

CHAPTER 6

Preparation, Pedagogy, Policy, and Power: Brown, the King Case, and the Struggle for Equal Language Rights

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This case is a judicial investigation of a school's response to language, a language used in informal and casual oral communication among many blacks but a language that is not accepted as an appropriate means of communication among people in their professional roles in society. . . . The problem posed by this case is one which, the evidence indicates, has been compounded by efforts on the part of society to fully integrate blacks into the mainstream of society by relying solely on simplistic devices such as scatter housing and busing of students. Full integration and equal opportunity require much more and one of the matters requiring more attention is the teaching of the young blacks to read Standard English. . . . Some evidence suggests that the teachers in the schools that are "ideally" integrated such as King do not succeed as well with minority black students in teaching language arts as did many of the teachers of black children before integration. The problem, of course, is multidimensional, but the language of the home environment may be one of the dimensions. It is a problem that every thoughtful citizen has pondered, and that school boards, school administrators and teachers are trying to solve. (*Memorandum Opinion and Order, Martin Luther King Elementary School Children v. Ann Arbor School District Board*, 1979)

The crisis is not about education at all. It is about power. Power is threatened whenever the victim—the hypothetical victim, the victim being in this case, someone defined by others—decides to describe himself. It is not that he is speechless; it is that the world wishes that he were. (Baldwin, 1981)

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As scholars concerned with educational issues, the year 2004 gave us pause to reevaluate the successes and failures of 50 years of court-ordered segregation since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Taking an action-oriented approach toward social change, all of the authors in this volume are responding to the question: What needs to happen before the close of another half-century in order for us to realize the full potential of *Brown*? Many of the authors in this volume have children, and some of our children have children as well. For us, reexamining *Brown* is not merely a professional exercise. It has personal meaning because we recognize the urgency involved. We realize that our children cannot afford to be subjected to unequal educational opportunities for another 50 years without dire consequences.

For scholars of literacy and educational linguistics, the years 2004 and beyond have given us cause to not only revisit racial issues 50 years after *Brown*, but also to revisit 25 years of language and racial politics since “the Martin Luther King Black English case.” This chapter discusses what needs to happen now—with *more* deliberate speed—as we reflect on the years since these two cases were decided and their impact on language education in the United States. As people of color continue to struggle for equal language rights in the United States, we are calling for an agenda that focuses on policy, pedagogy, and preparation. In our view, three major action points should be placed high on the language education agenda for the next half-century: the development and implementation of (1) inclusive, comprehensive, systemic reform in language education policy; (2) critical language pedagogies; and (3) teacher preparation programs in language and literacy education. Before we get to these action points, however, it is necessary to understand some of the historical contexts of this continuing struggle for equal rights. We will discuss the historically neglected linguistic dimensions of the black American tradition; the legal contexts and consequences of *Brown* and *King*; and the educational responses to the rulings. In the final section, we consider the challenges that remain.

The Historically Neglected Linguistic Dimensions of the Black American Tradition

In his thought-provoking chapter (this volume, pp. 90–103), “Linguistic Considerations Pertaining to *Brown v. Board*: Exposing Racial Fallacies in the New Millennium,” John Baugh paid particular attention to the historically neglected linguistic dimension of the black American experience in light of the currently neglected issue of linguistic and

cultural diversity in black America. Citing substantial evidence from the work of sociolinguists on black language in the United States, Baugh begins with the premise that the linguistic legacy of slave descendants of African origin differs from that of *every other* immigrant group. Despite this unique linguistic heritage, or perhaps because of it, the law has never fully addressed the language issues faced by many black Americans. As involuntary immigrants (Ogbu, 1978, 1992), black Americans differ from voluntary immigrants in that, in addition to suffering the cruel and obvious indignities of chattel slavery, they were abruptly and systematically cut off from their linguistic heritage. As Baugh writes elsewhere, not only were they “isolated from other speakers of their native language, which was a practice employed by slave traders to prevent revolts,” they were also simultaneously “denied statutory access to schools, literacy or judicial relief in the courts” (Baugh, 2000a, pp. 108–109). Through the manipulation and control of access to language and literacy, European slavemasters hoped to situate blacks as a permanent underclass. These efforts, however, also provided the sociolinguistic conditions that fostered the development of a unique black language—alternatively known as Ebonics, Black English, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and African American Language, among other labels.

Baugh points out that within the context of the ever-diversifying black population in the United States (which includes immigrants from North and South America and Caribbean slave descendants, as well as continental Africans) all of the above terms for the language of slave descendants may not exactly fit the bill. In other words, the labels that are currently being used do not adequately or accurately describe the full range and complexity of the linguistic diversity represented in the black language community today. While the black population in the United States is far more diverse than is often noted, the languages of most black slave descendants in the Americas do share two very important qualities. First, all of the “New World” hybrid languages are the result of contact between African and European languages (e.g., Wolof, a West African Niger language, and English). Second, all of these languages, without fail, have been viewed as lesser versions of their European counterparts (to put it mildly), and they have suffered under the laws, practices, and ideologies of linguistic supremacy and white racism (Alim, 2004a, 2004b). It is the ideology and practice of linguistic supremacy—that is, the false, unsubstantiated notion that certain linguistic norms are inherently superior to the linguistic norms of other communities, and the practice of mapping those “superior”

norms onto the “language” of “schooling,” “intellectual pursuits,” “economic mobility,” and “success”—that we, along with Baugh, seek to dismantle. Our collective aim is to recognize and acknowledge the unique linguistic legacy of the African slave trade and to propose a social action agenda that is based on policy, pedagogy, and teacher preparation to address the long-neglected sociolinguistic reality of black Americans.

In addressing this unique sociolinguistic situation, particularly within the educational context, we must begin with the question: When did speaking black language come to be seen as a problem? According to Baugh, this has always been a problem; however, the fact that there was a vast proliferation of sociolinguistic studies of black language in the 1960s leads us to an expanded response to this question. As a result of *Brown*, America underwent what was often a tumultuous process in attempting to integrate many of its schools. For the first time, no matter how reluctantly, white teachers were faced with the opportunity to teach black students, many of whom were speakers of black language. It was forced interaction between two very different social and cultural worlds that provided the context for the proliferation of public and scholarly discourse about the existence of a “black language.” Hypothetically, we could ask: What did the black child speak before his language became known as “Nonstandard Negro English”? In other words, what was the language education experience of the black child in the pre-integration era? Professor Richard Wright provided an insightful response to these questions during a television discussion about the Oakland school board’s Ebonics resolution, describing his own childhood education experience in racially segregated schools in Texas. His comments touch on a critical issue that is central to every chapter in this volume concerning racism in American schooling. He notes,

The whole problem of black children going to school and not learning Standard English is a relatively recent phenomenon. . . . I went to school during the 1940s and 50s. We didn’t go to school as speakers of black English. . . . Since desegregation you’ve had to deal with the weight of color. When we went to school, we just went to school. You didn’t go to school as a black child, you just went to school as a child. . . . I did not go to a black school, I just went to school. . . . You were simply going to school and the assumption was that you were going to school because you had something to do there you couldn’t do away from school, and that’s learn something . . . but [now] what we need to understand is that there is an environment in school in which race is something you have to deal with while you’re trying to learn something. (Quoted in Baugh, 2000, pp. 109–110)

In this dialogue, we see that public discourse about the language education of black youth in the United States often incites discourse about racism and race relations, underscoring the fact that racism is still a significant issue in American schooling. Further, we see that linguistic concerns, in the minds of many Americans, are often linked to issues of race. In the next section, we take time to reflect on the *Brown* decision—a decision mainly about race—in relation to *Memorandum Opinion and Order; Martin Luther King Elementary School Children v. Ann Arbor School District Board* (1979)—a decision mainly about language. While these two cases have often been discussed separately in the scholarly literature, a joint understanding of the cases should prove useful in our more deliberate movement toward access and equal educational opportunity for all students.

The Legal Context and Its Consequences: The (Re)segregation of Schools, Speech Communities, and *Brown* and *King* in Comparative Perspective

Brown, which many refer to as “the single most honored opinion in the Supreme Court’s corpus” (Balkin, 2001), effectively overruled *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which sanctioned separate but equal facilities for blacks and whites. In the years of struggle leading up to the case, many blacks and their supporters, fully aware that white facilities were usually better funded and better resourced by local and state governments, argued that the doctrine of “separate but equal” was inherently unequal and that de jure segregation helped to reinforce the ideology of white supremacy. As we witnessed only one decade ago in the heated “Ebonics controversy” of Oakland, California, in 1996–97 (where the Oakland school board called for teachers to respect the legitimacy and richness of “Ebonics” while teaching “English”), “race and schooling” have remained a cause for concern. However, amidst the firestorm of discussion that emerged around blacks and their language, almost no one mentioned the fact that America has silently become a resegregated society (Orfield & Yun, 1999).

Witnessing the massive white American resistance to court-ordered desegregation, Gillespie-Hayes (1981) noted that “Twenty-five years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, the desegregation of schools ‘with all deliberate speed’ has resulted in more deliberation than speed in the dismantling of dual school systems. The crucial word for black people in the *Brown* mandate was ‘speed,’ while the Southern school boards accentuated ‘deliberation’” (p. 259). One of

the greatest ironies of the *Brown* decision is that students at the beginning of the 21st century are once again separated by race and language in U.S. schools, only this time the segregation is caused by an increasingly complex array of social, economic, and legal issues (Frankenberg & Lee, 2002). The resegregation of American society—not just of some, but of all communities—has resulted in a situation where most black and brown children attend racially segregated schools. De facto segregation is in full effect in almost every major urban area and the increasing resegregation of American cities is strongly correlated with poverty levels: “Although only 5% of segregated white schools are in areas of concentrated poverty, over 80% of black and Latino schools are” (Balkin, 2001, p. 6). Along with teachers throughout the United States, we can testify to the presence of de facto segregation, as there has been a gradual relaxing of the need to comply with court-ordered desegregation since the 1970s (see Balkin’s [2001] discussions of *Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell* [1991], *Freeman v. Pitts* [1992], and *Missouri v. Jenkins* [1995]). While the Kerner Commission (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968, p. 1) feared the development of “two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal,” some sociolinguists feared the development of two separate languages, one black, the other white (Labov & Harris, 1986; also see the debate in Fasold’s 1987 special issue of *American Speech*). This, they argued, would mean that the language of some blacks in resegregated America would be growing further and further away from the “language of schooling,” possibly halting black American educational progress.

The Martin Luther King Black English Case

In 1979, a federal district court handed down a decision in favor of 11 African American children, residents of a scatter-site low-income housing project in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and students at Martin Luther King Jr., Elementary School, holding the Ann Arbor School district board responsible for failing to adequately prepare the King School teachers to teach children whose home language was African American English (see Ball & Lardner, 1997). Like *Brown*, the *King* case drew national as well as international attention. *King* focused on the role of language variation in the education of black children, the language barriers created by teachers’ unconscious negative attitudes toward these students’ language use, and the negative effect these attitudes had on student learning. Ball and Lardner noted that the *King* case is significant because it associated low educational achievement

not with shortcomings within learners, but with inadequate, ineffective curricular and pedagogical routines, and it held the school district and teachers responsible for rethinking pedagogy and curriculum in light of extant information about AAVE. Stating that a major goal of a school system is to teach reading, writing, speaking, and understanding standard English (Memorandum 1391), Judge Charles Joiner wrote that “when teachers fail to take into account the home language” (Memorandum 1380) of their students, “some children will turn off and not learn” (Memorandum 1381). In the *King* case, the Court ruled that the teachers’ unconscious but obvious attitudes toward the African American English used by the plaintiff children constituted a language barrier that impeded the students’ educational progress (Memorandum 1381).

In the *King* decision, Joiner explicitly makes the connection between language barriers and segregation (see this chapter’s opening quote). *King* represents the first test of applicability of 1703(f), the language provision of the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunity Act, to speakers of black language (Smitherman, 1981, 2000).

Critical to this chapter, the judge was also influenced by sociolinguistic testimony that dually attributed the continued existence of black language to external, social factors (such as the historical and enduring isolation of blacks from “mainstream” America and its institutions) and internal, community factors (such as the recognition of black language as an important cultural symbol of black ethnic identity and group solidarity). Unfortunately, while there is much to celebrate as a result of the *King* case, it is also important to note that the elements of the decision that directly address language barriers and African American English have yet to be cited as a precedent in other cases aimed at school policy. Furthermore, the Court’s final *Memorandum Opinion and Order* explicitly and unequivocally positions African American English in a subordinate relationship to the mainstream, stating that

Black English is not a language used by the mainstream of society—black or white. It is not an acceptable method of communication in the educational world, in the commercial community, in the community of the arts and science, or among professionals. (Memorandum 1378)

In the aftermath of both the *King* decision and the Oakland “Ebonics controversy” (Baugh, 2000a; Rickford & Rickford, 2000), the majority of the American public deemed it irrational to expect

teachers to use existing knowledge on African American English to better educate AAVE speaking students. However, the dialogue on the right of black students to their own language that took place among scholars following both cases presented important questions for educators to consider: What are the rational ways by which teachers can take black language into account when teaching black students? What is the state of “existing knowledge” on the subject? How can we prepare teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and disposition to teach all students effectively? In the remainder of this chapter, we examine the state of educational language policy for speakers of black language and suggest ways in which we can revisit and rethink pedagogical approaches that take students’ language into account while also considering the interconnectedness of language within a larger sociopolitical and sociohistorical context that helps to maintain unequal power relations in a still segregated society. In addition, we address the issue of teacher preparation.

The Educational Response to the Legal Decision: Systemic Educational Language Policy Reform for All “Language Minority Students”

Although not mentioned in the prior chapter, perhaps the most comprehensive ideas on creating systemic educational language policy reform were formulated by its author (Baugh, 1995, 1998) when he drew on the “African American language minority student” as a point of departure and as a case in point in his discussion of “language minority students.” Traditionally, this term had been used as a code phrase that actually referred to English language learners (ELLs) or those students for whom English is not their native language. Using Judge Joiner’s decision in the *King* case, Baugh redefined linguistic parameters in innovative ways that adjusts educational policy so the linguistic classification “Language Minority Students” included black American students. He noticed how in the *King* case, Joiner drew upon *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), a Supreme Court ruling that called upon school districts to address the linguistic needs of ELLs (in this case, Chinese-speaking students in San Francisco) to bolster his decision. This precedent had significant implications for the linguistic reclassification of speakers of black language. For Baugh, the key dimension of Joiner’s reasoning was the fact that he called upon education agencies “to take appropriate action to overcome *language barriers* that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs” (see 1703[f] above; author’s emphasis). For the first time, the barriers faced by black

American students who spoke a variety of English known as “Black English” were given the same attention as those barriers faced by ELLs (that is, students traditionally referred to as “language minority students”).

Baugh further drew some comparisons between the black American and Hawaiian sociolinguistic situations, wherein both groups share a history of “creolized English,” both are “‘involuntary caste-like’ minorities, both have been denied the use of the languages of their ethnic background, and both have performed poorly in schools once they were given the opportunity to attend schools” (Baugh, 1998, p. 294). In Hawaii, however, categorical programs in bidialectal education exist and their success can be partially attributed to Hawaiian native language revitalization efforts and the *respect* that is afforded these students’ home language. This overt respect stands in obvious contrast to the black language situation, in which AAVE is afforded little or no respect in most educational contexts. This lack of respect may very well be the primary reason why cases like *King* and incidents like “the Ebonics controversy” continue to emerge.

In his analysis, Baugh also reformulated the two traditional categories of “language minority students” into three linguistic subdivisions: (1) students who are native speakers of Standard English; (2) students who are native speakers of Nonstandard English; and (3) students for whom English is not native (see Baugh, 1998, p. 296). Under 1703(f) and Title VII, the second and third groups would receive funding from the federal government to address the “language barriers” that they confront in school (e.g., most Spanish-speaking Latinos fall under the “Bilingual Education Act” [1968]). The question remains: While this reclassification makes all the sense in the world, why has such a classification been resisted and rejected by policymakers?

Historically, in the bureaucratic world of educational policy, blacks were excluded from any funds for linguistic purposes based on their receipt of Title I funds for poverty, while Latinos and other ELLs were excluded from funds designated to fight against poverty, based on their receipt of Title VII funds as ELLs. This is a strange situation, particularly because poverty and English language learning are highly correlated variables. Under Baugh’s reformulation, the two policies did not have to be seen as mutually exclusive. Baugh supported efforts that called for the extension of Title I (poverty) funds to ELLs who were also poor, but added that black Americans and other speakers of “Non-standard English” should receive funding from a federal source to address language barriers to educational success. While Baugh’s

forward-looking, comprehensive policy recommendations offered a way for the American upper middle class to recognize their privilege and level the linguistic playing field in a sincere effort to leave no child behind, his recommendation was met with great resistance. If implemented, such a policy would have secured federal funding for all linguistically and culturally diverse students who face language barriers that limit their chances at educational success.

Now, more than ever, it is time to forge a language policy alliance between scholars, education reformers, and advocates for the rights of all linguistically and culturally diverse students. Together, these constituencies can present a united front that calls for the formulation of a national language policy for all students who speak a language variety other than Standard English—that would include, for example, Vietnamese ELLs in the San Francisco Bay Area, Jamaican Creole speakers in the Bronx, Chicano English speakers in East Los Angeles, isolated white Appalachian English speakers in the mountains of the northeast, Gullah speakers on the Carolina Sea Islands, Lumbee English speakers in southeastern North Carolina, and Arabic-dominant Palestinian ELLs in New Jersey—to name a few. This broad-based coalition could argue for the cultural, social, and economic value of additive language policies that foster the development of “Standard English” while maintaining, respecting, and building upon the home languages of the students that we teach. While black Americans have long been the most vocal leaders of the struggle for civil rights in the United States, which every “minority” group has benefited from, this broad-based coalition would give added strength and momentum to the struggle, particularly in light of growing antibilingual sentiment and legislation, and in light of the public furor over Ebonics and the proposed establishment of anti-Ebonics laws (Richardson, 1998, p. 14), which prohibit the use of black language in the classrooms—even as a means of acquiring Standard English.

The Conference on College Composition and Communication has adopted a national language policy that includes three main points: (1) it reinforces the need for teachers to teach students mainstream academic language varieties; (2) it reaffirms the legitimacy of nonmainstream languages and dialects and promotes instruction in mother tongue as a coequal language of instruction along with the predominant academic language variety; and (3) it promotes the acquisition of one or more foreign languages, preferably a language spoken by persons in the Third World, such as Spanish, because of its widespread use in this hemisphere.

Along with the widespread adoption of such policies, we need to develop ways to improve language pedagogies and teacher preparation programs that prepare teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Pedagogies of Power, Critical Language Awareness Pedagogies, and the Redefinition of “Language Barriers”

Examining the Power of Language

In redefining the regulatory definition of “language minority students,” Baugh (1998) also posited a rather unique and insightful redefinition of “language barriers” to refer not only to the academic struggles faced by linguistically marginalized students, but also to those experienced by students classified as members of the linguistic majority who may experience language barriers as well. Baugh does not neglect native speakers of Standard English, either, asserting that they need a different kind of linguistic training: “*They must learn to be tolerant of those who do not speak Standard English*” (p. 297; emphasis in the original). Specifically, these students “must learn that they have a linguistic heritage that places them at considerable advantage in this society, and that the long-standing attitudes of linguistic elitism among politically powerful speakers of American Standard English have restricted opportunities for less fortunate citizens from other linguistic backgrounds” (p. 297).

Teachers and students alike should learn about the relationship between language and discrimination in American society. Linguistic training should teach about the diversity of American English dialects so as to combat ideologies of linguistic prejudice as well as internalized feelings of linguistic shame. For example, linguists have been involved in the production of a set of documentaries that can serve as excellent resources for students engaged in learning about the deconstruction of linguistic elitism. One film, *American Tongues* (Alvarez & Kolker, 1987), can be used in teacher education programs and in secondary schools to generate discussions on the topic of language and discrimination. Participants could share their opinions about the issues raised in the film and discuss some of the perspectives that are shared, such as these:

It’s easy to figure out which dialects are more desirable and which dialects are less desirable—just look at which groups are more desirable and which groups are less desirable. We tend to think of urban as better than rural. We tend to think of middle class as better than working class. We tend to think of white as better than black. So if

you are a member of one of those stigmatized groups, then the way you talk will also be stigmatized. This goes on all over the United States—in every community.

There's the feeling that anybody who talks like that can't be very smart. And if I don't talk like that I must be smarter than you, and I don't want anybody who's not very smart representing my company. And those kinds of folks tend to have a hard time getting a job. So their speech is very, very important.

Participants can relate the video to their own life experiences and the way people have responded to the way they talk. Experienced facilitators would know that these discussions should be approached with sensitivity.

Critical Language Awareness Pedagogies

In considering critical language awareness pedagogies that combat linguistic discrimination, facilitators could draw on the work of scholars who disprove the notion that the language and literacy practices of students from linguistically marginalized groups are “deficient.” According to Labov (1972),

The view of the black speech community which we obtain from our work in the ghetto areas is precisely the opposite from that reported by Deutsch or by Bereiter and Engelmann. We see a child bathed in verbal stimulation from morning to night. We see many speech events which depend upon the competitive exhibition of verbal skills—sounding, singing, toasts, rifting, louding—a whole range of activities in which the individual gains status through his use of language . . . We see no connection between verbal skill in the speech events characteristic of the street culture and success in the schoolroom. (pp. 212–213)

Many scholars have utilized ethnography of communication to provide evidence that students on the margins of school success often use “different, not deficient” language and literacy practices in their home communities. Heath’s (1983) classic, decade-long study showed how families from black and white working class communities socialize their children into different “ways with words,” some of which are closer to school norms than others. Scholars have demonstrated the language resources students bring into the classroom (Ball, 1992, 1995, 1998) or focused on bridging the out-of-school language and literacy practices of black students with classroom practices (Ball, 2000; Ball & Lardner, 2005; Dyson, 2003; Foster, 2001; Lee, 1993), while others have examined the inventive and innovative language and literacy events of black youth involved in hip-hop culture (Alim,

2004a, 2004b, 2006; Cooks, 2004), spoken word poetry (Fisher, 2003; Jocson, 2005), and other verbal activities (Mahiri & Sutton, 1996; Richardson, 2003).

New Literacy Studies scholars, such as Gee (1996) and Street (1993), situate literacies within the social and cultural practices that are constitutive of everyday life (Hull & Schultz, 2002). Exploring what Ball and Freedman (2004) refer to as “new literacies for new times,” the New Literacy Studies pull away from the generally noncritical American sociolinguistic tradition by drawing upon contemporary social and cultural theorists, and thus more closely align with the British tradition of Critical Language Awareness (CAF) (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, 1995). CAF views educational institutions as helping to maintain the sociolinguistic status quo, and works to identify the ways in which the dominant ideology (and the resulting social control) is perpetuated through language. Both CAF and New Literacy Studies foreground the examination and interconnectedness of identities, ideologies, histories/herstories, and the hierarchical nature of power relations between groups. Research in this area attempts to make the invisible *visible* by examining the ways in which well-meaning educators sometimes silence diverse languages in white public space by inculcating speakers of heterogeneous language varieties into what are, at their core, white ways of speaking and seeing the word/world—that is, the norms of white, middle-class, heterosexist males (Alim, 2004c, 2006). Importantly, a critical approach is not concerned with the study of decontextualized language, but rather with the analysis of “opaque and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 1995).

While American sociolinguistic research has certainly been helpful in providing detailed descriptions of language variation and change, this is often where it stops (Lippi-Green, 1997). Most American suggestions about pedagogy on language attitudes and awareness tend to discuss linguistic stigmatization in terms of *individual* prejudices, rather than as discrimination that is part and parcel of the *socio-structural fabric of society*, which serves the needs of those who currently benefit the most from what is portrayed as the “natural” sociolinguistic order of things. Fairclough (1989, pp. 7–8) argues that the job of sociolinguists should be to do more than ask, “What language varieties are stigmatized?” Rather, we should be asking, “How, in terms of the development of social relationships to power, was the existing sociolinguistic order brought into being? How is it sustained? And how might it be changed to the advantage of those who are dominated by it?”

Research conducted by the Linguistic Profiling project at Stanford University (Baugh, 2000b, 2003; Purnell, Idsardi, & Baugh, 1999) attempts to apply findings of studies on language-based discrimination to educational practice by working with black, Chicano, and Pacific Islander youth in a diverse working-class city in northern California. One goal is to develop a Freireian critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) of language that aims to educate linguistically profiled and marginalized students about how language is used and, importantly, how language can be used against them (Alim, 2004d). Questions central to the project are: “How can language be used to maintain, reinforce, and perpetuate existing power relations?” and “How can language be used to resist, redefine, and possibly reverse these relations?” By learning about the full scope of their language use (through conducting ethnographic and sociolinguistic analyses of their own communicative behavior) and how language can actually be used against them (through linguistic profiling and other means; see Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003), students become more conscious of their communicative behavior and the ways by which they can transform the conditions under which they live. The project moves beyond traditional sociolinguistic and educational rhetoric like “respect for diversity” and “all languages are equal” that continually defaults a “standard language” over all other varieties.

Research conducted by the Literacies Unleashed Project at Stanford University (Ball, Ellis, & Wilson, 2004) drew on a sociocultural framework to investigate linguistically diverse students as active learners, capable of reasoning, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills, particularly when provided with adequate support or scaffolds within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). This line of work used writing as the focal medium of literacy to investigate students’ higher order thinking skills inside and outside of schools and contributed to our understanding of both the role of others in extending students’ learning and the relationship between formal and informal teaching and learning. Realizing the critical role writing plays in the development of higher order thinking skills, researchers questioned why writing does not play a more central role in efforts aimed at closing the achievement gap in our nation’s schools.

The research was conducted in a class of 23 students: 13 Latino/as, four African Americans, five Pacific Islanders, and one Filipino—with the majority of them assessed at the lowest quartile of achievement in language arts. The questions guiding the research asked: What is the nature of the home- and community-based literacies that culturally and linguistically diverse adolescents practice when they are away from

school? What observable achievement gains do students experience in a writing-intensive class where the curriculum is explicitly based on their home and community literacy practices? Using interview data, surveys, and text analysis, the researchers found that when students' home and community literacy practices are honored in the classroom and allowed to grow along with academic literacies, students experienced not only increased classroom attendance and increased levels of interest in writing over the school year, but they also experienced minimal disciplinary problems in the classroom (unlike in other classrooms), increased lexical density and complex development of ideas in their writing, and the development of generative literacy practices such as multiple representations of ideas through visual literacies, performances, and increased uses of technology-based literacies. More research on the writing of linguistically diverse students is needed if we are serious as a nation about moving, with more deliberate speed, toward closing the achievement gaps in our schools.

Teachers' Attitudes as "Language Barrier": Teacher Preparation for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

Ball and Lardner (1997) discussed the structural and nonstructural barriers to the classroom success of students who are speakers of AAVE. As demonstrated in the *King* case, the teachers' failure to recognize that AAVE is a rule-governed language system led to negative attitudes toward the children who spoke it. In effect, their attitudes constituted a "language barrier" impeding students' educational progress. Then as now, research on language attitudes consistently indicates that teachers perceive speakers of AAVE to be slow learners or uneducable; their speech is often considered to be unsystematic and in need of constant correction and improvement.

In the *King* case, the Court identified teachers' language attitudes as a significant impediment to children's learning, noting that "Research indicates that the black dialect or vernacular used at home by black students in general makes it more difficult for such children to read because teachers' unconscious but evident attitudes toward the home language causes a psychological barrier to learning by the student" (1381). The Court called for the Ann Arbor school district board to develop a program to help the teachers understand the problem, provide them with knowledge about the children's use of African American English, and suggest ways and means of using that knowledge in teaching the students to read (1381). In a court-ordered, 20-hour in-service program for King School teachers, experts in reading and sociolinguis-

tics furnished teachers with information on these topics. In spite of the wealth of information delivered to teachers, the district's report of the results of this in-service program concluded that, although teacher respondents felt positively about all substantive issues, they were somewhat less positive about their understanding of the pedagogical issues.

The nonstructural barriers resulting from negative attitudes were the focus of the Ann Arbor case, and they remain a challenge to successful practice and to our students' educational progress today. Ball and Muhammad (2003) documented the voices of preservice teachers who continue to reflect an attitude of "zero tolerance" about the use of language variation in classrooms. The comments expressed by some of our nation's future educators indicated that there might continue to be very little tolerance for linguistic diversity and the expression of ideas from diverse cultures in many future classrooms. Exploring why these attitudes persist, Ball and Muhammad reported the findings of an Internet study that revealed the lack of required courses in language diversity in most teacher preparation programs. They also concluded that the enrollment of preservice teachers in available courses on language variation is typically low because the curriculum sequence for preservice teachers is loaded with other required courses. After describing one course that was designed to give preservice teachers opportunities to consider the role and function of language and literacies in their lives and in the lives of others, and to consider how language and literacies could be used to teach diverse students more effectively, the researchers concluded that well-designed courses that address issues of linguistic diversity in substantial ways do result in students reexamining their language attitudes and understandings of language, literacy, and linguistic diversity as issues of power and privilege (Ball, 2006; Ball & Muhammad, 2003). They recommend that at least one course—but ideally a three-course series—on the ideologies, pedagogies, and policies of linguistic diversity be required of all teachers.

We call for further efforts that will help us develop future teachers who have a broadened understanding of and respect for linguistic diversity in their classrooms. We call for the preparation of future teachers who will grow to become agents of change within current reform efforts to improve our nation's schools (Ball, 2006; Ball & Lardner, 2005). Research on teacher efficacy suggests that effective teachers develop strong human bonds with their students, have high expectations, focus on the total child, and are able to use communication styles familiar to their students. Exemplary African American teachers in Ball's (1995) community-based organizations were able to draw, to varying degrees,

on the rhetorical modes and discourse-level strategies of African American English in shaping interactive discourse as the medium of instruction with their students. Their practice in this regard stands as a model for other teachers to reflect on as they consider expanding their own pedagogical repertoires. Ball argues that the practices of these teachers demonstrate ways of focusing on student participation patterns in interactive discourse to raise teacher awareness of the possible links between their own styles of communication and their students' responsiveness in classroom exchanges. Having high expectations and good intentions is not enough; these intentions and expectations need to be evident to students in observable or, we might say, *audible* behaviors in the classroom.

Challenges That Remain: Realizing the Full Potential of *Brown*

Today, several years after *Brown* has turned 50 and *King* has turned 25, we find ourselves still at a turning point in the journey toward realizing the full potential of these rulings. As was the case with *Brown*, it is clear that the *King* case left many questions unanswered, including the most pressing question of how teachers are to respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students. At the heart of the *King* decision was the recognition of the need for policies, pedagogies, and teacher preparation that reflected sensitivity to students' uses of African American English and responsiveness to racial and linguistic difference. The *King* case raised a question that continues to perplex educators even today: How can policymakers and educators accomplish the necessary but complicated task of assimilating new knowledge about race and language and translating that knowledge into effective pedagogical practices? In ordering the defendant school board to invest time and money in a staff development program for the King School teachers, the Court disrupted the institutional status quo by holding the school district accountable for the inadequate educational progress of their black students. From this perspective, the *King* case can be viewed as a turning point in the history of educational justice for African American children. At the heart of both decisions was the recognition of the need for schools to become sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse students; Judge Joiner's Memorandum and the court order clearly signaled that recognition.

In this chapter, we have proposed three major action points that move us beyond mere recognition of the problem and in the direction of responding to the question "How can policymakers and educators

accomplish the necessary but complicated task of assimilating new knowledge about race and language and translating that knowledge into effective pedagogical practices?" We have proposed that, to effectively address this question over the next half-century, we must place high on the language education agenda the development and implementation of (1) an inclusive, comprehensive, systemic reform in language education policy, (2) critical language pedagogies, and (3) teacher education programs that are specifically designed to prepare teachers to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. If we are to realize the full potential of *Brown*, we must continue to disrupt the institutional status quo by aggressively pursuing these action points as we strive to support schools in their efforts to become sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse student populations.

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