

AERA Session Title: Assessing the ‘World of Quality’ in Educational Language Policy: Challenges and Opportunities. Chair: Elana Shohamy. Organizer: Terrence G. Wiley

Hawai`i: Challenging Language Education Policies
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Introduction

Hawai`i has a legacy of language education policies that ignore or negate indigenous and immigrant linguistic resources and needs (Davis, 2001). In the past three years, NCLB polices have resulted in heightened denial of local resources through curriculum and standardized testing based on mainstream U.S. norms. Subsequent restructuring of up to 50 public schools are conducted by mainland companies that lack knowledge of the languages and cultures of the islands. Two months ago, Hawaiian educators and community members challenged NCLB initiated national and state control over educating their children. On February 2nd the Hawai`i State Senate Committee on Education heard a bill written by Hawaiians and their supporters to appropriate funds for establishing Ho`okulaiwi: Aha Hoonaaauo Oiwī (Center for Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Education) at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa. If funded by the State legislature, this Center would establish a program to recruit and train native Hawaiians to serve as teachers within predominately Hawaiian communities. The Ho`okulaiwi initiative goes beyond Hawaiian Immersion charter school programs, which currently serve approximately 2000 students (Warner, 1999; Wong, 1999), to provide culturally appropriate educational services to Hawaiian children throughout public schools.

I feel that this bold “retaking the education of our children” move holds promise for modeling local resistance to the intrusion of federal and state education policies into

the lives of minority and poor children who are most at risk of being failed by schools. It also suggests the need for challenging educational practices that neglect the diverse linguistic needs and resources found in local communities. In Hawai`i, these resources include the indigenous language of Hawaiian, over 40 heritage languages, and Hawai`i Creole English or HCE, known locally as Pidgin, spoken across indigenous, immigrant, and locally-born populations.

Today, I'll describe how community college, high school, and teacher education programs developed by the Center for Second Language Research at UH Manoa drew on the linguistic and cultural resources of local communities in exploring community-based curriculum. I'll focus on a three year project in which local teachers put theories into practice at a high school serving nearly 3,000 Filipino, Samoan, Hawaiian, and Micronesia students. This *Studies of Heritage and Academic Languages & Literacies (SHALL)* program offered heritage language classes in Ilokano and Samoan as well as courses in academic English languages and literacies.

Challenging Curriculum: Theories into Practices

SHALL first and foremost intends to recognize and build on students' language and cultural resources. We take a New Literacies Studies (NLS) approach that views languages and literacies as social practices (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivani_, 2000; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 1996, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Luke, 1999; Street 2003, 2005). This perspective argues that, rather than a set of static, decontextualized, and discrete skills, literacy is always instantiated, dynamic, situated, and multifaceted, through local practices which are "embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" (Street, 2003, p. 1). Multiliteracies "signal multiple communication channels,

hybrid text forms, new social relations, and the increasing salience of linguistic and cultural diversity” (Schultz & Hull, 2002, p. 26). NLS generally explore how literacies are multiple, ideological, and both locally and globally situated (Street 2003; 2004).

NLS scholars are further investigating associated theories of multimodality (Stein 2004; Hull & Nelson 2005) and hybridity (Anzaldua, 1987; Arteaga, 1994; Bhabha, 1994). Glenda Hull & Mark Nelson (2005) define multimodality in view of recent technological trends. They suggest that:

It is possible now to easily integrate words with images, sound, music, and movement to create digital artifacts that do not necessarily privilege linguistic forms...but rather that draw on a variety of modalities—speech, writing, image, gesture, and sound—to create different forms of meaning (p. 224-5).

Yet Kress (2003) also suggests the need to investigate multimodality as it’s realized within cultures, across ages, and through various modes of representation. Pippa Stein (2004) describes local forms of multimodality in South Africa, including “the visual, the gestural, and the performative” (p. 95). In other words, multimodality is deeply embedded in ways of being in and viewing the world. This epistemological stance can be particularly important in considering how schools may draw on multimodal representations of both heritage communities and popular culture (Ginwright et. al., 2006; Mahiri, 2004; Morrell, 2004b) in developing curricula. In addition, hybridity or complex identity formation is reflected in what Anzaldua (1987) refers to as living a mosaic of multiple languages and cultures—always in a state of transition, ambivalence, conflict and yet also a potentially rich and enriching resource.

In designing student investigations of school practices, SHALL teachers linked the concept of multiple identities with Gee’s notion of Discourses (1992; 1996) which

includes ways of talking, believing, valuing, doing, being—or whole identity kits. Thus, hybridity expands to include the ability of individuals to function across multiple Discourses and through multiple literacies. Framed in another way, Wenger (1998) views learning as identity construction that takes place while apprenticing to particular communities of practice. Our intent is for project participants to explore communities of practice (CoP) located in neighborhoods, schools, and social service agencies, including how they are often microcosms of the larger social and political world, such as illustrated by Bourdieu (1991).

Bourdieu (1991) describes three primary concepts illustrative of the mutually reinforcing and regulatory social relationships which characterize the human social environment. *Habitus* involves the notion that through socialization, one develops particular class, culture-based and engendered ways of seeing, being, occupying space, and participating in history . The various language and literacies practices of individuals and groups are articulations of the linguistic habitus (Carrington & Luke, 1997). *Fields* are semi-autonomous, structured social spaces characterized by discourse and social activity (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Schools are just one of many intersecting and/or competing social spaces which an individual may encounter (Carrington & Luke, 1997). *Capital* is defined by Bourdieu as the cultural, economic, social, and linguistic indexes of relative social power. These concepts suggest the need for student awareness of language and literacy as situated practices imbued with power relations both in and out of school. For example, students explored how local habitus may lack the linguistic and social capital recognized in school fields of practice. Yet other social theories and pedagogical practices go beyond more deterministic

interpretations of habitus in assuming individual agency and the ability to transform social inequities.

Central to student exploration of multiple identities and communities of practice is the notion of third spaces which Bhabha (1994) defines as the constructing and re-constructing of identity which is fluid, not static. He also views third spaces as “discursive sites or conditions that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, and rehistoricized anew” (Bhabha 1994, p. 37). According to Lam (2004), we can “create third spaces or zones where immigrants may engage in discourses that serve to construct an in-between space or trajectory for speaking and that they use to subvert the dominant discourses of both their native and adopted countries” (p. 85). Bakhtin (1981) suggests that individuals often “struggle against various kinds and degrees of authority” (p. 345) in the process of developing their own ideologies and personal identities. Thus, while recognizing relative social power, participants can apprentice to CoP discourses and/or develop agency for negotiating or taking up alternative/hybrid identities of their own within discourses. In these ways, CoP can offer individuals the possibility of exploring imagined communities or new ways of being that lie beyond the current state (Wenger, 1998).

While theories concerning the situated and multifaceted nature of language and literacies formed the basis of our curriculum development, two overarching pedagogical approaches were used in carrying out the SHALL project. The practice of “students as critical researchers” (Davis et. al., 2005; Morrell, 2004; Duncan-Andrade 2004; Ginwright et. al., 2005, 2006; Mahiri 2004) draws on ethnographic and sociolinguistic

methods as teaching tools. By emphasizing and legitimizing the knowledge that exists in families and communities, ethnographic projects encourage students to view home knowledge as resources for their academic learning. Students further conduct ethnographic investigations of their school discourses and ultimately make connections between home and school communities. Critical Language Awareness (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995; Janks, 1993; Pennycook, 2001; Wallace, 1992) approaches highlight the notion that text can be deconstructed and, through this process, unmask text laden with values associated with power, while providing what Cope and Kalantzis (1993) call an “explicit pedagogy for inclusion and access.”

Appropriation and Resistance in Classroom Spaces

SHALL generally sought to promote linguistic and discursive proficiency at school, including improved understanding of teacher social and educational expectations. At the same time, teachers allowed spaces for students to negotiate or resist the encoded meanings of dominant discursive practices or knowledge frameworks.

In Samoan and Ilokano classes, teachers encouraged students to critically explore their multiple linguistic resources in view of their own emerging cultural identities. They reflected on their hybrid heritage, local, and school identities and developed metalinguistic skills through analyses of interviews conducted in their heritage languages. They further explored the relationships between locally situated multimodality (e.g. oratory, gestural dance storytelling, talk story) and school sanctioned performances (e.g. speeches, plays, debates). Students also examined the hybrid and multimodal nature of

popular culture (e.g. hiphop, technology) as it was appropriated by various ethnic groups in Hawai`i.

While heritage language courses valued community resources, curriculum went beyond simply valorizing the heritage language and culture. The third spaces created within classrooms allowed contact zones in which students struggled against home authoritative ideologies (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). For example, one second generation Samoan student began to challenge a Samoan hierarchical language and cultural system that went against her feminist principles. Another male student who is a participating member of the Samoan elite chiefly system struggled with the multiple conflicts and contradictions of being marginalized in U.S. classrooms while privileged in Samoan communities.

A central component of Academic English classes involved investigation of the ideological issues and identity outcomes associated with promotion of Standard English and marginalization of heritage and local languages (August & Hakuta, 1998, Nieto, 2002, Valdez, 1996, Varenne & McDermott, 1998). I'll use Pidgin as an example here since, as the language of communication across linguistic and ethnic groups in Hawai`i, it's a primary marker of Local identity. First, to validate Pidgin as a language, students investigated the historical roots of Pidgin and analyzed this language in the linguistic sense, discussing word roots, grammar, and orthography. Students then examined how Standard English and Pidgin are differentially situated in communities, schools and classrooms. Lippi-Green (1997) specifically addresses the ideology of standardization of languages in relation to language varieties.

The myth of standard language persists because it is carefully tended and propagated. Individuals acting for a larger social group take it upon themselves to control and limit spoken language variation, the most basic and fundamental of human socialization tools. The term *standard* itself does much to promote this idea: we speak of one standard and in opposition, non-standard, or substandard. This is the core of an *ideology* of standardization which empowers certain individuals and institutions to make these decisions (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 59).

The programs we implemented in Hawai`i paid close attention to the power structures that defined language and literacy use. We initially found that students had internalized dominant school ideology concerning the Pidgin language (Kunimoto, 2006).

Jill: How ‘bout in college – Can you talk Pidgin in college?
Annmarie: Yah
Jasmin: I say – no
Brandon: Dey talk – I see it
Jasmin: ((to Brandon)) They talk Pidgin?
Brandon: Probably not to the professor or something lidat – but
Jill: But what if the professor’s local?
Brandon: Oh yah
Jill: Then yah?
Brandon: Yah
Jasmin: To me it doesn’t seem very professional if you do that though – you’re in college and it’s all adults or - you’re an adult – so to me it wouldn’t be very professional.
Brandon: () it would
Annmarie: ((laughs))
Jill: What about writing?
Jasmin: Writing Pidgin? – That’s w that’s why that’s why the state had problems with us in the first place – because of the way we spoke Pidgin and the way we wrote – our standards weren’t as high or we didn’t reach the standards – the way mainland schools did.

The marginalization of Pidgin and Local Hawai`i culture in public schools has a significant impact on self-esteem among both youth and adults who are speakers of this language. Lippi-Green observes the relationship between identity and language varieties.

Given what we know about the links between social identity and linguistic variation, there can be no doubt that often when we ask individuals to reject their own language, it is not the message, but the social allegiances made clear by that language which are the underlying problem. We do not, cannot under our laws, ask people to change the color of their skin, their religion, their gender, but we regularly demand of people that they suppress or deny the most effective way they have of situating themselves socially in the world (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 63).

Yet dialogue in our high school project opened a “third space” for students to explore linguistic power relations which, in turn, promoted an internally persuasive discourse that challenged the authoritative voice of Standard English ideology.

- Jasmin: Yah – wasn’t – wasn’t there like – last year we learned how teachers wanted to stop talking Pidgin in school – only use it for some activities
- Brandon: () Oh yah dey said dey was gon stop yah
- Jasmin: Yah
- Brandon: Wanted to stop or something like that – something like ()
- Jill: In Hawaii?
- Jasmin: Ya – They wanted to ban Pidgin
- Brandon: But they can’t cause it’s like our language – that’s like telling ...telling English people not to speak English – what is there else to speak?

In addition to promoting positive language identities, counter discourses appeared to allow students to claim previously avoided school associated behaviors. For example, studying local literature written in Pidgin helped some students adopt the commonly rejected identity of “reader”. An academic English teacher described one such transformation as follows.

Up until today I would have characterized Bruce as a reluctant reader. But now, Bruce thumbs through the Pidgin short story book *Da Word* by Lee Tonouchi, the self-proclaimed “Pidgin Guerilla”. I am so pleased I try to ignore him sneakily reading it under the table after reading time. At the end of the class, eyes wide open, he proclaims, “Miss, I can read *this*. It’s in *my* language!”

Through critical ethnography and critical language awareness, students began to form positive hybrid identities and resist authoritative discourses. Yet we also were aware of the need for students to have knowledge of the discourses of power operating in mainstream classrooms (Delpit, 1998). We looked to McComiskey's approach to composition as a social process in designing curriculum intended to expose students to unfamiliar academic genres. Drawing on Fairclough's (1992) social theory of discourse, McComiskey (2000) describes the composing process as involving three interrelated levels: textual, rhetorical, and discursive. Because of their inter-relatedness, McComiskey argues that "success at any level requires success at all levels simultaneously" (p. 16).

Students engaged in textual analysis through oral history assignments in which they were asked to use their heritage language and/or Pidgin to interview family or community members. They were then asked to translate the interview into academic English and conduct analyses of the syntactic, phonological, and lexical similarities and differences between their heritage language and English. This and other comparison and contrast assignments helped students develop metalinguistic awareness of academic English rhetoric as well as promoted new or enhanced multilingual literacy practices.

At the rhetorical level of analysis students focused on gaining an awareness of the diversity of literacy practices they encounter in their lives. They brought in home and school writing samples which they then analyzed in terms of the structure of texts, noticing the different organizational patterns in various genres such as letters from the Philippines and science lab reports. They also examined visual cues such as the use of art work in newspaper advertisements and paintings or photos in history books. Teachers

differentiated between the intended audience and the actual audience and discussed how differences could shape text and change interpretations. Part of rhetorical analyses also involved a discursive critique of academic English use in terms of its possible perceived threat to their identities and as an incomprehensible enterprise they had little or no access to. To counter these difficulties, students were encouraged not to see themselves as passive receptacles of information; instead, they interacted with texts, talking back to them as they developed their own stances and opinions. For example, students read a 19th century missionary account of Samoan people as lazy and ignorant. Students used their own experiences and research to counter this racist ideology. Thus, “talking back to the text” encourages student ownership of the text, validates the prior knowledge they bring with them into the classroom, and finally helps them to conceptualize the text writer as subjective rather than the speaker of absolute truths.

In addition to student analyses, ongoing research and weekly technology classes offered students the opportunity to develop a range of heritage, local, and academic English language abilities and identities. We also drew on multimodality and hybridity theories in developing ways for students to self-assess their oral language and literacy development. Notably, Electronic Portfolio Assessment (EAP) allowed students to choose how they positioned their multiple language abilities and social identities. Research and technology additionally supported exploration and transformation of social, economic, and political injustices (Davis et. al. 2005; Ginwright et. al. 2006). Over the course of a year students worked in groups to conduct primary and secondary research on issues of interest and concern in the school or community, including sexism in sports, male hula dancer stereotyping, local interpretations of Hip-Hop culture, standardized

testing in Hawaii, and cross-ethnic/sexual orientation discrimination. To work towards publicly addressing social, economic, and political injustices, students also developed professional film production and editing abilities through training with `Olelo public television station personnel. At the same time students “wrote up their data” in 10 – 15 page research reports, they produced public service announcements or mini-documentary films that were broadcast on Hawai`i public television.

Implications

The Hawaiian word *kuleana*, as it’s reflected in educational policy-making, suggests that communities, parents, and schools have the right and responsibility to oversee the education of their children. Claiming *kuleana* also demands challenging curriculum that is disconnected from the lives of students by developing community-based curriculum that attends to the intersection of identities, discourses, cultural knowledge, and power relationships. More, specifically, the *SHALL* project revealed that, through critical ethnographic processes, students began to see how institutions, sociocultural values, and individual standpoints constitute the learning enterprise. Students also realized how their differing subjectivities can result in passive acceptance, resistance, and adaptation of the Discourses and texts they’re subjected to. By drawing on community resources in conducting project-based studies, students developed a repertoire of language, literacies, and technological abilities that value their hybrid identities and enabled them to succeed in school. In addition to personal transformation, research and technological abilities allowed students to explore, expose, and work towards transforming social, economic, and political injustices within their immediate environments and in the larger sociopolitical sphere.

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