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Defining Primary and Academic Discourse through Instructional Methods in a Single Junior High Classroom

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Defining Primary and Academic Discourse through Instructional Methods in a Single Junior
High Classroom

Defining Primary and Academic Discourse through Instructional Methods in a Single Junior
High Classroom

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction

by

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I examine the use of academic discourse in the school setting and discuss the relation of the primary discourse to academic discourse. I focus on the verbal exchanges between a teacher and her students as these students acquire the academic discourse of the English classroom. The study focuses on the ideas of primary discourse and secondary or academic discourse as presented by Gee (1996) and focuses on his idea of social languages.

Using a microethnographic study, I develop the idea of how the teacher related to her students and how a single educator felt about the purpose of academic discourse in relation to the students she teaches in an urban junior high school classified as economically disadvantaged by the free and reduced lunch rate. Data sources included ten classroom observations, transcriptions, interviews with the student participants, and interviews with the teacher participant.

The data collected in this study develop an understanding of the student experience in a society that is changing rapidly and demanding them to use academic discourse. I acknowledge the changes the students and teacher experienced throughout the study and the importance of both discourses in the academic setting. I conclude my study with implications suggesting that primary discourse and academic discourse serve a purpose in the school setting and should be used in the instructional methods of educators. My data indicates the frustrations students cope with in the school setting, and they feel they must lose themselves in the school setting. Thus, this dissertation suggests primary discourse be made visible in the school setting and be allowed as vehicle for teaching the academic discourse and social languages desired in various social settings.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The purpose of this microethnographic study was to develop a more complete analysis of what constitutes academic discourse, how junior high school students receive it, and what instructional practices are used in the teaching of academic discourse. The use of academic discourse is a secondary discourse for students; therefore, this discourse may seem awkward or as if they are losing a sense of self. Furthermore, the language students speak should be considered good enough to use in the academic setting; and with that in mind, this study explores whether the language students speak and if social languages should be taught in the school setting. This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, a synopsis of the methodology, and theoretical sensitivity. Important definitions are also provided in this chapter.

Background of the Study

For junior high school students, language acquisition acts as a social phenomenon involving more than just language. For example, junior high school students may read a piece of text and acquire vocabulary from the selection. They may also acquire language through the differing social contexts, and many of which are oral communication in the classroom setting. Thus, language acquisition necessitates the need to evolve discourse in the sense of social contexts and the perspectives of what is considered socially acceptable. Gee (2003) stated, "Big D Discourses are ways of using language, acting, interacting, valuing, dressing, thinking, believing, and feeling (or displaying these), as well as ways of interacting with various objects, tools, artifacts, technologies, spaces, and times" (p. 7). When discussing the concept of urban

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schools, certain issues arose multiple times. For a school to be considered Title I or high poverty in the United States, the school must show that 50 percent or more students are eligible for free or reduced lunch (Jensen, 2009, p. 67). Some of the symptomatic conditions found in the discussion of low socioeconomic (SES) schools are low reading scores, high dropout rates, and poor motivation (Kozol, 1991, p. 3). As these concepts are considered, an awareness that students in an urban junior high school may struggle with academic language emerges.

Everyday conversations require less linguistic skills than academic conversations; in other words, academic conversations are challenging because they require more linguistic skills than everyday conversations (Gibbons, 2002, p. 1). Students who come from low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds often struggle to distinguish the differences between their primary discourse, home language, and the secondary discourse, academic language. According to Gee (2008a), "success in school requires children to comprehend the complex academic language found in the content areas" (p. 2). The process of discourse acquisition occurs when a person acquires a language or method of communication other than the primary discourse.

Through the use of empirical research and data collection, Jensen (2009) asserted language processing differs for students from middle-class and upper-class backgrounds (p. 35). Thus, these middle-class and upper-class students acquire advanced levels of academic discourse more quickly and must make minor alterations to their current discourse because of increased exposure to vocabulary within their home environments (Huttenlocher et. al, 1991). In contrast, low SES, culturally diverse students require the most instruction in academic discourse and speak the more unconventional versions of English that emphasize their low SES backgrounds (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). Social context must be assessed when discussing the idea of academic discourse. While low-SES students speak these more unconventional versions of

English, the context and ability to switch discoursal codes should be analyzed to provide an understanding of the ways these students use language. As one teacher stated in Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, "the language that our children speak may not be Standard English but there is still wisdom here" (Kozol, 1991, p. 41). These students communicate in a discourse different from what society deems appropriate but maintain the wisdom to switch to academic or secondary discourse when in the social context of the academic or school setting.

With these considerations in mind, Gee's (2001) four questions for discourse analysis must be contemplated.

1. What *social language* or *social languages* are represented in this discourse?
2. What are some of the important *situated meanings* of key words or phrases in this discourse?
3. What significant *cultural models* are triggered (or could be triggered) by words or phrases in this discourse?
4. What *Discourse* (with a big "D") or *Discourses* is or could this discourse be a part of? How does this Discourse (or these Discourses) relate to other Discourses? (p. 1-2)

Although these questions developed the basis for discourse analysis and the cultural identity of those who use the discourse, the concept of academic discourse requires more analysis of the factors influencing junior high students who attend a low SES status junior high school and why these students struggle with academic discourse.

According to Gee (2001), the methods for discourse study are developmentally and instructionally appropriate tools for facilitating language acquisition among low socio-economic urban students. Gee (2001) stated, "by 'discourse' (with a little "d") I mean any stretch of language, oral or written, that is meant to communicate or can be taken as communicative" (p. 1). Discourse study prepares students to meet the expectations of employers and aids them in

understanding the differences between their first language and the academic vocabulary utilized in educational settings.

In addition, the acquisition of increased vocabulary and academic discourse allows students to comprehend the expectations of a society molded by the desires of "the world of industry and commerce" (Kozol, 2005, p. 64). Empirical research highlights the need for students to acquire language skills and to understand complex academic language (Jensen, 2009; Gee, 2008a; & Collins, 1988). Research regarding elementary level children suggests students from middle-class homes are more readily prepared for school than their poverty-stricken counterparts. Prior to school attendance, children reared in middle-class households are exposed to the components of academic discourse as they learn to talk because their parents and other caregivers talk to them using this style (Heath, 1983, p. 344). One vital difference between underprivileged adolescents and their middle class counterparts appears to be access to academically acceptable language. These students have a different L1, primary discourse or home language, than what they meet in the academic setting. The L2, academic discourse, presented to these students must be viewed through the sense of language acquisition. As Gee (2008b) suggests, "children acquire their initial sense of family and community identity as part and parcel of the process of acquiring their native conversational language" (p. 62-63). However, the research is lacking and not fully developed in relation to strategies and teaching methods, which work for junior high school students as they progress with secondary or academic discourse acquisition.

The process of discourse acquisition occurs when a person develops a language or method of communication other than the primary discourse. As students enter the workforce, they are exposed to various language expectations considered to be societal or career norms.

According to Reskin (2013), "these societal mechanisms include normative considerations within establishments' institutional communities, the expectations of their clientele, collective bargaining agreements, public transportation routes, and laws and regulations" (p. 10). Among these institutional communities, the educational system causes discrepancies between middle-class and low socioeconomic status students by holding them to the same discourse expectations (Kozol, 1991, 2005). Students who have professional, middle-class parents often have more access to academic and secondary discourses than their counterparts who attend schools with a high free and reduced lunch rate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to define the methods used to teach academic discourse and responses of students who attend a school with a high free and reduced lunch rate to the explicit teaching of secondary or academic discourse and how it relates to their primary discourses; thus, academic discourse or secondary discourse was defined through the practices of the teacher and the students. In addition to this purpose, I considered the idea of cultural diversity as it relates to the process of academic discourse acquisition. Thus, I wanted to know how a single ninth grade English teacher defined academic discourse and why she felt it was necessary to correct discourse.

Hyland (2009) defined academic discourse as "the ways of thinking and using language which exist in the academy" (p. 1). Academic discourse uses multiple ideas such as formal grammar, vocabulary, behavioral expectations, and the methods by which students are educated. Furthermore, Hyland (2009) contended the significance of such discourse lies in the fact that major social functions utilize these standards (p. 1). Thus, when I conducted my study in Ms. Smith's classroom, I had to narrow my focus to primarily the language and vocabulary used.

This study supports the idea of Gee (2014) in the notion of social languages and that every discourse serves a purpose and has a place in the academic setting.

Statement of the Problem

A certain stigma exists with the teaching of language in the academic institution; thus, "a certain sense of powerlessness and paralysis among many sensitive and well-meaning literacy educators who appear to be caught in the throes of a dilemma" exists and causes many educators to question the necessity of teaching dominant or academic discourse (Delpit, 2006, p.152). Literacy educators often question the idea of teaching academic discourse and debate whether this discourse is still beneficial. Students can communicate within their social setting and with people they encounter, so they essentially have a language, which serves the basic purpose of communication. As a matter of fact, Delpit (2006) contended primary discourses are maintained because of their relation to a secondary discourse.

> The status of individuals born into a particular discourse tends to be maintained because primary discourses are related to secondary discourses of similar status in our society (for example, the middle-class home discourse to school discourse, or the working-class African American discourse to the black church discourse). Status is also maintained because dominant groups in a society apply frequent "tests" of fluency in the dominant discourse, often focused on its most superficial aspects—grammar, style, mechanics—so as to exclude from full participation those who are not born to positions of power. (p. 153)

Junior high students and individuals growing up, speaking slang and broken English, have limited research available. These individuals who have a primary discourse differing from what is seen as socially acceptable by the dominant powers may struggle to acquire academic discourse differing greatly from their own (Delpit, 2006). Thus, the matter becomes essential that students need to be tested with secondary discourses relating closely to their primary discourse; furthermore, they must learn to communicate in society rather than have standards differing greatly from their norms forced upon them by testing and rubrics. Essentially, these

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students must learn how to code-switch between social languages rather than lose the sense of their primary discourse to an academic discourse which does not relate to them (Gee, 2014).

Research indicates students experience deficits in the number of words they are exposed to in relation to students whose parents are considered to be white-collared professionals. In fact, Jensen (2009) suggests based on the findings of Huttenlocher et al. (1998) that "children raised in poverty experience a more limited range of language capabilities" (p. 35). Huttenlocher et al. (1998) examined 10 low-income children and 8 middle income children over the beginning stages of language acquisition and suggested talkative mothers who spoke at least 7,000 words over a 3 hour period for 16 months caused their children to gain more vocabulary than those mothers who were less talkative (p. 196). Despite the fact the mothers varied in the amount of speech they exposed their children to, the scenario also found a significant difference in the amount of words teachers use with differing classes of children. The study also found "low income children use less than two-thirds the number of different words that middle income children" (Huttenlocher et al., 1998, p. 196). The issue arises when children are exposed to fewer words over a period of time a larger inequality is created causing these children to attend school with more marked deficits than their peers.

These deficits indicate a problem in the amount of exposure students have to vocabulary and the process of academic vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, Delpit (2006) argued the acquisition of a dialect and language of a particular area could occur when students are corrected and receive direct instruction in the rules of academic English (p. 49-51). Since students who live in homes with little resources and low income may struggle with the acquisition of academic discourse, they must also deal with marked differences in their primary and secondary language skills and the ability to understand and utilize the differences in language. In fact, some students

who attend low SES status junior high schools often lack the sense of academic social vernacular to make educated decisions regarding social context (Gee,1996, p.25). Specific instructional practices designed to structure academic social language provide students with the opportunities to practice the ability to speak, write, and listen aids them in distinguishing social contexts (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011; Beck et al., 2013).

These students often struggle with the differences between their primary discourse and the secondary or academic discourse they learn in school. According to Gee (2008a), "success in school requires children to comprehend the complex academic language found in the content areas" (p. 2). These content areas develop a need for students to understand social context and the employment of specific strategies used to teach language structures and the use of academic discourse. Thus, the objectives of the study were (a) to investigate the instructional practices designed to teach academic discourse and (b) to explain the impact of teaching methods on students as they are used to establish academic discourse as a social language in the school setting.

Research Questions

The study focused on the following research questions:

1. What types of verbal exchanges occur within the classroom setting of a low socioeconomic junior high school?

2. How are students at a low socio-economic status junior high school engaged with academic discourse in the context of their classrooms?

3. What reactions do students have in relation to the specific scaffolds or techniques teachers use in the classroom?

Significance of the Study

The study examined the implementation of instructional strategies and practices of one junior high English teacher as she taught academic discourse, in particular academic language and vocabulary with a focus on the language acquisition process of urban junior high students. These student participants of the study were not limited to English Language Learners. Students who live in poverty are exposed to less vocabulary words than students who are raised in homes with professional parents who hold a career and college education (Jensen, 2009).

The significance of this study was to inform urban junior high educators about the instructional strategies used to teach students how to switch discourses depending upon their social contexts in particular switching between academic discourse and their primary discourses. Empirical research emphasizes language acquisition skills in either elementary grades or high school grades, yet more research is needed for junior high students. Thus, this study provided an additional analysis regarding the particular approaches used to help urban junior high students acquire language skills appropriate in the academic social context. From this study, educators gain a knowledge that students possessing vernaculars differing from academic discourse have a language acceptable to communicate in their social world, and academic discourse must be seen as a social language students may utilize within the social context of the educational institutions and as they seek job opportunities (Gee, 2001, 2009). The benefits of this study were to change the positivist perspective that there is only one correct language and that people living in distress must not speak it and to adjust to the understanding of socially appropriate language skills and discernment.

The study added to the body of research regarding language acquisition for students and the teaching methods used to teach academic discourse. By developing the perception that

students who attend a low SES urban junior high school must also develop an academic

discourse, researchers, English teachers, and curriculum designers will benefit from the study.

The study informed these groups about the behaviors of these students and the responses the

students have to each strategy. Also, the study provided insight into language acquisition skills

in reading, writing, and speaking.

In this study, I collected data to analyze the teaching strategies used by one English

teacher in an urban junior high setting. I used a process and a checklist to determine the

effectiveness of the strategies used by the teacher. The goal of teaching academic discourse is to

provide students with the mechanisms to achieve success in college and their career. This study

provided information based on an in-depth analysis of one English teacher's differing approaches

to the teaching of academic discourse; therefore, emphasizing the difference between what was

considered good practice and what one English teacher does to change these ideas and provide

strategies geared to urban junior high students. Thus, the information from this study may be

used for future research studies to provide more information regarding how students acquire

language skills.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations.

The study's site was one classroom within one urban junior high school with a high free

and reduced lunch rate. This factor limited the data because the school chosen is populated with

a low socio-economic and diverse student population. This study explored the language

acquisition of the students who attend a low SES status junior high school. Therefore, the

demographics of other schools may vary.

Although the language acquisition process may be similar, it was more difficult to generalize that the event may occur in other settings unless they are similar in student demographics and teacher behavior.

Finally, the last limitation was I had formed a relationship with the English teacher. Thus, in an effort to control bias, I videotaped lessons and triangulated data. The study was also peer reviewed.

Delimitations.

As the researcher, I limited the scope of the study by interviewing and observing students after the lessons. The students were selected for the study based on convenience and which students were most actively participating in the lessons. A wide representation of primary languages and ethnical backgrounds provided me with an understanding of how socio-economic status and primary language affected the learning of second language.

The choice of school was limited to a specific school whose socioeconomic and demographical status meets the requirements of the research objective. The socio-economic status and demographics demonstrated a range of cultural perspectives revolving around a culture of low socio-economic status within the home life of the students.

Definition of Terms

To construct an understanding of the study, the following terms are defined to establish their context in this study.

Academic Language is the specialist styles of language associated with academic disciplines, fields, and domains, including the so-called 'content areas' in school (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies, history, civics, etc.) (Gee, 2014).

Discourse is beyond the idea of language; instead it takes in the idea of existence in society. The term refers to the idea of one's identity kit, which integrates clothing, actions, beliefs, gestures, body language, speech, and writing. The identity kit allows a person to take on a particular social role. A person's discourse helps them to fit into a particular social setting and group. In other words, the discourse comprises primarily ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, and behaving in certain places (Gee, 1996, p. 127-128). For the purpose of this study, the focal point will be these language specific interactions and behaviors.

Discourse grammar is the relationship between grammatical form and discoursal functions. Furthermore, discourse grammar continually forms patterns, which shape discourse (Hughes & McCarthy, 1998, p.263-264).

SES refers to socio-economic status (SES) and describes the social and economic circumstances such as education level of parents, familial income, parental employment, and resource availability. In the school setting, SES is defined by the eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch (F/R lunch) in regard to state and federal regulations (Bakle, 2010, p. 11).

Social Context "includes the physical setting in which the communication takes place and everything in it" (Gee, 2014). Thus, social context takes into account body language of those involved as well as what talk and actions occurred prior to the current situation and the "shared knowledge those involved have, including shared cultural knowledge" (Gee, 2014).

Social Languages are the "styles or varieties of a language (or a mixture of languages) that enact and are associated with a particular social identity" (Gee, 2014).

Standard English is the type native speakers are taught to read and write (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008, p. 2). Furthermore, Standard English is the type of English most widely

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understood and attracts the least amount of attention as far as being strange or peculiar to other people (Krapp, 1919, p. ix).

Summary

I began conceptualizing this study when I taught in the classroom setting and listened to my students talk and would have parents who would complain their student could not understand my vocabulary and language. Then, as an instructional facilitator, I encountered the idea of academic discourse again through teachers who said they could not understand the acronyms, vocabulary, and ideas I was trying to impart, which required me to rephrase my thoughts and ideas. I listened as my English teachers discussed many of their students could not understand the texts, language used in the classroom, and could not speak as if they were in the school setting.

Thus, the study sought to develop insight into the language acquisition process for low socioeconomic urban junior high school students. The purpose of this study was to define the methods and responses of low socioeconomic students to the explicit teaching of secondary or academic discourse and how secondary discourse relates to their primary discourses. Thus, academic discourse or secondary discourse was defined through the practices of the teacher and the students.

Research highlighted the need of students to acquire language skills and to understand complex academic language (Gee, 2008a; Jensen, 2009; & Collins, 1988). However, while the study sought to bring clarity to this situation, I also sought to bring an understanding that discourse is used to communicate; and therefore, primary discourses must be used to relate information provided in the academic discourse. A combination of discourses will aid students in recognizing the practices of their teachers. Through the compilation of multiple theories, the

issue arose that teaching the idea of social setting simultaneously with students' primary

discourses may be essential in fostering students' understandings of academic discourse and the

ownership of such a social language.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The study examined how low socioeconomic status students acquire academic discourse and learn to differentiate their discourses depending upon social context. The literature review examines the factors that play a role in the language acquisition process. I used a variety of methods such as books, journals, databases, and a small number of texts from other sources. My literature review begins with broad terms associated with my topic: discourse analysis, academic discourse, language acquisition, academic vocabulary, and instructional practices. I utilized Google Scholar, ProQuest, Ebsco, ERIC, and government associated websites to assure I conducted a thorough review of the relevant literature.

Since instructional practices and the terminology academic discourse changes, I included literature from the mid-1980s. Academic vocabulary plays a significant role in the understanding of academic discourse; therefore, I considered research highlighting the acquisition of language from the perspective of academic vocabulary in written and oral communication. I processed the information found in this literature review by using the following thematic ideas: academic discourse, English Language Learners, inequality, testing, vocabulary, and low socioeconomic status. I wanted to find literature consistent with the site I studied as well. Once those ideas were processed, I categorized each reference by topic. Therefore, this literature review consists of a chronological review of concepts that play a role in the academic discourse. The final section reviews the gaps found in the literature and served as a basis for the methodology section found in Chapter Three.

Inequality and Language

Through monolingual discourse education, a perspective of one superior discourse,

academic discourse, impacts the teaching of English in educational institution. Heller (1995) established the argument by suggesting language choice creates an environment reliant upon symbolic domination within social institutions. Language becomes a vehicle for control over other ethnicities that are unable to articulate, write, or read in a particular manner. The term "symbolic domination" may be defined as the "ability of certain social groups to maintain control over others by establishing their view of reality and their cultural practices as the most valued and […] as the norm" (Heller, 1995, p. 373). These groups predominantly attempt to repress immigrants and other minorities with the use of language in particular social institutions and the norms of such institutions. To dominate, establish norms, and progress desires, these social institutions delegate their resources, control behaviors, and create meanings used by those controlled by the institution (Heller, 1995, p. 373). The best method for establishing these interests and norms lies in the use of language as a control over others.

Thus, the use of language norms emphasizes the delegation of power relations in the social institutions. People possessing this symbolic power use language preferences to "exert, aggravate, or mitigate their power, to collude with or resist that exercise, and to exploit or minimize the effects of paradoxes" (Heller, 1995, p. 374). Monolingual education is believed to foster an environment which breeds symbolic dominance due to the inability of certain groups to comprehend language.

As many ELLs work through the process of Second Language Acquisition, many learners prefer to mesh their primary language with the academic language they have learned. Heller (1995) argued, "in the context of monolingualizing institutions of nation-states, overt juxtaposition of codes is threatening, since overt practices such as code-switching are in two ways the antithesis of the monolingual norm" (p. 374). The two key problems with code

switching and the use of language are illegitimate forms of language surface in official discourse and the idea of monolingualism is challenged (Heller, 1995, p. 374). Code switching threatens the purity of monolingualism and the norms established by the dominant class.

Monolingualism continues to be championed by researchers as the best solution to universalizing language. Some researchers believe it is better to speak one language regardless of esteem than to speak two languages poorly (Heller, 1995, p. 374). This function of language perpetuates the symbolic domination of the middle class by maintaining a monolingual viewpoint and not educating students in other languages. Through the maintenance of schools' monolingual norms, schools allow the educated middle class to advance its interest in bilingualism and concern with autonomous governance. Students' interests are less well addressed when the power struggles take place within schools (Heller, 1995, p. 377). The middle class exploits language to preserve power within the educational institutions.

With the conversation of monolingual education as a method for middle class control, the education provided in institutions continued to focus on monolingualism. Cummins (2000) highlighted a problematic situation in the development of monolingual discourse in the field of education, which impacts the teaching of academic discourse. The research argued the teaching of monolingual education restricts the learning of bilingual students and represses the relationships between teachers and students. "Xenophobic discourse is broadcast into every classroom and constitutes the primary means through which coercive relations of power are enacted" (Cummins, 2000, p. 4). Instead of viewing the teaching of academic discourse as a means to achievement, this situation highlighted the teaching of the middle-class and ultimately relied on power distribution and minority repression theories.

The maintenance of L1, the home language or first language, and the acquisition of L2,

the second language or academic discourse, appears to be highly important to parents, but the emphasis suggests the L1 must reach a certain point before L2 acquisition occurs. "Contrary to the views of many North American educators, active promotion of the first language in the home appears to benefit not only development of L1 but also the L2" (Cummins, 2000, p. 12). The educational setting acts as the dominant environment in this research and ultimately represses the L1 to emphasize the power over minorities and language learners. "Affluence and privilege alone can't buy L1 maintenance in the face of the massive power of the dominant language in the environment" (Cummins, 2000, p. 13). The dominant society controls the educational setting and teaches academic discourse as a means to control the minority group.

While these movements surface in educational institutions, the workforce also utilizes language as a means to repress minority workers. In 2003, Barbara F. Reskin highlighted the methods utilized in society to repress certain minority groups. Reskin (2003) stated that "employers might […] forbid workers from speaking any language but English while on the job, or use race or gender-conscious practices as part of court-ordered affirmative action" (p. 12). The mechanisms of ascriptive inequality suggest the need for education to prepare students who do not speak in the formal English register to be prepared to deal with employers who require good communication skills. More than one way to speak exists and may be used depending upon the social context the student may be in at any given time. Thus, education must champion bilingualism and the teaching of academic discourse in terms of social context. Students must be taught how to discern when to use certain language skills.

While Heller's, Cummins's, and Reskin's research draw upon the repression of minority groups through the use of academic discourse, the need to bridge the opportunity gap and prepare underprivileged children to be employable and college-ready is apparent (Heller, 1995;

Cummins, 2000; Reskin, 2003). Through discourse and language, the key to being successful, communication, will be easier for students to navigate. The teaching of formal language skills, social contexts, and when to use certain language patterns provide students with the ability to overcome the monolingual education system and apply their bilingualism.

Place

Adolescents socialize by using language; therefore, academic language acquisition acts as a means for these adolescents to be socialized into the middle-class society and working society. Shirley Brice Heath (1983) distinguished three points regarding how language socializes children. The first point was that language patterns must be in agreement with and also support other cultural patterns (Heath, 1983, p. 344). The concept of language patterns as enforcer of cultural norms creates the need for urban adolescents to develop a working knowledge of academic discourse and be able to determine in which contexts to use discourses. The second point was a combination of factors influences the success of children in mainstream educational settings and goes deeper than "formal structures of language, amount of parent-child interaction, and the like" (Heath, 1983, p. 344). Preparing adolescents to be successful requires an awareness of all of the contributing factors in the language socialization process and in the process of language acquisition. In this sense, adolescents must acquire a second discourse instead of merely acquiring language. The final point was "the patterns of interactions between oral and written uses of language are varied and complex" (Heath, 1983, p. 344). These patterns are complex because they absorb the academic discourse of the community and nation and require students to utilize each sense of the academic register.

Heath (1983) maintained that children also develop their discourses by watching drama around them and adding it to their discourses. "Children come to respond to unspoken signals of

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emotion and states of preparedness for action" (Heath, 1983, p. 347). These unspoken signals comprise the basic foundations of discourse. As these children develop language skills and involve themselves in conversations, their experiences in their neighborhoods and communities play an essential role in the use of discourse. Through the use of detailed ethnographies of two communities, Roadville and Trackton, Heath (1983) established her case for the situational differences in the acquisition of discourses. "Discontinuities between out-of-school activities and in-school lessons occur for individuals, but not for the group as a whole" (Heath, 1983, p. 350). For the individual students, these discontinuities may be detrimental to their academic success. To ensure the success of students, parental involvement in academic discussions acts as a key to comprehension.

The argument continued with students whose parents discuss what goes on in the school environment with them are more likely to experience success due to the impact of focused conversation. Heath (1983) asserted through the focused conversations a child acquires the ability to concentrate on a "preselected referent, masters the relationships between signifier and the signified, develops turn-taking skills in a focused conversation on the referent" (p. 351). Thus, the ability to focus translates into the ability to focus in differing contexts and create narratives. The child is "expected to listen to, benefit from, and […] to create narratives placing the referent in different contextual situations" (Heath, 1983, p. 351). The key factor is purposeful and a meaningful interaction with adults, not the quantity, develops successful students in the school context. "It is the kind of talk, not the quantity of talk that sets townspeople children on their way in school" (Heath, 1983, p. 352). The children ultimately must deal with their previous background to aid them in the context and development of academic discourse and knowledge.

School presented new discourse demands and emphases on different knowledge than the children of Roadville, Trackton, and townspeople had developed at home. The school context required these students to understand the academic discourse and restructure their formulated patterns of language. In the school setting, "the tightly interwoven nature of language and context made it especially necessary for teachers to tease apart and make as specific as possible aspects of the language and context of both home and school domains" (Heath, 1983, p.355). Thus, the students learned how to manipulate contexts and language and learned the ideas of talking and knowing rather than being seen as poor and in need of remediation.

Discourse Grammar

Discourse grammar is the relationship between grammatical form and discoursal functions. Furthermore, discourse grammar continually forms patterns, which shape discourse (Hughes & McCarthy, 1998, p.263-264). Academic discourse requires students to cope with grammatical organization and structures. Patrick Hartwell (1985) explored the concept of grammar and second language learning and used the idea of grammar to analyze the concepts of language acquisition and metalinguistics. "Native speakers of English, regardless of dialect, show tacit mastery of the conventions of Standard English, and that mastery seems to transfer into abstract orthographic knowledge through interaction with print" (Hartwell, 1985, p. 123). The acquisition of language skills develops similarly for each speech community; therefore, the basic structure develops for each group.

These understandings provide more insight into the education of native speakers and the acquisition of academic discourse. While research has shown that written and oral communication differs, "developing writers show the same patterning of errors, regardless of dialect" (Hartwell, 1985, p. 123). These patterns develop from a lack of understanding of the

premises of formal grammar as defined by Francis and by the educational community. "Studies of reading and of writing suggest that surface features of spoken dialect are simply irrelevant to mastering print literacy" (Hartwell, 1985, p. 123). This mastery of print literacy illuminates the understanding of multiple literacies for differing social contexts.

Research of multiple cases exhibited that social constructs impact the literacy types used in certain situations. Hartwell (1985) posited multiple literacies are used for multiple purposes rather than a single static use of language, and these occurrences became apparent in cross-cultural studies (p. 123). The differences between written and oral communication bring about changes in the processes used to teach writing. Hartwell (1985) argued writers only need to have a basic understanding of two things: 1) broadly rhetorical and 2) broadly metalinguistic. The broadly rhetorical are best defined as communication in meaningful contexts taking into account the registers, procedures, and strategies of discourse across differing social contexts and audiences; in comparison, the broadly metalinguistic develops as a writer manipulates language to convey meaning in which particular awareness is paid to surface forms (Hartwell, 1985, p. 125). The study of such linguistic patterns in oral and written communication established the basic foundation for a new perspective on the teaching of language and the strategies used. Hartwell (1985) called teachers to action and asked they "formulate theories of language and literacy and let those theories guide […] teaching" (p. 127). Academic discourse and the teaching of social contexts stresses the language competency of change and using different communication purposes in various settings.

Class

In the 1960s, the failure of the working-class and minority students became a public problem. "Communication deficiencies […] were proposed as the major cause of that failure"

(Collins, 1988, p. 302). These deficiencies appear in the realm of the class context and are a result from the societal differences in institutional knowledge. Collins (1988) attributed this to the "schooling in modern society can be characterized as a special set of institutional activities which center on the acquisition of general purpose skills, the most important of which is literacy" (p. 311). This academic literacy or discourse must fit in the requirements of the middle class and drew on the institutional requirements designed by the middle class, which highlights the significance of a knowledge of social contexts. Since the main goal of formalized education appears to be acquiring literacy and literate behavior, face-to-face interactions and the cumulative ability assessments are represented by grades and standardized test scores (Collins, 1988, p. 311). The problem occurs due to a lack of experience with academic discourse and sufficient background experiences required.

Rather than viewing the use of language as vital to the contexts in which it is used, the educational institutions often view academic discourse as the best possible means for students to speak, write, and read. The challenge occurs due to a positivist assumption of Standard English as the most appropriate manner of approaching language; conversely, many researchers adopt an ethnographic stance for researching to combat the one correct approach mentality. Collins (1988) acknowledged these issues through his citations of ethnographic research and concludes "teachers who were assiduous in correcting nonstandard speech were usually ineffectual with urban minority students—indeed, the less effective the more nonstandard the students' speech" (p. 313). These ethnographic studies led to conclusions regarding the unintentional inequality of reading group instruction. Collins (1988) concluded, "on the basis of our ethnographic work we knew that the reading groups received different instruction" (p. 314). Consequently, the use of the ethnographic perspective revealed the inequality in the remediated instruction.

The low-ranked group ultimately received instruction based on 5 activity types: dictation, sound-word drill, sentence completion, passage reading, and comprehension questions (Collins, 1988, p. 314). These activity types act as a portion of aiding students in acquiring the academic discourse. The low reading group's instruction comprised dialectical difference and intonation; in contrast, the high reading group's instruction consisted mostly of sentence structures, meanings, and placement in the text (Collins, 1988, p.314). These instructional differences highlight the difference between the minority urban students and the fluent Standard English speakers.

Collins (1988) ultimately concluded from this that cultural communicative differences "are not just matters of knowledge: they result from ways of living defined as much by opposition to class and ethnic "others" as by a body of shared traditions" (p. 320-321). The research maintained the best method for combatting these patterns of formal education would be to continue the study of classroom instructional practices.

Development of Vocabulary

The role of exposure to speech at an early age is essential for vocabulary growth. Janellen Huttenlocher, Wendy Haight, Anthony Bryk, Michael Seltzer, and Thomas Lyons (1991) conducted a study to examine how exposure to speech can affect children's early vocabulary growth. The study analyzed 22 children's exposure to vocabulary at the ages of 14-26 months. Huttenlocher et al. (1991) asserted that "rapid growth of vocabulary in early childhood also is a manifestation of the human preparedness for language" (p. 236). However, exposure to a variety of words appears to affect the amount of vocabulary acquired and understood by children. Word exposure acts as a necessary component to vocabulary acquisition; children, who never encountered human adults, do not acquire language

(Huttenlocher et al., 1991, p. 237).   Children acquire words by interacting with the language and by conversing with caregivers. Nine hundred root words and fundamental sentence structure should be acquired by 2 years of age (Huttenlocher et al., 1991, p. 236). The study focused on parents' speech addressing children and the rate of vocabulary acquisition by those children.

Huttenlocher et al. (1991) analyzed the interactions of parents and children to analyze in particular gender differences in vocabulary acquisition. However, their findings did not develop strong correlation between genders and talkativeness, yet they did determine gender may be the most important factor in vocabulary acquisition up to 20 months and parent speech became more important after 20 months (Huttenlocher et al., 1991, p. 246). Students must be exposed to certain discourse and vocabulary from the caregivers in their lives. Thus, acquisition of vocabulary at later ages may be dependent upon the exposure to particular words and how many times these words are used (Huttenlocher et al., 1991, p. 246). The study concludes the culture of the parent may affect the amount of speech they use with their children. Ultimately, exposure to parental speech affects the children's amount of vocabulary growth (Huttenlocher et al., 1991, p. 236). Exposure to language is essential in the language acquisition process.

Teaching in Urban Schools

Jonathan Kozol (1991) explored the struggles of students in low SES status urban school districts in comparison to the top ranked schools in the same districts such as New York, St. Louis, and Chicago. Kozol discussed the strategies used to teach vocabulary words. One such strategy consisted of students pronouncing a list of words, but these words are not in a context (Kozol, 1991, p. 85). The lesson appeared to be very basic and required students to merely learn to say words. Kozol questioned the teacher's intent with this vocabulary lesson by suggesting the lesson lacked context. "The teacher never asks the children to define the words or use them

in a sentence" (Kozol, 1991, p. 85). Students must understand how words are used in context and what the word means to apply them. Kozol (1991) stated that this lesson did not ask students to define or use the words in a sentence but focused on the pronunciation. Perhaps the reason these words were selected was because "these are words that will appear on one of those required tests that states impose now in the name of 'raising standards'" (Kozol, 1991, p. 85). Thus, society teaches that students must learn a wide range of vocabulary.

During his Chicago research, Kozol (1991) suggested "reading levels are the lowest in the poorest schools" (p. 71). Reading appeared to be a struggle for students who attended these schools. The problem arose that "27 percent of high school graduates read at the eighth grade level or below; and a large proportion of these students read at less than sixth grade level" (Kozol, 1991, p. 71). Curriculum differences began to emerge between students who attended the low SES status schools and the students who attended top ranked schools; thus, issues also became apparent for different ethnicities. Kozol (1991) found speech, language, and hearing impaired classes appeared to be excessively Hispanic and that "black children [were] 3 times as likely as white children to be placed in classes for the mentally retarded but only half as likely to be placed in classes for the gifted" (p. 144). These differences illustrated issues that required research and an awareness of teaching for learning.

Teaching for Learning

The awareness of linguistic structures and of social contexts brings about a need to determine whether teaching for learning or teaching for language acquisition should be deemed desirable. J. P. Gee (1996) explored academic discourse and language learning. "By 'language learning' what linguists mean by the term, namely, the result of the interaction between biological capacity for language and the child's home culture giving rise to a particular dialect"

(Gee, 1996, p. 15). Texts use language and grammatical structures to convey meanings in differing way depending on the context. Thus, the need becomes imperative to teach all children how various social forms exist in accordance with challenging texts.

Gee (1996) argued teaching for acquisition only creates an apprenticeship relationship in which students become colonized. In contrast, teaching for learning "uses explanations and analyses that break down material into its analytic bits and juxtaposes diverse Discourses and their practices to each other" (Gee, 1996, p. 145). Schools must teach each student using higher order thinking skills and create a comfortable environment for learning about the differing social contexts through the critical analyses of texts and teaching practices. "Schools […] ought to be about people reflecting on and critiquing the 'Discourse maps' of their society, and, indeed, the wider world" (Gee, 1996, p. 190). Therefore, the issue of teaching students analysis, the use of multiple discourses, and the ability to distinguish social contexts and the grammatical structures, which complement these contexts, remains an imperative call to educational institutions.

Discourse

Gee (2001) provided his definition of discourse with a lowercase d and Discourses with a capital D. "By "discourse" (with a little "d") I mean any stretch of language, oral or written, that is meant to communicate or can be taken as communicative" (Gee, 2001, p. 1). These discourses consist of the understanding of both a primary and secondary discourse known as the academic discourse or language. These discourses emphasize the basic concepts of speech and demonstrate a person's instinctive understanding of language, which exists in the language identities they use in their home setting.

With these instincts, a person also develops the ability to code-switch based on the social language required in situations. He also conducted a critical discourse analysis as an example of

the registrars of language, which he terms social languages. Gee (2001) suggested, "any human language is composed of a myriad of different styles, registers, or 'social languages.' A social language is a way of using language so as to enact a particular socially-situated identity (i.e., a specific socially meaningful "kind of person")." Social languages may be viewed in interactions between a student and their friends, their parents, their teachers, and perhaps other people who play roles in their lives. While some of these interactions and languages may be similar, many of the languages will be different and demonstrate different social contexts and discourses. These concepts of social language guide the idea that students have different discourses and acquire other discourses as they journey through education. Even though Gee (2001) explicitly explained these ideas, exploration of the reactions and strategies used to teach discourse and registers may reveal strategies necessary for differing social communities.

Academic Language and Standardized Testing

One theory regarding literacy assessments highlighted the idea that these assessments merely exist to classify individuals and to rank discourse by valuing academic discourse over other nonstandard discourses. In 2005, Peter Johnston and Paula Costello conducted research about what literacy assessment means and how it relates to discourse within the educational setting. Ultimately, Johnston and Costello (2009) argued high-stakes testing is a mere means for stratification. "There is evidence that the long-term effect of such testing is to create a curriculum that extends stratification rather than reducing it" (Johnston & Costello, 2005, p. 258). The theory suggested is one that takes into account literacy assessment in relation to societal and literacy practices. They propose the idea that children as well as teachers become players in the entangled problematic situation of high-stakes testing and argue for a more formative and multimodal understanding of literacy. Thus, the academic language serves as a

means to allow standardized tests to assess the literacy capacity of students. The use of multiple choice questions, reading passages, and rubrics creates the one size fits all mentality of literacy.

Power and Language

The teaching methods employed in schools with low SES status and minority students need to analyze the impact methods have on students. Delpit (2006) posited in the "culture of power" five concepts of power portrayed in the classroom setting.

1. Issues of power are enacted in classroom.
2. There are codes of rules for participating in power; that is, there is a "culture of power."
3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.
4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.
5. Those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence. (Delpit, 2006, p. 24)

Furthermore, these concepts of power are demonstrated socially as well as academically, which calls for teachers to be aware of the reasons they do things in the classroom setting. The classroom setting and schooling relates directly to the concept of power and who has power. Delpit (2006) maintained codes or rules in school "relate to linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentation of self; that is, ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting" (p. 25). School entails all of the mannerisms and norms students are asked to adhere to when in the academic environment.

These norms may cause confusion and problems for students who have not become accustomed to them prior to school attendance. However, Delpit (2006) acknowledged children from non-middle class homes come from a differing culture but one that is equally as important and viable as those of their middle class counterparts.

> The upper and middle classes send their children to school with all the accouterments of the culture of power; children from other kinds of families operate within perfectly wonderful and viable cultures but not cultures that carry the codes or rules of power (p. 25).

The codes of the middle class reflect in the school setting; therefore, students from homes other than these may not be able to adjust to the school demands as easily. Delpit (2006) continued with the idea that language and communication pose some of the most difficult challenges in the classroom setting.

As a solution to these challenges, she suggested a celebration of the diversity and language differences in the classroom by "making language diversity a part of the curriculum" (Delpit, 2006, p. 67). The argument among linguists continues though that Standard English is the academic language; therefore, linguists argue that "the language associated with the power structure—'Standard English' – is the language of economic success, and all students have the right to schooling that gives them access to that language" (Delpit, 2006, p. 68). The major issue that arises is whether students should learn a secondary discourse or not. Delpit (2006) asserted "there can be no doubt that in many classrooms students of color do reject literacy, for they feel that literate discourses reject them" (p. 160). Moreover, the issue becomes what the teacher should do to reassure and validate students. "Teachers must acknowledge and validate students' home language without using it to limit students' potential. Students' home discourses are vital to their perception of self and sense of community connectedness" (Delpit, 2006, p. 163). Students need to be allowed to learn how to code-switch between social languages and must be shown that their primary languages have a place in the academic setting. In addition, the goal of teaching academic discourse must not be "to eliminate students' home languages, but rather to add other voices and discourses to their repertoires" (Delpit, 2006, p. 163). Social languages

become an essential learning goal in the academic institutions and should be used in the curriculum as part of switching audiences and social languages.

Social Languages

Social languages are acquired as a student progresses through the many facets of education and requires them to select how to use language. J.P. Gee (2009) argued for the comprehension that different vernaculars are all linguistically good and the idea that no person's vernacular is better than any others. "People use their native language initially and throughout their lives to speak in the vernacular style of language, that is, the style of language they use when they are speaking as 'everyday' people" (Gee, 2009, p. 5). For students, this native language presents itself as their L1 or home language students speak at home. This vernacular dialect becomes the familiar and characteristic of the area the students reside.

Language acts as a catalyst for certain social situations; thus, one child's language must not be valued as better than another child's (Gee, 2009, p. 5). Academic discourse provides a critical basis to the functioning of low socioeconomic urban students in the middle-class business society. Despite these facts, the child's "language is not lesser because that child speaks a so-called 'non-standard' dialect" (Gee, 2009, p. 5). In addition, academic social language becomes a means of vernacular utilized in the educational social context.

The set of rules for demonstrating knowledge of the academic social language consists of a sense of grammar, specific phrases, and abstraction in illustrating proper academic discourse. Gee (2009) argued that the most important part of these rules is knowing "all these things together and that these linguistic features, in fact, tend to go together—to pattern together—in this form of language" (Gee, 2009, p. 8). Linguistically, these characteristic grammatical

patterns serve as indicators of academic discourse and may be best exercised in educational institutions or in the workforce.

Academic Register

Snow and Uccelli (2009) emphasized five essential components of academic language. These five components were the "interpersonal stance, information load, organization of information, lexical choices, and representational congruence" (Snow & Uccelli, 2009, p. 119). These five academic components each bring different complexities to texts. An interpersonal stance in academic texts may be difficult for low SES urban students because the author distances themselves from the audience and provides an authoritative tone, which many low SES students struggle to grasp.

While the tone itself can be very challenging for these students, information load presents a new struggle and requires students to deal with abstract concepts and complex word choice. The organization of information component allows for teachable moments as it relies heavily on a sound progression of concepts (Snow & Uccelli, 2009, p. 119). Lexical choices also pose a problematic situation for students who struggle with academic vocabulary. As Snow and Uccelli (2009) constructed a definition of lexical choices, "at the lexical level, a diverse, precise, and formal repertoire that includes appropriate cross-discipline and discipline-specific terms is desirable" (p. 120). This large range of words makes academic language difficult for urban school children, especially as they work through the content disciplines.

The last component of academic language presents perhaps the most difficult aspect for students. Representational congruence refers to the issue of words switching parts of speech. Academic language represents a range of abstraction and often words that were verbs become nouns in certain sentences (Snow and Uccelli, 2009, p. 119). The abstract presents difficulties

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for urban low SES students because they require a concrete sense or may develop the meaning of a word to find that it has changed to mean something entirely different. The urgency to teach language structures and social contexts becomes ever more prevalent in these issues.

Effect of Poverty

Jensen (2009) described the tumultuous effects poverty has on behaviors, academics, and motivation. When students are faced with the challenge of poverty, they struggle in the educational setting. When the term "poverty" is used, the meaning suggests when a person makes less income than what is sufficient to sustain the basic needs such as shelter, food, and clothing (Jensen, 2009, p. 6). Poverty is a multifaceted problem to define and for those who cope with poverty. Thus, Jensen (2009) categorized the six types of poverty as "1)situational poverty, 2) generational poverty, 3) absolute poverty, 4) relative poverty, 5) urban poverty, [and] 6) rural poverty" (p. 6). Nevertheless, poverty can be detrimental in the educational setting as students cope with risk factors and with worrying about life's basic needs.

Poverty-stricken students experience setbacks in their educational opportunities. They experience limited access to enrichment opportunities, access to fewer books, fewer library visits, and greater amounts of time spent watching television than their middle class peers (Jensen, 2009, p. 8). Parental involvement in the schools compounds with the lack of enrichment opportunities to create another setback for these students. Low-SES students are less likely to "be coached in learning skills or helped with homework" (Jensen, 2009, p.37). Reading to children is less likely in these households. Language acquisition requires students to be readers and immersed in the language. However, reading is not an innate ability instead each component of reading ability must be explicitly taught. These reading components are comprised of phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension (Jensen, 2009, p. 37).

Caregivers who cope with poverty are not equipped to address their student's needs and teach these skills.

Another factor beyond the lack of resources appeared to be the parents' speech. Specifically, the "mother's socio-demographic characteristics, personal characteristics, vocabulary, and knowledge of child development" as well as the quantity, quality and context of the speech make a difference in the competence of the child (Jensen, 2009, p. 35). Children acquire language before they begin school and acquire speech patterns and vocabulary from their home setting. At school age, middle-income children come in contact with 5 million words and have knowledge of 13,000; therefore, they use 60,000 to 100,000 words in high school (Jensen, 2009, p. 35). However, children in low-income households may not experience as many words. Jensen (2009) suggested that these students experience less two-way conversation, which limits the child's range of language abilities (p.35). The ability to learn is affected by the home environment of students, which affects school performance.

Cognitive stimulation appears to be the key for student achievement, yet low SES students are not exposed to as many opportunities. Deficits in cognitive stimulation seem to impact the development of vocabulary, IQ, and social skills (Jensen, 2009, p. 38). Therefore, these problems impact student achievement and ability to score well on standardized tests. Jensen (2009) asserted, "standardized intelligence tests show a correlation between poverty and low cognitive achievement, and low-SES kids often earn below-average scores in reading, math, and science and demonstrate poor writing skills" (p. 38). While all of these factors seem negative and seem to cause poor academic performance, the conclusion was made that they could be overcome with parental involvement regarding the children's needs and with improved instructional practices (Jensen, 2009, p. 39). Teachers and parents impact the vocabulary growth

of their students and must work together to build the core skills and to offer the opportunities for students to achieve success.

High-Stakes Testing

The mentality of a perfect concise use of academic language was further developed when the issue encompassed reading skills. In 2009, Kelly Gallagher wrote *Readicide* to discuss the issue of schools making students lose the desire to read. Gallagher further suggested high-stakes testing causes the students to lose interest in reading because they are merely reading to pass a test. Recently, schools develop a class for reading and literacy intervention where they focus on fluency, phonemic awareness, and comprehension. According to Gallagher (2009), students are "often placed in remedial classes where the pace is slow and where the reading focus moves away from books to a steady diet of small chunks of reading" (p. 32). He continued to claim while schools teach students test-taking ability schools fail to teach them to actually read. The result of such methodology constitutes fewer books for those who struggle and the achievement gap continues to widen.

In many local schools, test-taking strategies continue to receive more emphasis than the actual process of reading comprehension skills. Gallagher (2009) commented on this phenomenon by stating, "students may pass the test, but they're being robbed of perhaps the only opportunity they may ever have of building that wide knowledge base that is foundational if they are to develop into critical readers of the world" (p. 35). Rather than focusing merely on test preparation, schools must focus on fostering an environment of knowledge and deep reading skills. Academic discourse often becomes the choice of the tests and a device to score and evaluate students in comparison to their peers.

Race

   A primary component in the study of academic discourse lies in the understanding of the components of race and what constitutes an urban school. Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller & Kelley (2010) explained "students attending school in urban settings rarely experience the same opportunities to learn literacy skills as their counterparts in suburban settings" (p. 196). These students experience less access to books and to multimodal texts. Racial issues arise in the learning of academic discourse primarily because of allotment of resources. Lesaux et al. (2010) contended "urban schools—schools located in large city centers and characterized by high concentrations of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds—have historically suffered from limited educational resources" (p. 196). The lack of resources contributes to the understanding of and ability to employ academic discourse.

   One of the major problems presented in this study was vocabulary knowledge. Empirical research indicated that differences between the number of words students are exposed to occur over time and the gap merely widens (Lesaux et al., 2010). These differences become more problematic because low socioeconomic status (SES) urban students lack an awareness of academic discourse and begin at a clear deficit from their peers. "Differences in both vocabulary knowledge and reading outcomes between native speakers and language minority learners have been shown to widen over time" (Lesaux et al., 2010, p. 197). Low SES urban students regardless of their racial backgrounds are all language minority students as academic discourse is not encountered in their home settings.

   Academic discourse acquisition entails an understanding of grammatical patterns, various uses of words, and how to write in a comprehensible fashion. Lesaux et al. (2010) primarily focused on vocabulary knowledge; thus, the researchers argued "children with impoverished

vocabularies cannot necessarily rely on learning words through wide reading. Because struggling readers read less than their typically achieving peers, they encounter fewer words, especially low-frequency words, than do skilled readers" (p. 197). The major issue revealed in this research seems to be the access to words. However, U.S. born minorities and students who enter kindergarten in the U.S. educational systems constitute the largest group of language minority students (Lesaux et al., 2010, p. 198). These students enter into the educational system as a minority, because they have immigrant parents and have little access to the English language or at least people who will help make it comprehensible. By middle school, this population seldom needs Basic English instruction; despite this fact, these students still lack an understanding of the academic discourse "central to text comprehension and school success" (Lesaux et al., 2010, p. 198). These students need more than Basic English instruction and must receive a culmination of best instructional strategies.

While bilingual students have been pinpointed as lacking, monolingual students also seem to lack the knowledge of academic discourse characteristic of the education setting. "However, of significant importance when considering the design and delivery of effective intervention strategies to serve language minority learners is that comparative work suggests these vocabulary levels are only slightly lower than many of their classmates who are monolingual speakers" (Lesaux et al., 2010, p. 198). With this knowledge, the crucial idea for research in academic discourse study is the collection of data on the instructional practices used within classrooms to teach students academic discourse.

The challenges for researching academic discourse lie in a variety of ideas about what constitutes academic discourse. Lesaux et al. (2010) explained "the challenge [...] is in fact twofold: 1) to demonstrate evidence of efficacious literacy programs for mainstream middle

school classrooms" (p. 200). Defining effective literacy programs may pose a potential problem also. The second challenge was how to implement and maintain such programs in these classrooms (Lesaux et al., 2010, p. 200). These programs must be designed to reflect the needs of these students and move them beyond this basic comprehension of the English language.

The teaching of vocabulary is a key component in academic discourse. Lesaux et al. (2010) suggested that more research must be conducted to evaluate the impact of approaches that allow for multifaceted aspects of vocabulary to be taught (p. 219). Students must be given opportunities to interact with text and essentially be instructed in comprehension strategies. "The findings suggest that text-based academic vocabulary teaching is a promising approach for improving early adolescents' vocabulary and comprehension" (Lesaux et. al, 2010, p. 220). In the urban school setting, the separation between bilingual and monolingual students is minimal; therefore, all students must be taught using similar instructional practices for growth to occur. "Vocabulary instructional approaches and activities deemed effective in research with monolingual English speakers could be effective with learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds" (Lesaux et al., 2010, p. 220). Thus, an imperative need exists to examine the classroom strategies used to teach academic discourse in the urban middle school.

SIOP

Language learners struggled with achieving success with academic language and vocabulary; thus, in 1996, The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model became a major educational movement supporting second language learners (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010). SIOP provides a guide for lesson planning and delivery for teachers and offers a method of observation and rating for administrators. Echevarria et al. (2010) suggested that the teacher become an innovative, flexible facilitator of the English language. According to Echevarria et. al

(2010), "SIOP teachers highlight and model procedural knowledge (e.g. how to accomplish an academic task like writing a science report or conducting research on the Internet) along with study skills and learning strategies (e.g. note-taking and self-monitoring comprehension when reading)" (p. 19). Rather than focusing solely on the language acquisition, master teachers teach these students how to be successful in all content areas and allow students to utilize their particular interest.

Guided practice, modeling, and graphic organizers make the content comprehensible and accessible, because teachers connect the students' schema to the content being taught. Research indicates that "students are more successful when they make connections between what they know and what they are learning" through meaningful and authentic experiences (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010, p. 19). The current research exposed specific needs for second language acquisition, yet more research is required on how to help students differentiate between social settings and primary and secondary discourse, how to teach these students to speak using formal discourse, and how to teach them to switch registers.

Academic Conversations

Language acquisition develops with writing, speaking, and listening. Previously, research placed importance on the use of academic conversations. According to Zwiers and Crawford (2011), "conversations are exchanges between people who are trying to learn from one another and build meanings that they didn't have before;" in comparison, "academic conversations are sustained and purposeful conversations about school topics" (p. 1). Various strategies and methods of talk demonstrate how to teach various academic discourse structures. Zwiers and Crawford (2011) build a strong argument for the use of academic conversation to influence comprehension and aid students in the use of particular discourse structures (p.1).

Engaged conversations with specific protocols provide ELLs in the process of language

acquisition with specific protocols for discussing and allow them to utilize their understanding of

differing social contexts.

Zwiers and Crawford (2011) acknowledged "five core conversation skills: elaborate and

clarify; support ideas with examples; build on and / or challenge a partner's idea; paraphrase; and

synthesize conversation points" (p. 2) Through these types of discussions, vocabulary knowledge

may be built. Academic conversations maintain a focus and an authentic discourse in the context

of the classroom setting. This authentic discourse related to a topic may impact students by

exposing them to new words and engaging them in academic discourse (Zwiers & Crawford,

2011, p. 12). These conversations require students to listen, speak, and develop understanding in

relation to academic topics and vocabulary. Students develop knowledge of social context

through the use of this discourse and learn to adjust their vocabulary based on these social

situations. "It is vital for students to use new words in slightly new ways, transferring and

tweaking and processing word meanings—stretching language to fit new situations" (Zwiers &

Crawford, 2011, p. 12-13). Through this ability students distinguish how words may be used and

how these words may differ in social settings. Academic conversations are essential in

vocabulary acquisition and teaching students the meaning of words.

Vocabulary Instruction and Low SES learners

Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2013) argued for the teaching of a strong vocabulary base

and discussed the issues that students in low socioeconomic (SES) situations face. A large

vocabulary knowledge relates to a person's education because reading proficiency and success in

school may be contingent upon such knowledge (Beck et al., 2013, p. 1). Through this

understanding, the issue for low SES learners becomes apparent, and the differences between

learners in other groups manifest themselves. Thus, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan made a call for 'robust' vocabulary instruction. "A robust approach to vocabulary involves directly explaining the meanings of words along with thought-provoking, playful, and interactive follow-up" (Beck et al., 2013, p. 3). Thus, the role of context is argued in the vocabulary acquisition process.

Beck et al. (2013) suggested context vocabulary can mean one of two conditions: 1) instructional contexts or 2) naturally occurring text. The difference between the two conditions is that instructional contexts are intentionally created for the purpose of determining an unfamiliar words meaning whereas naturally occurring text is the acquisition of words from the learner's environment. In the educational setting, vocabulary acquisition occurs through two modes. "First, it is the case that words are learned from context" (Beck et al., 2013, p. 4). Teachers must plan to teach words according to the text structures and contextual situations in which they are displayed. These situations occur mostly through the preplanned teachable moments in the instructional context. Beck et al. (2013) also stated that the second assumption is "instruction must focus on learning vocabulary from context because there are just too many words to teach to get the job done through direct instruction" (p. 4). Students encounter words through reading and through oral interactions in the classroom, in their everyday activities, and as they read various texts. While context determines what words are learned, an individual's development may cause the context to change.

In the early years, children learn vocabulary mainly through oral contexts; yet in later years, vocabulary is learned through written contexts (Beck et al., 2013, p. 5). However, written contexts can be harder for language learners to understand and harder for vocabulary acquisition to occur. The reason for this difficulty is due to the lack of features in "oral language, such as intonation, body language, and shared physical surroundings," that support vocabulary learning

(Beck et al., 2013, p. 5). In order for vocabulary to be learned in written contexts, students must

be exposed to inferring meaning from the context in which the words appear in a piece of written

language. For vocabulary to be acquired through reading, two conditions must be met: 1)

students must read widely from texts of substantial difficulty, and 2) students must be able to

infer meaning from context clues (Beck et al., 2013, p. 5). Low SES students have limited

resources; thus, complex texts may not be readily available. Students encounter the difficulty of

only hearing or reading previously known words. Beck et al. (2013) hypothesized that the

"calculations of how many words are learned from reading overestimate what occurs for many

students" (p. 5). For students to become interested in word learning, the classroom conditions

must be right for interest levels to be heightened and for engagement with word learning to

occur.

Beck et al. (2013) implied that most classroom instruction tends to revolve around

looking up dictionary definitions of words and often fails to peak the students' interests.

Classroom instruction tends to spur a lack of interest in word learning. Furthermore, Beck et al.

(2013) contended that engagement goes beyond student enjoyment in the classroom; instead they

maintained that classroom conditions must be developed to cause students to have interest in

unknown words and to spark curiosity. Thus, Beck et al. (2013) developed multiple game-like

strategies to inspire students to explore the meaning of words.

Gaps in Literature

Research emphasizes the need for academic vocabulary and its influence on academic

achievement and success (Townsend, Filippini, Collins, & Biancarosa, 2012; Zwiers &

Crawford, 2011). However, the literature on these academic language needs fails to address

three key issues when teaching academic discourse skills. The first gap in the literature appears

in the understanding that low SES students fail to have opportunities to grasp academic discourse and do not develop an understanding as quickly (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). These researchers discussed the issues diverse low SES students face, yet they ultimately overlook the fact that these students are also English Language Learners and must develop fix-up strategies to develop competence with academic discourse (Gallagher, 2004, p. 24). Low SES urban school students speak nonconventional English, which they developed in their home settings and through their background experience. These students struggle with the beliefs and competencies required to secure a grasp on academic discourse. Academic discourse affects how students interact with their peers and how they interact in their home lives.

Academic discourse is founded upon middle class values and requires students to acquire more than language. Discourse is beyond the idea of language instead it takes in the idea of existence in society. The term refers to the idea of one's identity kit, which integrates clothing, actions, beliefs, gestures, body language, speech, and writing. The identity kit allows a person to take on a particular social role. A person's discourse helps them to fit into a particular social setting and group. In other words, the discourse comprises primarily "ways of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, and behaving" in certain places (Gee, 1996, p. 127-128). The language specific interactions and behaviors must be examined to formulate significant understandings of social context and language structures portraying academic discourse.

Although research highlights academic vocabulary, reading, and writing, the second gap occurs in the area of teaching students how to transform their identity kits and how to deal with students who are academic discourse learners. As the Common Core State Standards highlight college and career readiness, part of this emphasis will require teachers to guide students to identity kits that will help them to achieve success in a middle class society. Thus, academic

discourse must be a bridge to these middle class values and Standard English skills. Standard English is the type that native speakers are taught to read and write (Trudgill & Hannah, 2008, p. 2). Furthermore, Standard English is the type of English most widely understood and attracts the least amount of attention as far as being strange or peculiar to other people (Krapp, 1919, p. ix). These skills in academic discourse and Standard English lead students to achieve success by acculturating them into a middle class business world.

The final gap in the literature emerged as the relationship to strategies and teaching methods that work for junior high school students as they progress with secondary or academic discourse acquisition. The methods for discourse study must be developmentally and instructionally appropriate tools for facilitating language acquisition among low socio-economic urban students. Thus, discourse must be regarded with the little "d" and with the emphasis of the idea of language for the sake of communicating meaning through the use of verbal skills or written communication (Gee, 2001, p. 1). Discourse study prepares students to meet the expectations of employers and aids them in understanding the differences between their first language and the academic vocabulary utilized in educational settings.

Research highlights the need for students to acquire language skills and to understand complex academic language (Jensen, 2009; Gee, 2008a; & Collins, 1988). The acquisition of increased vocabulary and academic discourse allows students to comprehend the expectations of a society molded by the desires of business. Research regarding elementary level children suggests students from middle-class homes are more readily prepared for school than their poverty-stricken counterparts (Jensen, 2009). Prior to school attendance, children reared in middle-class households are exposed to the components of academic discourse as they learn to talk because their parents and other caregivers talk to them using this style (Heath, 1983, p. 344).

In low-income homes, adolescents are at a disadvantage compared to their middle class counterparts (Jensen, 2009). These students must be considered language learners who have a different L1, primary discourse or home language, than what they meet in the academic setting. The L2, academic discourse, presented to these students must be viewed through the sense of language acquisition. As Gee (2008b) suggested, "children acquire their initial sense of family and community identity as part and parcel of the process of acquiring their native conversational language" (p. 62-63). In the urban setting, the native conversational language emerges as broken unconventional English learned from low-socioeconomic status parents.

The process of discourse acquisition occurs when a person acquires a language or method of communication other than the primary discourse. Gee (2014) emphasized this concept through the idea of his Big D Discourse Tool to highlight that language must be viewed as a contextual entity comprised of very methodical ways of speaking or listening within particular social settings. Through the use of the discourse analysis tool, the basic functions of what is said and what is really being said within social institutions and the societal mechanism can be emphasized. Furthermore, the development of the discourses of students also derives from low-income households and an exposure to pop culture. According to Reskin (2013), "these societal mechanisms include normative considerations within establishments' institutional communities, the expectations of their clientele, collective bargaining agreements, public transportation routes, and laws and regulations" (p. 10). Among these institutional communities, the educational system causes discrepancies between middle-class and low socioeconomic status students by holding them to the same discourse expectations.

Need for Future Research

Thus, past studies and literature necessitate future studies to develop insights into the language acquisition process for low socioeconomic urban junior high school students. Students who attend low SES status junior high schools often do not have adequate access to resources exposing them to Standard English. Hence, future studies must also define the methods and responses of low socioeconomic students to the explicit teaching of secondary or academic discourse and how secondary discourse relates to their primary discourses. Thus, academic discourse or secondary discourse will be defined through the practices of the teacher and the students.

Research highlights the need of students to acquire language skills and to understand complex academic language (Jensen, 2009; Gee, 2008a; & Collins, 1988). The following questions must be explored in future research: How do the varied discourse backgrounds of students impact classroom practices? How are students at a low socio-economic status junior high school engaged with academic discourse in the context of their classrooms? What reactions do students have in relation to the specific scaffolds or techniques teachers use in the classroom?

Conclusion

The synthesis of the empirical research and the gaps in the literature revealed students who attend a low SES urban junior high school are at a strong disadvantage in the positivist understanding of language. The current linguistic practices cause such disadvantages and create an obvious gap between school children whose discourse differs greatly from the academic discourse used in the classroom setting. Driven by standardized, high-stakes testing, the results of the tests indicate academic achievement and measure intelligence; in the process, students attending low SES status schools lose their sense of being within the educational setting. Future research must be conducted to meet each junior high school student in the social context he or

she resides in and teach discourse in the terminology of academic discourse or social language. As Gee (1996) suggested, academic discourse should be viewed as a social language that aids in the context of creating meaning through the structures used to communicate (p. 68). By creating a safe environment for students to blend their understanding of academic discourse with their primary language, teachers empower language learners to achieve success and enable them to maintain bilingual status.

Chapter III
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses my procedures for conducting a microethnographic approach to my qualitative research study. The purpose of this study was to define the methods and responses of low socioeconomic students to the explicit teaching of secondary or academic discourse and how secondary discourse relates to their primary discourses. This chapter includes a brief overview of the topic, a detailed description of the participants, procedures for data collection, and data analysis.

Overview

Teaching academic discourse and the understanding of social context while still valuing a student's primary discourse is a challenge for English teachers within low socioeconomic status urban junior high schools. These ideas require teachers to utilize a variety of teaching strategies to engage this type of English language learner in the use of academic discourse. This study used the idea of academic vocabulary and context vocabulary in the junior high classroom to analyze how teachers differentiate instruction as well as teach the concept of academic discourse. The research questions for this study were:

1. What types of verbal exchanges occur within the classroom setting of a low SES urban junior high school?

2. How are students at a low socio-economic status junior high school engaged with academic discourse in the context of their classrooms?

3. What reactions do students have in relation to the specific scaffolds or techniques teachers use in the classroom?

Academic discourse was defined as reading, writing, listening, and speaking using academic

vocabulary and patterns taught within the school setting. These words were defined and identified through classroom observations and teacher and student behavior within the classroom setting.

The objective of this study was to define the strategies one teacher used to teach academic discourse in the classroom and to analyze the responses of her students who attend a low SES status junior high school to the teaching of academic discourse. Furthermore, through this study, I wanted to analyze how academic discourse relates to the students' primary discourses to define the concept of academic discourse.

Academic discourse and vocabulary study have become everyday practices in English classrooms, and teachers teach vocabulary study without hesitation or without examining the rationale behind engaging in such practices. Thus, the study questioned why teachers and students felt that vocabulary study should occur in the school setting and ultimately how or if students felt vocabulary practice would aid them in their lives.

Research Design

Based on the empirical research about academic discourse and the formalized structures of language, a positivist lens about the proper linguistic etiquette of grammatical structures, standardized testing, and repression of minority populations through the use of language and discourse emerged which requires future research to be objective and change the views discovered (Collins, 1988; Hartwell, 1985; Johnston & Costello, 2005; Reskin, 2003). The use of the research method aided me in breaking the mold of the positivist paradigm placed upon language by demonstrating how the use of language is constructed by the urban junior high school children who attend a low SES status junior high school and how the data reveal the use of differing speech acts in varying social languages and contexts.

By using a qualitative approach to research, I sought to discover a more complete interpretation of the verbal exchanges that occur in the English classroom to determine how academic discourse affects students in the low SES status urban junior high school classroom and to investigate the cultural identities of urban students in the educational environment. Phil Francis Carspecken (1996) posited "qualitative social research investigates human phenomena that do not lend themselves, by their very nature, to quantitative methods" (p. 3). Thus, I chose to use critical qualitative research to examine one English classroom to determine how students respond to the teacher's efforts to teach academic discourse or, in this case, vocabulary. The qualitative design merged with the steps of microethnographic research design to provide a complete description of the language phenomena that take place within the classroom setting.

As academic discourse and instructional strategies are further analyzed, research through a critical stance allows for the methodology and structures constructed during research to mesh with the participants of the study. Carspecken (1996) defined the critical stance as a perspective that "does not give […] recipes for helping the poor and downtrodden; it rather gives us principles for conducting valid inquires into any area of human experience" (p. 8). The major view in the critical stance is the need to understand the particular social situation by which interactions take place. The main characteristic of the pragmatic stance is that it "signals attention to transactions and interactions; to the consequential, contextual, and dynamic nature of character of knowledge; to knowledge as action; to the intertwinement of values with inquiry; and so forth" (Greene, 2007, p. 85). Through this specific look into the transactions and interactions, a collection of research specific to the contexts in which academic discourse exists may be revealed.

Microethnography.

A microethnography was the approach taken for researching the issues of academic discourse within the low SES status urban junior high school environment. The microethnography provided me with the ability to analyze the occurrences from a constructivist viewpoint. Hatch (2002) defined microethnographies by comparing them to the larger concept of ethnographies; therefore, he suggested macroethnographies are when an extended period of time is spent studying a culture and microethnographies occur by making "fine-grained analyses of face-to-face interactions within specific social contexts" (p. 21). Thus, the examination of the social context coincides with the idea that academic discourse relies on the social contexts in which they are used. Language is a constructed phenomenon used to convey meaning in a particular social context.

Microethnographic research allowed for the combination of videotaping and observations to allow for more in-depth analyses. A microethnographic study relies on a mixture of observation notes and video recordings to conduct a microanalysis of the data identifying values of an institution and the cultural design of that institution by which everyday behavioral patterns are analyzed (Hatch, 2002, p. 127). By using a microethnography, I was able to analyze the use of language patterns and academic vocabulary exposure in the classroom and determine if the students were using it more readily in the context of the classroom setting through a cross-reference of the videotape transcriptions and the videos with my observation notes. Video recordings allowed for the collection of data to occur "simultaneously with field-note data then used to fill in protocols, making it possible to create a much more detailed record of classroom action" (Hatch, 2002, p. 127). Thus, the videotaping allowed me to be fully present as researcher when I was in the classroom.

The videotaping allowed me to be present and examine the behaviors of the students and teachers. However, if the participants demonstrated behavioral changes, I set up a Swivel camera to permit me to be a noninvasive researcher. To avoid the issue of students and the teachers may behave and use language differently in my presence, I used these video recording precautions and waited to interview the students until the end of the observations, because many of these students would seek positive reinforcement by trying to behave in accordance to what they believed I wanted from them as participants (Carspecken, 1996, p. 52). When the teacher knew that a Swivel camera was available, the reactions appeared truer from the students and language patterns were revealed. Videotaping allowed for an alternative to observations, interviews, and acts as a less invasive method (Hatch, 2002, p. 127). Academic discourse and language patterns may be more readily analyzed when the observer can cross-reference field-notes with a video recording of the classroom observations.

Site Selection

Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS] (pseudonym) was chosen for the study for many purposes. The school is situated in what the citizens characterize as an urban mid-South community with a population of approximately 90,000 citizens. The school district is considered urban because of diversity. The school district is considered to be in the top ten largest in the state of Arkansas with approximately 14,000 students enrolled and is state accredited. The school district is comprised of 19 elementary schools, 4 junior high schools, 2 senior high schools, and 1 alternative learning center.

Students who attend Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School walk within a 2.5-mile radius of the school; thus, the school is the only school that does not run school buses in the district. Students who attend this school reflect the environments in which they live. Samuel

Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS] presents many challenges for the staff. In the school setting, loud noises filled the hallway and students ran from class to class playing with each other. The students willingly tell their teachers "I don't care." Interventions, such as Resource to Intervention (RTI) period and an after school homework time, were enacted to try to assist students to maintain passing grades since the belief in this school was that students struggle in their home lives and need the opportunity to learn at school.

Despite these beliefs, Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS] featured an Advanced Placement track that students take to prepare for high school level Advanced Placement courses. The principal also discussed the future of the school stating that next year students will be able to leave the junior high school with up to 11 of the 23 credits needed to graduate from high school. He hopes to become what he calls the "academic school" in the school district. The classes are scheduled according to Pre-Advanced Placement and on-level courses.

When the study was conducted, the enrollment at Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School was 644 students in grades 7 through 9. During the 2014-2015 academic year, 95% of the students were considered economically disadvantaged, determined by the free and reduced lunch rate. Minority students comprised 70% of the student body at Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School. The demographics are displayed in Table 1 School Demographics.

Table 1
School Demographic Breakdown

Ethnic Group	Percentage
Asian Non-Hispanic	1.24
Black Non-Hispanic	15.68
Black Hispanic	0.16
Hawaii/PI	0.62
Native American Non-Hispanic	2.32
Native American Hispanic	0.16
White Non-Hispanic	29.35
White Hispanic	49.68

Prior to beginning my study, I contacted the principal of Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS] to discuss my study and what I hoped to accomplish. The principal agreed to allow one of his English teachers to participate in the study. After receiving consent from the principal to conduct the study in his building, I met with the teacher to discuss the study and to ensure she was a willing participant.

Upon the teacher's agreement to participate, I observed one of her classes and interviewed and collected data on a small group of students from the class. These participants were representative of those students who spoke the most and displayed the most reaction to the strategies used in the classroom and were also representative of the ability ranges represented in the class. These students were interviewed to establish their knowledge of their primary

language, the responses to strategies or requests, reasons for certain behaviors, and the struggles they experienced in the English classroom.

Participants

The study was based on a sample of convenience and occurred at the school where I currently work as an instructional facilitator. Because of the demands of my position, I chose to study within my workplace. The sample of participants was a convenience sample as the principal, teacher, and I agreed on the scheduling of the observations and the students involved. However, the primary participants were one English teacher and the researcher, me, as an observer.

As an instructional facilitator, my role in the school is to ensure that teachers receive needs-based professional development and to assist with continuous improvement in classroom instruction; thus, I work with teachers to engage them in discussions pertaining to student learning goals and what student evidence suggests in regard to such goals. In addition, my role is to serve teachers and provide instructional leadership. The teacher, who I will call Ms. Smith (all names are pseudonyms), and I have worked together on certain units such as "The Hitchhiker" and *Romeo and Juliet*. However, Ms. Smith and I have not worked on vocabulary strategies or *The Odyssey* unit.

My work with students relies on what teachers ask me to accomplish as part of their classroom goals or what they would like to focus on as part of their development. Students know of me but many of them do not understand my position and role in the school. My work with students pertains to observations of behavior, modeling or co-teaching in classrooms, mentoring program leader, and as a teacher in the after school program. Therefore, another reason Ms. Smith's second period English class was chosen was because many of the students were new to

the school and had not worked with me. I did not have a relationship with these students prior to the study.

The teacher, Ms. Smith, is considered a master teacher. She currently teaches eighth and ninth grade and has taught for 17 years. During the two and half years I have been at the school, I have established rapport with the teacher during our work together as a facilitator-teacher team. The principal and some of Ms. Smith's peers quickly recommended Ms. Smith based on her knowledge of and comfort with teaching vocabulary in her English classroom. I chose to study her classroom and students because I was told she utilized vocabulary on a daily basis. I was unaware of how she used vocabulary, but I wanted to make sure that the study of vocabulary instruction was rich and consistent. Ms. Smith's classroom (Figure 1) was arranged in traditional rows, which she changes quite often to accommodate the activities she asks the students to participate in during her lessons. The decorations consisted of posters, a word wall with vocabulary words, and pictures of her family line and significant quotes line her bookshelf. Ms. Smith has placed lamps in certain corners of the room and used window valances to provide the students with a sense of home. When I approached Ms. Smith about being a participant in my research study, she was agreeable and very willing to participate. Ms. Smith explained that one of the essential elements in her classroom was the study of vocabulary and that she felt students would use vocabulary more than anything in their everyday lives and to grow as professionals.

The students were in one of the Ms. Smith's class periods and were selected based upon convenience sampling. All participants were in Ms. Smith's second hour English class. The class population consisted of sixteen students of various backgrounds. Of the sixteen students in the classroom, eleven students returned informed consent forms to participate in the

study. Due to previous negative experiences with observations, five students chose to not participate in the study.
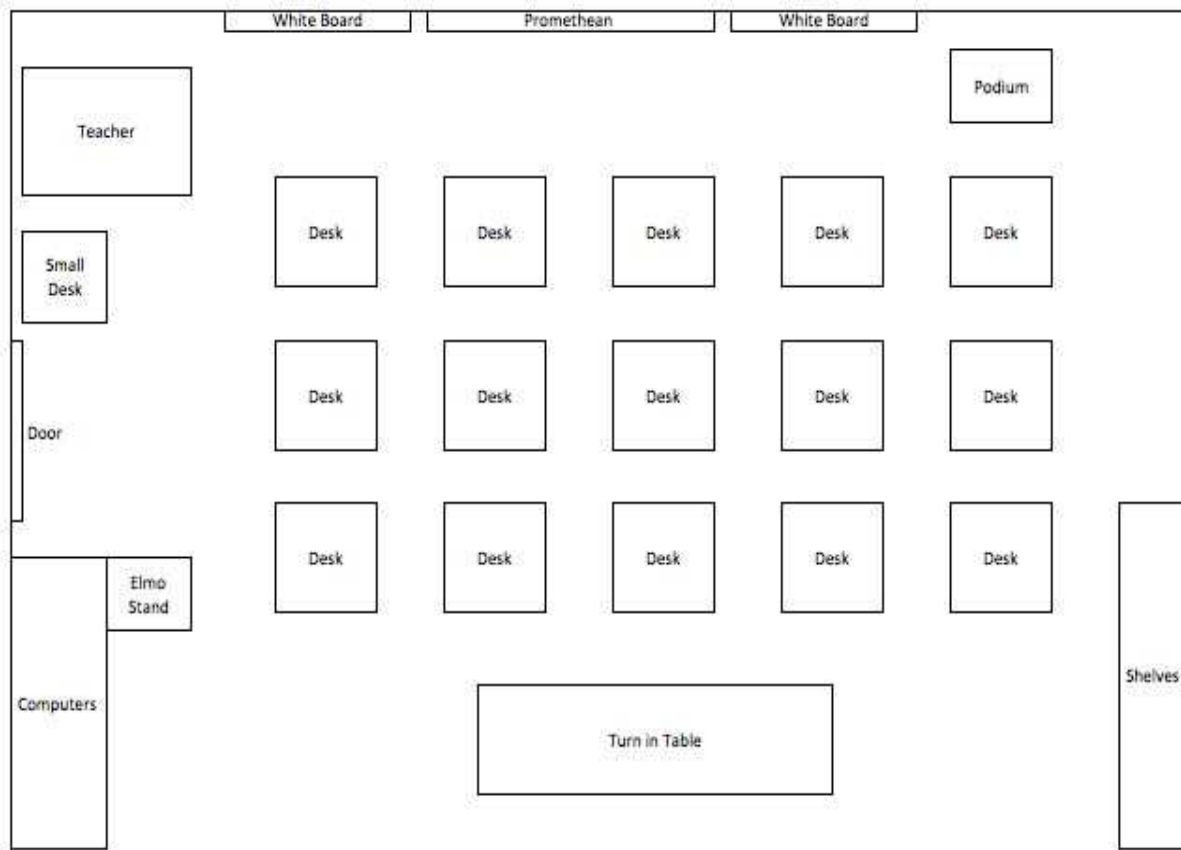
Figure 1 Diagram of Ms. Smith's Classroom

Classroom Context

During the two weeks of the study, Ms. Smith focused on Greek mythology and the study of *The Odyssey*. *The Odyssey* unit consisted of reading strategies, context vocabulary practice, and English content words. Ms. Smith prepared lessons in accordance with the abilities of her students by modeling assignments, allowing students to pair with each other, using technology enhanced activities, and by providing students with opportunities to engage in independent practice. Each of these methods occurred in the classroom setting; because as indicated by Ms.

Smith teachers do not give students homework to do in their home settings. Furthermore, Ms.

Smith explained the reason for lack of homework.

> We have been encouraged not to give specific homework in this school because
> we are told that they go home and they have to babysit. They go home and they
> have such hard lives that we need to teach them while they're here and make the
> most of the time that they're here and not give them homework whenever they're
> home. (Interview with Ms. Smith, 2015)

Despite not agreeing with the no homework policy, Ms. Smith adhered to what the

administration of the school asked; and therefore, she structured her classroom to reflect those

mandates by determining how she can assist students to understand the assignment through

modeling and providing them, what she believes, to be necessary practice elements.

The students in this classroom were highly diverse in their abilities and ethnic

composition. Of the students who agreed to participate in the study, the students were 5

Caucasians, 5 Hispanics, and 1 African American. The study took place in late January and

early February, so I asked Ms. Smith about the vocabulary growth she noticed in her students to

that point. Ms. Smith suggested that her students struggle with mixing English rules with their

home or primary languages and do not know words English speakers take for granted like

"omit." Students ask for instruction in vocabulary skills, but she found this particular group of

students to be apathetic and to lack a certain motivation to study and learn.

Confidentiality

Prior to initial contact with the principal or participants regarding the research study, I

obtained IRB approval, approval number 14-12-357. I took appropriate provisions to ensure the

privacy of the participants and to maintain the privacy laws of the IRB. Each participant was

assigned a pseudonym to protect the individuals' rights and identities. I kept all data in a secure

location and reassured the teacher participant that the videos would remain confidential and protected.

After seeking principal approval, I met with the teacher and discussed my study and had my teacher participant sign an informed consent form (Appendix B). Once the student participants were agreed upon, I gave the teacher the student informed consent letters to provide to the student participants (Appendix A). I contacted each participant's parent or guardian to be sure that the student informed consent form had been given to them and that the parents or guardians were willing to allow their student to participate in my study. After taking this step, I received eleven informed consent letters and only five participants refused to participate in the study.

Data Collection

Steps in the Process:

- Contact principal of Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School.

- Initial meeting with principal and teacher

- Principal wrote the Institution Letter of Approval

- Informed consent form provided to teacher participant and all student participants

- Initial interview with teacher, Ms. Smith, prior to first observation

- 10 Observations during lessons

- Exit Interviews with 8 student participants

- Exit Interview with the teacher

I met with the principal first to discuss my study and to obtain the institution letter of approval. After meeting with the principal and gaining approval, I met with the English teacher to explain the study, answer her questions, and determine the days and class period I would

observe and use for interviews. The collection tools for the study were interviews, recorded observations, and videos. During the duration of the study, the issue of confidentiality was emphasized because all observations and interviews were recorded.

The data collection period took place in ten 50-minute class periods over a period of two weeks. To guarantee data were collected in accordance with what took place within the classroom during the lesson, the classroom activities and the interviews with the teacher as well as the student groups were videotaped using a Swivel camera. Small group interviews were conducted to gauge the students' fluency with language and to discuss their aptitude for work in their English classes. The interview with the teacher was used to establish her perspective on the students and their language abilities. Furthermore, the teacher's exit interview also gauged changes in her beliefs and whether her beliefs changed or remained the same.

Steps of the Microethnography

Carspecken (1996) strongly recommended a loosely cyclical application of the stages and suggested an adaptation of the five-stage scheme to suit the needs of the locale and the considerations needed for the qualitative study (p. 40). The first step in my microethnographic study was to conduct my initial observation as a starting point and reference for my other observations, which included videotaped observations, initial record notes, and field journal notes (Carspecken, 1996). The videotaped observations, also known as passive observations, took into account the language interactions between the students and the teacher; thus, I recorded verbatim the transactions that take place in the fifty minute classroom time. Therefore, I took into account how language was used during classroom time and watched for verbal and nonverbal cues.

The initial observation was used to establish comfort with videotaping and to illustrate the foundational aspects of Ms. Smith's classroom including the classroom environment, date and times, and classroom details such as seating arrangement and posters. After the observation, I used my field note journal to record my questions, thoughts, and reactions to provide for an instant record of follow-up questions for the students. The videotape was viewed at least three times to record initial thoughts and then to determine the discourse behaviors used during the lesson. Since verbatim transcriptions were required to analyze patterns and reactions to the language events that occurred, I recorded many of my thoughts in brackets as I viewed the videos of my observations.

> Tyrek: "Miss, you skipped number 6." [Observer Comment: *Tyrek looks at me before the statement and then looks back at Ms. Smith. Tyrek is very aware of my presence. Raises his hand and tells her about number 6. Why are they just calling her miss? How did this start is this something that they are taught or they just do?*]

> Ms. Smith: "Oh, I did."

> Tyrek: "You want me to do it." [OC: *Students obviously willing to take risks. How was that fostered in the classroom?*]

> Ms. Smith: "Yes, Tyrek, I do."

> (Tyrek quietly answers the question but smiles at the end because he got it right.)

> Ms. Smith: "Good, good. Boston, can you tell me what is the independent clause in number 2?" [OC: *Reviews the grammatical structures. Independent clause? Why is this part important?]*

> Boston: "Winter." [OC: *He slumps down and sighs loudly. He demonstrates a problem with the terminology and tone indicates that he doesn't understand the term independent clause, but he took a risk like Tyrek. How does she help him?*]

> Teacher: "What's the sentence that could stand alone?" [OC: *Scaffolding to answer.*]

The verbatim speech acts were placed inside the quotation marks. My comments are placed in brackets with the code OC used to distinguish them as an observer comment. In some of the brackets, I placed questions that arose during the observations. I watched to see if the questions continued to arise as I observed; and if the questions were present in multiple observations, I used those questions in the exit interview with the teacher and the interviews with the students to determine if they interacted in a conscious manner in the classroom and whether they felt these interactions differed from how they would interact outside of the classroom and perhaps outside of the school environment.

During the next phase of my microethnography, I reviewed the transcripts and videotape to allow for interpretation of data. The reconstructive data analysis occurs directly after building the primary record (Carspecken, 1996). During the first stage, I provided an explanation of what is happening in the classroom and the meaning of the interactions. The initial meanings led to low-level coding of the data through verbal exchange coding. Saldana (2013) distinguished verbal exchange coding as "the verbatim transcript analysis and interpretation of the types of conversation and personal meanings of key moments in the exchanges"(p. 136). Through this coding, I was able to determine how the students and teacher interacted. I determined if the words or phrases needed interpretations to code; therefore, I coded the data by interpreting if the language was a shift to the norms defined by academic norms to determine these norms an interview was conducted initially with the teacher to distinguish how she viewed vocabulary study prior to the study, to distinguish why she held this view, and what her goals were for vocabulary study in her classroom. Upon the conclusion of the study, an exit interview was conducted to discuss her expectations and to determine if these expectations influenced the

students. The exit interview determined if perhaps the teacher's initial opinion of academic values changed.

While the verbal exchange coding process was meant to determine the "generic type of conversation," the "reflection examines the meaning of the conversation" (Saldana, 2013, p.136). The next step in data analysis involved looking at the use of communication and linguistic structures throughout the duration of time spent in the classroom setting (Carspecken, 1996; Fairclough, 2003). I interpreted the transcriptions and video recordings from each observation and continued to code those interactions. The first level of coding facilitated the determination of what generic verbal exchanges occurred in the classroom setting. To determine if the events and classroom interactions were related, I looked for thematic coherence between the events, words, and phrases used in the classroom setting and in the interviews.

During the third stage, I conducted interviews with eight students from the class I observed. These students were a representation of the demographics of the students in the classroom observations as well as representative of the minority influence at SLCJHS. To gather authentic data during the interviews, I paired the students with the person they talked the most to during class time to see if I could distinguish differences between their vocabulary use between student-and-student and between adult (researcher) and student. The first section of the interviews consisted of basic information questions such as name, age, family members, favorite class, and anything that the students felt needed to be known before we moved on with the interview.

The second portion of the sessions consisted of depth interviews to establish students' perspectives on how they feel about differences in their home environment and their school environment, which were videotaped to ensure consistency of the findings. I video recorded

these interviews to gauge reactions and to record transcriptions. The interviews were transcribed by a transcription service; and then, I reviewed each of the transcriptions and watched the video again to ensure each transcript was an accurate reflection of the interview. The interviews allowed me to distinguish the student participants' perspectives on the vocabulary strategies used in the classroom, their opinion regarding whether vocabulary is important, and to analyze their individual use of vocabulary. I used semi structured interview protocols to allow for flexibility to discuss reactions to words, phrases, and nonverbal interactions. The interviews were used to analyze what happened during classroom interactions and vocabulary activities and discuss why those events took place. The teacher interviews as well as the student interviews were conducted to help identify the differences between the denotation of what is said and the connotation of what is said in the classroom.

A second level of coding was used to look for matches in discourse and behavior; therefore, during this stage, I also looked for thematic patterns in the initial observation notes, interview statements, and in interactions between the students and the teacher. These findings derive from the generalizations made "during […] the analysis of interactive power" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 148). I constructed commonalities that manifest themselves in the data and determined denotation of language in relation to the connotation of language, the discoursal functions of the language, used by the students and teacher. I also discussed changes that I saw in the values of the teacher and how she feels academic discourse functions in society's role of standardization. *Figure 2 Coding Process* illustrates the steps taken during the coding of data.

Figure 2 Coding Process

During the last part of data analysis, I had two sets of coded data and needed to determine if these codes correlated to my questions and objectives for the study. Once these codes were established, I looked at the meanings, words, word phrases, and patterns to reorganize the ideas. I needed to consider the word levels and cognitive academic words in these themes; thus, I regrouped the codes into a final category, the three tiers of vocabulary, and sought to address the questions and purposes of the study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness includes all of the methods taken to ensure the validity of the qualitative data provided in a study. For my study, I used a time period of ten class hours to conduct observations and collect data; thus, I observed ten class periods and the same set of students and teacher at the same time of day to be able to compare the same group of students' data during the entire time period. I kept a record of my field notes to cross-reference video recordings and to verify the audio from the video or the notes taken during the observations. In the next step, I typed transcriptions after each observation and noted any patterns as I typed those transcriptions. I collaborated with my advisor to discuss the collection process and to gain clarity regarding data analysis and took into account any thoughts and suggestions provided by the members of my

dissertation committee. To ensure the accuracy of my findings, I also asked for assistance in checking my methodology and coding from another researcher who was able to question my methodology and patterns as I completed the process.

The focus of a microethnography is usually conducted to study verbal and nonverbal communication patterns to make an analysis of the "face-to-face interactions within specific social contexts" (Hatch, 2002, p. 21). Therefore, with the consideration that academic institutions and classroom settings are social contexts, then generalizations may be made to the larger context. Thus, the use of the microethnographic protocol was employed to provide a means for validating the qualitative data in the field-notes. Through the use of two stages of coding, the study will be more valid and provide a basis for the findings of the qualitative results. I will employ a second reader to substantiate the coding and themes found in the data.

As a researcher only, I used my passive role to determine if my presence altered behaviors too much. I used video recording to ensure that my data collection was as authentic as possible and unobtrusive during the span of the study. Carspecken (1996) suggested "the researcher makes herself as unobtrusive as possible within the social site to observe interactions" (p. 41). Thus, I found a table in the very back of the room to set up my equipment and to observe the students and teacher interactions. The teacher was bothered a little in the beginning by the camera and the note taking. However, I assured her that all of the video recordings and the observation notes were only for me. I explained that these materials were locked up and shared with nobody. After reiterating the confidentiality procedures, she told me that she felt better about the process and began to act "more like herself again" (Interview with Ms. Smith, 2015).

Researcher's Subjectivity

I approached the classroom observations and transcription process as a former high school English teacher, a former AP Lead English teacher, and now a Literacy Instructional Facilitator. In these roles, I developed an understanding of what constituted academic discourse and gained an awareness of primary discourse.

I served in the positions of high school English teacher and Advanced Placement English Language and Lead teacher for four years. In my role as an Advanced Placement English Language teacher, professional development experiences and classroom practices taught me to be aware of what academic discourse sounded like and the words that I was exposed to illustrated the focus on that academic language. For example, these academic vocabulary words included metonymy, synecdoche, rhetorical analysis, and synthesis essay. The tone of my Advanced Placement English course required a sense of what constituted academic discourse and a very active role in teaching my students to use and identify academic language. Furthermore, in this role, I also learned what primary discourse meant. My students complained they could not understand the vocabulary I used in the classroom. Thus, many parents also called me and attempted to explain to me that they needed me to speak and use vocabulary more closely linked to what their children were accustomed to in their home life known as their primary discourse. In this role, I had also formed a very clear perception that academic discourse was indeed important for students to learn and understand. I felt for my students to be successful in their futures as college students and professionals the essential component in those roles would be the ability to speak and behave using academic discourse.

In my current position for four years as an Instructional Facilitator for literacy, I brought the bias that academic discourse was important and needed to be used in classroom practices. I

held a very positivist stance that academic discourse was indeed required by the academic and professional institutions of society. I viewed moving to a junior high school as my chance to impart this goal to a younger generation who would have more practice with academic discourse and possibly have a better chance in society. Once I began working with teachers and students, I noticed teachers who were raised in the area and attended the school used language differing from what I viewed as academic. I began to listen and to watch students more closely also and discovered they switched discourses and language between classes and in classes. For example, students would enter the classroom, sit at their desk, not move for a class period, and not engage to avoid speaking or being seen. When I listened to their vocabulary I noticed they would try to speak according to what they thought was "proper" with terms like "yes, ma'am," "rubrics," and "graphic organizers." However, when they entered the hallways, the students would discuss the "charts" they used in the classroom and respond to questions with "yeah." I began to question my beliefs regarding academic discourse and the place of primary discourse. Through these experiences, I began to ponder the idea of social languages and the role primary discourse should hold in the school setting.

Thus, I approached the study with these biases and found many of my preconceived notions about the importance of academic language changed through the process of the study. I was familiar with selection of vocabulary and teaching academic vocabulary; in fact, I had been taught as teacher that academic language was important for students to know and understand. I had encountered the idea of primary language and social languages before, yet I found myself being more aware of the importance that social languages should play in teaching. Just as Gee (2014) contended, social languages occur when speakers demonstrate who they are in a setting

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and what they want to accomplish with the use of that language. Thus, I brought my experiences and preconceived notions to the table, but I watched these notions change.

Limitations of the Study

The greatest limitation was the need for immediate transcription of observations and interviews. I transcribed each observation period, which consumed much of my time and took away from my ability to interview students. However, for the interviews, I used a transcription service but also reviewed each transcription in detail to check for accuracy.

Since the idea of discourse lies in the socioeconomic background of students, the strategies and resources used in the classrooms may not be accessible to students in other classroom settings. If students are not exposed to these strategies and resources in other classrooms, an effect may be seen in their ability to determine what is academic discourse and what is primary discourse.   All of these ideas are contingent upon the teachers' styles of teaching and use of language.

The last limitation to this study was that there were a variety of concepts comprising the idea of academic discourse and primary discourse. However, I limited my study to monitor for the use of vocabulary and speech. The idea of vocabulary was viewed through the idea of words and phrases, but the concepts of grammatical structures were ignored during the study. However, further research beyond the scope of this study will be required to analyze each concept of discourse analysis.

Summary

In this chapter, I explained the research methodology I used to conduct my study. The portions of the chapter included contextual information about the junior high school in which the study was conducted, a brief overview of the participants, the process of receiving permission to

begin the study, and an explication of the data collection procedures. The chapter also included a

detailed discussion of the steps taken in my microethnography and the data analysis procedures.

Finally, I reviewed the limitations of the study at the end of this chapter.

Chapter IV
Results

Introduction

This study presented the results of a microethnography of a teacher and one class of students. In this study, I used a combination of observations, video recording, transcripts, and interviews to triangulate my data. I triangulated the data by coding from the observation transcriptions and videos, viewing the interview transcript and video, and comparing the videos and interviews to analyze similar behaviors and responses within each of them. Through this triangulation of data, I sought to write "an evocation representation of the fieldwork experience" (Goodall, 2000, p.121) and to show the connections between the student and teacher responses and classroom observations (Denzin, 1978). The study took place over a period of ten days in the classroom and was followed by three days of interviews, which occurred two weeks after observations to provide me with enough time to transcribe the observations.

The analysis of this data allowed for the interpretation of meanings and required careful analysis and explanation. In fact, to maintain objectivity, the results and analysis of the information are discussed through the use of each research question. The microethnographic study involved one teacher, Ms. Smith and her class, in particular eight students, in an urban school "Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS]" in a mid-South community. Observations, interviews, and transcripts were used to address the research questions. Pseudonyms were given to the participants and school site to protect them.

The teacher participated in an initial interview, provided lesson plans and activity sheets, and allowed for video recorded observations to take place in her classroom for two weeks while she taught. The first step in data analysis came from the idea of verbal exchange coding, which is the "verbatim transcript analysis and interpretations of the types of conversation and personal

meanings of key moments in the exchanges" (Saldana, 2013, p. 136). Thus, I analyzed the issues

of classroom discourse as defined by a typology or continuum of five forms of verbal exchange

(Goodall, 2000; Saldana, 2013). The data are categorized into the following thematic ideas:

1. Ritual Interaction: simple verbal interaction that is considered a traditional form of good manners used to "express social recognition and mutuality of address."
2. Ordinary Conversation: "patterns of questions and responses that provide the interactants with data about personal, relational, and informational issues and concerns, as well as perform the routine 'business of …everyday life."
3. Skilled Conversation: illustrates "a higher or deeper level of information exchange or discussion" in face-to face conversation.
4. Personal Narratives: comprise the types of "individual or mutual self-disclosure, wherein the episodes of disclosure are used to situate, coordinate, detail, and explain or retell pivotal events in a personal […] life."
5. Dialogue: "interactants typically report that the dialogue 'transcends' the ordinary boundaries of self and other as well as topical continuity, producing a lived experience of ecstasy" (Goodall, 2000, p. 103-4).

While these five categories are characteristic of verbal exchanges, the last "dialogue" was less

likely and did not necessarily pinpoint my research objectives.

To aid with the analysis of data, I used a set of preselected questions suggested by

Goodall. I limited the number of questions I used to analyze the data. The first four questions

had to do with the framing of the event, whereas the last six developed the sense of what is truly

being said through the verbal interactions. The following questions represent the questions I

asked myself on the first round of coding:

1. Where does the action take place? What are the physical, economic, social, hierarchal, and political contexts involved?
2. What kind of speech act is it?
3. What is the nature of the episode?
4. What is the nature of the relationship?
5. What is the "work" that the words are doing?
6. What are the symbols that must be read as signs?
7. What are the "power" terms?
8. What indexes are available?
9. What is the role of silence / the unsaid in this episode?
10. What are the influence of fixed positionings:
    a. Race / ethnicity?

b. Social Class (Goodall, 2000, p. 106)

Through the questions about what work is being done and what kind of speech act is occurring,

the functions of academic discourse became apparent or the sense that academic discourse was

being used was revealed to me.

The second round of coding consisted of analyzing the ideas that came from the first.

Furthermore, the first round provided insight into the acquisition of academic discourse.

Academic discourse consists of the Three Tiers of Vocabulary words, but I also used Gee's

Vocabulary Tool and Big D Discourse Tool to make sense of each Tier of Vocabulary. The

following table illustrates what is meant by the Three Tiers of Vocabulary.

Table 2
Three Tiers of Vocabulary

Tier Three: Words are specific to the content of English and are of low frequency to most students. Examples include archetype, epic, and epic simile.

Tier Two: Words are high frequency for mature learners and may be used in multiple content areas. Examples include luxurious and furtive.

Tier One: Words are considered to be at a very basic level and do not receive instruction in school. Examples include story and word.

(Beck, Mckeown, & Kucan, 2002, p. 8)

With the Three Tiers of Vocabulary, I looked at the idea of discourse and determined based on

the criterion found in the table where to place words and what occurred in the classroom and

interviews in accordance with discourse functions. Using Gee's Vocabulary Tool, I asked

myself "How is the distribution of word types functioning to mark this communication in terms

of style (register, social language)? How does it contribute to the purposes for communicating?"

(Gee, 2014).

As a matter of fact, Gee (2014) argued that little "d" discourse means merely the

"language in use;" therefore, the Big D discourse is "composed of distinctive ways of

speaking/listening and often, too, distinctive ways of writing / reading." To begin the coding of

academic language, I chose to use the Big D Discourse tool. The use of two discourse analysis

tools during the second round of coding provided me with a substantial means to argue what

types of words and contexts the students were attempting to embody through their language. The

Vocabulary Tool considers what type of words are employed in a social context such as content

specific vocabulary words (those related to English), words used informally in everyday

language, and formal words serving a purpose in a specific specialized context (Gee, 2014);

furthermore, in conjunction with The Big D Discourse Tool, I sought to develop an

understanding of the social context the students tried to demonstrate and asked the question of

how a certain word functioned in the realm of the school context.

As I used both the Vocabulary Tool and the Big D Discourse Tool, I employed Gee's

questions to guide my discourse analysis. After walking through the analysis of vocabulary with

the Vocabulary Tool, I focused primarily on the Discourse that was exposed through the

language. Despite only analyzing for language, I could still determine what Discourse was being

employed; as a matter of fact, Gee (2014) argued "even if all you have is language, ask what

Discourse is this language part of, that is, what kind of person (what identity) is this speaker or writer seeking to enact or to get recognized." Thus, the transcripts helped me to uncover many of the underlying assumptions employed in the academic setting and what society finds socially acceptable behavior. Furthermore, Gee (2014) recommended asking another question, "What sorts of actions, interactions, values, beliefs, and objects, tools, technologies, and environments are associated with this sort of language within a particular Discourse?" These questions helped me to determine if the students switched discourses and what the language really meant in terms of the behaviors of the students, how the students responded to the teacher and their peers in the classroom environment, and how the students switched discourses according to what they thought the teacher wanted at a particular instance.

Portraits of Ms. Smith and Eight Students

During the extent of the study, I observed one teacher and her classroom. The following portraits provide background knowledge regarding the concepts of primary discourse and academic discourse. The data used to create these portraits was collected through one-on-one interviews with the teacher and small group or paired interviews with the eight students. I begin with the teacher portrait to set the tone of the classroom and her beliefs. The student portraits are essential in understanding their home lives in comparison to the academic, school setting. The first three students, Cody, Olivia, and Boston, were the Caucasian students who claimed to have educated parents. The second set of students, Carlos and Elena, were two Hispanic students who talk and discuss in the classroom and display code-switching between their primary discourse and the academic discourse. Maria, the next student, demonstrated little knowledge in her oral language within the classroom setting; despite her silence, one-on-one she explained her issues in

the classroom. Finally, the last two students, Pablo and Tyrek, were Hispanic and African American students who were fairly quiet during class discussions of academic nature.

Ms. Smith.

Ms. Smith entered the profession as a child of a teacher and a rancher. She also had an uncle who was a superintendent. The expectation for education in her family was to grow up and attend a large private university, because everyone in her family attended this particular large private university. She suggested that she chose teaching for the hours. Ms. Smith began her teacher career as an elementary teacher; but when she had her children, she stayed home with them for ten years. When she made the decision to enter the profession again, she did not want to go back to elementary school and through a suggestion from a colleague she chose to become a junior high English teacher. Now, Ms. Smith has been a teacher for 17 years and is praised by her colleagues as a master teacher and a strong academic vocabulary instructor.

When asked about her philosophy regarding the teaching of academic language, she stated in the initial interview that teaching vocabulary was essential in this school because the students come from a low socioeconomic area of town and are mainly immigrants who are still learning English.

> Researcher: Okay, um. I'm going to switch gears just a little bit. And the question is I understand that you are concerned with teaching your students to speak intelligent academic language and expand their vocabulary. Tell me about your students. And why that's necessary?
>
> Ms. Smith: Our students are in a low socioeconomic area of town with a lot of immigrant students, and a lot of the immigrant students live here because it is affordable. And uh many of them are learning English, and they don't even know that they are learning it incorrectly. It's important for all of them to speak grammatically correct so that they can present themselves to the middle class world in order to get a job.

In fact, Ms. Smith referenced that when she asked her students what they felt they needed to learn at the beginning of the school year they requested more study in vocabulary. Thus, she chose to teach vocabulary and grammar at the beginning of her classes. Ms. Smith suggested that many of the students translate for their parents and then go home to non-English speaking households.

In contrast to Ms. Smith's philosophy of the need for academic language teaching at the beginning of the school year, she changed her philosophy because she began to notice that teachers in her building did not speak as eloquently as she originally thought they should. She stated that she had an awareness of the eloquent language skills that she wanted to impart upon her students and suggested that the only part of her philosophy remaining the same was when she spoke to the students she needs to be consciously using some new words that they have not ever heard. For example, she will use words like splendid, furtive, and luxurious in her everyday conversations with the students. At this point in her career, she did not know that students should necessarily speak on an academic level at all times. However, she did indicate that students should have an awareness of the demands and differences in their social settings and languages. Rather than saying she is sad, she employs the word crestfallen at school to indicate a difference in social setting.

Ms. Smith cited the experiences in school as being driven by testing and by the ideas of Ruby Payne. She suggested that teachers are not encouraged to provide students homework to practice the vocabulary words or anything, because they are in a low socioeconomic area, which means that many students go home to babysit or to hard lives preventing them from excelling in studies. In fact, Ms. Smith contended that the primary discourse of the students in this school and in the low socioeconomic areas is just as important as the academic discourse and just as

good as any language spoken. Furthermore, she suggested that professionals be aware of what is going on culturally with these students. Her experiences found that these students serve as waitresses, waiters, cooks, and as employees in various other fields of work. In the exit interview, she also added that standardized testing requires students to understand the academic vocabulary and places them in a group making them fit in what society says is sufficient for college and careers, those high-powered degrees.

Cody.

Cody is a fourteen-year-old Caucasian male who resides in a single parent home. He lives with his mother. Cody shook his head and stated "she thinks education is highly required. I can argue with that for hours." Ms. Smith stated that conversations with Cody's mother consisted of her desire for him to attend dental school and her very high expectations for him. Furthermore, Cody declares his hatred for English and for studying vocabulary. He currently holds a high C average in English. He suggested that the only reason English courses are required and that he must learn formal grammar and English skills is because America thinks it is necessary. I noticed that Cody was absent from class on more than one of my observations; and when he was in attendance, he was easily distracted by Olivia or by his other friends in the class.

Cody felt as if he has learned very little from English instead he proclaims that he is more skilled athletically than academically.

> Cody: I just can't stand English. I swear. They got us trying to learn stuff that, you ...They're having us write stuff. I mean, you're going to write in the future, and have to know this stuff. But, I mean, you're not, you're not going to be writing a book when you're doing it. So. I'm pretty sure writing in the future's going to be more summarizing, not writing.
>
> Researcher: So. You said that they have you writing stuff. Like, what kind of things do you have to write that you might not see as important? What are you having to write that's not important at all?

Cody: Daily stuff we gotta do in that one little book. I don't need to know what a hyphen is.

Later in the interview, he suggested that his understood "they" meant schools in America and whoever decides what is taught. When asked about his exposure to vocabulary and books with new words, Cody had not engaged in reading any books and was very adamant in his stance that he does not read. During the duration of the observations, he said he could remember nothing that was discussed in the class and could remember no exposure to vocabulary words. Despite not reading or remembering any vocabulary from his experience in the English classroom, Cody's mother still asks him to maintain proper language skills. As a matter of fact, during the interview, Cody corrected one of his peers and said "You're wrong right there anyways, it was, 'my best friend and I.'" When asked why he chose to correct his peer, he continued with the understanding that society demands proper language skills and to be perfectly skilled.

Cody also displayed an understanding of social languages because he discussed how he differentiates his speech and his behaviors when he talks at school, with his friends, and with his family. With friends, he continued that the language is "more dumbed down." He provided the following example: "Go get Rob real quick." He continued to suggest that this was the dumb downed version of the language he speaks to friends.

While Cody claims his vocabulary and reading are not great and he does not do them, Ms. Smith stated that he is very intelligent and has a very high level of vocabulary. During the interview, Cody used vocabulary words like "athletically inclined," "life moral," and "loyalty." His mother used these words with him all the time. He attempted to not be as intelligent around his peers, especially Olivia, and would make statements like "I didn't know it," "How am I supposed to know that," and "I hate school." He also brought out the fact that he has been in jail before and that he spent some time at the alternative school in town.

Olivia.

A fifteen-year-old Caucasian female, Olivia, resides in a home with her mother, stepfather, four brothers, and three sisters. Olivia stated that her mother has a strong desire for her to be educated; in contrast, her stepdad is not that concerned with the idea of education. According to Ms. Smith, Olivia has one of the larger vocabularies. She is also very willing to speak and engage in the classroom activities and to try new vocabulary words. Olivia clearly enjoys English more than Cody and Boston and maintains a high B or A average in the course.

She stated that she learned a lot of different formal skills in English, such as how to use commas and hyphens. Even though Olivia engaged in the classroom activities, she hates English because she feels like the skills she is exposed to she will never use in life.

> Olivia: Um, I've learned, I've learned a lot. Like, I've learned, um, I've learned how to, like, commas, and, like, hyphens and all that. But, I don't ... I hate English. Like, I hate English. And hate is a very strong word, that's why I use it.
>
> Researcher: Why do you hate English?
>
> Olivia: Because, it's like, um, I'm not, I'm not going to use this in life. Like, I don't see that I'm going to use this in life. I'm not going to have to, like, know how to use a hyphen. Like, "if you don't know how to use a hyphen, you're not going to get a job." Like, I don't see it that way. And I don't see that it, like, it matters.
>
> Cody: No, that's wrong right there. I can already tell you that.
>
> Researcher: No, no.
>
> Olivia: I don't see, I don't see that it matters. Like, I don't think that English is a big deal. I don't see that it matters. If you know how to write a sentence, then it doesn't matter.

Despite feeling that she will not use many of the skills in her English course, Olivia was still willing to engage in the activities as she felt that she had to be respectful. She explained that part of being respectful to her teachers was participating even when she might not agree with what she learned in class.

Like Cody, Olivia also does not read and has had very little exposure to vocabulary. Olivia also brings to light that she indeed has no books available at her house except for ones from elementary school. Olivia found *The Odyssey* to be "boring" and "rushed." In contrast to these statements, Olivia expressed that she did enjoy learning the vocabulary words in *The Odyssey* and learning new words is an important skill to her.

Ms. Smith emphasized repeatedly that Olivia has one of the highest vocabularies in her class, she enjoys learning new words, and then flaunts her vocabulary skills in conversation and to compete with others in the English class. Olivia's philosophy regarding new words was so she can use them to sound "more intellectual" and to help her become someone. She also discussed that her mother makes her use the proper grammar rules and demonstrated this knowledge with the phrase "you was" but said the proper rule would be "you were." Olivia said that her mother uses large vocabulary words with her and will not let her speak using poor vocabulary like "ain't." She said that she values vocabulary and being in the school setting to use them. Thus, I concluded that this student ultimately knows how to use academic discourse and differing social languages. In fact, she told me that she would not use the same vocabulary with me in this interview as she would with her friends. She even suggested that the vocabulary she would use with her mother, teachers, and friends would sound different.

Boston.

Boston is a fifteen-years-old Caucasian male and wanted me to know right away that his parents are divorced. He lives with his mother and stepfather and one younger brother. Both parents value education and expect him to receive an education. Ms. Smith told me Boston has a middle level vocabulary for the school but lacks motivation and desire to learn. His current low

D average reflects his lack of motivation. When asked how he felt about English class, he found

the class to be boring and not entertaining enough for him.

> Researcher: How do you feel about English?
>
> Boston: I think it's not that fun, on my opinion.
>
> Researcher: You know, I noticed that you're the one, that you like to, kinda, lay your head down and she's always telling you to sit up. And, why do you think that you have that tendency, in that classroom, to lay your head down and be told to sit up? Why do you think she does that? Why do you think she's always pestering you?
>
> Boston: Because ... Because I like, I think it's not as - like, because I like to be entertained, and stuff. And so, I think it's really boring just sitting there, and having to read, and stuff.
>
> Researcher: Why do you think she keeps trying to correct your behavior, though? Do you think, do you think you should have your behavior corrected?
>
> Boston: So I'll have better, like, bod- better body posture. For whenever we have you here, or something, probably. So, like- because, like, whenever she corrects me, she's like "You need to sit straight up, or that'll never get you somewhere."
>
> Researcher: But who says, who says that that's better?
>
> Boston: It's better.
>
> Researcher: Who says it's better, though? Who made us think that it was better for you to sit up straight?
>
> Boston: Oh. My, uh, music teachers tell you that. It's better to sit up straight.

Sitting and reading bored him and made him feel like slouching quite often; thus, I asked him

"Why do you think you should have your behavior corrected?" He told me he agrees with Ms.

Smith when she tells him to sit up and not slouch, because he said it's like she told him "that'll

never get you somewhere." Boston said that "better body posture" shows that he "cares to

guests" like when I was there as a researcher. He even explained that music teachers always

make him stand up or sit up straight.

When asked about reading habits, Boston quickly suggested that he read four books in the past year and that his favorite was *Maximum Ride* by James Patterson. He has a large library of books at home and also has comic books that he keeps in plastic so they do not "decay." He reads to learn new words and does value the vocabulary study in Ms. Smith's English class.

During *The Odyssey* lessons I observed, he said he got bored with those because "she was rushing the lessons." He tried to pick up on the vocabulary and learn the skills they were studying but struggled with the speed of the lessons. As he discussed the activities that were used, he used words like "Venn diagram," "grammar," and "rubrics." When asked where he learned all of these words, he said he acquired them as he progressed through school and that teachers like Ms. Smith and one of his elementary teachers taught him. "Venn diagram," "grammar," and "rubrics" are what he explained to be words he would only use at school and would not use them at home with his parents. He said during *The Odyssey* he learned words to describe people.

Boston also demonstrated an awareness of how he changes his language when he is with his friends, with his teachers, and with his parents. I found that he displayed the ability to code-switch according to his social setting. He even said when he is at home or in the classroom he changes his vocabulary and language depending on whom he is talking to. In addition, he said "teachers you have to respect" but his friend he felt that he "can talk to them any way and they'll probably be able to understand you." Like the other students I interviewed, he also felt that the school and society made these rules and that he had to be "a different man" in these settings.

Carlos.

Carlos, a fifteen-year-old Hispanic male, moved to this mid-South community from El Salvador when he was eight-years-old. He told me that he is adopted and has a stepbrother and

stepsister. He also referred to his parents as his stepfather and stepmother and lives in the

household with them, his grandparents, and his younger sister. He said his household values

education because his stepmother and his real mother did not attend college. His brother also

talks to him about attending college and just finished his service as a Marine so he attends

college now. Carlos also said that education is important to him because of the opportunities and

skills that education and college will provide him.

When we discussed English and vocabulary, Carlos talked about the struggles he still has

with the English language, which reflected in his high C average. He said that he has never liked

English because it is his second language and mixes up with his first language.

> Carlos: I've never liked English cuz it's just my second language so I tend to want
> to mix it up with my first language so it's hard. So, sometimes Miss Smith gets
> after me for doing something that I'm just so used to doing in my other way.
>
> Elena: Yeah
>
> Carlos: So that's why.
>
> Researcher: Like what, what does she getting onto you for?
>
> Carlos: Sometimes whenever I write a sentence or the way I write it it's just weird
> cuz in El Salvador it's just backwards sometimes. Just the way you phrase things
> is backwards, so. It's like the opposite of English so it's really hard when you're
> talking Spanish in one house and then you get to school and you're talking in
> English.

The struggle also occurs for him because he only speaks Spanish in his home setting and then he

comes to school where he only speaks English. His family values his primary discourse and asks

him to do everything in Spanish and according to his culture so that he does not forget it. Carlos

said that it took him a long time to become fluent in English because he moved to the area when

he was eight and repeated third grade because he started school at age three instead of five.

When asked about the reasons for so many rules in English, Carlos believes that it is so that everyone can understand the language.

As we switched to the vocabulary discussion of our interview, I asked Carlos why it is important to study vocabulary words. Carlos said that he feels like he has to be able to communicate with everybody. "It's important because some people out there might still use those words, they might be adjusted to one language so it's good for others to understand all kinds of English." He has a respect for speakers who speak a different language or use different worlds and feels that we should all be able to communicate with each other. When discussing his social languages, Carlos would be "more foolish" and not use the large vocabulary words that are used in English class with his friends and family than he is at school. Carlos called the teacher "Miss" during the majority of the classroom observations. Thus, in the interview, Carlos explained that he calls Ms. Smith "Miss" because he confused his teacher's names.

He too displayed a tendency to code-switch between his primary discourse and academic discourse to reflect the social language and social setting that situations and people required at certain times. He said he does switches like his because he said at home he feels that there are not as many rules as there are at home. He also suggested that many of his peers are raised differently than he is and so they may not understand what he is saying or the language he is using. I asked why he used different vocabulary words or felt like he had to use different words. The response was an analogy "just like El Salvadorians are Hispanic they'll understand the whole Mexican or Hispanic language." The words Mexicans use are not always the words that El Salvadorians use.

Elena.

Elena, a fifteen-year-old Hispanic female, was born and raised in this mid-South community. She speaks what she calls "Mexican Spanish" and English. She lives with her mom, dad, and two brothers. Her family values education because both of her parents studied in Mexico but only made it through high school. Elena suggested that she works hard now because she wants to get "scholarships" to attend college, but she struggles with maintaining a passing grade in English and currently has a low D average.

Ms. Smith told me that Elena understands English more than some of the other Hispanic students in her second period English class. She said she struggles with switching between Spanish and English, her primary discourse and her secondary or academic discourse. She laughs "it's Spanglish for me." In her home setting, Elena speaks mostly Spanish but she said she speaks a little English too.

> Researcher: So what about you? What do you think about English as ...
>
> Elena: I mean, like he said, it's a second language of mine too and what's is interesting (coughs) it's interesting. It's getting there for me, I mean, like you said I also talk Spanish and then sometimes English at home. And but mostly I talk the same thing like, basically I talk ummm both languages at the same time.

Most of the time she speaks both languages simultaneously, but she struggles to separate the two languages. Even though Elena has spoke English since preschool, she said it is still difficult for her and a struggle. Vocabulary serves as a means for getting through schoolwork and for making it through the school setting. Furthermore, vocabulary like she uses in the school setting is not used in her home setting.

Her behavior and vocabulary in her home setting are different. She said her home setting is where more silliness takes place; thus, she avoids using "big words" like she uses in Ms. Smith's English class. She uses her mix of Spanish and English but still mostly Spanish because

the majority of her friends also speak Spanish. Elena does not practice her vocabulary skills or English skills outside of the classroom instead she just listens and tries to acquire new English words. She showed me what her primary discourse, Spanish, sounded like; and then, at school or to somebody she doesn't know, she would be more polite and say "hi, how was your day?" When she goes home, the conversation to her mother may be something like "what did you make to eat," but it would be in Spanish. She continued by discussing that society expects her to use proper language; and when she is at school, she wants to show her ability to use the "bigger vocabulary."

Maria.

Another fifteen-year-old Hispanic female, Maria, was also born in this mid-South community area like Elena. Maria lives with nine people: her twin sister, her oldest sister, her sister's boyfriend, her sister's baby, her mother, and other family members. While Maria's family speaks Spanish primarily, she tries to avoid speaking Spanish.

> Researcher: Now, is English the only language you speak? Or do you speak one-
>
> Maria: I speak, um, Spanish.
>
> Researcher: You speak Spanish too? So, do you speak Spanish primarily when you go home, or ... No?
>
> Maria: My mom want, wants me to speak Spanish because she doesn't understand when I speak English, but I don't speak Spanish when I can.
>
> Researcher: Okay. Why do you think you feel that way about Spanish that you don't want to speak it?
>
> Maria: I don't know.
>
> Researcher: Do you know how to speak it? Or am I just making an assumption there?
>
> Maria: I don't like speaking it. I don't know, it's just, I am more comfortable speaking English than I am Spanish because I can't really pronounce, like I

couldn't- I couldn't ... like, I know the words and stuff, but I just can't pronounce them all and stuff.

Maria continued she is more comfortable speaking English and desires to sound educated and intelligent. In her opinion, Spanish seems uncomfortable because she struggles to "pronounce" the words. Speaking Spanish does not feel intelligent to her and makes her feel inadequate.

During my observations in her classroom, Maria remained very quiet and did not seem to engage in the lessons. In a discussion with the teacher, Ms. Smith said Maria is extremely quiet but she does her work and "just does her job." I found that Maria maintained a B average in the course; thus, as Ms. Smith suggested "she actually understands how to do the work." Maria also confirmed these claims by talking about how she moved frequently from place to place and when she came to Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS] she didn't have friends, so she decided that learning would be something for her to do.

Despite not knowing if she will attend college, Maria continued to explain that she enjoys English class and that she likes to learn vocabulary words. Her conversations at school are completely different from her home conversations; thus, like the other students, she feels like she has to use language that suits the academic discourse. At home, Maria feels comfortable with being herself stating, "They're not going to judge me rather, because they don't educate me." However, in the school setting, people expect her to be "educated and stuff like that, so I talk more educated here than I would do there." Maria engages in reading books and exposing herself to more vocabulary words; therefore, when students do not understand vocabulary words like "luxurious," she said she struggles to understand why they do not understand those words when she has "already known them for years." When she goes home, she says she reads articles on her smartphone and tries to expose herself to the world around her.

Maria plans to become a tattoo artist and does not plan to attend college, so I asked her why she felt that learning vocabulary words and studying was important. Maria had never thought about it that way as she felt that it was her job to be a good student at school. In fact, she continued the conversation with "it's good to have vocabulary and stuff like that and read and be educated, but it's not really like the most important thing." During her school day, she has very little practice using the vocabulary she learns because her peers will not understand what she means. When discussing this issue, she finds that "they haven't learned our vocabulary or haven't had enough effort for themselves to learn the vocabulary." When she is at home she cannot utilize what she learns at school, she feels that since they use Spanish and it is "a very simple language" in her opinion her family will not understand. To show the changes in the language, she used the following example. At school, she would say, "The watch you're wearing is very luxurious;" in contrast, to her sister, the phrase would show "your watch looks good." She hopes that when she leaves home she will be able to use her vocabulary words in job interviews and just in conversations with educated people.

Pablo.

A fifteen-year-old Hispanic male, Pablo, moved to the mid-South when he was a very young child from Mexico. He lives with six people, his mother and father, sister, grandmother and grandfather, and himself. Because his family never had the opportunity to receive an education in Mexico, they feel that being educated is very important "that education's like the way to keep on moving forward." His family wants the best for him, so he agrees that education is important.

In regard to English class, Pablo finds the class difficult with lots of work to be done and finds the class to not be fun. However, he maintains a B average in the English course. Pablo's

experience with the activities relating to *The Odyssey* were "boring" and "easy," because he had read the book a couple of times before at another local private junior high school in the city. His mother enrolled him in the private junior high and paid for him to attend in hopes of raising his vocabulary, English, and math skills. Pablo desires to focus on vocabulary and become more proficient in English, yet he struggles with language acquisition and with confidence in using new vocabulary words. Pablo also struggles to "remember" or acquire the new words presented in English class. Ms. Smith tries to use higher-level words with him. In fact, during our interview, Pablo remembered Ms. Smith saying a word but he couldn't remember exactly what it was.

Pablo also said that he does not speak the same way at school as he does in his home setting or with his friends. In his home setting, his speech sounds faster. He speaks with more respect to his mother, his sisters, and his teachers, but he said with friends he can be himself. Pablo's mother speaks no English, but she is currently attending Adult Education courses to learn English. Thus, his mother asks him to translate English into Spanish, so he'll say that he does not know how to and gets "real lazy."

> Researcher: Okay, let's see. Can you describe one thing that you can show me or give me an example, like, use a sentence, and show me a difference. Can you guys do that? Show me a difference between...
>
> Tyrek: Like my mom, she'll ask me what was I doing, and I'll tell her. Then, what... the teacher, I'll be like, "I don't know," and all that kind of stuff.
>
> Researcher: Mm, how about you?
>
> Pablo.: For me, it's kind of the opposite. I just tell my mom I don't know, because she wants me to translate something, I get real lazy. And with a teacher, I just say I know it and I do, and yeah.
>
> Researcher: I caught that word "translate." Do you speak English at home or...?

Pablo: Like, if we have to go somewhere and have a translate, I'll... I'll speak both languages.

Researcher: Oh, so you speak Spanish at home?

Pablo: Yeah.

If they are in a public place and his mother needs him to translate though, he will translate for her. His home life consists of speaking Spanish, whereas his school life requires him to speak English only. His struggles are a result of him trying to switch between his primary discourse and his secondary discourse. When teachers request him to do something, he just knows it and does what he is asked to do without hesitation like he has with his mother.

Tyrek.

Tyrek is a fifteen-year-old African American male student and the only African American student in Ms. Smith's second hour class. Tyrek lives with his mother and father, sister, and brother. His family places a very high value on education and both of his parents have attended college, but his mother only attended for one or two years and his dad for three. He told me that his sister has a scholarship. In the last few years, Tyrek has attended three other junior high schools and is in his first year at Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS]. Despite his struggles with school, Tyrek also wants to attend college.

During the duration of my classroom observations in his second period English class, Tyrek would become distracted and begin looking around the room. Tyrek's class average reflected his concerns and remains a D average. Tyrek claimed that he likes English but simultaneously does not enjoy it. "I'm having a little problem with the regular work" was the statement he made in regard to it. The regular work he references is the grammar rules and vocabulary study portion of the class.

Researcher: Tyrek, what do you think about English class?

Tyrek: I like it, but at the same time, I don't. Only thing I really don't like about English is the workbook activity beginning of the class. I'm havin' a little problem with the regular work. I think it's really easy, I just don't try my best at it, and I like it, like English, but it's boring in there cuz we don't get to do anything.

Researcher: I can tell you guys both get bored. I can tell you really get bored in that class. You're like looking around and...

Tyrek: It's really boring.

Researcher: It's really boring? Why's it so boring? Why is English a boring class?

Tyrek: Cuz she keeps us... She keeps us at work. She likes to do it... she likes to get a lot done.

Researcher: Oh, she does like to get a lot done. So how many books have you read in the last year?

Tyrek: Probably like 60.

Tyrek practices English vocabulary skills and said in the past year he has read about sixty books, but he made sure that I understood that this was only because his English teacher made him read those books. The obvious difference between school and home is when he is at home he watches movies and when he is at school he reads.

Tyrek's conversations differ between his home and school setting as well. In his home setting, he is more inclined to talk as a "regular, normal person," which he characterized as "not smart" and "without big words." Tyrek's vocabulary skills are very basic in comparison to some of the other students that I interviewed. When Ms. Smith discussed Tyrek, she said that he has one of the more basic vocabularies and speaks in Ebonics when he is in the classroom environment. He pretends that education is not important to him in the classroom environment and desires to assimilate with his peers.

Data Collection

The findings in this study are addressed according to discourse analysis procedures and according to each of my research questions and the interrelationships displayed in the five types of verbal exchanges and the three tiers of vocabulary. To examine what the verbal exchanges, vocabulary words, and interactions suggested about the academic discourse and events that occurred in the classroom, I videoed classroom observations and recorded transcripts verbatim from the video recordings. I also took notes directly from my experience in the classroom and recorded notes and questions in brackets as I transcribed the observations. I observed the teacher and the students in one classroom for ten days and then concluded with a round of exit interviews to clarify questions I had during the class time. For transcription of the interviews, I used a transcription service and then analyzed the data by watching the video recordings of the interviews and reading through the transcriptions. I used these interviews to show correlations between the observations and interview responses. The data that were collected uncovered how the teacher, Ms. Smith, evolved in her beliefs regarding the teaching of academic discourse and how eight of her students felt about English class and vocabulary instruction.

In the interviews and observations, I focused on the interactions between teacher and students, the verbal exchanges that took place, the types of words that were used, reactions to vocabulary and English, and beliefs regarding education. The responses to the interview questions resulted in the teacher and student portraits, which revealed how the reactions in the classroom reflected the discoursal functions of language and emotional response to the English class in general. For example, each student offered his and her perspectives on questions asked; but since the students each had a diverse range of experiences in their home environments and a variety of reactions to the English class, their reactions provided a variety of perspectives regarding the need for academic discourse. However, while these students may not have

maintained academic discourse behavior in the interviews, these discussions revealed

connections to their primary discourses and highlighted the perspective that they indeed had a

language thought of as appropriate for the purpose of communication.

In an effort to provide a methodical stance to discourse analysis, I utilized Goodall's

verbal exchange coding method for the first round of coding. I used the Nvivo application on my

Mac to code and annotate the data from the observations and cross-referenced the responses in

my interviews in accordance with the five types of verbal exchange and also annotated according

to the suggested questions to ensure that my interpretations relied heavily on a process which

questioned the verbal interactions rather than merely viewing these interactions through a biased

lens. Figure 3, Nvivo Coding and Annotation of Verbal Exchange illustrates how Nvivo was

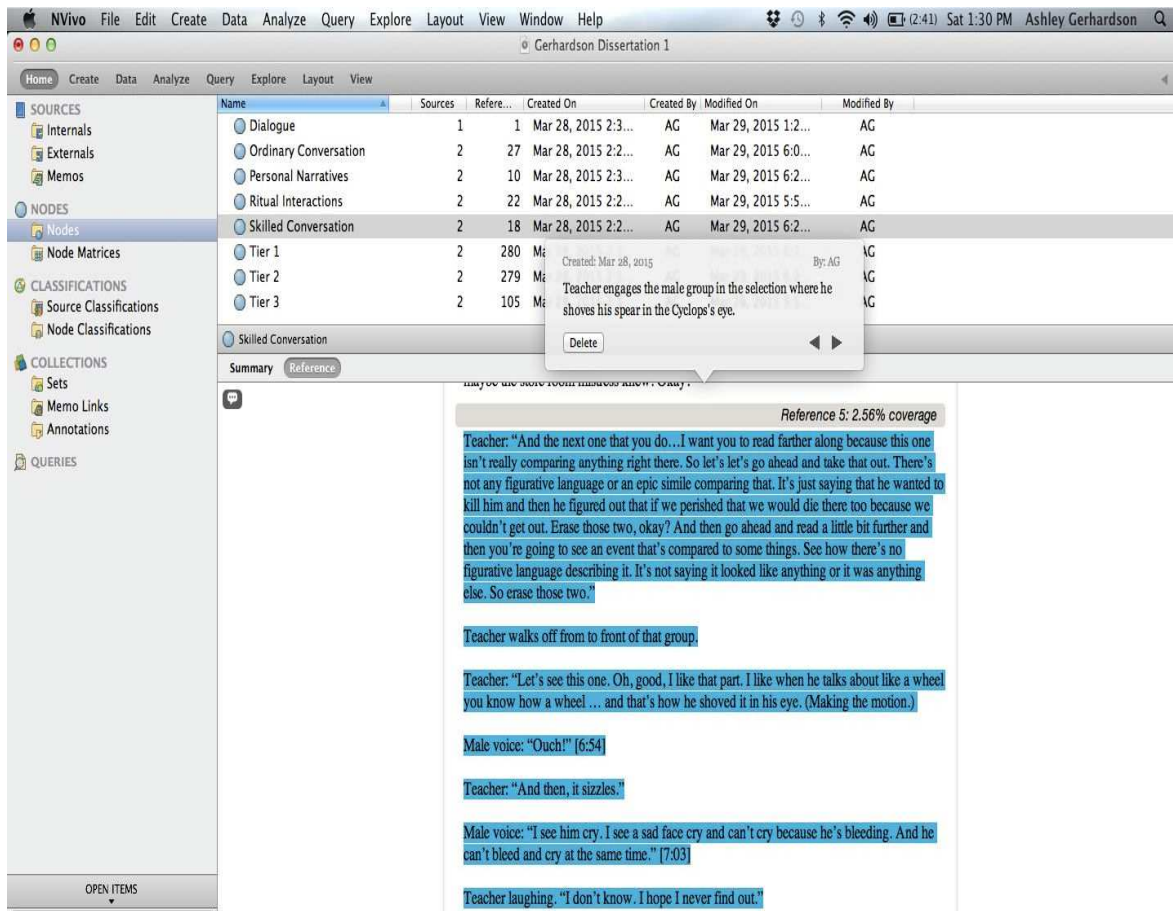used to annotate and code the transcriptions.

Figure 3 Nvivo Coding and Annotation of Verbal Exchange

In *Figure 3 Nvivo Coding and Annotation of Verbal Exchange*, I determined that the verbal exchange resulted in "Skilled Conversation," because the students interact with the teacher's description of *The Odyssey* and show empathy for the Cyclops. Furthermore, I asked the following questions to make this analysis: "What kind of speech act is it?," "What is the nature of the episode?," "What is the 'work' that the words are doing?," and "What are the symbols that must be read as signs?" (Goodall, 2000, p. 106). As I worked through the various speech acts, I began to recognize the words that were being used to create various types of verbal exchanges.

In fact, once this first round of codes was in place, data were collected from the teacher and student interviews to provide a method of triangulation. Then, I recoded through a second lens. I used Gee's Big D discourse analysis tool and Vocabulary Tool to categorize words and phrases into Beck et al.'s (2002) Three Tiers of Vocabulary. I used Gee's questions to determine what was meant by the words and phrases. Once all data were collected and coded, I presented my analysis through specific coding methods. As the discourse analysis progressed, I noticed patterns between what was said, what was really said, and what reactions the students and teacher had to each other. *Figure 4 Reaction to Classroom Activity* illustrates the reactions of the students to redoing a particular activity to ensure the mastery of the skill.
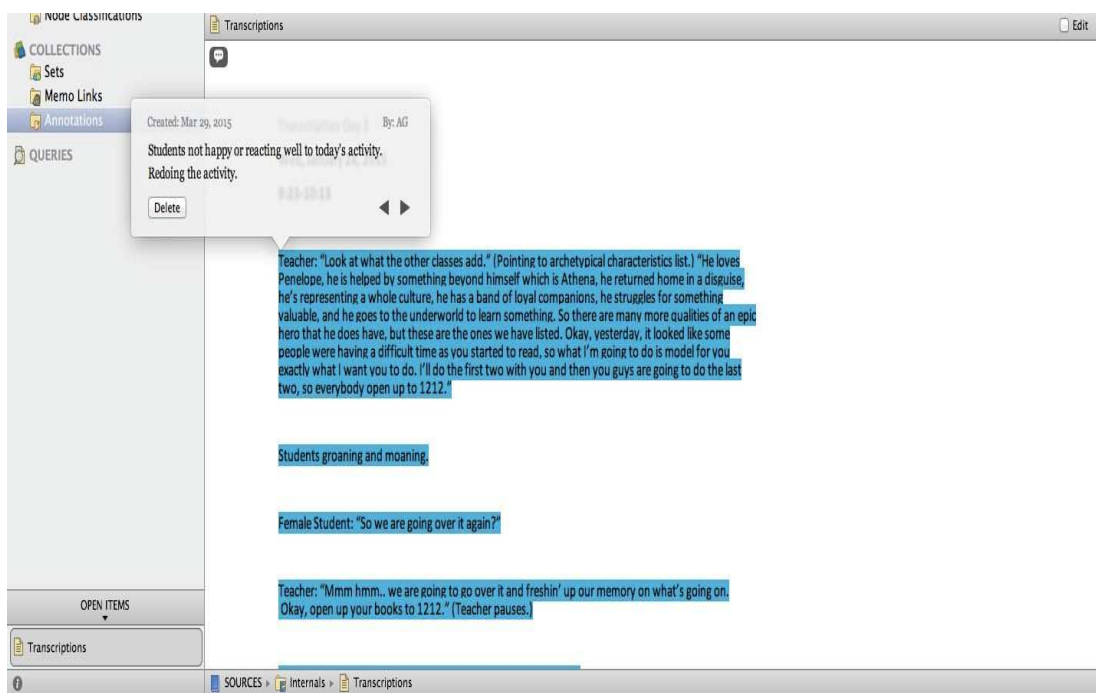
Figure 4 Reaction to Classroom Activity

When these issues arose in the data process, I looked at the interview data to triangulate as a

reaction to the classroom activities and determined if more than one student experienced a

similar reaction. Following the data collection process, I began to code the data into manageable

discoursal functions.

Coding Methods

I began the coding process by transcribing each classroom observation verbatim and adding my

notes from my research journal or extra ideas as I watched the videos in brackets.

> Ms. Smith: "He's going to have to make this big sacrifice to Poseidon and then go home and do some more sacrificing at home and carry out some more rituals and then how's he going to die?" [Summarizing for the students. Told me previously language in *The Odyssey* is difficult for the students.]
>
> Carlos: "He's gonna blow up. Boom. Old age." [Carlos speaks with an accent. What is his first language though? He understands 'old age.']
>
> Ms. Smith: "He's going to die of old age. He's going with all his family around him. So on the side of the book, look over there where it says epic hero and I want

you to read that. Read that to yourself." [Ms. Smith walks around telling them to read that. Why did she decide to do this? The students struggle.]

Carlos: "Yes! Found it." [Carlos continues to talk quietly. He does not seem to enjoy the class at this moment.]

Carlos: "Are we gonna read the rest of da books?" [He acts defeated today. Lays his head down on his desk.]

Ms. Smith: "Yes, we are." [Wants students to know the story.]

Carlos: "Oh my gosh!" [Exclaiming his dislike to the entire class.]

Ms. Smith: "No, I love them. I think they're fun." [Trying to reassure him that the readings will be fun.]

Carlos: "This isn't English. This is Greek mythology." [Showing that he does not understand the content of "English" class. Student is asking why read something that is supposed to be Greek in English class?]

Ms. Smith: "This is literature." [Trying to reassure him that literature is English] [Carlos flops head on his desk as if he is defeated.]

Carlos: "Fo' reel!" [Sarcasm in his voice. Showing he is tired of *The Odyssey*. Why? Is it a struggle to understand?]

After I finished all of the transcriptions, I followed my coding procedures outlined previously in this chapter and using NVivo I looked for patterns that occurred in the data. Once I completed the coding analysis, I reviewed the interview transcripts with each of the students and the teacher to note significant portions and triangulate my findings from my classroom data.

Because I was interested in the student and teacher interaction and the underlying issues from society in the analysis of data, I coded the observations just as they were transcribed. During round one of coding, I looked primarily at the conversations as a whole and whether they fit into Goodall's continuum of verbal exchanges. As I coded, I added in annotations dealing with the framing of the events and then what is truly being said socially through the use of words and reactions.
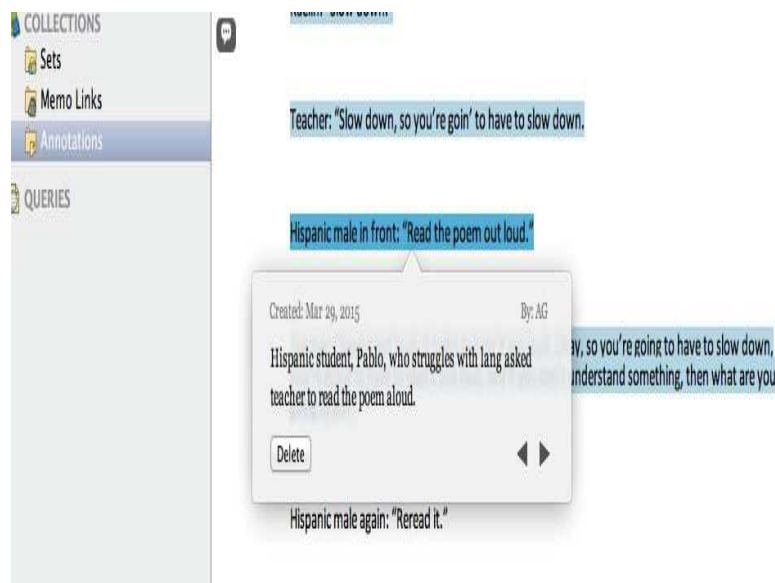
Figure 4 Reaction to Independent Reading

The second round of coding provided me with the understanding of what vocabulary was used in the verbal exchanges and whether the participants demonstrated the use of varying vocabulary and how each of these vocabularies played into their understanding of discourse. I wanted to determine if the students used Tier 3 interactions, which would be the disciplinary content words and if the teacher varied her use of the words in the interactions with students. I questioned the content by asking myself what the interactions in the English classroom meant and what the social exchanges meant.

To discuss my findings, I used each of my research questions as subcategories. I answered each one of the questions by also answering the questions suggested by Goodall (2000) and Gee (2014) to apply an understanding of the social issues as well as the discourse questions that arise.

What types of verbal exchanges occur within the classroom setting of a low socioeconomic urban junior high school?.

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For this portion of the study, I chose to look primarily at the verbal exchanges that took place in correspondence to what the teacher was doing and the majority of these interactions involved the teacher. I coded the data by using five types of verbal exchange; therefore, I classified my data based on those categories. The following Table 3 depicts the results found in 10 classroom observations with 50 minutes per class period and 500 total minutes of data.

Table 3
Forms of Verbal Exchange in the Classroom

Forms of Verbal Exchange	Number of Occurrences in the Classroom
Ritual Interaction	22
Ordinary Conversation	27
Skilled Conversation	19
Personal Narratives	11
Dialogue	0

The ritual interactions highlighted those daily routines students are accustomed to in each classroom and those normal societal mannerisms such as "thank you," "ma'am," and common courtesies. These interactions happen on a daily and hourly basis during the school day and are not questioned by the students. During the interviews, the students discussed that they attempt to show respect to their teachers. Thus, during the coding of those ritual interactions, these customs of mutual respect played a role in the everyday functioning of the classroom. One of the students I interviewed, Carlos, demonstrated this type of respectful interaction as he left the classroom.

Ms. Smith: "Yep, turn your paper in."

Carlos: "Bye, miss."

It is in these miniscule interactions that I found the students interacted with the greatest levels of respect to their teacher. Carlos had referenced in his interview how El Salvadorians regard teachers and people who are older or have power with respect. He continued this commentary with "you may be nicer to someone" and "you have to think more about what you're saying." Other ritual interactions found to be normal for Ms. Smith and her students were their discussion of student absences and the daily bell work that they were so accustomed to doing without question. In the following observation transcription, the teacher asks the students to repeat each of the vocabulary words after her. None of the students question this repetition, instead they just begin to repeat each of the words.

> Ms. Smith: Say them after me. Bedazzled! [With emphasis in her intonation, like excitement.]
>
> Students respond with same intonation: "Be-daz-zled!"
>
> Ms. Smith [lowers voice and places her hand on her hip]: "Be-grudged!"
>
> Students respond with same lower intonation: "Be-grudged!"
>
> Ms. Smith: "Be-laboring." [Raises arm and makes a fist]
>
> Students with less emphasis: "Belaboring."
>
> Ms. Smith: "Be-little" [With a tiny voice]
>
> Students again not doing intonation: "Belittle"
>
> Ms. Smith: "Be-mooaaan-ing!" [Dragging the word out and making low voice]
>
> Students, especially Carlos: "Be—moaaaan-in'"
>
> Ms. Smith: "Be-mused" [With enthusiasm]
>
> Students, not with same emphasis, respond: "Bemused"
>
> Ms. Smith: "Besmeerch." [Besmirch]
>
> Students: "Besmeerch."

Ms. Smith: "Be-whale."

Students: "Bewail"

During the ritual interactions, the students engaged in their daily routines and knew what was expected. The good manners and word choices used during these good manners did not pose a major problem for these students, because they perhaps were accustomed to the societal expectations of what to say during these interactions. In the interview transcripts, the students indicated that they felt they had to watch what they say more in the school setting than in their home setting.

The ordinary conversation consisted of the questions and answers teachers often ask students in expectation of receiving answers. The ordinary conversation occurred the most in the classroom setting as Ms. Smith chose to guide the students through the vocabulary words found in *The Odyssey* and would question the students regarding the passages and what was going on or would ask a certain student to simply follow along or read a certain part. These verbal interactions would be considered ordinary conversation as they require the students to react to the "patterns of questions and responses" (Goodall, 2000) to maintain the normal function of everyday life in the classroom setting. The teacher, Ms. Smith, appeared to be the primary speaker during the majority of these verbal interactions and would elicit responses from the students in the classroom setting. These verbal interactions are simply seen as the back and forth reactions or question and answer segments of the English class that did not require the students to use anything more than what they saw in the book. An ordinary conversation looks like the following excerpt when the teacher is just simply asking the students to recall the title in her review from the previous day's lesson.

Ms. Smith: What are we reading? What's the title of our work?

Elena: The Cyclops

Ms. Smith: No, no, the whole thing? But what's the whole big thing we're reading.

Carlos: Greek Mythology.

Ms. Smith: It is Greek mythology. You are correct, but what is the title of the entire work?

Cody: Odysseus's Adventures?

Ms. Smith: Not Odysseus's Adventures, but it's called? Just The Odyssey.

Elena and other students: Oh, oh!

Ms. Smith: So say The Odyssey.

Students repeat in unison: The Odyssey.

The teacher wanted the students to simply understand the basic information about the epic poem that they have been reading in the classroom setting. The students also had issues with recalling what the basic information was and struggled with just the word "title." The teacher continued to lead them through this interaction. Another example of an ordinary conversation occurred when the teacher paired the students to read *The Odyssey* and work through their vocabulary worksheets she monitored each pair and asked them to focus on getting the task done. The following interaction displays how the male students reacted to being asked to focus.

Ms. Smith walking around to each group. Walks back to Pablo, Tyrek, and Cody.

Ms. Smith: Okay, guys, you're going to just have to make an effort and you're going to just have to do it. So start to read. Okay, I'm not going to do it for you.

Cody: We know that.

Ms. Smith: Okay.

They begin to read.

Teacher to Carlo's group: Let's see.

Carlos: Yeah.

Teacher: Yeah, keep on goin'.

This interaction demonstrates how the teacher maintains the classroom environment and requests that students stay focused on their tasks. However, Cody's reaction to Ms. Smith telling them "I'm not going to do it for you" reflected his belief that males should take control in the situation. Thus, reflecting that in the school situation his discourse and his behavior is completely different than his home setting.

In contrast to both of these very simple levels of verbal exchange, the data illustrated a few instances of skilled conversation when the participants engaged in higher levels of information exchange and were able to immerse in the topic of discussion at that time.

Ms. Smith to Tyrek.: "Hey, who were you with? Who is Mariah?"

Tyrek.: "Mariah? I dun't know who dat is." (Tosses shirt over shoulder. Gets an aggravated attitude in his voice.)

Ms. Smith: "In Ms. Ferguson's just now?"

Tyrek: "Oh, Mariah."

Ms. Smith: "Yeah, who is that?"

Tyrek: "Oh yeah! (Smacks lips) She wudn't ev'n let me come (points finger). She put me down fo ev'ry single day (Hands together and then out flat across to signal.) Can you sign my planner so I dun't have to go there tama?"

Ms. Smith: "Uh."

Tyrek gets planner and walks toward teacher with it.

Ms. Smith: "Who was in there with you though? Who was Mariah?"

Tyrek (looks downward toward left): "Oh, it's da Mexican girl. Um, um, they call her. Aww, I fo'got wut dey call her. Mariah?" (Slaps planner on palm and turns away thinking.)

Ms. Smith: "I must … She was in there with you too?"

Tyrek: "Uh huh, she was tryin' ta come. But they wouldn't let her come."

Ms. Smith: "I don't know who Mariah is. (Talking to the class) Do you know who Mariah is?"

Elena turns around to face the back toward Tyrek and Ms. Smith.

Elena: "Mariah?"

Tyrek: "Mariah, she is the Mexican girl. She hangs out with…"

Elena: "Mariah?"

Gabby is still standing looking at teacher.

Gabby: "Mariah uh?"

Elena: "Mariah Gomez?"

Gabby: "Angelica?"

Tyrek (pointing to Candy): "Yeah, Angelica, Angelica."

Gabby: "Yeah, her."

Ms. Smith: "Oh, Angelica."

Gabby: "The curly, skinny girl."

Elena: "Yeah."

Ms. Smith: "Oh, I know Angelica."

Elena: "Yeah."

Ms. Smith: "Does she go by Mariah?"

Elena: "Yeah"

Tyrek: "Yeah, that's her real name."

Gabby: "She has both names."

Elena: "She has both names."

Gabby smiling: "Wow."

Ms. Smith: "I have never called her Mariah in my life."

Gabby: "You should, you should."

Elena: "You should."

Both girls smiling and nodding in agreement.

Ms. Smith: "I never. Does anybody else call her Mariah?"

Tyrek: "Hey, can you sign my planner for tomorrow?"

Gabby: "I call her both."

Ms. Smith: "You call her both?"

In this conversation, the students try to help each other as well as the teacher to figure out a student's name. Tyrek's African American Vernacular was evident in the interaction as he was irritated over the previous hour. He begins using language like da, fo, dat, and dey. At this level of interaction, Tyrek allowed himself to slip into his primary discourse because he felt he needed to talk to Ms. Smith. Thus, he slipped into the transition of talking directly to Ms. Smith as he would talk in what he termed in his interview as "regular person words." He is not maintaining formalized language. Instead, he just wants to communicate his emotions to Ms. Smith. Elena and Gabby also switched to their primary discourses and did not strive to use the terminology they usually use during their interactions in the English class. The information displayed in this interaction goes beyond the surface interactions in the English class and allows the students to discuss their friend's name and to discuss what they feel the teacher should call her.

Furthermore, the skilled conversation also brought about a mutual disclosure, which I will term "personal narratives." As the students discussed the student's name and Tyrek discussed his experience with RTI, he decided to disclose how he truly felt about Miss Ferguson's course and what she was trying to accomplish. Thus, a mutual interaction occurred

as Ms. Smith tried to calm him down and explain that all of his teacher's merely desired to help

him to achieve success in his education.

Tyrek: Miss! Can you sign my planner fo tomorrow?

Ms. Smith (turning around toward him): Well, um, if you need to go there, if she's signed you up, …. (pointing toward planner)

Tyrek: I owe you…I wuz supost to come here today, so I cud finish my papers." But she won't le me. (Leaning forward slightly toward teacher. Puts left hand out to the side.)

Ms. Smith: Here. I can sign you up for a day.

Tyrek: I didn't…she, she really put me down for ev'ry single day. (Handing planner to Teacher) See that's why I gonna keep my planner out her class. (Points to it. Then, walks over to his desk. He is getting frustrated at this point)

Ms. Smith takes planner to sign him up.

Ms. Smith: Well, honey, she's tryin ta help you.

Tyrek: She's messin up my planner by puttin' her name in my planner.

Ms. Smith: Well, she's trying to help you.

(Carlos turns around in desk and watches.)

Tyrek (walk back to teacher): Yeah, yeah.

Tyrek: I paid fo dat planner. Not for evryone to put their name in der.

Tyrek: Like it's borin' in her class.

Ms. Smith: Well, you're going to have to. Here I'm going to sign you up for next Monday.

Tyrek: Nex Munday?

Ms. Smith: Yes, and next Tuesday.

Tyrek: Why da I…?

Ms. Smith: Because you evidently are so behind that you're failing there.

Tyrek: Now, I'm bout ta frow it away cuz I I dun't haf time fo any of dat. [Takes planner back]   Man, I dun't haf time for dat.

Ms. Smith: Tyrek, we're making time.

Tyrek: She did this all last week…

Ms. Smith: We're making time for you to help you pass. It's a favor to you.

Tyrek : It's like… It's like she's tryin' ta…It's like I'm not gettin nowhere. Like I go dere, and finish all my work. Then, some more work wil show up. Like what's that? I mean I was dere all las week. It's just like…

Ms. Smith: That's just kinda the way it is work shows up…

Tyrek: It feels like I'm in jail.

Ms. Smith giggles quietly to herself at him.

Tyrek's struggle to understand why Ms. Ferguson signed him up for Resource to Intervention [RTI] period and to understand the academic context of the situation frustrated him and caused him to unconsciously utilize his comfort zone, his primary discourse, in his communication with the teacher. His word choices illustrated that while he was not speaking in academic discourse as the school setting necessitates he was still speaking a language that communicated what he was trying to say to Ms. Smith. He struggled to understand why Ms. Ferguson felt she could write in the planner he had purchased; because as he revealed in his interview, he felt as if the respect was not mutual and if "they give me respect, I give them respect" seems to be his philosophy. In the classroom setting, Tyrek's primary discourse played a role in showing his frustrations. However, Ms. Smith calmed him down and an obvious code-switch was seen as he began to interact in the academic setting again. Ms. Smith began the lesson and began reading to them as a whole group and modeling her thought process as she read *The Odyssey*, but the students at this point verbalize how they feel about reading more and about being read to as she asks them about their reactions.

Ms. Smith Now, you guys read by yourselves. You read in pairs. This one I'm going to read to you because I like it.

Carlos (sighs): But I'm sick of reading!

Ms. Smith: I like this one. I like this one a lot.

Tyrek: I feel bad when someone's readin' to me like I know how to read.

The reactions to being read to illustrate more of these personal level narratives, and a reaction to the one that occurred previously as the students respond and tell the teacher their thoughts demonstrate a genuine reaction to prior events. This event occurred after a week of reading *The Odyssey*. As Ms. Smith suggested in her initial interview about reading academic language, that it is a struggle to engage them in the English content and academic language because "they feel like they don't belong [and] that it doesn't belong to them."

How are students at low socioeconomic status junior high school engaged with academic discourse in the context of their classrooms?.

In regard to this research question, I employed the second round of coding to determine what level of language students were exposed to in the context of their classroom setting. I employed the three tiers of vocabulary to analyzed this data (Beck et. al, 2002). Thus, in relation to the 10 days of observation within 50 minutes of classroom interaction, I found that the majority of what occurred happened between Tier 1 words and Tier 2 words. Table 4, Vocabulary Tiers Breakdown, exhibits the findings in regards to the tiers of vocabulary.

Table 4
Vocabulary Tiers Breakdown

Tier Level	Frequency of Words and Phrases	Sample Words / Phrases in Category
Tier 1 Basic words	280	a good idea, scary music, what or what, good people or bad people, I don't know, small, bad word, large dog, name, papers, tray, books, Miss, read, number, book, finish, story
Tier 2 High frequency words across content disciplines	279	Handout, bogged, analyzing, embodies, chart, bullets, listed, model, strategies, graphic organizer, objective, visualize, prodigious, imagination, victuals, comparisons, pronounce, independent work, moral
Tier 3 Content Specific Vocabulary	105	archetypes, collective unconsciousness, archetypical hero, hero journeys, structure the text, mystery, tension, figurative language, point of view, epic poem, epithet, epic simile, independent clause, introductory phrase, text evidence

Table 4 Vocabulary Tiers Breakdown indicates the number of times students hear or use these

words within the total number of observations. The students are exposed to these words in

conjunction with the reading of *The Odyssey*.

To ensure that the students were exposed to Tier 2 and Tier 3 words, the teacher built in

specific activities to provide the students with structures to explore vocabulary. In fact, during

the exit interview with Ms. Smith, she explained when she teaches them to practice with

academic discourse, in particular, vocabulary, she plans to do it for them to introduce it during

the lesson and shows students a couple of examples; and then, she plans for them to read it in

pairs or to work with the vocabulary orally and do it that way.

> Researcher: How do you plan for those students to do, to practice their discourse and then how do you plan for them to practice with that academic and how do you work all of that in?
>
> Ms. Smith: Well, I know that when I would start it, I had to kind of do it for them. And then after I did it for them, you know, after I read it and explained how to read the metaphor, how to do things like that, then I needed to let them read it themselves and read it in pairs. And then I needed, needed to let them do it on their own. So I tried to do it like as a whole group, then as a small group, and then on your own so that hopefully I could see, you know, who could, you know, channel and, and, and do that. But if I had just said, "Here's the book. Go at it." I don't think they could have guided themselves.
>
> Researcher: That was, you know, that was in the next question I had. I noticed that you provided those extensive directions and extensive instruction and you worked with them and then you would let them practice and come back. Why do you think, why is it necessary to do that and how does this add to the acquisition of them understanding the academic vocabulary that they encountered?
>
> Ms. Smith: I've never thought of that like that. I just thought about them having to be able to, to read and comprehend to be able to, to see that it's going someplace. They need to be, first of all, they've got to be interested in the story. After they're interested, maybe they'll go ahead and read it a little bit more. But, um, they need help, you know, just kind of getting it going. And then after they're going, then they can maybe finish up.
>
> Researcher: We've talked about how the students progressed with the academic discourse throughout the year, from the beginning. Um, what strategies do you think works the, worked the best ... Sorry ... Worked the best, and then how do you ... How do they respond?
>
> Ms. Smith: I think that, um, learning the words and saying them orally helps the best. Being able to hear themselves say the words confidently in a sentence helps the best. And I don't always have enough time to be sure that they do. But I do believe that, that being able to speak it is, is the best. Um, there's resistance to learning new vocabulary because they take pride in being from this area of town. And they will actually tell me, uh, "We don't talk like that. Miss, we, uh, we, we don't want to talk like that. We live in the ghetto, Miss."

Then, for students to instill what they have learned, she felt they needed to do it independently.

More specifically, Ms. Smith discussed her plans as they "read it in pairs. And then, I needed to

let them do it on their own. So I tried to do it like as a whole group, then as a small group, and then on your own" (Interview with Ms. Smith, 2015). If a section of reading or the activity appeared to be difficult for the students, Ms. Smith guides them through the portion of the lesson to ensure the students feel confident with their ability.

Ms. Smith also ensured as students practiced the academic discourse, particularly the Tier 2 and Tier 3 words, that the students not only see them written on paper but they also practice them orally and pronounce the words correctly while also putting the words into the context of a sentence. Also, Ms. Smith supported this observation with "learning the words and saying them orally helps the best. Being able to hear themselves say the words confidently in a sentence helps the best."

> Ms. Smith: So you should be finished writing a sentence with begrudge. What's the next one? This is a great one. Let's do belaboring.
>
> Cody: Daww, come on.
>
> Ms. Smith: Okay, Olivia, go ahead and read us belaboring.
>
> Olivia: To talk about something for too long; to repeat or stress something too much or too often; to attack or criticize someone.
>
> Ms. Smith: You are belaboring the point. Okay, I usually hear it like that. If somebody is going on and on and on about something, you are belaboring that point.
>
> Carlos: Cody is belaboring.
>
> Ms. Smith: Yes, you know what , you're just belaboring the point, Cody. You won't shut up. Belaboring means you're going on and on and on and on.
>
> Carlos: Example.
>
> Ms. Smith: It's an example.
>
> Cody: So that's what bedazzling looks like.
>
> Carlos: Did you look it up?

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Cody: Yeah, I had pulled up super models and crap. Then, it pulled up dark colors and other colors.

Ms. Smith: Why would they pull that up with bedazzle? What does it mean?

Cody: (holds phone up) See it's just like.

Ms. Smith: "Yes."

(Carlos turns to see his phone.)

Ms. Smith: That probably would be a good thing is for every time you look up the definition of a word look up an image for it.

Olivia: I looked up the definition for belittle.

Ms. Smith: What is belittle?

Olivia: To describe someone or something as little or unimportant.

Ms. Smith: Mmm hmmm…whenever you belittle somebody you it's a it's a cut down.

Carlos: We like to belittle Cody.

Ms. Smith: Just say…Carlos just belittled Cody by calling him ugly.

Boston: I put that down.

Carlos: Fo' real.

Ms. Smith (Directing to Tyrek and Pablo): Okay, are you guys writing these down?

Ms. Smith: You know you're just belaboring the point. You won't stop talking about it, will you? That's belaboring.

Tyrek: Are you bein' serious?

Ms. Smith: No, I'm not being serious. And finally the last word, what is the last word?

Boston: Beguile.

Olivia: Bemused.

Ms. Smith: Ah, my favorite one, bemused. Hmmm…what is bemused?

(Students giggle at her.)

Olivia (gets phone and begins reading): To cause someone to be confused and often also somewhat amused.

Ms. Smith: So it sounds like amused. Whenever you're amused, what does that mean?

Boston: You're despised?

As the students practiced with *The Odyssey* and the Tier 2 and Tier 3 words, they also paired and would read and say vocabulary words back and forth with each other. One day, the students grouped into pairs and simply explained the words in context, provided examples of the academic vocabulary, and then created a new sentence either as an example of the word or using the word in a new context.

What reactions do students have in relation to the specific scaffolds or techniques teachers use in the classroom?.

The scaffolds that Ms. Smith employed to engage students in the acquisition of academic discourse are discussed in the previous sections. The particular scaffolding she used the most was providing an introduction to new academic words, modeling for the students how to use or do particular tasks that have to do with the academic vocabulary, whole group activities, small grouping and pairing students to practice, and independent practice. As I observed the students progress through these activities, the students displayed varying behaviors depending on the task at hand and the amount of disequilibrium the task presented.

Ms. Smith used the whole group activities for vocabulary practice and for dealing with difficult segments of *The Odyssey* that presented Tier 2 vocabulary. During one of the observations, Ms. Smith set up a whole group activity for about 20 minutes that allowed the students to engage in a vocabulary debate, and the students began to debate about the context of

the word and the textual evidence that would indicate that a particular word should be used in a certain sentence. Olivia, Boston, Carlos, Maria, and Elena engaged completely and began debating with each other as well as their other classmates.

Ms. Smith: Hey, if you know anything about suffixes, there's one word that you can tell will go into the blank.

Olivia: I found number two.

Carlos.: Me too, but it is bewail.

Boston: No, that's three.

Elena, Aubrey, Maria: That's not three.

Olivia: No, that's two.

Ms. Smith: You guys decide.

Olivia: Look it up. Number three is …

Carlos says something to Aubrey.

Boston: Guys, stop are-gue-ing!

Olivia: You're confusing me.

Ms. Smith: Okay, let me tell you this. You're not going to change the ending of the word, so see which one it which one it sounds best in because that one tripped me up too.

Carlos: It goes in thr-eeee!

Elena: Mmm mmm…. (No tone)

Carlos says something.

Elena: It is two.

Carlos: Three. It fits in. (Pointing at Elena's book)

Ms. Smith: Read number two to me and let me hear it.

Olivia: The coward is always complaining and bemoaning his fate. (Reading the sentence off of the page)

Boston struggled to maintain a positive environment as the students debated which "be-" prefix word fit in each of the sentences. Carlos stated in his interview that he struggled to understand this lesson, because he has "never liked English cuz it's just my second language so I tend to want to mix it up with my first language so it's hard" (Interview with Carlos, 2015). In fact, he struggled to separate El Salvadorian meanings from what he thought the words and sentences should mean in this particular situation.

Olivia greatly enjoyed this lesson and discussed the words during her interview. As a matter of fact, the academic discourse and vocabulary Olivia felt would have value in her life outside of the English classroom. She desired to use better academic vocabulary words to not sound dull and "to use intellectual words." During the "be-" prefix debate, Olivia was the most engaged and wanted to use the words correctly. Furthermore, she added to the fact that I noted this during this observation in her interview by sharing that "I like doing the prefixes and suffixes. […] I think that's fun. Because some people think it's one word, and […] you know it. You can prove them wrong" (Interview with Olivia, 2015). Therefore, she enjoyed both the activity and the debate to prove herself correct with the evidence. Despite having positive feelings regarding this activity, she expressed a hatred for English class and for learning about the vocabulary in general with "I'm not going to use this in life" and "I don't see that it matters" (Interview with Olivia, 2015). When asked why she felt we were so concerned with vocabulary study, Olivia expressed that this need occurs because we are supposed to be "smart."

In addition to some of the frustrations with vocabulary study and English class, Tyrek expressed his dissatisfaction with the whole group instruction and with being read to as a method for learning words in the following excerpt from the observation transcription. During many of

the whole group activities, I noted Tyrek laid his head down and did not engage; yet he also followed similar patterns in individual activities as well. He expressed his distaste in being read to when the teacher made the instructional decision to read a difficult portion of *The Odyssey* to the entire class.

> Ms. Smith: This one I'm going to read to you because I like it. I like this one. I like this one a lot.

> Tyrek: I feel bad when someone's readin' to me like I know how to read.

Tyrek felt that the teacher did not think they could read well enough to understand the vocabulary and approached English by getting "bored." In addition, Tyrek attempted to avoid engaging in the class as he conversed about the differences between his home life and his school environment he reflected on his behaviors with "like my mom, she'll ask what was I doing, and I'll tell her. Then, the teacher I'll be like 'I don't know' and all that kind of stuff" (Interview with Tyrek, 2015). When Ms. Smith asked them to do multiple activities in one class period, Tyrek struggled to accomplish the tasks, which resulted in his attendance at Resource to Intervention (RTI) period to catch up and receive additional assistance in English class. Thus, these issues caused frustration with the course.

Summary

During the interviews and classroom observations, I discovered how one English teacher approached academic discourse in her classroom. Ms. Smith demonstrated the idea of gradual release of responsibility as she engaged her students in multiple levels of independence in the study of vocabulary (Fisher & Frey, 2014). In fact, as she progressed throughout a single class period, multiple strategies were often used.

Table 5
Frequency of Strategies

Strategy	Frequency
Paired Reading	7
Modeling	5
Sentence Completion	2
Guiding Questions / Practice	7
Graphic Organizers	4
Greek / Latin Roots	2
Context Clues	8
Whole Group Discussion	10

The reactions of her students to these particular activities varied with the emotions and values of the students. Her value for academic discourse was not to replace the students' primary discourses but to enhance their skills by helping them to comprehend the texts they encountered. The exit interview revealed her vision and when asked how she elicited reactions and code switching from her students she made it apparent that she had never viewed vocabulary study in that manner (interview with Ms. Smith, 2015). The perceptions she has regarding studying academic discourse have been formed over the longevity of her career as a teacher.

However, perceptions of academic discourse began to change in regard to how she approached the strategies and the individual students within the last year. The structure of her classroom has changed with the implementation of her understanding that reading, vocabulary study, and writing all have to occur during the same time. The students who engaged in this study expressed their dislike of English and the multiple activities happening simultaneously. The eight students suggested that they wish to start something and finish it before they move on to something new or acquire more words.

Chapter Four sought to explain in narrative form the study of one English teacher and her students in second hour English. The findings of this study were presented through the teacher

and student portraits, verbal exchanges that take place within the classroom setting, and the tiers of vocabulary presented in the classroom setting (Goodall, 2000; Beck et al, 2002). Through the use of the teacher's words and the students' words, I attempted to create a picture of the primary discourse, backgrounds of the teacher and students, and a depiction of how academic discourse is presented to the students.

Chapter V
Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

Introduction

This study was a microethnography and sought to increase the knowledge of academic discourse, junior high school students' perceptions of this discourse, and what instructional strategies teachers use to instruct students in academic discourse. For students who attend a low SES urban junior high school, academic discourse is thought to be their secondary discourse, because their primary discourse differs from that of the academic institution. The findings of this study indicate that primary discourses and social language instruction have a place in the academic institution and may aid in the teaching of academic discourse. This chapter reflects on the study by providing a summary of the study, a discussion of my findings, the implications of those findings, and a conclusion.

Summary of the Study

Today's society requires students in low socioeconomic schools to speak using an academic discourse that is foreign to them and often very different from their primary discourse they are accustomed to utilizing in their home setting (Delpit, 2006; Kozol, 2005; Jensen, 2009). In 2002, Beck et al revised the idea of academic discourse or academic vocabulary into the three tiers of vocabulary. However, in low socioeconomic urban junior high schools, the struggle to form basic vocabulary words and to deal with code-switching between the primary discourse and the academic discourse continued to be a factor in the functioning of the school.

Testing continues to be a problem for these schools as students struggle to comprehend texts that are two to three grade levels higher than their current grade level and are often more than four grade levels high than their current grade levels. The teacher, Ms. Smith, discussed these issues, which have become current realities. The problem occurs when low socioeconomic

students are told they must conform to the societal expectations of what is acceptable; thus, the curriculum provided suggests that if a teacher is "doing a good job teaching that skill with the material that they believe that these kids need to know, the kids are going to drink it in and begin to learn those things" (Interview with Ms. Smith, 2015). The intrinsic motivation appears to be lacking for the students when they are faced with bigger challenges in their home setting (Jensen, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to construct a better comprehension of what academic discourse is, how low socioeconomic junior high students received this discourse, and what strategies are used in the teaching of this discourse. To explore these ideas, I interviewed and observed one teacher as she taught her second hour English class and interviewed and observed eight of her students from various ethnic backgrounds as well as various ability levels with academic discourse. Through the consideration of the school culture and expectations of the students, I was able to contextualize my findings and create individual portraits of the teacher and the eight students. I also learned what reactions students had to learning these words and to developing an academic discourse, which seemed to counter with their primary discourses at home. The students explained society expected them to be perfect and to not use what they considered their first language.

When I completed each of the ten observations, I typed transcriptions and then I worked through discourse coding methods. I used a transcription service to type verbatim transcripts of the ten interviews though. When I completed the verbal exchange coding (Goodall, 2000), I turned to the idea of what constitutes discourse and what Gee (2014) suggested as a Vocabulary Tool and Big D Discourse Tool to situate the use of academic discourse and primary discourse into the students' reactions and societal expectation suggested by such behaviors. Furthermore, I

manipulated these ideas into the frequency that these verbal exchanges and tiers of vocabulary words were heard to illustrate how these students are exposed to the idea of academic discourse. By taking these measures, the core ideas of student reactions and verbal exchanges become apparent in the classroom setting.

The microethnographic study took place at a low socioeconomic status urban junior high school, Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS], in one classroom where one teacher taught a ninth grade English course. The initial interview introduced the teacher to the concepts that would be addressed in the classroom observations and to the concept of what is meant by academic discourse. A semi-structured interview format was used to allow for the teacher and me to expand upon answers and questions and to explore the idea of academic discourse in relation to the use of primary discourse in the school setting. Thus the interviews aided in the creation of reconstructive analysis, "this sort of analysis is reconstructive because it 'reconstructs,' into explicit discourse, cultural and subjective factors that are largely tacit in nature" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 93). I used the classroom observations, interviews, and video recordings to triangulate my data. The results are presented through portraits of the students and the teacher, descriptions, demographics, and the frequency of occurrences to provide a rich presentation of the data using the teacher's perspective and the perspectives of her students.

Findings

The results of this study were focused on one English classroom with one English teacher and eight of her students. The perspectives and the experiences of these students and the teacher are unique to the setting of a low socioeconomic status urban junior high school. However, while the students and teacher are products of this environment, students and teachers in similar situations may also glean relevant information for understanding their current situations and

experiences with primary discourse in relation to academic discourse. As noted in Chapter One, the generalizability of this study may be the greatest limitation because of the specific setting and the small number of participants that may not adequately represent students or teachers in all urban junior high school settings. Carspecken (1996) suggested, "critical epistemology does not guarantee the finding of 'facts' that match absolutely what one may want to find" (p. 6). Furthermore, Carspecken (1996) indicated that one study will not be the answer to all the needs of each individual case; thus, "critical epistemology does not give us recipes for helping the poor and downtrodden; it rather gives us principles for conducting valid inquiries into human experience" (Carspecken, 1996, p.8). Thus, each researcher must take into account the human experience as they construct a research study.

Ms. Smith and her students demonstrate the perceptions from their experiences in the classroom and discuss the issues that arise between primary discourse and the teaching of academic discourse in a low socioeconomic area of town. From this study, there is no one step-by-step methodology or evidences that all students react the same to the learning of academic discourse or what strategies work for one group of students will work for another group of students. However, the narrative in the portraits and results indicate that the students observed may react differently to activities and to the learning of academic discourse on any given day. The eight students are aware the school setting and classrooms require them to speak at a different level than their primary discourse and than the home setting. In fact, the teacher is also aware of the expectation differences between the home setting and the school setting.

The study substantiates the processes of analysis and recommendations by Carspecken (1996), Goodall (2000), and Gee (2014) as explained in Chapter Four. The questions and interview transcripts were not limited to a particular idea; instead, they were guided by the

responses of the participants and were analyzed through triangulation with the classroom observations. Thus, the interviews provided a sense of truth and understanding of the cultural setting and removed the researcher's biases about the topic at hand (Carspecken, 1996). When the students and teacher were provided with the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding the learning that occurs in particular with vocabulary study, their perceptions became much more distinct. Therefore, portraits of these participants reflected their backgrounds, desires, and ability to articulate what their primary discourses are in relation to the secondary discourse.

This study considered in particular the strategies the teacher used to engage students in academic discourse and to provide students with opportunities to practice vocabulary skills in the context of the English classroom. The study also found, through the interviews with the student participants, the students only receive practice with English academic vocabulary within the classroom setting and that they feel the pressure to be "perfect" and "smart" to meet the demands of the academic field and society. The age of the students indicates they have had enough experience in the academic setting to establish this feeling of needing to conform to the school setting and not being able to verbalize in their primary discourse in the school setting. When asked to provide an example of their primary discourse in the interviews, the students did not want to seem "dumb" and suggested that their primary discourse was what they would consider to be "normal people talk" and not "educated." The societal pressure to fit the requirements of educated people creates the sense that these students must cast aside their culture. However, Gee (2014) brings to light the concept of social languages and recommends an awareness of differences in social languages.

By approaching the idea of academic discourse as a social language, the educated society, educators, and students may be able to adapt and structure language in ways that allows the

primary discourses of the students to play a more active role in the educational setting. Teachers must be trained in using strategies that allow students to engage with their academic discourse while simultaneously allowing students to also use their primary discourse. Furthermore, when the students are allowed to hear themselves communicate the new words orally and saying the words with confidence, the students feel that they own the academic discourse rather than having something that does not belong to them forced on them. As indicated in the interview with the teacher, the students "own their surroundings and some of them feel resistance to the learning of new vocabulary because they don't want to be a prep."

The school culture also seems to play a factor in the vision of academic discourse the students have created. One of the big influences in the school and district was the study of Ruby Payne; thus, the teachers at Samuel Langhorne Clemens Junior High School [SLCJHS] have been asked to not give the students homework and to teach while the students are in the academic school setting rather than have them practice more in their home setting. Ms. Smith indicated her view of this issue is that "it is detrimental to those who have the goal of wanting to compete and grow up to be professionals." Thus, being aware of the culture of the social situation plays a vital role in understanding the perceptions of the participants in the study (Carspecken, 1996). Furthermore, educators, policymakers, school leaders, and business leaders should establish an awareness of the importance of the primary discourse. The students from low socioeconomic areas and schools are just as important as people with large academic vocabularies and degrees (Interview with Ms. Smith, 2015). Students must be allowed to feel comfortable with their primary discourse before they can access and become comfortable using academic discourse (Reskin, 2003; Cummins, 2000; Heller, 1995). Therefore, the call is imperative to remove the xenophobia and provide students with skills in code switching between

their primary discourse and the academic discourse. In today's society, those in education must provide students with these opportunities to allow for ownership and the ability to manage the differing demands of certain social settings.

In addition to the issue of social setting, the concept that cultural identity fails to accurately indicate intelligence became a factor in this study. When asked what academic discourse in the school setting should look like, Ms. Smith indicated a change in her perceptions and that perhaps this change should be considered in academic settings as well.

> I came into this job thinking it should look like one thing and it looks nothing like that. To be honest with you, I don't know where I stand on that because I do see a lot of cultural influences. Plenty of intelligent people say, for example, adults do this. When they're looking at a picture and I'm asking them who's in the picture, they'll say, "There go my mother. There go my sister. There go my auntie." And many of them say, "He be." It seems to be cultural. It doesn't have anything to do with their intelligence because I hear some teachers speaking that way too. I did not think that I should ever hear in an academic setting teachers using incorrect grammar. I hear that here constantly. I hear even teachers say "ain't" as they're instructing students. I hear even their announcements, people using "that" instead of "who." "Students that need to" instead of "students who." And I used to be appalled at that thinking it ought to be on everyone's mind to be able to speak more eloquently and more grammatically correctly. And I don't see that people, even professionals, here doing that as much as I thought they should. However, now I'm under the impression that maybe it's not as important as I thought it was. (Interview with Ms. Smith, 2015).

Perhaps the cultural needs of the students and educators should be accounted for in the larger understanding of what constitutes good language, the concept of formalized academic discourse holds less immediacy in this particular low socioeconomic junior high school than society places on it. Intelligence cannot be measured by the formalized language and by the idea that to be professional one must always speak in the proper forms of language. Moreover, Heller (1995) maintains that allowing illegitimate forms of language in academic discourse challenges the educated perspective through the ability to code switch and communicate as well in other forms of language (p. 374). The ability to communicate must come before the concepts of formal language skills as implied by the academic society and business leaders. Instead of requiring students conform, students must be allowed to learn the key skills in effective communication; thus, if academic discourse is indeed still considered to be an important capacity of education and an essential function in the advancement of students to higher education institutions, allowing for the acquisition of a second discourse to occur must be guided by the students' primary discourses.

Research Question 1: What types of verbal exchanges occur within the classroom setting of a low SES urban junior high school?.

Verbal exchanges in the classroom setting indicated the understandings students portrayed in the interviews that the academic institutions require students to mold to the norms of the middle-class culture and does not allow them to behave in manners connecting them on deeper levels. By coding the five types of verbal exchanges that occur in the classroom setting, the findings demonstrated that students and teachers interact at the lower levels by using everyday mannerisms and patterns of questions and responses to conform to the expectations of the academic institution. Furthermore, the majority of the interactions involved the teacher,

which illustrated that the students did not engage in conversations regarding the English content or the academic vocabulary without teacher interaction. The reactions of the students also demonstrate that the students understand how to maintain behavior required by school; yet during the interviews, the students indicated they behave differently in the classroom setting and feel the need to show respect to the teacher.

When the students began talking about the name of another student and what they call her, more authentic conversation and the use of primary discourse was highlighted as skilled conversation because students engaged and were willing to talk among each other about something important to them. The idea of self reflected in this conversation as they discussed and explained how the teacher should interact. In this instance, the teacher may have asked the question, but the students responded and began to talk to each other about the topic. This authentic self-driven motivation is essential in learning. Thus, the use of primary discourse to bridge the gap to academic discourse must be made to connect these students more authentically with the disciplinary content in the academic setting. Students feel an obligation to conform to the norms without demonstrating an understanding of why they must change their behaviors.

Research Question 2: How are students at a low socioeconomic status junior high school engaged with academic discourse in the context of their classrooms?

The three tiers of vocabulary revealed the frequency with which students are engaged in what is thought of as academic vocabulary. While the teacher was involved in the majority of the conversations, these numbers can also be considered indicative of the vocabulary use of students within the classroom setting. Students are most often hearing and repeating the words; yet in regard to engagement with the vocabulary, a lack of authentic engagement occurs when tied to the types of verbal interactions. The frequency of words used in each of the tiers reflected

the discussion of Tier 3, Content Specific Vocabulary, originated with Ms. Smith who stated she made sure students were exposed to the words in oral and written communication. Students must be engaged with a variety of discourses to become aware of the vocabulary they use. When discussing the practices of teachers in a particular school, Delpit (2006) discussed how two teachers engaged students with language varieties.

> Without appearing to preach about a future which most students find hard to envision, one teacher, for example, has high school students interview various personnel officers in actual workplaces about their attitudes toward divergent styles in oral and written language and report their findings to the entire class. Another has students read or listen to a variety of oral and written language styles and discuss the impact of those styles on the message and the likely effect on different audiences. Students then recreate the texts or talks, using different language styles appropriate for different audiences. (p. 68)

Therefore, students must be aware of the differing social worlds they belong to and employ differing skills and oftentimes "divergent" skills in their ability to code-switch between the discourses of a particular context. Furthermore, policymakers, educators, and researchers must hold the perception that primary discourses do have a place in the academic setting and employ such discourses into the curriculum and standards.

Research Question 3: What reactions do students have in relation to the specific scaffolds or techniques teachers use in the classroom?

As Ms. Smith planned her differentiated instruction of whole group, paired readings, and independent practice techniques and scaffolds, students reacted quite differently to each type of methodology. In the student interviews, the students indicated their dissatisfaction with being read stories and with whole group instruction by saying things like "English is boring," "she just

reads to us," and demonstrating overall disgust with the "everyday assignments." The reaction of Boston to the vocabulary debate and arguing with each other was a struggle for him, but he also found the interaction with his peers to be interesting. Carlos and Olivia were in agreement that the most fun they have with English content and practicing vocabulary is when they get to "show off" their vocabulary skills with their peers in conversations. This evidence provides another reason why it is essential to make connections to the primary discourse and to champion the idea of bilingualism and the place for primary discourses in academic institutions.

Furthermore, Ms. Smith also indicated that when the students studied the Latin prefix mal- was one of those prefixes. She told the students that it meant "ill," but she told me that her "Hispanic students told her they use it to mean bad in their language" (Interview with Ms. Smith, 2015). The students were excited to teach her something about their primary discourse and to explain such things about their home life. New strategies, curriculum, standards, and testing habits are essential components in American society as students hold intelligences beyond that of academic discourse. Their ability to translate and use their primary discourse as a means to communicate illustrates intelligences beyond those skills found on a standardized test or in a classroom.

Implications

The findings from this study reflect the practices of one English teacher with eight students in one English class. Therefore, the perspectives and experiences presented through the viewpoints of the teacher and her students are unique to them. The teacher in this study has 17 years of expertise to present; thus, teachers and students who find themselves in similar contexts may be able to use these findings to aid them in addressing the use of social languages, vocabulary, and verbal exchanges. As previously stated in Chapter One, the greatest limitation

of the study may be the ability to generalize because of my small, unique sample of participants and the particular demographics and location of the school.

The analysis of one teacher's strategies and views as well as the reactions and perceptions of eight of her students found their perceptions of academic institutions and discourse impact the verbal exchanges and vocabulary used in the classroom setting. Both the teacher and her students felt vocabulary learning was an integral part of success in the future. However, the teacher suggested that in the course of her career as an educator her beliefs have changed in regard to how she expected professionals to speak and the importance of academic discourse and vocabulary. Thus, the idea of social languages and the use of primary discourse to bridge the gap to secondary or academic discourse seemed to be consistent.

Previously, in this chapter, I quoted Ms. Smith's reaction to the primary discourse the students use and her comment that their languages appeared to be cultural. Indeed, these cultural effects are evident in the different areas of the city. Ms. Smith's colleagues claimed Ms. Smith is a very strong vocabulary teacher; but at this point in her career, she is not sure why she is teaching students academic discourse without their primary discourses blending into the curriculum. When asked if the students changed their language in the classroom, Ms. Smith assured me that the language they speak stays the same regardless of where they are. She went on to suggest that they perhaps reflected my presence by trying to sound more educated when I came in her classroom to observe. This reflection was not a direct result of what I was studying, but what she claimed was normal behavior when someone unfamiliar or in a higher position enters the classroom setting. With this understanding, students know the concept of code-switching between academic discourse and primary discourse depending on who is in the room,

so a vital curriculum change would apply to the teaching of discourse, perhaps both primary and secondary or academic discourses, in relation to audience and context.

Thus, the imperative implication from my findings maintained the idea that as new curriculum advances are made a place for the primary discourse of students must be interwoven into the schools and the standards held for schools and students. Each student is a unique individual possessing a knowledge of their own primary discourse, but these students become discouraged and feel like they "hate English" or are not proficient in academic discourse because of being told they are speaking "bad English" or are not correct in the formalized English valued by society. Therefore, as research suggests, a sense of value must be placed on the students' primary discourses to allow them to excel in the academic discourse (Delpit, 2006; Gee, 2014). The concept of teaching students through the use of a primary discourse allows students to take ownership and to see that there are differing ways to communicate in various social contexts.

While the concept has been in existence for years, its application has not been in existence in the standards implemented by policymakers and thus is not reflected in the methodology of practitioners. As Gallagher (2009) suggested, a society driven by standardized testing reflects the classroom practices and causes educators and administrators to focus on these test scores rather than on teaching students to be effective communicators and valuing what students need to achieve success. By approaching the idea of discourse through such a lens, students become effective in the practice of switching from one discourse to the next effectively. However, standardized testing would need to change to reflect the practice of code-switching and to place less emphasis on testing by avoiding a culture of testing too frequently.

The first thing, which needs to occur in classrooms, must be to teach students to be effective communicators in their primary discourse. After students achieve success with their

primary discourse, they learn their secondary or academic discourse more deeply and develop stronger skills in effectively communicating (Cummins, 2000; Delpit, 2006; Gee, 2001; Jensen, 2009). A pedagogical shift and trainings must occur to provide teachers the opportunities to understand how educators must reflect and use the culture of the school and surrounding area to provide students with a bridge to academic discourse.

Different discourses are a method of communication; in fact, this idea means that no language is better than any other language (Gee, 2009). Indeed, the students' perceptions in the interviews were a loss of their sense of self when they enter the academic institution and a feeling of being inadequate in the English classroom because teachers have told them they are not using proper English. The idea of proper English must be reflective of communicative practices and maintain that all discourses are proper depending on the social context in which they are utilized. Educators and policymakers must leave the xenophobia behind and the thought that a language be less pure if tainted by multiple discourses and allow students to communicate. Indeed, monolingualism is nonexistent in today's educational system as many students are bilingual. As the teacher, students, and principal in this study stated, students leave the campus and leave English to go home and to speak a different language with their families. Thus, the educational system must embrace bilingualism as a newfound intelligence and provide students with fair and equal opportunities by interweaving "regular people" language into educational standards and expectations.

Recommendations for Future Research

As noted in the literature review portion of this study, many empirical studies exist on academic discourse, students who cope with low socioeconomic urban areas, vocabulary, and language acquisition. Although these researchers highlighted the issues that impact students who

are accustomed to a different primary discourse, the truth is the students' primary discourses have not been addressed as an equally vital players in the development of language skills and that educators remain unaware of what a classroom placing an emphasis on the concept of social language over academic discourse would look like is absent from the research. Our students require an emphasis on skills that would develop their primary discourse as a means of communication that is good enough for the sake of communication and require curriculum that allows them to use both their primary discourse as well as the secondary, academic, discourse in the classroom and school setting. A longitudinal ethnographic study in which the researcher developed a curriculum for the teacher to employ that met the code switching requirements would provide more insight into what this type of classroom would look like and what the assessment results would prove.

When the concepts of primary discourse and academic discourse arise, multiple issues, such as writing, grammar, vocabulary, verbal interaction, behavior, clothing, and norms, are questioned. During the extent of this microethnography, I was able to focus on one particular aspect, vocabulary, as the basis for my data analysis and to specify a specific issue to study. In future studies, an examination of each of the components of discourse may provide further insight into the struggles students and teachers face when teaching the academic discourse. Moreover, I found it very difficult to not want to initiate a discussion of student behavior into the study as I viewed students raising their hands or following the teacher's instruction to repeat after her as they all did so in unison. The question then becomes a matter of not only academic vocabulary but of what academic social behavior the school setting requires of students.

Based on the idea of social behavior, a larger ethnographic study might be conducted to discuss the power relations found within the school setting. This task would require more than

one classroom and more than one school be observed to formulate an accurate perception of how institutional power may be used to dominate a particular culture or discourse. The discussion of monolingual discourse as enforced by the state of Arkansas may also be seen as a power issue. The need to study general education classrooms, ELL classrooms, and to study inclusion classrooms may also be of benefit to such a study. Data from this kind of a study may be seen as a method for revealing what occurs in the social institutions and as a means to highlight the "social inequalities and [to] direct our work toward positive social change" by highlighting the "nature of social structure, power, culture, and human agency" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 3).

Conducting a qualitative case study that examines—through multiple cases—how students in different urban schools are asked to engage in academic discourse and how teachers use those strategies would provide more generalizable results and allow for the development of findings that would be regarded as more valid in the larger academic setting and would better expose the human experience with academic discourse and primary discourse. The researcher would need to develop a very thorough analysis of each of the students and each of the teachers to develop comparisons between what constitutes the academic discourse and what comprises the primary discourses of each of the individual students. If the focus were to be on each of the concepts that comprise discourse, interviews might include the parents, teachers, students, building administrators, and district administrators.

Conclusion

The findings from the qualitative, microethnographic study revealed the portraits of the students and their beliefs in regard to academic discourse, the beliefs of the teacher, the teacher's opinions about academic discourse and primary discourse, the verbal exchanges that take place in the classroom setting, and the tiers of vocabulary comprising the idea of academic discourse in

the classroom setting. Through interviews, observations, and video recordings of the teacher and the students, their perspectives and use of academic discourse and primary discourse emerged.

Admittedly, I came into this study anticipating the teacher would feel that the academic discourse played an essential role in her classroom and that she would view the students' primary discourses as playing a less vital role; and in contrast, I believed that the students would place less value on the academic discourse and champion their primary discourse as who they are. However, as I observed the classroom interactions and engaged in interviews with the participants, I became aware of the teacher's mutual respect for the primary discourses of the students and of the students' mutual respect for the teacher's attempts to engage them in academic discourse or as they referred to it "vocabulary" and "big words."

As I mentioned in this study, academic discourse acquisition must occur after students have become proficient with their language; as I learned in this study, the students relied less, according to them, on their primary discourse in the school setting and found that it was a struggle for them to sound educated and maintain an academic discourse. Students must be provided with the opportunity to use their primary discourse and be comfortable with it to alleviate such struggles, and teachers must be trained on primary discourse and academic discourse. Teachers must be given the opportunity to take risks in their instruction of academic discourse and must feel comfortable with allowing students to practice code switching between two social languages. The culture of the low socioeconomic urban junior high school and the cultural influences of a society who prides itself in mixing cultures require curriculum and the idea of academic discourse to change. If these adjustments are made, then society will champion the idea that "all language is considered good enough to use for communication" (Gee, 2014).

Thus, social language and code switching must be seen as appropriate skills to teach in the academic setting.

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Student Informed Consent Form

Title: ***Defining Primary and Academic Discourse Through Instructional Methods in the Junior High Setting***

Researcher: *Compliance Contact Person:*
Ashley Gerhardson, PhD Candidate   Ro Windwalker, CIP
Christian Goering, Faculty Advisor   IRB Coordinator
University of Arkansas   Research Compliance
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Description: The purpose of this study will be to define the methods and responses of students to the explicit teaching academic discourse (classroom communication) and how it relates to their primary discourses (natural communication); thus, this communication will be defined through the practices of the teacher and the students. Participation will be through video recorded observations in the classroom setting during lessons for two weeks for 50 minutes and may involve a series of follow-up interviews based on class participation. The questions will be open-ended during the interviews. The interviews will be around thirty minutes to an hour in length. The video recording will be destroyed once the study is complete. The researcher may request additional interviews to ask follow-up questions.

Benefits/ Risks: The study will add to the body of research regarding language acquisition for students and the teaching methods used to teach academic discourse. The study will provide insight into language acquisition skills in reading, writing, and speaking. No risks are anticipated.

Voluntary participation: Your child's participation in the research is completely voluntary.

Confidentiality: Real names will not be used in the publication of the study, and all participants will be assigned a pseudonym. All information collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy.

Right to Withdraw: Students are free to refuse to participate in the research and to withdraw from this study at any time. Decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences or penalties.

Informed Consent: I, _____, have read the description, including the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, the potential risks, the confidentiality, as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Each of these items has been explained to my child by the investigator. The investigator has answered all questions

regarding the study, and I believe I understand what it involves. My signature below indicates that I freely agree to allow my student to participate and that I have received a copy of this agreement from the investigator.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have discussed this study with my parent/guardian and I agree to participate.
Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher Informed Consent Form
Title: ***Defining Primary and Academic Discourse Through Instructional Methods in the
Junior High Setting***

Researcher:	*Compliance Contact Person:*
Ashley Gerhardson, PhD Candidate	Ro Windwalker, CIP
Christian Goering, Faculty Advisor	IRB Coordinator
University of Arkansas	Research Compliance
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Description: The purpose of this study will be to define the methods and responses of students to the explicit teaching academic discourse and how it relates to their primary discourses; thus, academic discourse or secondary discourse will be defined through the practices of the teacher and the students. Participation will be through video recorded observations in the classroom setting during lessons and may involve a series of follow-up interviews based on class participation. The questions will be based on semi-structured interview questions. The video recording will be destroyed once the study is complete. The researcher may request additional interviews to ask follow-up questions. The interviews will be around thirty minutes to an hour in length. The researcher requests that you provide copies of your lesson plans and allow the researcher to observe for a two-week period in one 50-minute class period. The observations and interviews will be scheduled in advance.

Benefits/ Risks: The study will add to the body of research regarding language acquisition for students and the teaching methods used to teach academic discourse. The study will provide insight into language acquisition skills in reading, writing, and speaking. No risks are anticipated.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the research is completely voluntary.

Confidentiality: Real names will not be used in the publication of the study, and all participants will be assigned a pseudonym. . All information collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy.

Right to Withdraw: You are free to refuse to participate in the research and to withdraw from this study at any time. Decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences or penalties.

Informed Consent: I, _____, have read the description, including the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, the potential risks, the confidentiality, as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Each of these items

has been explained to my child by the investigator. The investigator has answered all questions regarding the study, and I believe I understand what it involves. My signature below indicates that I freely agree to allow my student to participate and that I have received a copy of this agreement from the investigator.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have discussed this study with my parent/guardian and I agree to participate.
Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Semi-Structured Teacher Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your background and how you got into teaching. What is your educational background?

2. How long have you been teaching and at what grade levels?

3. Describe your views of teaching. What are your philosophies, specifically in vocabulary study? In what ways do children learn?

4. Talk to me about the students' skills with academic discourse. Primarily, how are their skills with vocabulary words? How do you adjust to fit the needs of your students?

5. What does a typical lesson look like in your English classroom?

6. How do you choose academic vocabulary words to teach?

7. What kinds of texts do you use when you work with vocabulary instruction? How do you choose the words to emphasize with your students?

8. What kinds of strategies do students enjoy the most when they learn vocabulary words?

9. How do students respond to these strategies? How do their primary discourses affect their ability to use academic discourse?

10. What challenges do you encounter in teaching students' academic discourse?

11. Why do you feel that vocabulary instruction is a necessary component in your classroom? Why teach vocabulary skills?

12. What is the motivation for teaching academic discourse? Describe the intent for teaching these skills? How might a student's primary discourse factor into this scenario?

13. How do students encounter vocabulary in your classroom?

14. How do you encourage students to continue to practice their academic discourse skills?

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Student Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. Name, age, favorite subject, favorite food, where are you originally from.

2. What people live in your household? How do you feel about education? How do they feel about education?

3. What is your favorite subject in school? Why do you enjoy that subject?

4. Talk to me about English. What have you learned so far? How do you feel about your English class?

5. How many books have you read in the last year? What is your favorite book?

6. Explain what you thought about _____ part of today's lesson. What reaction did you have to the assignment?

7. What vocabulary words are you studying? Why do you think you should learn these words?

8. Explain what you do to practice these words outside of the classroom. What homework do you do at home?

9. How do you behave in the classroom? Why do you behave in that manner? Is this how you would behave at home or with friends? Describe those behaviors.

10. Are there differences in the face-to-face conversations you have at home and the face-to-face conversations you have in your classroom environment? If so, describe the differences between the face-to-face conversations you have in your classroom environment and those you have in your home setting.

11. Why do you think you are asked to behave differently in the school setting?

12. Why is it necessary for you to learn vocabulary words?

Appendix E

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Section Break (Continuous)

January 5, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ashley Gerhardson
                Christian Goering

FROM: Ro Windwalker
                IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #:   14-12-357

Protocol Title: Defining Primary and Academic Discourse through Instructional
                     Methods in the Junior High Setting

Review Type: ☐ EXEMPT ☒ EXPEDITED ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 01/05/2015 Expiration Date: 12/18/2015

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 26 participants. If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, os.irb@uark.edu ========= Section Break (Continuous) =========