the district, low economic district, tends to be a lower education and more illiteracy in the home, and therefore the parent or guardian may not see the same value in learning a FL.

**I:** I know that you do not live in Springfield, and I don't either, and you have children who go to school, but how do you perceive the economic factor in the suburb.

**R:** Being in a worse economic situation (like Springfield) puts you in a better position to get federal funding. I have a child at the high school level who wants to take Italian, and they cannot hire a teacher. He has to wait until he is a senior to take Italian

III...because they only have enough room for the kids who are seniors. And I had a

child who wanted to take a different language as a senior, not Spanish and was not allowed to take it because they did not have enough teachers. My heart weeps when a child wants to be in a classroom and cannot. I still don't see a strong support on FL in this small community

**I:** I know that you are involved in many organizations at the national level. From your experience can you tell me if the situation is similar in other corners of the country?

**R:** Actually Springfield is one of the very few communities that has a FL program at the elementary program. While I am a little disappointed about our district, I still think it is a better program than in many parts of the country whether is a suburb or not....

FL is in the past 2 years one of the programs that has been cut back.

**I:** What do you mean it is a better program?

**R:** In the sense that it is offered at least at middle school.

**I:** So, not in terms of achievement, but in terms of program offerings

**R:** In terms of achievement I think that in my community, and I think that I can say this safely about the whole country, they teach the way they were taught. And I have a child who dropped out of French IV because he said that no matter how hard he tried or how many more hours he spent in the AMSCO book, he could not get higher than a B+, and that is a horrible reason not to want to take the course. You should want to take it because you love it and you feel engaged.

**I:** So where do you think this is coming from?

**R:** Again, I go back to a teacher who has the ability to inspire a child. And I do not want to put the responsibility on the teacher but I think that the teacher should be able

to be a good facilitator. So if drill and kill in Amsco workbook are not working, you need to look at what you doing when you're teaching.

**5. NCLB law has stipulations for the improvement of student education, including foreign language education. In your opinion, what is the direct impact of these stipulations for learning a foreign language in this district?**

**R:** There is literally just one line that says that FL is a core subject. So that's all-in the document. But, that line is there. So, I get to go back to the superintendent and my colleagues and say "We are in there. So, when I go and meet with the technology director I can say that I want to be there, in the 3 year technology grant. Also, technically we can qualify for some title 1 money to support reading and writing in FL. There is so much of the pieces of the pie.....

*Interruption by a representative from the personnel that came to gave me a letter*  
.....

**R:** So NCLB allows us to be part of the pie but the pie is only so big, that you can still come back and say that there is not enough money. It does affect us when it comes to highly qualified. For instance, my immediate supervisor asked me what I was doing to support my teachers this summer. And I said nothing, because I have no money. But in the future what I'd like to see is that a piece of the PD pie, help provide a specific workshop for teacher to become highly qualified. So if that is happening, it is a positive thing in our district.

**6. What kind of learning scenarios do you think are facilitated by the implementation of National Standards?**

**R:** The first thing that comes to mind is realistic, hands-on, empowering.... student looking at communication as interpersonal, interpretive and presentational, how it affects the way we teach our children, how we infused our culture, moving forward with assessment units. The idea of backwards planning, you set up the child with a rubric and you move backwards, and then it becomes much more real. Let's think about Jacques Cousteau, using interpretative questions and it raised the level of the accountability, because they can show that they can make inferences, and then in terms of interpretative mode. Let's say that you and I are the students, we have to sit here and have a real conversation about what we read. So the scenarios should become much more realistic.

**I:** How close you think that these scenarios are to the life of our students?

**R:** In Springfield it depends. Because we have kids who are 15 minutes from a ski resort

(Mt. Tom) and they never went there or heard about. They think it is a big trip 15' away to Riverside. I guess it does not have to be Jacques Cousteau; it could be a famous basketball player. We could read an article in Paris Match about the war in Iraq, and that could be very significant for the children because they might have a sibling or a relative who is fighting over there. So it moves us to find things that they can relate to...

**7. Currently our school is offering two foreign languages. Could you tell me what was the basis for selecting these languages?**

**R:** This was done many years ago, and I would say Spanish because it is the second language in our country and we also have a large Spanish speaker's heritage population

in Springfield. And over the years French was also a second language. In the middle school we are looking to expand Chinese in a third middle school in our second year of the grant. I am actually looking at your school and another one to expand the Chinese program.

**I:** I know that we offer Chinese in Springfield. But I know that a good portion of the Springfield population is Vietnamese, why are we offering Chinese?

**R:** It came to be because we had an opportunity thorough the Dodge foundation in the early 80's to bring someone in, and we started as an exploratory. As far as the Vietnamese program, it is something to explore as a heritage speaker program.

Currently Chinese is the hottest program in the country of course after Arabic. We also have a sister city project with Sci Tech and a Japanese city. And this year the Asian program at UMASS will offer a program at all the Chinese schools in Spfld and also in Japanese language.

**I:** Talking about Japanese, I remember that a few years ago we went together to Glastonbury and they had a Japanese program. So what would you say that was the reason why Japanese was developed there? A language that has nothing to do with the community?

**R:** We have a strong connection with UMASS, and quite frankly I think that it would be a good idea to interview Mei-Ju and ask her how she became involved in the program. She is our lead Chinese teacher and we hope to have her work as a consultant on the grant. But she started as this Dodge foundation, and then it was the FLAP grant. I know we have a large Chinese population in the UMASS area. It is very important that if you start a program you have to be able to continue. There are now 7 Chinese teachers. And

Mei-Ju found most of them. As far as Glastonbury is concerned I think that there must be a kind of business link.

**8. in your opinion, is a student's advanced study of FL important in the district?**

**R:** Absolutely. It is an area that I feel in a way I was not successful. A lot of people say that "Oh you have a program that starts in K, so by the time they are in HS they must be fluent". I tell them that: no, because they can switch in middle school and then in HS. But if a child wants to continue, we have AP, AB and a few semester Internet courses. I would like to see a Science class in Spanish a history class in Spanish, European History in French, one of the graduation requirements as an elective. But what we have to do is raise the level of accountability. Carmen worked very hard to bring the Heritage program in alignment in all 4 schools. I asked the Heritage speaker teacher what they do after they finish the Spanish 2. They said nothing. I asked "Why don't you offer Spanish 5 AP, IB (international baccalaureate). Let them jump into a higher course"

**9. In contrast to language learning in U.S., do you have any knowledge of how foreign language practices occur for Burundi, Romanian, Indian, Malaysian or Colombian students who learn English? Are they similar, different?**

**R:** I can't speak specifically about those countries. But most of the countries start their first foreign language in grade 3, and in grade 5 they start a second foreign language. Most people start with English because of the national presence that we have in the world. Well, the Olympics use French and the UN uses French, but a lot of other organizations use English. And in order to be a player in the world market, you need to speak English. They are much stricter about grammar, there is intense reading and writing, and less emphasis on communication.



**I:** You mentioned earlier “the Americans don’t see” who are you referring to?

**R:** Well government, politics CIA FBI, and the general public. For example my husband is a commercial lender. He only deals in CT but he does not see the need, or the use of a FL. He is involved in big projects like the Hall of Fame, projects of 14 million or 20 million dollars

**10. Would you like to ask or add anything?**

**R:** I think that a really good teacher empowers the student. It sounds easy but it is hard to engage the kids, and then to stand back and see them how they prepare power point presentations. If you empower them to do that, and if they have a certain level of investment, both the teacher and the student, to achieve that right balance and to take ownership. These are the kids we have whether they come from a wealthy or impoverished community, they all come with issues and concerns. Shared ownership and responsibility are huge!

**Dr. Beach interview — 11/15/04**

**Transcript**

**1. Are all the students in Springfield taking a foreign language?**

**Dr. B:** No. Is everybody in your school taking foreign language?

**I:** No

**B:**..... It is taking us back to School Committee policy and also the challenges in Springfield.... The accountability for MCAS is in Reading and Mathematics, or English and Mathematics. In some school particularly in elementary that are not performing at grade level, the students need the total of 5 hours a week to do more Reading or more Math. One of the conversation I had with Rita is: "Do you have some evidence or research to show that taking foreign language is going to help improve Math and Language Arts on MCAS scores?" And the answer was that foreign language might help, or helps if you are at a higher level to do reading comprehension. So because there is no direct correlation kids have to spend more time on task in Reading and Math...and then the school committee policy that has to be taken into consideration.

**2. Some students are reluctant, resistant learners in foreign language. What do you think that contributes to this?**

**B:** I would not use reluctance; they have outside exposure such as:

- Do their friends take a foreign language? peer relationship is #1
- Do their parents speak a foreign language at home? Do the students speak a foreign language at home?

- If they are speaking for instance Spanish at home, French in school would be their third language, maybe they are resistant to a third language, rather than a second language. You know, enough is enough.
- Where are the children seeing the benefit of learning a second language? Is there anywhere in the curriculum a history or science that shows that there is a benefit for learning a second language? Even for students who are highly capable and go to colleges; Do the colleges require a language to get in? Do you need three years in high school? In middle school: Do I need to take it now if I have to take it in high school? How it is valued, what kind of capital it has.

If you are looking at larger segments, my sense is that the majority of suburban schools offer foreign languages since they are highly valued. I grew up in a middle class where you had French and German in kindergarten. That is part of the community. You also took a music lesson, belonged to church, babysat, and went to scouting... So there are the expectations of the community. But I have the same issue about Algebra. Why would I learn Algebra as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, why am I going to learn French? In the Spanish case, it is more difficult because

- a) don't want to be identified with Latinos, and in their adolescent mind they think that it would identify them with a different population,
- or it could be just the smart kids syndrome. "It is not cool to be smart", so, all of them could be factors or none of them.

**I:** I thought that students have a preconceived idea that .....

**B:** You do not need a foreign language to graduate from high school.

**I:** In Springfield you do...

**B:** I am going to check that but I don't think it is true. ....It has to do with value...I am 13 years old and what are the benefits of learning a F.L.? Ask a student.... Students are curious but they are also looking for benefits. There are jobs and business but I don't know if kids make that connection...

**I:** How is everything else helping them relate to ....

**B:** The other aspect is that if it is required do they find it difficult? If they get good grades it is because they are either good at, it or the work is easy. A foreign language is an unknown. How do I get help out of school? I could get help for English, even in Science, but French? I have to go pretty far to find someone to help me in French to the level that I need help with...I do not know?

**I:** How do you define achievement in FL?

**B:** A proficiency level and a deep understanding and a demonstration of such an understanding

**I:** What do you think that students in FL class should show in order to fulfill the definition of achievement?

**B:** Standards, competency in those standards..

**I:** I know you are not a FL teacher, but what would you expect to see in a FL class? Should they be fluent?...

**B:** I would assume that at least they should have an ear for the language so that they understand a percentage of what they hear. I do not know the percentage, maybe 60%, ...to demonstrate some writing skills.. I have a feeling that I separate speaking from writing. So listening should be demonstrated by writing or reading. A cumulative growth. I assume that students who have a difficulty in English have also a difficulty in

FL. So, when you see students that are reluctant in FL maybe you should go back and check the English class. I do not think it is a resistance, but what is happening for the students.

**I:** Is this achievement related to the student, classroom, teacher, policies..

**B:** Achievement is related to **expectations** "Do we expect all student to learn FL, and do we assume that all children can learn or are able to learn a FL? Assuming that no one is looking at a kid and saying that they cannot learn because they have blue eyes, or because they are boys, or because they are poor, or because nobody went to college in your family, or are of a certain race. Achievement is between a kid and an adult. There may be outside factors. Have we taught them the skills that they need to be successful in F.L.? Just because you taught it does not mean I learned it... Have you figured a different way to teach me so I can learn it? Most of us teach the way we learned. If we are good at teaching we will realize that not all the teachers figured out a way to teach

**I:** So, it is the adult's expectation a factor in student achievement

**B:** Absolutely

**I:** ..and adults are defined as..?

**B:** Teachers, Parents, Counselors. For students it has to be an adult. Or an adult that believes in a student enough to make him learn

*Due to a phone call interruption, we lost our train of thought and upon reconvening*

*I asked:*

**I:** When I asked you if you would accept to be interviewed, you were very nice to say that you could come over to my school to give the interview. Is it because I am teaching FL, or would FL have anything to do with this?

**B:** No

**I:** I could have come to your office...

**B:** I did it because #1 Kiley is in my zone, and I arrived a few minutes early, and I visited a few classrooms. #2. I like to be responsive to the teachers and the students and go to them. Why everybody has to come to us, make no sense. Had you been in another zone.... I still might have come. It is easier for me to come and fit in your prep time than for you to ...

**I:** OK. Thank you.

**3. How significantly are the students' lives impacted by economic forces?**

**B:** We do not say come and take your 3<sup>rd</sup> language, we just say come take a foreign language, and what I am going to..... I do not think that poverty plays a role at all.

**I:** I will just give you some examples from my classroom. One of the things I like to start the year with is to tell the students what they need in order to come prepared to class. I tell them that they need to bring a notebook, pen and pencil, and because it is a FL they need to bring a dictionary. It takes for some of them a whole year to come prepared for class, and when they come unprepared I ask them to write, sometimes in FL sometimes in English, why they come unprepared. And some of the answers are "My mother does not have a car to drive me to CVS, etc.. So most of the times I find these difficulties that they have at home that would prevent them maybe to come prepared to class...."

**overlap. interjection of turns**

**B:** No! Those excuses have worked 6 years of school so why not keep using them?

**I:** So you think it is a school...

**B:** I think it is getting over on you

**I:** That is very interesting...Do you think that the school molds the student up until they get in 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> grade in such a way to use excuses...

**B:** I don't know if we mold them, people use excuses at work...

**I:** So you think that they are already versed..

**B:** Yeah, I and I would go to kids that said that to you for example, or go to other teachers when a kid had not been prepared...Most of kids in school are poor you already know that. Teachers are sort of middle class they have money, so what is a good thing for poor kids to say?" I don't have money", But when you look at they sneakers....And they do not have money to buy a dictionary? How much is a dictionary? They are 13 right? What kind of an odd job they can come up with to make the money to buy a dictionary? Maybe rake a yard and earn money to get a dictionary.

**I:** I do hear those discussions in class "If I had the money, I would not spend it on a dictionary." ... and like you said, if they have that expensive speakers .....should not go in school related items

**B:** Are my sneakers part of my belongings? That's what I asked you. What is the capital to invest in FL?

.....

**I:** I explained about students who take FL and Reading in our school. FL students do not want to move to Reading due to a membership that is attached to Reading class

**B:** How many years have you taught?

**I:** 10

**B:** So if you took the last 4 years of students who took FL, how did they do on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS? compared to kids who did not take a F.L. That would be something it would be worth looking at. It may be what would count?? as an endorsement for FL. Kids want to do well on MCAS. It is important for a variety of reasons, because we all have the expectations for them to do well, for the image of the school. It is important to go into sports....for tons of reasons. So, it is a capital or an endorsement for any subject or any activity is .... If we could find exactly the relationship of how foreign language can help them perform better.... you have your students.. you can go back and learn how they did on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS in FL versus kids who did not take FL. You can go back. If you go back and find out you may have an entire school who wants to take FL.....

**B:** ...the student..I only have so much energy I am going to put my effort in what counts

**I:** So MCAS is associated with a certain performance from the start...

**B:** That is correct

**4. NCLB law - What is the relationship between this law and FL?**

**B:** ...All core courses... they consider everything a core except gym, Home Ec... The other part talks about the highly qualified teachers....What is the national association of FL called? If there is a federal law any association like the FL association.... If you did not make it into the federal legislation, think how bad it would be. When we talked about the highly qualified for instance, Guidance is not mentioned, and people took offence at that. My guess is that teachers of FL made sure that would be in the



legislation. Both ways, somebody that was conscious about FL, just like Civics, obviously there was no reason not to be mentioned.

**5. What kind of learning scenarios, do you think allow for learning a FL? Or to fulfill the Standards?**

.....

**B:** I am surprised to find out that you gave the example that you allow the students to write an excuse either in English or FL. When I went to school you would speak FL even in the hall with the teacher, and the class would be a total immersion.

**I:** My students come in 6<sup>th</sup> grade sometimes as beginners of a language, and it would be difficult to ask them to write in FL when they do not even have a dictionary....

**B:** Then you have to lend them a dictionary, if it is that important to you

.....

**6: Do you think that sequence is important in a language or are AP classes in a FL valued?**

**B:** .....No, sequence is not something we look at, other than a data set. Here is where FL gets a negative hit. We have reduced the number of FL teacher in the buildings. When you reach advanced courses the number of students is getting smaller. If I am going to give a school an x number of teachers by allocation, there will be a Union issue. Like if some teachers have a work load of only 50, and other teachers a work load of 125.

**7. How about FL in other countries?**

**B:** private schools are very different than public school..... English is something you have to have. There is a capital, an undisputable value in speaking English

**I:** ...as a foreign language?

**B:** As something you have to have. English is the language of finance. In other countries the opportunities increase if you know English. If you take English out of the mix you might have the same issues that are here..... American have a degree of arrogance, we all assume that everybody speaks English. If I go to Montreal, although I am able to speak a few languages and French too, I will choose to speak English unless you made me. I had to stay for a week in a community where only French was speaking so I had to speak French.

Dr. Riordan interview — 12/12/04

Transcript

.....

I: I wanted to talk to you because you were for a very long time the director of FL

R: 25 years

.....

1. How many students are taking a foreign language in Springfield Public Schools?

R: I really would not be able to answer that question since I retired 3 years ago.

Historically Springfield viewed FL as a program for the best and the brightest, not all the students. That was the thing in Springfield and in most other places. Springfield is not unique in that respect. As a result of the Ed Reform law in 1993, The Mass Ed Reform law, the FL was listed as one of the core subject requirements, and also as one of the competencies that would be tested for graduation. Now we know that since then the competencies requirement has not happened, and it is questionable if it will ever because there are so many controversies over the parts of the MCAS that have happened and to the fact that it has become a Math and Language Arts test. Probably even Social Studies and Science will not make it to the full degree, only because they never appreciated the money piece of it. How much it was going to cost and the problems that were going to be brought to the forefront by it. How much it was going to be a challenge to resolve those problems. But in any case in 1993 when the Ed Reform Law was passed, from my point of view we were very fortunate to have a superintendent who was a real believer and the fact that all the kids could learn a FL and should and will be able to do it. If they could handle one language there was no reason not to

handle a second one given the right circumstances and the learning environment? So we were going to go from a program that was elementary to HS for some of the kids, to a program from K-12 for all the kids. That was a big shift in terms of thinking and a big change in terms of management and organization... We were the first system in the state that did it., and probably one of the few in the country of our type when you look at how the state department categorizes, and the federal government as well. They make a big issue of this KOC category. They categorize the communities by size, by their economics and all of those variables. We were the only kind of community, like us who had done this. I think that in many instances I received credit for something that while I probably was the instigator, it would have never happened had it not been for the superintendent support. Because the kind of resistance that there is from some administrators today was there then. Even though MCAS was not as big of a factor as it is today. The attitude was there then, and Dr. Negroni's beliefs system was so strong that the people who had the attitudes kept quiet. Because, they may have said it privately they knew they were going to get nowhere. So there was no point in making a big issue about it. And lots of things were put into place that would not have been into place otherwise. His presence and out-front support were very consistent and critical in my mind, so that changes the student population numerically in and in every other way. And as you know over the past few years that has changed in terms of who is in the FL class. There are decisions being made based on Reading scores. And what's happening, is that the pressure is very intense imposed by the State on the school system, and therefore by the leadership of the school system on the principals, and therefore by the principals on everybody. So it is a downward pressure that is there. So, as a result there

are fewer kids that are taking FL now than they were taking it before. Whether it is going to go back where it was before 1993, I can't say, because I do not have the numbers, but I would suspect that the elementary program is smaller than it was a few years ago, but it is still bigger than it was before 1993. So I think that on the paper the district says that it is a program for all the kids, but it may not be implemented because the exceptions are made... But that's kind of the evolution of it all.

**2. Some students are reluctant learners of a foreign language in this district. What do you think that contributes to such a situation?**

**R.** I think that when you say reluctant learners, I don't know if I would say that students are any more reluctant learners of language than the same student may be a reluctant learner of something else. I think that what makes the language piece more challenging is maybe in the minds of some people, language learning is not important enough and therefore a student hears that, hopefully not from the language teachers,, from other teachers, from other adults, both school connected adults and other adults. When you see languages as not being part of the school culture, that it is not a k-12 endeavor. So if a student is, let's say not doing well in Math class, then the option is not to have the student not take Math, but to solve the problem. And to either find a different Math class or whatever. And maybe Math is not a good example because of the MCAS requirement, but the fact is that if a student should either not like the language class for what ever reason: It's I don't like the teacher; I don't like this, I don't like that the student can say I do not want to do it. And in his mind and in the mind of some others, that is an acceptable statement. As if it were another subject that would not be an acceptable statement.

You have the statement but you are not going to act on it. So I think you have a lot of things circling in the air, so to speak that make it acceptable to be a reluctant language learner and that it is not so important because so and so says. And at the same time you have national policies where frankly the whole globalization piece is so dramatic now and the need for people who are both competent in other languages, but also who are knowledgeable in other cultures, it is greater than it ever was. I mean to the degree that after 9/11, you had TV ads and ads in the Worlds Series program for speakers of Farsi. Now that is a disgrace that a country our size should have had to be advertising in that manner for speakers of these languages. And at the national defense level, there was a very big meeting held last Spring, and if you are interested in the paper you can get it from "languagepolicy.org". On that website there is a reference to the Department of Defense meeting that was convened last Spring around the issue of the lack of language and culture competence being a national security issue. Forget the fact that is a nice thing to do. We do not have enough people who are knowledgeable and communicating at a high enough even in a whole bunch of languages, some of which we never even heard of. So you have all this happening at the same time but it is not translating in the k-12 arena.

**I:** It is interesting that is missing because there is a missing link and the link is that at the government level there are some policies but the money to support those policies is missing. The centralized education system is not in place

**R:** unlike some of these other countries that you have listed here that have national education systems and therefore in many instances there are policies about whatever,

and there are also national curriculum requirements in what ever subject you might mention. And part of the controversy over the national standards in any content area was the tremendous resistance on the part of some that that was becoming a national curriculum, and in the US education, is a priority of the State government, and the state delegates it to the local authorities. So the one who can create more regulations is the state as opposed to the federal government, but they have gotten involved at another level. See, you have the national standards and the big, big controversy about the national standards was the use of the word "Voluntary". They had to be very careful, when we were working on the national standards in what ever subject area that the word "voluntary" was upfront and very clear. That just because these publications existed and these standards existed, that they were voluntary, and school districts did, or did not implement them as they chose. And then you got something like the education reform at the national, I think it was largely the result of our seeing several recent presidents or governors who came from a situation where they did make education policy at the state level. Not so much Carter because he didn't do that kind of thing, but Clinton had been the chair of the national governor's association prior to becoming president. The Southern governors conference was the single most significant organization in terms of leaning us where we are today, with No Child Left Behind. That organization looked at the South and understood that the perception of the South was that their educational system was lousy. Therefore, they could not attract the kind of business (American companies, but particularly foreign companies). So, when they wanted to attract the Germans or the Japanese auto makers to go to Tennessee or to Georgia they knew that they had to have schools that were different than the schools

they had. So you saw huge sums of money in the Southern States being put into the school systems from their State government, and standards being created at the state level that were very rigorous because they wanted to change both the perception and the reality. They wanted to be able to assure that the foreign company's that they were producing workers, were well educated and who could work in this new environment in this both high-tech, but also culturally different work setting. And they put their money where their mouth was. So then you had Clinton going to Washington and his whole mind set was that of one being a governor who was very engaged in education policy. So a lot of this "No Child Left Behind" it didn't just come out of nowhere, the title and the actual legislation did, but

the concept the world work was being developed before that. The same thing with Bush coming from Texas which had a very active state department of Ed. Which really put a lot of requirements in effect that the local communities had to do? Very much different from a place like Massachusetts, where it is really the local community. What the course requirements are, what kids have to take, what the content of the courses are. That is not true in some other states. In other states the dept of Ed is an m much more aggressive body, they have much more staff, therefore they not only make policy but they have the people to monitor the policy and to be sure that is actually happening. Quite unlike the department of Ed in Mass that is abysmally small and understaffed. They can barely monitor what they have now. So if they were to put more in place they do not have the staff to make it really happen. Most of these other states they have regional offices, a much more hands on approach with the school systems.



**I:** Do you think it is the geographical location, of these states or just the choice where the industries were going to focus it is it the sizes, or the ..

**R:** I don't know. I think that New England is the place where the dept of ed., until the NCLB, because it forced them to be the implementers in their own state, where the dept of Ed had the least engagement in the requirements... Even when we did the curriculum frameworks that was the biggest effort that it had occurred in this state in terms of curriculum in many years... Because in the 60's they used to have curriculum supervisors, then they downsized all that and everybody became a generalist at the department, and it became more of a monitoring to things like special ed, bilingual. In a way more legalistic kind of monitoring as opposed to a curriculum support to schools. At almost in all the other states there is a person at the dept do Ed in charge with each of the content and that person's job is to work with the curriculum people at the individual communities and to help them implement their program, to help them know what is going on in the subject area. So for instance at ACTFL every year in addition to the national association of district supervisors, which I attended for many years and I was one of the charter founding members. There is also a National State supervisor of FL. There is nobody who goes to that meeting from Mass because there is no one there. So there, people in these other states are tuned in to Washington in a very direct way at the dept of ed. They are the ones who in the greater scheme of things get the information and share the information with the various communities in their state. But we have no one. So when foreign language issues come from Washington they go to Malden to the dept of Ed and the question is, to whom does that go? So it is a very different flow of information as well as support. That's way off the topic...

**I:** no, that's ok

**R:** so the whole idea of language being viewed as something as part of the general education for all the kids, is just that is not historically true in the US, and certainly is not historically true in Springfield. And then you get the typical reaction of the kids coming needier and needier and school being in the position to offer compensatory programs in order to address the challenges of things such as MCAS, and the pitch that is written at. People are saying well, we do not have time to do this other stuff. So in the past you were fighting the best and the brightest belief, now even if you have people, who say that yeah I think that FL is important, however it is not as important as X. And X is what the test is going to measure, and X is the pressure point. So, you have an implementation attitude and I think that trickles down to the students. They hear it in school; they maybe hear it at home as well. And then this kid is not going to college. It is kind of a carry over from the past, where language is something that students who went to college did, but not others. So, it is a lot going on to the kids not necessarily thinking that language is that important. And I think that that is what contributes to them being not as engaged. Because even if they don't like Math it does not matter. They don't have to like Math, they don't have to do well, they don't have to like their Math teacher. They don't have to like anything about it. You are taking Math: period, end of discussion. So you have the things that are part of the general curriculum that reluctant or not, you're going to be there. And then there are the other things that "well, if you really don't want to do it maybe it is not important." So I think that attitude is still present. It takes many years to develop an attitude. And we did have enough time to change it before these other pressures came into play...

### 3. How do you define achievement in foreign language class?

**R:** As a result of the National Standards the foreign language learning has been defined differently than it ever was, because it is no longer just the listening and speaking that was a big goal and even the speaking and listening, reading and writing. The 5 C's kind of put it out there and as you can see from your picture there, up on your wall it does not make any one of them more or less important than the others. Obviously, than one that is critical is the communication one. Because should you read the standards, the first statement always says: Use the second language to deal with the culture, to do the comparisons, to do whatever. The implications being is that this is not a social studies class, where we could talk about culture in English and get the job done. That in a language class the difference is that you use the language to get into the other areas. So even though pictorially it does not show to be more important it is the first standards and it is the one on which all the other are build. So, I think that when you look at achievement, achievement isn't any longer the question of who can fill in the blanks, which historically was for many people, very much grammar driven, and could you fill in the blanks on the test, or could you conjugate the verbs, and could you make the subjects and everything agree, and it was a very accuracy grammar driven role. Then when you look at the standards, you look at the fact that you can't just say that these are the 5 c's, and that those are the values you have to implement the program so than that really happens. And that is a much bigger challenge than just teaching the people to fill in the blanks.

**I;** But in my classes I use, as one of my favorite activities to do, writing in the journal. It is because I want the kids to develop as independent learners and so on, I don't stress

their errors, and their errors consistently across the class are the use of infinitives, the use of English patterns structures when translating into the target language, and so I guess that many foreign language teachers, they are questioning their own teaching. As so if we are doing away with grammar, how are we going to achieve a communication that is...

**R:** that is a high level

**I:** .... and I noticed their discussion in a lot of curriculum meetings where high school teachers question what are the students in the middle school doing, because when they come over here they do not even know how to conjugate a verb...

**R:** Well you've got some different values systems going on there, and I think that what you have to look at is you will have the never ending accuracy issue versus the message. And I think that the way to address it is in the teachers' mind and in the kids mind it has to be very clear what we are doing at this moment. If the goal of this activity is accuracy then accuracy is what is going to be evaluated. So, yes you do have to have the subjects and verbs agree, the noun and adjectives have to agree the sentence has to be put together properly for this particular situation. When you get into the journal writing and also speaking, for the most part, I think, is the information that is being delivered, and the message that is being delivered. And often in first languages as well as in second languages, accuracy becomes shakier because the person, when I am doing a fill in the blanks, or just doing a conjugation, that is boring, there is absolutely no engagement or interest in that activity. I have only one thing to focus on : accuracy, so that is what I focus on. When I am having a conversation with someone, or when I am writing an email to someone in the second language, I am focusing on

there information that I want to share and the message that I want to deliver. And that is how it should be. That is how it should be in the real world. Now the issue is that I can't control everything at the same time because I get caught up in the message that I am delivering and some of the other situation which I have very, very limited time to focus on. You are looking at the stimulation when in a good case scenarios you have 45 minutes a day, 5 days a week you can only do what you can do in 45 minutes a day. This is why it is so critical to have a long sequence of language study. Because you need the time that you need ...the interest in communicating the message. From day 1 kids have to know that that they can put it together in writing and verbally, and the opportunity to build their accuracy over time, so they can self-correct, they can not make the errors as repeatedly as they might while they are focusing on the message. But is it's a tremendous challenge to be balancing that. And the time is the killer. You don't have it.

**I:** A few years ago... We go to Canada every year, so before we go there we have a contact school, so I have the kids writing to pen pals so they write each other one or two times. So I don't know where the paper is, maybe here, maybe at home, where I am working . One student was writing his very best about himself to a student in Canada and she writes back to him, and I kind of let the letter go the way he wrote it without correcting it. So she writes back to him and she says, she is a French speaker from Canada, she says: you are a very interesting boy but I don't quite understand what you are saying. If you mean that you have a girlfriend, this is the way you say it. So she starts bringing in some slang

**K:** Perfect, perfect error correction

**I:** This was hilarious because, it was not what I would have corrected him. It was a perfect way to balance that...

**K:** And you can look at how high the motivation will be on the part of that boy receiving that letter. "Now I understand I guess it does matter if I say it correctly, and that I could cause some confusion. So these are the things that are really critical. It is for ever and ever" Je suis 15 and.." That is going to be for ever. And I am also convinced that the French will also have to live with *etre* and *avoir*. It's going to go *avoir*, period end of discussion. Because life is simpler that way. One of my college professors said, she never lived to see it, but I'm convinced that she is right. The issue is that you have to want to do it, and it has to be important to you to communicate accurately. Doesn't have to be perfect but it has to be accurate enough so that what you are saying or writing is what you have in your head, and that comes over time and it comes after lots and lots of valuable experiences. So these kind of letters that the kids write that, no matter what errors that might make, as long as they can get the message out there and the fact that he say that correction are probably going to be before he is going to fix other mistakes. It was a correction at the level of vocabulary, at the slang level

**K:** so it was also a cultural message

**I:** exactly

**K:** So now is that he can go and use that term and he is not going to have a clue what it means but he has to understand that what he had written might have been correct in terms of standards, just like the standards English in the US, but when you listen to

kids talking to each other the conversation is at a different kind of vocabulary and culture level so

**I:** I bring that letter to my classes because it is a classic example

**K:** Sure

Transcript

**I: What are we talking about?**

**G:** We were talking about FL, and how FL in this particular system... because I don't have any experience in another system, is not looked upon respectably. It is not overlooked, and is not part of the curriculum in many schools. Now we worked at Kiley, I worked at Kiley for 7 years, until I was transferred here. We saw the foreign language department from being part of the curriculum, to being, the years before last, to be specials, or exploratories whatever they call it in the middle school.

**I: Why do you think that this has happened?**

**G:** Well, it happened because of scheduling, because of children underperforming in schools, it happened because the state focuses on scores, scores, scores. We don't care if the kids are learning or not.

**I: Underperforming in what sense**

**G:** Underperforming in school, underperforming on the MCAS,..

**I: In subjects like...**

**G:** like Math, English, you know. Everything becomes ah, MCAS, MCAS, and nobody cares about anything else. In many schools they have taken all the exploratories or specials or prep time, what ever you call them, out. In some schools the kids have 24 hours of Reading. As if that is going to help big time the children to learn more reading. It just doesn't work that way. In some schools that is not going to help you learn more English, if you are not in a structured classroom. If it is not targeted for you to learn.

**I: Why do you think that? Do you think that is the situation in the entire system?**



**G:** Yeah it is, but my question for you is why do you think that Rita wants to leave the system? Get a position and go to another system. My thought is that according to what she said first to you, that she is underlooked and that she is not treated equally by the other directors, my personal thought was that it comes with a ...because FL is not considered part of the curriculum, it is overlooked. I think that it is nationally overlooked and that people don't know if it is important.

**I:** At what level do you mean?

**G:** At the economic level, social level, this is what I teach to my students that it forced me to learn. You are watching television, and you are looking at your president visiting another country, a person from another country. And you look to the president and you look at the other person and in the middle there is the translator. That person knows both languages and can communicate with these people just because he knows these languages.

**I:** You know it is funny that you mentioned the translator. One of my students was writing in her Spanish journal, and was answering the question "Why do we need to learn Spanish?" And she was writing that, we don't have to learn Spanish, first of all because teachers say that it is going to help you when you go to a foreign country. But that is not true, because there are things like the Translator". So I guess that maybe it is a fashion to have a translator, or having people who perform this job...maybe impeding on..

**G:** Probably, but another point that has to be brought up to the student is that where are you in this action? How do you feel when somebody else has to do the job? Do you have the feeling that your sentence is not being communicated? That maybe they are no

doing it properly or maybe that they are not doing it at all. The process of learning a second language goes beyond .....

**I: most of the kids have this argument. "When are we ever going to get out of here.?"**

**G: You do not have to get out of here to use a language. It doesn't matter. You don't know what life is throwing at you. You have no idea..**

**I: You bring the idea that foreign language teacher is teaching to invest in the future**

**G: Absolutely**

**I: That they are not going to be sure about**

**G: If you don't take a chance in learning something new, then you are not invested in the future. I have to be an advocate because I am not a native English speaker. I am from Venezuela and I am,... Spanish is my language. If I never bothered to learn or be interested in any language, I would never be here today. I would not want my life to change I would not have become a teacher here..**

**I: But you're here. They are here. Why would they learn a language ? They are already here?**

**G: Well you do not know what may happen in the future. They may be faced with an opportunity to go abroad anywhere, it may be safer. So how are they going to say ...**

**I: to get a job .....**

**G: Look at my mother. Everytime she comes over, "this is not how I cook the rice. This is how you cook the rice"... And I always say to my mother you have your way and I have my way... We don't have to become objects, and we do not have to have the**

same lifestyle. If you do not invest in the future you are not going to have good opportunities in life. That is what I think personally. Because I have 2 languages already and I am learning a third. It opened choices that you did not have before...

**I: So how did you... what do you think that the perception of the American public about foreign language?**

**G:** The American public believes in it or not...

**I: you know the parents of our students...**

**G:** Let me tell you this and this is my personal opinion. Americans say: to be free, and Americans say that everybody is equal, but let me tell you that American society is the same traditional society than before. They say we open the arms to gays and lesbians, but inside they say not near my house, not in my living room. And the majority of the American public does not know a second language. That is why they do not support... That is the way I see it. Because Americans do not support things that they do not know..

**I: what do you think that contributes to this?**

**G:** Everybody that doesn't know. You have to look at Springfield right now. You have 3 kids they don't have any family problems. Had they not been in a family?... So if you have young parents who are not educated. I mean everybody can get an education but not everybody can be educated. If you know what that means. If they are not educated how are they going to educate their children? And if you do not have a foreign language how are you going to give that back to your children? In that under society, that sub society? And that is what is happening in Springfield. Look at the schools..

**I:** How about the policies? Do you think that the policies coming from the national level, the state level, the district level, even the memos from the director of FL, do you think that they are all conducive to learning a FL? You know NCLB, etc., The students' attitude, perception, motivation to learn a FL...

**G:** No because there is no uniformity. From the top down everything.... Let me give you an example. In Springfield, at the school where I am at supposedly, is adopting responsive classroom strategy, and I quote that. I took the workshop to see what that is. And to tell you the truth some of it is applicable in the FL classroom, but most of it is not because you can find the social aspect of life changed...

**I:** What do you mean the social aspect?

**G:** Well, to learn socially, you know the community learning. You know, not the singing of songs and the TPR, but this is different. I disagree with this. Children are individuals and should be seeking individuality. And I am going to explain that to you. In a responsive classroom the teacher no longer says "Gee, Adina I like your picture!" the key words are "I like the picture because you are forcing that child to present something to please you not himself. I totally disagree with that, because I think it takes a lot of individuality away from the children. So you are supposed to explain to the children: Well, why don't you explain the picture to me? And then the child is supposed to explain to you about his picture. So the child will never hear from you "I think you did a good job, I like your picture, congratulations". Those words are banished!

**I:** From the classroom?

**G:** Yes that is why I disagree with that. Going back to your question, Springfield has adopted this Responsive Classroom program going on, Right? So what are the other

programs? They have 4 different programs going on at the same time. So there is no uniformity in the system. So then, you know our students are traveling students because they go from school to school, from town to town, you are asking about the motivation for the children, that you know I disagree with that. Because just as you get your good and bad in life, you have your good teachers and you have your bad teachers. But all in all it does not depend only on the teacher to motivate the students, and there are a lot of factors that go along with that and you can do... And the teachers should not be blamed for their student's underperformance. For instance Kiley is presented, that the teachers are not doing their jobs. There is some truth to that but you have to look at all the factors. You have to look at how schools are administered. You have to look at the disciplinary program that nobody wants to do it. That is my opinion. Uniformity, you don't have it.

**I: Now you live in a suburban area, You have kids who go to school. Now, did you notice any differences between, or similarities between children in a FL program in a suburman area and children in a FL program in Springfield? Would you say that economic factors in a community are the ones that have contributed to ...**

**G:** I think it is a major difference and I am going to tell you. People would say look at the kind of people that go in these community, look at the kind of money that this community has. And to tell you the truth I don't think it has to do with economics, or the money, it has to do with uniformity. From the moment my children entered kindergarten, till the moment they graduate from HS, the system applies the same rules, and they are applicable and if you break them there is a punishment. There is consequences, there is logical consequences. They are not just teaching the children

academically, but also social skills. Springfield parents do not want to get involved in schools. Somebody might say that they can't they work 3 jobs. But look, my husband works 3 jobs, I work 2 jobs and between the two of us we have to go to school for any reason: parent teacher conference, how are the kids doing, whatever it is. We like it because it is consistency and uniformity. And I am going to give you another example: My daughter started 3<sup>rd</sup> grade last year and from the time they are in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade till they finish HS, the children have agendas. You know the agendas they have at Kiley? Well they have them here too, but they change it. As they grow up, they get smaller and smaller when they get to HS, like an organizer for the student. They teach them to use them. It is a great communication tool. You now my son Brian he has a Spanish teacher last year you know Mr. Eagan, and Brian came home from school, and he would spend 45 on Spanish HW alone. Things like vocabulary, all these kind of things that we do in FL, and Brian was willing to do it.

**I: I know Eagan, He does not fall in the category of regular FL teacher, he is very engaging...**

**G: But doesn't every teacher have to do his job like that?**

**I: Are teachers the main reason students learn a FL, continue the study of a FL?**

**Are they the motivators? ...Because my concern is why do students resist?**

**G: Student are not resisting just FL. Students are resisting to learning, period! They are resisting English, Math, everything. And just the fact that they put a label on FL, now it is exploratory, now it is special, a prep teacher. I am a prep teacher? A prep teacher?**

**I: It is related to policy.....**

**G:** It is related to policy, to labels to the fact that you have classroom teachers saying :right now you have the prep time teachers coming. Do we need anything? No, you do not need anything for special teachers. And then your job is really hard because of classroom teachers, because they have a classroom. I am a teacher too, but I am not looked upon as a teacher. I went to the same school, I went to do my Masters, I have the same working time as they do. And thus, a lot of the responsibility for your subject is taken away. And students see that and they are not going to care either. Students told me last year "Well in specials we never wrote anything" Excuse me how are you going to learn a FL, or anything, if you don't write it down. And I had to, and this is not a lie, I had to teach students how to use a notebook because they did not know how to use a notebook. And nobody event taught them that. So you know, I would change that they are resistant to learn period.

**I:** But have you not noticed that there is a bigger difference in FL?

**G:** Yes I have but also in Music, in Art, in any kind of Exploratory class and I tell you that because it is no respect from the top down. I lived it at Brunton, I lived this for a year and I have to live this for another year. I don't think it is so much resistance to FL Adina, I think there is resistance to FL in the system. Look at the people that are our administrators...

## APPENDIX H

### QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT INTERVIEW

**Research Question – What is the nature of student resistance that affects the endorsement of foreign language education in public schools?**

- What is your name? How old are you? What grade are you in?
- Which of your classes are difficult? How do you prepare for these classes?
- How do you know if you are learning in general, and how do you know you are learning in foreign language class? What do you think that makes you learn?
- Out of all the subjects that you learn in school, which one do you think you can connect the most to when you are not in school? How do you know that?
- Do you study a foreign language? When did you start the study of a foreign language? Did anyone encourage you to take this language?
- What do students need to know and be able to do in order to be considered foreign language students?
- How important compared to the rest of the curriculum is the foreign language program in your school?
- If foreign language is part of your education, how effective is your involvement in the foreign language class?
- In your opinion what is important to learn in the foreign language class?
- What media do you use frequently (radio, newspaper, TV,)? Did you ever encounter the use of any other language besides English in the day-to-day media that you use?
- In our class we often write journals. How related is writing in the journal and your learning of French? Do you see this relationship?
- What opportunities do you have to express yourself in a foreign language class? How does this affect you or not? Please explain.
- Would you like to add anything?

<sup>i</sup> In general, the interview questions were grouped to address the research questions



## APPENDIX I

### QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW

**Research Question – What is the nature of student resistance that affects the endorsement of foreign language education in public schools?**

- How many students are taking a foreign language in Springfield Public Schools?
- Some students are reluctant learners of a foreign language in this district. What do you think that contributes to such a situation?
- How do you define achievement in foreign language class?
- In your opinion, how significantly are the students' lives impacted by economic forces from outside the school, and how does this affect their learning of a foreign language?
- NCLB law has stipulations for the improvement of student education, including foreign language education. In your opinion, what is the direct impact of these stipulations for learning a foreign language in this district?
- What kind of learning scenarios do you think are facilitated by the implementation of National Standards?
- Currently our school is offering two foreign languages. Could you tell me what was the basis for selecting these languages?
- In your opinion, is a student's advanced study of FL important in the district?
- In contrast to language learning in U.S., do you have any knowledge of how foreign language practices occur for Burundi, Romanian, Indian, Malaysian or Colombian students who learn English? Are they similar, different?
- Would you like to ask or add anything?

<sup>i</sup> In general, the interview questions were grouped to address the research questions

## APPENDIX J

### STUDENT CONSENT LETTER

Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Adina Alexandru and I am your child's' French/Spanish teacher at Kiley Middle School. I am also the chair for the foreign language department at this school. For the past 5 years I have been involved in the Language, Literacy and Culture Doctoral Program, School of Education, at the University of Massachusetts.

I am presently conducting a study for the purpose of collecting data to be used in my doctoral dissertation. The general focus of this dissertation is to understand and examine how language policies enacted through class instruction impact student learning of foreign language education during the formative years in U. S. public schools.

The primary purpose of this study is to enhance student learning and encourage excellence in teaching. The results from this study should also increase our knowledge about the importance of foreign language learning. Such knowledge will be very useful to teachers as they help students learn a foreign language, especially students who may experience difficulty in other subjects that require motivation to learn.

I would like your permission to have your child participate in the study. I would like to observe your child during regular foreign language school activities. I would also like your permission to audiotape and videotape these activities in which your child may be involved. I may also be talking to your child about these activities and about the way he/she completes assignments in school and outside the school.

The findings of this study will be used in a final report presented to the school, my doctoral dissertation, presentations made at professional conferences, and in published articles and books. The audiotapes and videotapes will be used only for research purposes and in presentations at professional conferences.

The names of all participants in the study will be changes in any written reports or articles to protect their identity and insure their privacy. Your childr and you as the parent guardian, have the right to agree for the student to participate in the research or to decline participation. Students and their parents/guardians who decline to participate will not be penalized in any way, nor will the students be excluded from class activities or other school activities. Students who agree to participate are considered "participants" in the research by simply being a member of the class while I am observing. Any participant is also free to withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions. There are no risks associated with this study.

You are welcome to call me at any time and ask questions about the study. When the study has been completed, a report of the study will be available at your child's school, and you are welcome to read it.

The study has been discussed with, and approved by the Springfield Public Schools Director of Foreign Language, the principal of your child's school, and the UMass professor who oversees this research. They all endorsed the study and will be working closely with me on the study.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 787-7240.

Thank you

Sincerely,

Adina Alexandru

---

### Permission Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Please check:

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission to Adina Alexandru to include my child in the study of

foreign language education.

- I also give her permission to photocopy my child's written assignment Yes/No
- I am also willing to allow my child to participate in an interview. Yes/No

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not give permission to include my child in the study of foreign language education.

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX K

### ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT LETTER

By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this interview conducted by Adina Alexandru and I understand that:

1. This study is being conducted for the purpose of collecting data to be used in Adina Alexandru's doctoral dissertation
2. I allow Adina Alexandru to discuss with me topics related to this study that are going to be presented in the form of interview or informal conversations. I understand that she will audio-or video-record me during the interviews. I will provide her with materials that I may think could enhance what I have to say in the interview. These materials could be student work, in-district memos, curriculum frameworks, other materials from the Department of Education or foreign language policies from other states.
3. I agree to participate in interviews and I understand that the interview transcript will be used as data. I am also aware that informal conversations regarding language and language teaching can be used as part of her data. I have the right to review the interview tapes, reconstructive notes, and transcripts upon request.
4. I know that some direct quotations may be used in publications. Pseudonyms will be used in all cases. I understand that the identity of the school, teacher, students, and administrators will remain confidential.
5. The findings from this study might be used for journal articles, books and professional presentations. If data from this study were to be used in any other way, Adina will contact me to obtain further written consent.
6. In signing this form, I am agreeing that I will make no financial claim against Adina Alexandru for the use of the data.
7. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without repercussion.

I have read and understand the content of this form. I understand by signing this form I am voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study.

---

Participant's signature

Date

---

Researcher's signature

Date

## APPENDIX L

### MEGHAN'S SURVEY

Survey – 3/5/02 - excerpts Megan

#### **Why do you study Spanish?**

I think we study Spanish a way to explore other languages and cultures. This is how we learn history, grammar, reading skills, math and maybe even some science. I think Spanish teachers say that will help if we ever happen to go to a Spanish speaking country, but first of all a lot of people don't and second of all there are such things as translator.

#### **Do you think there is a relationship between writing in the journal and you learning Spanish and why?**

Maybe the more you write in Spanish in the journal then have other people read it helps your Spanish grammar, because you can see your own personal mistakes.

#### **What does it mean to you to have power in the classroom?**

To have power in the classroom doesn't mean very much to me because first of all I rarely receive any, and second of all when I do have any, I can only go along with the way the teacher tells me to, so that's not exactly power anyway.. I mean, to me, it's the teacher still in power, controlling what I do.

APPENDIX M

TABLE 2B – REFLEXIVITY ON F. L. CLASS PARTICIPANTS

Table 2B							
Means of data collection	Students	Teacher	Parents	Media	Administrators	Legislators	Other teachers
1. interviews	Interviews	Field notes	Student notes	Student essays	Interviews	Law texts	Interviews
2. surveys	Surveys	Videotapes	Student interviews	Administrator interviews	Interviews with teachers	Interviews with administrators	Field notes
3. student written text	Personal written text (journal entries, essays, notes)	Personal reflections	Field notes			Interview with teachers	
4. field notes, class observations reflections	Field notes from teacher conferences					Student notes	
5. student oral text							
6. class rules, syllabus, etc.							
7. legislation text							
8. district memos							

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