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Making Sense Of Language: How Representations Of Language Inform Teachers' Work

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Making Sense Of Language: How Representations Of Language Inform Teachers' Work

Abstract
Whether or not we are teachers, all of us must make sense of language. In doing so, we encounter representations of language, implicit or explicit descriptions which shift over time and are always tied to social and political interests. Teachers’ work necessarily depends on these descriptions, which are deeply embedded within their responsibilities to curricula and other structures of schooling through the process of curricularization (Kibler & Valdés, 2016; Valdés, 2015). As they plan and teach within these structures, teachers must somehow reconcile these responsibilities with their students' developing language practices. This ethnographic, discourse analytic study shows how a bilingual teacher at a K-8 school in Philadelphia made sense of language by recontextualizing representations of language in her planning and instruction. In focusing on these recontextualizations, I provide a model of how language ideologies impact the work of teachers and ultimately present consequences for students (Kroskrity, 2000a; Woolard, 1998). This model situates teachers as part of a wider infrastructure recontextualizing language ideologies, including school curricula, state educational standards, team planning, and online collaboration. Grounded in the problem orientation of educational linguistics, a commitment to address practical issues of language in education (Hornberger, 2001; Spolsky, 1974), I apply this model to explore the consequences of representations of named languages, genre categories, and linguistically typified skills. I first show the great range of planning sources from which these representations can emerge. Then, in the case of English and Spanish, I describe how redundantly distributed models of language separation and language dominance created difficulties for implementing heteroglossic or flexible bilingual pedagogy. I next describe how strict representations of the boundaries of literary genres resulted in diminished opportunities to center student understandings of texts. Lastly, I describe how representations of skills created opportunities to see students as incapable in ways that aligned with raciolinguistic discourses of linguistic deficiency. I close by considering potential practical implications of a language ideological model of teacher planning. At the same time, I argue for preserving an expanded sense of the problem orientation that values work defining problems even when those definitions paint practical solutions as elusive.

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MAKING SENSE OF LANGUAGE: 
HOW REPRESENTATIONS OF LANGUAGE INFORM TEACHERS’ WORK

Mark C. Lewis

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in 

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ABSTRACT

MAKING SENSE OF LANGUAGE:
HOW REPRESENTATIONS OF LANGUAGE INFORM TEACHERS’ WORK

Mark C. Lewis
Nelson Flores

Whether or not we are teachers, all of us must make sense of language. In doing so, we encounter representations of language, implicit or explicit descriptions which shift over time and are always tied to social and political interests. Teachers’ work necessarily depends on these descriptions, which are deeply embedded within their responsibilities to curricula and other structures of schooling through the process of *curricularization* (Kibler & Valdés, 2016; Valdés, 2015). As they plan and teach within these structures, teachers must somehow reconcile these responsibilities with their students’ developing language practices. This ethnographic, discourse analytic study shows how a bilingual teacher at a K-8 school in Philadelphia made sense of language by recontextualizing representations of language in her planning and instruction. In focusing on these recontextualizations, I provide a model of how language ideologies impact the work of teachers and ultimately present consequences for students (Kroskrity, 2000a; Woolard, 1998). This model situates teachers as part of a wider infrastructure recontextualizing language ideologies, including school curricula, state educational standards, team planning, and online collaboration. Grounded in the problem orientation of educational linguistics, a commitment to address practical issues of language in education (Hornberger, 2001; Spolsky, 1974), I apply this model to explore the consequences of representations of named languages, genre categories, and linguistically typified skills. I
first show the great range of planning sources from which these representations can emerge. Then, in the case of English and Spanish, I describe how redundantly distributed models of language separation and language dominance created difficulties for implementing heteroglossic or flexible bilingual pedagogy. I next describe how strict representations of the boundaries of literary genres resulted in diminished opportunities to center student understandings of texts. Lastly, I describe how representations of skills created opportunities to see students as incapable in ways that aligned with raciolinguistic discourses of linguistic deficiency. I close by considering potential practical implications of a language ideological model of teacher planning. At the same time, I argue for preserving an expanded sense of the problem orientation that values work defining problems even when those definitions paint practical solutions as elusive.
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TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbols</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| –       | break within speaker's turn, latching | V: And I choose–
          |                                   | What in the world can that be?                                         |
| =       | between-speaker latching or interruption | Eva: I don’t want to read about queens=
          |                                   | Antonio: ((loudly)) Queens are–
          |                                   | Eva: =You are interrupting me.                                         |
| [[text]] | overlapping talk                      | Eva: So I can identify characteristics of…?
          |                                   | Ss: [[nonfiction texts.]]
          |                                   | Eva: [[nonfiction texts.]]                                             |
| …?      | teacherly question intonation        | And this is called the…?                                               |
| …      | elongation and pause                 | She said, “What is the…”                                               |
| **bold text** | intense emphasis                        | The **talking**, that is happening right now                            |
| “ ”     | quoted, read, or otherwise attributed speech | And the author must have been like, “Woah!”                            |
| (( ))   | action                               | That’s right. ((nods))                                                  |
| ((( ))) | best guess at inaudible transcription | You can put it (((over there)))                                       |
| (((xx))) | syllables of unclear speech            |                                                                        |
| [ ]     | explanatory change in transcript, usually for confidentiality purposes. | Your dad and [name of student’s cousin] speak Spanish.                 |
| [*italic text*] | short translation into English. | Muy bien. [*Very good.*]                                               |
| […]     | short untranscribed section          |                                                                        |
| Ss:     | multiple students speaking           |                                                                        |
| S?:      | unknown student speaking             |                                                                        |
| Ms. Eva | Only my surname is transcribed directly. In other cases, surnames are replaced with pseudonymous first names. | Ms. Eva for “Ms. [Eva’s surname]”                                      |

Line breaks and capitalization are used in transcripts to aid readability and do not consistently denote any single feature of utterances.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Whether or not we are teachers, all of us must make sense of language to build identities, learn new ways of expressing ourselves, and understand our place in a world of always diversifying communicative practices. In doing so, we encounter representations of language, implicit or explicit descriptions which shift over time and are always tied to social and political interests. Teachers’ work necessarily depends on these descriptions, which are deeply embedded within their responsibilities to curricula and other structures of schooling. As they plan and teach within these structures, teachers must somehow reconcile these responsibilities with their students’ developing language practices.

Some of my own favorite stories from teaching are rooted in moments where students revealed tensions between their understanding of language and the typical work of schooling. In the six years since I left my own classroom and started visiting others, I’ve told my favorite stories again and again, cute stories in which my students are the heroes. But these stories also show moments in which I was taken aback, unsure of how my work as a teacher could ever really do justice to the ways that these second graders were making sense of language, literacy, and communication.

There’s the story of time that Lucía1 soberly handed me a note from a doctor. A note written in pencil and highlighter. A note written on a piece of paper from our classroom. A note written in Lucía’s handwriting, signed LOVE, THE DOCTOR.

There’s the story of the time I tried to help out Oscar during the poetry unit, after he spent twenty minutes writing nothing at all. What are you thinking about, Oscar?

1 The names of all children and teachers in this text are pseudonyms.
nothing! Well, do you want to write a poem… about nothing? yes!… I’ll call it… “no name!” said Oscar, who picked up his pencil with glee, then wrote his poem as quickly as he could record his work on the page:

NO NAME
By Oscar
When you here nothing you here
A wisel is beping! in your err?
Like a train. Screming.

And then there’s the story of the time that Sarah got in trouble with the staff at the cafeteria, mostly for smiling with her friend Shahid as they cheerily gave each other the middle finger, but also for her claim of innocence: I’m from Korea, and this isn’t bad there, so it’s okay!

But there were precious few moments when my teaching could completely focus on my students’ unfolding awareness, playfulness, and curiosity about language. Second grade is just too busy. While I certainly didn’t “discipline” Lucia for “forging” a doctor’s note, I also didn’t get to talk with her about all the features of letters she had noticed and put into her writing. At Oscar I could only marvel, and I told him I knew just the sound he was talking about, which most people would call a ringing in your ears rather than a beeping. I told him I noticed he was using a comparison in his poem like we’d talked about, but then I had to go address the room full of shoulders to look over and poems to read. As for Sarah, as much as I would have liked to follow up with her about how she made sense of the cultural differences she was already keenly observing, by the time we walked back to the classroom from the cafeteria, something else had come up, and I forgot about her comment until the end of the day.
The earliest motivation for this dissertation comes from my sense that while young children in classrooms are always using language to their own complex ends, opportunities to engage with their sense-making and discovery are missed even by teachers interested in doing so. In my own classroom, preparing students for reading assessments kept me busy. Helping my students wrap up and polish their sprawling writing pieces so I could stay on schedule with other teachers in my grade kept me busy. Adhering to state and district curricular directives kept me busy. There was always more that I wanted to do.

It’s not all bad. I know there were times when I was successful in opening linguistically inclusive spaces. And I know that there are teachers out there who were much better at approaching teaching in this way than I was, whole schools that are better at making room for this kind of work than mine was. But in my classroom, it was harder than I wish it was.

In this wish I was supported by the alliance of disciplines addressing language and education. As an undergraduate I was prepared through a program that included sociolinguistics, anthropology, and sociocultural theories of learning. All of that helped me as a teacher, and it did open opportunities to value student language that I wouldn’t have had in a world where those disciplines never investigated schools. But the theories I was carrying around weren’t the only things affecting life in my classroom. Every day my students and I encountered norms of how classrooms were supposed to work, how teachers were supposed to act, and what language was made of. And all this overlapped the histories leading the immigrant families my school served to live in small low-income neighborhoods inside a much larger and wealthier school district.
Classroom teaching was my pathway to educational linguistics, not the other way around. My research interests started with questions about my classroom. Why am I supposed to teach about language this way? Why are we trying to teach students to do things they can already do? Why am I being called upon to make assumptions that I know are too simple? It takes a lot of work to create common sense about language. Who did this work, and whose interests does it serve?

This dissertation revisits these concerns from the vantage point of another teacher, Eva, who I first got to know through researching what it’s like to be a student at the school where she teaches, Dual Language Charter School. I spent a year with her to understand the ways that her planning and teaching was intertwined with assumptions about how language works. Planning was an important lens for me to tease various assumptions apart from one another. Mindful of the ways that we organize language every day into different types and purposes—like writing a medical report, crafting a poem, or joking with our friends—I wanted to track how types of language were represented as a naturalized part of the curriculum Eva used and the resources she adopted. Each assumption, as it was recycled through planning and teaching, reveals a piece of the story of how language ended up being treated in Eva’s classroom.

**Research Questions**

In this dissertation, I address the following research questions:

(i) What events, interactions, and texts (produced by the school and sourced from elsewhere) constitute Eva’s planning for instruction?

(ii) Which representations of language does Eva recontextualize from these events, interactions, and texts?
(iii) How does Eva’s recontextualization of these representations of language structure opportunities for evaluating and perceiving student language?

**Chapter Outlines**

Chapter 2 describes the research literatures that inform this study. I frame the central concepts of this dissertation as emerging from two related issues within educational linguistics. First, this study is grounded in the educational linguistic tradition of the *problem orientation*, which responds to the needs of practitioners and students as by addressing relationships between language, teaching, and learning (Hornberger, 2001; Spolsky, 1974). I argue for preserving a broad interpretation of the problem orientation that remains more expansive than a project specifically of solving problems. Second, this study is an application of contemporary research that historicizes and critiques the traditional concept of named and bounded languages. I argue that this research highlights the need to more openly theorize the challenges of the problem orientation by imagining educational interventions while simultaneously investigating the conditions of teaching that would make those interventions difficult or even “impractical” to implement. I end the chapter by explaining my use of theoretical frameworks of *language ideologies* (Kroskrity, 2000a; Woolard, 1998), *recontextualization* (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Rymes, 2012; Silverstein & Urban, 1996), and *curricularization* (Kibler & Valdés, 2016; Valdés, 2015) to model how teachers must necessarily make sense of language as they plan and teach.

Chapter 3 describes my research methods, the setting of Dual Language Charter School, and my working relationship with Eva, her team members, and other staff while I collected my data. I discuss the methodologies of linguistic ethnography and discourse
analysis as they relate to my study, detailing the procedures of data collection and analysis that comprise these approaches. These methodologies view talk and other action about language as part of the creation of common sense ideologies of language. As part of describing the use of these methodologies in my study, I explain how my presence and relationships during data collection shaped the study in terms of the information that was or was not available to me.

Chapter 4 further elaborates how a language ideological perspective on Eva’s planning draws attention to the many resources she used in her planning. I consider these resources in terms of how and if Eva was expected by school leadership to use them. I discuss school-required resources that formed the basis for DLCS curriculum and assessment, school-offered resources that consisted of libraries of classroom materials and school partnerships, and teacher-explored resources independent of DLCS from which Eva could draw representations of language through individual decisions about how best to meet her instructional goals. I show how understanding her planning as it involved recontextualizations from these resources makes the representations of language that impact her instruction more traceable.

Chapter 5 examines the representations of language separation and language dominance that Eva encountered and recontextualized as a teacher. First, I connect literatures of the disinvention of languages with curricularization, showing bilingual educators’ long struggle with accommodating the complexity of language into the structure of schooling. I show that representations of language separation and language dominance were redundantly distributed into Eva’s planning resources, available for recontextualization nearly everywhere she looked. This redundancy, which comes into
clear focus through examining planning from a language ideological perspective, confirms that the invention of languages continues through processes of curricularization in language education. I also describe how this redundancy should be understood as powerful barrier to interventions for flexible bilingual pedagogy, though perhaps not an insurmountable one.

Chapter 6 describes how representations of textual genres and their essentialized characteristics were encountered by Eva in her planning and teaching. I begin by connecting concepts of speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986a) and curricularization (Valdés, 2015) to frame genres as represented for both the specific purpose of schooling and for other ends that may have little to do with schooling in themselves. While many genres were represented in Eva’s classroom, I focus the analysis on fiction and non-fiction, textual categories described as rooted in an author’s purpose, and literary genres like fairy tales and fables. I show how representations of all of these genres were recontextualized through distinct pathways of planning sources, with particular attention to online teacher resources. Overall, I describe how textual genres were often typified more strictly than were explicitly laid out in standards. I argue that the language ideological perspective of this study shows the deep and difficult problems of combining representations of genres with the imperatives of schooling as we know it today, and I outline key barriers to considering interventions on some of the troubling consequences of these strict typifications.

Chapter 7 describes Eva’s recontextualization of representations of linguistic skills in her teaching and planning. Similar to Chapter 6, the analysis in this chapter is rooted in literature of curricularization and other processes by which student language is
evaluated in schools. While many skills were represented in Eva’s classroom, I focus on the skills of *making inferences, asking questions, and comprehension*. I describe how these skills were represented in Eva’s planning resources, particularly the DRA/EDL assessment but other materials as well. I show how circulating representations of linguistic skills aligned with a language-as-entity paradigm (Park & Wee, 2013) in ways that made them especially compatible with raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017) defining racialized students as linguistically deficient. I illustrate the strength of the connections between curricularization and raciolinguistic ideologies by showing how Eva took on institutional listening positions (Flores, Lewis, & Phuong, 2018) dependent on anxiety about how her students would or could be understood by outsiders to the school. I close this chapter by briefly exploring key issues regarding the barriers these connections present.

I conclude in Chapter 8 by reviewing comparisons between the three chapters on languages, skills, and genres. In this comparison, I revisit the barriers to linguistically inclusive institutional change that were raised in each chapter, and I return to the theme of the problem orientation as discussed in the conceptual framework. I consider practical implications of the study while also arguing for an expanded understanding of practicality in educational linguistic research.

**Significance**

The questions raised in this study attempt to anchor the dynamic connections between teaching, language, and society. My hope is that a detailed illustration of the linguistic decisions teachers make could enhance the ability of teacher educators and other educational scholars to aid teachers in their work while also acknowledging the
barriers that teachers face. In this goal, the study aligns with critical approaches to the study of language in society that call for analysis of how power operates through and on the many linguistic choices made by individuals (Flores, Spotti, & García, 2016; Martín Rojo, 2016; Rosa & Burdick, 2016). Applied to classrooms, these perspectives situate the work of teachers within ideologies of language that marginalize anyone who is seen to use language in aberrant ways (Flores, 2013, 2014; Pennycook, 2002, 2006b). In light of their overlap with the structures of schooling, the most widespread language ideologies affecting teachers and classrooms cannot simply be withdrawn from, so any strategy for resistance to these ideologies will be well armed by clearer understandings of how they are sustained.

This study also aims to apply better understandings of teachers’ everyday sense-making with respect to language to larger questions about the social and political construction of types of language, including ‘languages’ themselves. Linguistic anthropological scholarship on language ideologies and their recontextualization can effectively model teachers’ negotiation of representations of language, and this scholarship may also be able to answer some calls from critical sociolinguistics for attention to how individuals become recognizable as particular kinds of subjects, in part through representations of the language that they should, should not, or are said to use. Together, these approaches can aid educational linguistics in its continuing mission to explore the role of language in schooling.
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

Educational linguistics has long recognized the challenge of describing the complex role of language in school while responding to the demands of teaching. It is rarely simple to connect knowledge of language and society at large to the needs of teachers. As illustrations of this challenge, I present two descriptions of bilingual education in the United States, written decades apart, sharing a common interest in the ways that teachers make sense of language in their classroom. In the first example, Hymes (1980a) argues that because schooling contributes to the reproduction of inequality, bilingual education might do so as well through the assessment of language:

But if linguistic discrimination is a culturally deep-seated way of maintaining social distinctions deeply embedded in educational institutions, is bilingual education likely to escape its influence? I have suggested that the form of attention to language in schools serves to maintain social stratification, and as long as the society requires such stratification, it is likely to find ways to reproduce it linguistically. The society is defined as one of opportunity, yet the relative distribution of wealth and class position hardly changes year after year, decade after decade; language plays some part in accomplishing and legitimizing that result. Is success for bilingual education then to mean that the accusation, “That’s not Spanish,” will be heard as widely as the accusation, “That’s not English?” Or that children who know varieties of Spanish other than the norm adopted for a classroom will bear the stigma of not knowing two languages? (One hears of teachers saying to a child, “I thought your problem was that your language was Spanish instead of English; now I find out that you have no language at all.”) (Hymes, 1980a, p. 111)

Cahnmann (2003) writes of the difficulties that a bilingual teacher has in deciding how to approach the correction of linguistic errors made by her students:

The critical educator’s role is… fraught with tensions and contradictions—how to both identify and accept community norms in the school context (challenging the status quo) while training students to be fluent in standard codes of power. Ms. Maria recognized that nonstandard varieties of Spanish and English were feasible, possible, and done through throughout the community (Hymes 1971). However, she appeared to struggle with the appropriateness of alternative, nonstandard norms in the classroom as compared to their legitimacy in the local community. In this case, the classroom teacher was caught

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between roles in conflict. On the one hand, Ms. Maria, a bilingual advocate, supported students’ bilingual norms as legitimate and a resource for standard biliteracy acquisition. On the other hand, she wanted to use classroom time to demonstrate and support students’ use of standard monolingual norms [in both Spanish and English], as these norms are required and rewarded in school and are seldom available to students outside classroom time. This analysis helps us to make sense of how and why certain types of correction take place and perhaps leaves the educator with more questions than answers. (Cahnmann, 2003, p. 198).

Both scholars are concerned about the educational impact of norms about language use emerging from social processes in which some forms are deemed standard or nonstandard and some forms are deemed English, Spanish, or an unacceptable mixture of the two. Both scholars determine, in the larger work from which these sections are drawn, that because multiple norms around language are made present in the classroom, it seems difficult or inappropriate to provide simple answers to teachers. At the same time, in their focus on the challenges of bilingual teaching, both scholars indicate the possibility of better understanding how teachers make decisions about language in their classroom.

This study follows the trail of this work and directly investigates what Cahnmann describes as teachers’ struggle with norms about language. In this chapter, I describe my conceptual framework and how the dissertation builds on past educational linguistic scholarship. First, I discuss how questions about teachers’ struggle with norms about language intersects with longstanding tensions within educational linguistics about how research can speak to the concerns of practitioners. Next, I review how these tensions have increasingly been fueled by calls for analysis of multilingualism that does not depend on categories of named languages. I connect this effort to eliminate presupposed linguistic categories from educational linguistic research to other struggles with language that are fundamental to work as a teacher, even within curricula and classrooms deemed monolingual. As a way to capture these struggles over language under various regimes of
categorization, I apply work on *language ideologies* to provide clear and useful definition of what Cahnmann calls a ‘norm’ about language or what Hymes calls the ‘form of attention to language’ in the quoted sections above. Finally, I introduce a model of language ideologies and schooling that uses concepts of *representations of language* and their *recontextualization* to make teachers’ struggle more visible and traceable.

**Challenges of the Problem Orientation**

When Spolsky (1974) articulated a rationale for a field of educational linguistics, he centered a concern for the problems of education. In its further elaboration, the *problem orientation* has been described as the commitment that “the starting point is always the practice of education and the focus is squarely on (the role of) language (in) learning and teaching” (Hornberger, 2001, p. 19). Many research agendas have developed from this starting point, owing to the many intersections of “theory and practice, research and policy” (Hornberger, 2001, p. 11) that can be explored in relation to language and education. Distinctions within these agendas reveal that while the problem orientation is a unifying concern for the field, it also contains significant tensions.

Fundamental aspects of the relationship between educators and the social context of education (i.e., teachers’ struggle with constraints on their work) make it difficult for educational linguistic researchers to address problems in teaching. These difficulties can be examined through two areas within educational linguistics—language policy and planning and classroom discourse analysis. In considering the difficulty of meeting the demands of problem orientations, I argue that preserving a broad interpretation of the problem orientation is served by centering how practitioners themselves struggle with questions of language and education.
The scope of the educational linguistic project has been expanded by a sense that the ‘practice’ of language education is not strictly conducted by teachers in their classrooms. Considering the wide and widening scope of educational linguistics, Spolsky (2008) identifies as its natural outgrowth the research and practice of language education policy, broadly defined socioculturally (i.e., the language practices, beliefs about language, and language management of a community) rather than only officially or institutionally (i.e., the conduct of people typically called policymakers) (Spolsky, 2008, p. 2). Indeed, the field of language policy and planning increasingly considers activities beyond those of actors traditionally understood as ‘policymakers,’ to also include actors in classrooms and other educational spaces (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; McCarty, 2011; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). In contrast to early research in language policy and planning that saw that official policies as effectively “already decided” (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 422) by the time teachers conducted instruction, current approaches to language policy and planning puts official policy texts are “in context as part of a larger sociocultural system” (McCarty, 2011, p. 2). Teachers’ activity with respect to language is seen as part of this broader system as well. Teachers’ physical presence in the classroom, rather than the halls of a policymaking body, does not make them incapable of re-interpreting or even re-making policy, nor does it remove them from understandings of language that pertain to contexts in addition to school (e.g., García & Menken, 2010; Hélot, 2010; Lo Bianco, 2010). This research portrays teaching, almost paradoxically, in terms of everyday complexity: teachers’ work with language is complex enough that it can only be understood within a vast social, political, and historical context, but it is simple or common enough that it occurs continually every day.
Classroom discourse analysis focuses on some of the everyday activities of the classroom, and it shows how processes in schools such as learning, socialization, and identity development proceed through discourse, whether about students, produced by students, or in between teachers and students (Cazden, 2001; Gallas, 1995; Martin-Jones, 2015; Palmer, 2008; Rymes, 2009; Wortham, 2005). In introducing a rationale for classroom discourse analysis, Rymes (2015) reviews classic examples of such research (Au, 1980; Michaels, 1981; Philips, 2009) that revealed how student language practices are systematically understood in schools as deficits rather than differences. Rymes discusses how such research can be and has been shared with teachers in ways that may work against marginalization that proceeds through the evaluation of student language from the perspective of school norms. However, Rymes also notes a danger that such research may be taken up as stereotypes, for example that all African-American children tell topic-associating stories. Furthermore, it is also possible that such reframings of student language may not change durable schooling practices when understandings of student language are rooted in their racialization and not the empirical details of the discourse they produce (Flores & Rosa, 2015). These facets of discourse in the classroom—how it is understood, the histories and politics that inform these understandings, and how these understandings involve more than just language—all add to the challenge of an orientation to the problems of practice. As Cahnmann (2003) wrote in the selection quoted at the beginning of this chapter, it appears that the more we understand about the complexity of language in classrooms the more we find “more questions than answers.”
So how then should our practical advice change when one of our chief findings is that it is very difficult to provide practical advice? In the fields of both language policy and planning and classroom discourse analysis, and elsewhere as well, the increasingly recognized difficulty of giving practical advice does not result from a lack of faith in our own abilities as researchers. Instead, this difficulty is rooted in recognition that where our findings describe links between schooling practices, sociopolitical inequities, and understandings of language, they necessarily do not suggest changes that are easy to implement.

This study directly addresses the field’s increasing struggles with the problem orientation by centering that which makes practicality difficult to achieve—a teacher’s own encounters with the constraints of her work. While providing a model of these encounters, I consider how research on the construction of named languages, conducted under the banner of educational linguistics as well as closely related fields, presents a fresh case of the tensions around the problem orientation. Because assumptions about named languages are so fundamental to language education and have been so fundamental to educational linguistic research, new perspectives on languages appear to unsettle a variety of projects we are used to thinking of as practical. The next section reviews shifts in the field in how the concept of languages has been lately critiqued and explored in educational linguistics.

**Languages and the Problems of Language Education**

Research on language has continually confronted the value of separate languages as analytic objects. Early sociolinguistic research pointed to the ways in which a community’s use of apparently different linguistic codes could be understood as
constituting a cohesive verbal repertoire (Gumperz, 1964). The phenomenon of “code-switching” generated interest across several approaches to researching language, including more cognitive or formally oriented work that attempted to precisely model constraints on the use of multiple languages as grammatical codes (e.g., Poplack, 1978, 1980). This work understood code-switching as a complex linguistic practice that required significant skills in the two languages ‘switched’, in contrast to early work that defined competent bilingualism as specifically excluding code-switching. Research that focused on the social significance of code-switching as a linguistic practice showed that choices of languages could take advantage of socially established linkages between sign and context to use a change in code “metaphorically” (Blom & Gumperz, 1972). In others, a diglossic situation prevailed in which the use of languages in different conditions or contexts were apparently more strict (Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1967), and while diglossia frameworks were eventually critiqued for imposing too strict of a boundary between contexts, studies of diglossia still significantly advanced understandings of the relationship between linguistic practices and the contexts they indexed (Jaspers, 2016).

Some of the sociolinguistic and anthropological approaches to multilingual language practices were more cautious about the utility of ‘languages’ as analytic units, including Hymes (1974) who noted that “the linguistic and communicative boundaries between communities cannot be defined by linguistic features alone” but rather by the “political, not linguistic, histories of the regions” (p. 47). Hymes foreshadowed attention to the political construction of languages, noting the political complexity that “lies beneath the appearance of linguistic neatness in Europe” and arguing that “were the
standard languages removed from above them, a mapping of Europe’s linguistic units would look much more like native North America” (Hymes, 1974, p. 47).

Developing understandings of the reciprocal links between language and context grew to address the ways in which language is discussed and represented in countless spheres of human activity, forging indexical links between form and context (Agha, 2007a; Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Briggs & Bauman, 1992; Irvine & Gal, 2000; Kroskrity, 2000b; Kulick, 1998; Mertz, 1998; Rymes, 2014a, 2014b; Schieffelin & Charlier Doucet, 1998; Spitulnik, 1998; Woolard, 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Pursuing a related project, scholarship in the (dis)invention of language historically locates modern representations of language practices as separable into named languages. These conditions were rooted in the European colonial project, particularly its links between nationalism, race, and language (Bonfiglio, 2010, 2013; Flores, 2014; Makoni & Mashiri, 2007; Makoni & Meinhof, 2004; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). Makoni and Pennycook describe the invention of languages as a set of efforts to isolate both the notion of languages in general as enumerable and separable entities as well as particular languages, tied to colonizing and colonized populations. In other words, they show that ‘languages’ exist for specific historical and political reasons, with concrete consequences for people whose experiences or choices do not adhere to conceptions of languages as separate.

While Makoni and Pennycook do not necessarily position themselves as beholden to the problem orientation of educational linguistics, their call to “find ways of rethinking language in the contemporary world” (p. 3) resonates with educational linguistic scholarship seeking to change schooling practices around language and languages.
Whatever field they are attached to, ways of rethinking ‘languages’ and multilingualism have intensely occupied the recent work of many educational linguists and sociolinguists. In many contemporary educational linguistics works where multilingualism is a focus, readers will usually find a dense knot of citations looking something like this:

The local naming of these practices is itself often indeterminate and contested, both among users and analysts, and scholarly terms referring to (different aspects of) this include ‘heteroglossia,’ ‘crossing,’ ‘polylingualism,’ ‘translanguaging,’ metrolingualism,’ and ‘new ethnicities and language.’ (Bakhtin 1981, 1984; Rampton 1995, 2011; Jørgensen 2008a,b; Madsen 2008; Leppänen in press; Harris 2006; Creese & Blackledge 2010; Otsuji & Pennycook 2010; for reviews, see Auer 2006, Quist & Jørgensen 2009, and Rampton & Charalambous 2010). (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011, pp. 8–9)

These hypercitations mark a current dissatisfaction with longstanding conceptualizations of languages (or even, at times, multilingualism) as analytic tools. New critiques in this area contribute two findings: (1) the languages concept offers an insufficient model of empirically observable (even long-observed) language practices and (2) the ideological maintenance of the languages concept is itself a consequential social practice deserving of study in its own right. Based on these findings, reconfiguration of the study of language is ongoing.

Scholars making more empirically-minded arguments against the languages concept describe how it fails to account for observable language practices. For example, the proposed framework of polylingual languaging (Jørgensen, 2008; Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen, & Møller, 2011) explicitly takes languaging as the universal human behavior at the focus of analysis. Jørgensen points to languaging that sources multiple languages and argues that the best way to understand these practices is to downplay notions of command of or proficiency in a language. He argues for a “distinction between different norms of linguistic behaviour and the suggestion of the terms polylingual and
languaging which are to be understood as based on the behaviour of language users” (Jørgensen, 2008, p. 160). To accomplish this shift, Jørgensen (2008) notably distinguishes polylingualism and multilingualism, the latter of which he takes as a “term which covers the (more or less ‘full’) command of several languages” (p. 169). For Jørgensen, languaging and the linguistic features it employs should be the central phenomenon of study, not languages, and it is with an empirical rationale that he advances this argument.

In this framework there is much in common with Rampton’s (1995) notion of crossing, denoting relatively fleeting uses of a language for purposes of identity and affiliation. Emphasis on the command a person may have of many forms across ‘languages’ is echoed in other scholars’ exploration of individual communicative repertoires (Rymes, 2014a, 2014b) comprised of layers of experiences with communication in social contexts so numerous that a single person’s repertoire might draw on dozens of so-called languages (Blommaert & Backus, 2012) in addition to other communicative signs, including embodied ones (e.g., gestures and dress). Rymes (2014a) draws on the empirical work of Gumperz (1965) and argues for the analytic usefulness of a communicative repertoires framework on the grounds that it is (a) more focused on individuals’ diverse experiences, (b) more responsive to situations of migration and mobility that affect more and more classrooms, and (c) more appropriate to shifts in technology that result in less “constrained communication,” an assessment sourced from Jenkins (2006). Rymes suggests that metacommentary, or the representation or description of one’s own or another’s language use, is a crucial way that communicative repertoires are formed, responded to, and able to be documented by researchers.
Blommaert (2013) summarizes the above and other similar breaks with the *languages* concept and explores how the textual and documentary practices of modernist linguistics (see also Agha, 2007b) have discouraged “an accurate account [of language] in which flexibility, dynamism, change, negotiability—in short, instability—were central and fundamental” (p. 49). He highlights register phenomena (e.g., Agha, 1998, 2007a; Blommaert, 2009; Boellstorff, 2004; L. Miller, 2004) and politically rooted differences in how linguistic resources are valued as aspects of ‘the real world’ that are excluded from research that proceeded with a lens of *languages*.

Alongside these empirically-minded critiques, others focus on the political consequences of the ‘languages’ concept. In her discussion of how institutionalized language-ideological processes marginalize the practices of bilingual people, García explicitly ties her work describing translanguaging to an activist project promoting bilingual education that serves the interest of language minoritized students. While *translanguaging* originally referred to specific pedagogical strategies in bilingual teaching (Baker, 2006; Williams, 1996), it was further developed to consider the political dimensions of the schooling of bilingual people, including the very models of bilingualism underlying current and possible realities (Baker, 2003; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009; García & Leiva, 2014; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Li, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013). This scholarship on *translanguaging* seeks to describe multilingual language practices in contrast to the ways that they are understood through *monoglossic ideologies*—defined as those according to which “monolingualism in each of the two languages [is] the norm.” (García, 2009, p. 115). It is only possible to grasp the full impact of this perspective if we recognize that this monoglossic view is part of the
operating view of many institutions, particularly included early linguistic scholarship on multilingualism. Unlike some of the concepts explored above, the heteroglossic perspective of translanguaging does not attempt to explain any and all instances of apparent mixing of named languages. Translanguaging is argued to be distinct as a concept from other frameworks such as polylingualism and metrolingualism, “in that it is transformative, attempting to wipe out the hierarchy of language practices that deem some more valuable than others. Thus, translanguaging could be a mechanism for social justice, especially when teaching students from language minoritized communities” (García & Leiva, 2014, p. 200). This presentation of translanguaging links its potential transformative qualities to specific educational changes based on the perspectives of bilinguals who approach their languaging as a cohesive system, rather than through the lens of the historically contingent discourses that measure all languaging against national standardized varieties.

Scholarship that questions the analytic utility or empirical validity of ‘languages’ intensifies tensions around the problem orientation to what feels like a breaking point. Even as the maintenance of the notion that separate languages exist objectively is seen as a consequential social practice deserving of study in its own right, it is also clear that the notion of separate languages continues to inform schooling, especially bilingual schooling (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009; Valdés, González, López García, & Máquez, 2007). Thus, it would appear that this new scholarship is in danger of diverging so much from the starting point of educational practice that it could no longer inform educational practice. Within the field of educational linguistics, multilingual language practices have long been recognized as a feature of life in multilingual communities and a
vital part of the capabilities of multilingual students (e.g., Gonzalez et al., 1995; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999; Hornberger, 2003, 2005b; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000; Moll & Diaz, 1985). But what does it mean to support those practices when our ways of talking and thinking about them refer to things (languages) that have unstable and potentially highly contested meanings? Every representation of language we provide as researchers may have productive features but also what seem like serious gaps or dangerous simplifications.

Flores, Spotti, and García (2016) offer one way forward in their proposal of a critical post-structuralist sociolinguistics, in which

the role of sociolinguists is no longer to objectively describe the nature of language, objectively describe the linguistic practices of communities or uncritically offer policy solutions. Instead, the role of sociolinguists is to understand the ideological processes at play in how individuals and communities construct and resist boundaries between language varieties and the ways that these negotiations interact with existing language policies. (2016, p. 546).

This expanded project is similar to Pennycook’s (2006a) advocacy for a critical applied linguistics that focuses on “issues of dominion, disparity, difference, and desire while at the same time maintaining a constant skepticism toward cherished concepts such as language, grammar, power, man, woman, class, race, ethnicity, nation, identity, awareness, and emancipation.” (p. 287). Such movements in socio- and educational linguistics draw on post-structuralist and feminist critiques of objectivity as supposing an image of the researcher and research process as dispassionately unattached to the world and separated from participants, an image which provided researchers material benefits and the privilege to define realities of their subjects (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, & Richardson, 1992; Craven & Davis, 2013; Flores et al., 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2014; Villenas, 1996; Visweswaran, 1994). Critiques of objectivity in language research do not
focus on arguing that nothing about language is true but rather that all truths (or claims) about language are partial and situated. In this view, the impossibility of objective knowledge of language is not an unfortunate fact about researching language, but a critique about what objectivity was supposed to entail for linguistic research but never could.

Still, in light of practical demands, a critique of objectivity may seem to make little sense when considered against the hoard of fundamental knowledge about language that teachers include in their work. Does critique of objectivity in educational linguistics mean that a critical educational linguist should deny it is true, for example, that the words *cat* and *mat* rhyme in English? This is indeed a claim made about language in many elementary schools in the US. Surely, for some speakers recognized by others as speaking English, those words do rhyme. An ideological approach to studying language would be interested in explaining how such claims became true (or were challenged) in the experience of those who encountered them. For example, an ideological approach to studying language in schooling would also push us to ask questions about the sociopolitical processes that positioned knowledge of rhyme as helpful for teachers. We might ask how a reliance on rhyme for literacy and language teaching imagines a homogeneous speech community or may inevitably set the stage for the marginalization of learners of English as an additional language or speakers of a stigmatized variety of English. Thus, if educational linguistics were to fully embrace critiques of objectivity, we would need to significantly reshape the contributions of projects generating basic linguistic knowledge for teachers, but not discard them. While educational linguistics researchers have long recognized that teachers must make sense of language by
negotiating claims about it, recent scholarship on ‘languages’ and accompanying critiques of objectivity should increase our sense of urgency about understanding this negotiation.

In line with these critiques of objectivity, this study centers the work that teachers do to make sense of claims about language, while accounting for the great number of claims and without attempting to objectively evaluate those claims. My questions explore not whether one of Eva’s claims about language is true, but rather where did the claim come from, what circumstances led to its arrival in the classroom, and what are its consequences for Eva and her students. In the next section, I describe approaches allowing an empirical foothold for direct investigation of representations of language as they circulate within schooling practices. If we can better understand the social and interactional processes by which teachers make sense of language, we could engage with practitioners in ways that are more reflexive and perhaps even ultimately more helpful.

**Conceptualizing Claims about Language in Schools**

Research within educational linguistics has sought to understand how schooling practices position and respond to many aspects of language, including:

- **variation in literacy and discursive practices** (e.g., Au, 1980; Avineri et al., 2015; Heath, 1983; Michaels, 1981; Philips, 1983)
- **new media practices underappreciated by schools** (e.g., Cope, Kalantzis, & Group, 2000; McGinnis, Goodstein-Stolzenberg, & Saliani, 2007; Rymes, 2011; The New London Group, 1996)
however, increasingly in light of recent work destabilizing familiar linguistic categories, the challenge for efforts that still seek to approach research in a problem-oriented way becomes: How do we learn from such research, how is it still practical, if we also know that things like dialects and languages necessarily have fluid, socially constituted boundaries? This study seeks to address this challenge by taking an explicit focus on the claims about language made for the purposes of schooling. With this approach, areas of research such as dialects in schools or bilingualism in schools would be seen not as different aspects of the objective or fundamental nature of language or a language (its syntax, phonetic inventory, dialectal range, or pragmatics) but rather as different types of claims about language made by schools.

The lens of ‘claims about language’ can only be useful in describing how school actors make sense of language if there is some empirical and theoretical specificity for recognizing precisely what constitutes such a ‘claim.’ This section describes how a particular definition of language ideology frames my discussion of claims about language or representations of language. The language ideology literature provides an approach to uncovering what, as quoted in the opening to the conceptual framework, Cahnmann (2003) called ‘norms’ about language as they are encountered by teachers.

**Language Ideologies**

Practically any scholarship on language ideologies represents some investigation in which scholars are confronting the intersection of language and social life. However, not all scholarship carries the same assumptions, so there is some unavoidable terminological ‘cleanup’ to be done. Here, I specify the utility of this subfield and then review how it contrasts with attempts to understand similar phenomena. This particular linguistic
anthropological approach offers a rigorous and clear set of principles for approaching the ways that people represent language, as well as some of how people make sense of the consequences of these representations (Rosa & Burdick, 2016).

An underlying influence on this scholarship is the sense that anything subsumed into what is called ‘culture’ must necessarily be a public phenomenon: “though ideational, it does not exist in someone’s head; though unphysical, it is not an occult entity” (Geertz, 1973, p. 10). As public phenomena, both the broad set of things often called culture and the specific understandings we can call language ideologies have to be communicated about in order to be relevant for any number of people. Sapir (1951) explains this perspective in an argument that social “structure” is rooted in communication:

While we often speak of society as though it were a static structure defined by tradition, it is, in the more intimate sense, nothing of the kind, but a highly intricate network of partial or complete understandings between the members of organizational units of every degree of size and complexity, ranging from a pair of lovers or a family to a league of nations or that ever increasing portion of humanity which can be reached by the press through all its transnational ramifications. It is only apparently a static sum of social institutions; actually it is being reanimated or creatively reaffirmed from day to day by particular acts of a communicative nature which obtain among individuals participating in it. (Sapir, 1951, p. 104)

Sapir was writing decades before language ideologies scholarship emerged as a recognizable subfield, but his argument fits current explanations of a rationale to focus on material and public representations of language.

Language ideology scholarship represents both a linguistic and social theory in which language use, representations of language, and the construction of social groups are seen as inseparable (Kroskrity, 2000a; Silverstein, 1985; Woolard, 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Woolard (1998) defines language ideologies as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings
in a social world” (p. 3). Representations are material and public, as in the arguments of Geertz and Sapir. This approach asks how language is represented, what material circumstances these representations support, and which social positions are animated by actors representing language in a particular way.

Language ideologies have a metadiscursive function, defined by Bauman & Briggs (2000) as based in “the capacity of discourse to both represent and regulate other discourses ... [in a] reflexive relationship” (p. 142). Thus, language ideological discourse involves not only explicit statements about language or languages, but also implicit constraints or regulatory effects rooted in already present or widely circulating representations. Accordingly, the analytic toolkit of language ideology scholarship has been applied to

- how named languages come to be understood as separate and aligned with social groups of speakers (e.g., Irvine & Gal, 2000; Jaffe, 1999; Rosa, 2014)
- how distinct affiliations with one or several named languages aligns on axes of identity (e.g., Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998; Leeman, 2004; Warriner, 2003).
- how representations of particular genres or kinds of uses of language mediate social relations (e.g., Bauman & Briggs, 2000; Irvine, 1998; Kulick, 1998; Mertz, 1998)
- how language itself functions (e.g., Bauman & Briggs, 2003; Hill, 2008; Silverstein, 1985)

This list does not show strictly demarcated domains of social activity or sub-subfields, but it shows that this scholarship offers a lens on many types of language, not only named languages. In recognition of the large number of important claims about language that impact daily life, “language ideologies scholarship has sought to examine the ways in which our commonsense notions about language are always situated, biased, and the result of historical and contemporary processes” (Rosa & Burdick, 2016, p. 106).
Teachers and students are impacted every day by these commonsense notions or representations of language continually reanimated at school.

**Representations of Language**

Representations of language can take potentially many forms, such as explicit description, censure, parody, earnest modeling, among others. Such representations are an utterly everyday occurrence, owing to the fundamentally reflexive character of language and the ubiquity of many forms of metacommentary (Agha, 2007a; Bakhtin, 1981; Lucy, 1993; Rymes, 2014b; Silverstein, 1993). Representations can occur in fleeting conversation but also in ways that are embedded in institutionalized practices such as, in the case of language practices in schools, curricula or teacher training materials (e.g., Britsch, 2004; Collin, 2014; Luke, 1995; Whitney, Ridgeman, & Masquelier, 2011).

Representations of language at school travel through recontextualization by series of school actors. That is, particular understandings of language may spread in circulation, be widely publicized through popular accounts of language, teacher preparation programs, and so on. But ‘travel’ in this sense is strictly a metaphor, as it is only specific interactions that mediate a school actor’s encounters with representations of language (Agha, 2012; Rymes, 2012; Wortham, 2012). Thus, in this study, the notion of *recontextualization* is vital for understanding the ways in which a sample of discourse can be re-used again in a context unlike the one it which it was originally generated, playing on both similarities and differences between the old and new contexts to accomplish a social action, in this case a contribution to the creation of a plan for future instruction (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Rymes, 2012; Silverstein & Urban, 1996). But the
fact that representations of language can take so many forms means that their recontextualization can make many different kinds of contributions. For example, a teacher could directly quote a curriculum document’s description of a particular written genre in order to win an argument with their colleague or to ridicule the absent and perhaps nameless curriculum writers. Theorizations of what these representations entail in terms of the activity of their users are inseparable from methodological concerns of how their ‘travel’ can be observed by a researcher. While this section of the conceptual framework concerns how I theorize representations in connection to scholarship on language ideology, more detailed consideration of how to identify them through data collection and analysis is included in Chapter 3 (Methods).

**Representations of Language in Schools**

The production of knowledge about language requires the constant invention and re-invention of linguistic types and relies on numerous ideologies of language and literacy practices as well as on ideologies of the nature of the language faculty itself. Powerful and widespread ideologies of how people should (or do) learn to use language always accompany institutionalized learning contexts, and indeed these ideologies construct the naturalness and stature of the institutions themselves (Bourdieu, 1991; Collins, 2009). Language ideologies scholarship provides frameworks for understanding many aspects of social life in general, but it is particularly applicable to understanding the work of teachers because schools appear to have a special relationship with language ideologies: the activities of school actors mass produce claims about language at the same time that the work of those actors is acutely affected by such claims.
My analysis of Eva’s classroom in subsequent chapters shows how specific representations of language become recontextualized in her classroom. For the present purpose of exemplifying this process, Mertz’s (1998) language ideological study of a law school classroom shows a basic template of issues addressed by the representation-focused model of how language ideologies are employed in a classroom. Her study illustrated a law school classroom professor applying a representation of lawyerly discursive in order to motivate instructional practices, supplying extended turns at talk for students, as if he was putting not just a few words but “new voices into their mouths” (p. 156). This teacher’s instructional plan depends on an image of ‘speaking like a lawyer’ and a sense that to do so is important. In order to model this situation, we also have to recognize that this teacher did not invent a type of lawyerly talk and is not the only one to represent the importance that engaging in such talk. A language-ideological model of this teacher’s classroom would also need to account for sources of representations of language re-used during instruction. Accounting for these sources entails investigation of recontextualization processes by which they become available to teachers and students.

From this point of view, attending to how types of language use are represented and modeled, schools depend on more language ideologies than have been previously documented, since there are so many types of language at issue in a single classroom. In this way, my use of language ideologies as a lens on elementary teaching intersects with Bakhtin’s (1986a) argument that our use of language is describable in terms of the numerous genres we regularly use. In defining the term speech genres, he wrote “each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres” (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 60, emphasis in
Bakhtin stresses that the range of possible speech genres is “boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible” (p. 60). The inexhaustible number of speech genres derives from the possibilities of human activity as well as the fact that the number of people using a speech genre or the range of utterances it contains is irrelevant for whether it counts as a speech genre; a multitude of ways of using language can be viewed in this way. Bakhtin himself specifies this point:

In fact, the category of speech genres should include short rejoinders of daily dialogue (and these are extremely varied depending on the subject matter, situation, and participants), everyday narration, writing (in all its various forms), the brief standard military command, the elaborate and detailed order, the fairly variegated repertoire of business documents (for the most part standard), and the diverse world of commentary (in the broad sense of the word: social, political). And we must also include here the diverse forms of scientific statements and all literary genres (from the proverb to the multivolume novel). It might seem that speech genres are so heterogeneous that they do not have and cannot have a single common level at which they can be studied. For here, on one level of inquiry, appear such heterogeneous phenomena as the single-word everyday rejoinder and the military command that is standardized even in its intonation and the profoundly individual lyrical work, and so on. (Bakhtin, 1986a, pp. 60–61)

Bakhtin’s work on speech genres later influenced linguistic anthropological scholarship in language ideology and in particular, how ways of using language are typified, which fulfills in part Bakhtin’s hopes for a “common level” at which speech genres can be studied.

As spheres in which language is used, classroom life and the profession of teaching include numerous speech genres, which vary widely in scope but nevertheless are similarly the subject of planning events and sources in which representations of language are produced. Students produce numerous discursive products that correspond with content areas, social-emotional comportment, and classroom management or behavioral areas. Within professional and scholarly discourse about teaching, the range of representations of types of language appears limitless, covering everything from genuine
apologies and kind words (e.g., Charney, 1992; Wade, 2011), to productive and unproductive contributions to class discussion (e.g., Ball, 1993; Gallas, 1995; Santori, 2011), to mathematical proof (e.g., Hanna, 2000; Steele & Rogers, 2012). Although each of these types denotes distinct student practices, they have in common a function as evidence of their academic progress, and teachers are charged with supporting students in this production.

The extensive infrastructure creating and maintaining these types is addressed by Valdés (2015) in her theorization of how language instruction in schools is treated similarly to instruction in mathematics, science, or other content areas. She defines the work necessary in this process as *curricularization*:

This process of curricularizing language—an essential aspect of all language teaching—involvesthe activity of organizing and selecting elements from a particular dialect/variety of a language (e.g., Spanish, English, French, German, Chinese) for instructional purposes as if they could be arranged into a finite, agreed-upon set of structures, skills, tasks, or functions. (Valdés, 2015, p. 262)

The framework of curricularization draws attention to the institutionally constructed nature of familiar representations of language, along with the inherent limitations and partiality of the skill-focused representations that schooling requires. Valdés poses curricularization as the processes by which language is turned into academic content from its uncurricularized form, which she defines as “a species-unique communicative system acquired naturally in the process of primary socialization” (p. 262). Valdés stresses the many inputs on the process of curricularization, which includes models of “standardized or prestige varieties of language” as well as specific conceptualizations of language (e.g., language is structure, language is use, language is action) drawn from various informing disciplines and theoretical perspectives, by ideologies of language, by traditions of instruction, by existing textbooks and materials, and by language policies that define unit/credit institutional requirements. (Valdés, 2015, p. 262)
Her work points to the ways in which schooling enacts self-justifying models of language that represent linguistic competence as something obtainable only with the approval of schools. My study’s application of an ethnographically informed lens to the models of language that schools depend on is a relatively new approach because “the curricularization of language as complex and multifaceted has not yet been closely examined” (Valdés, 2015, p. 262).

Representations of language are continually animated within schools through their recontextualization in instruction. These representations are end products of curricularization, which is itself just one example of forms of metalinguistic labor (Carr, 2011) accompanying institutional contexts and, even more generally, the reflexive or metadiscursive character of communication. Because such a wide variety of types of language is discussed or implied in professional discourse about teaching, I did not limit my investigation to the claims that schools make about ‘a’ language or particular languages. Instead, I understand representations of language as complex, ubiquitous, and necessary ingredients of schooling, which are nevertheless identifiable and traceable through their recontextualization by school actors.

**Teachers’ Encounters with Representations of Language**

Lurking tensions within the problem orientation of educational linguistics have become amplified by increased attention to the social construction of linguistic categories. These tensions result from the many constraints on educators’ work: the more constraints there are to implementing a recommendation that would benefit teachers and students, the less practical it appears. For example, in one sense, recommending bilingual education approaches to California policymakers would appear profoundly impractical
during the decades-long period when such programs were effectively illegal. Yet the research base for such programs did aid political efforts that eventually succeeded in overturning the prohibition. What is impractical at one scale (e.g., advising a principal or school board member) may be practical on another (e.g., state-wide activism), but this is little comfort for educational linguists who wish to simultaneously address seemingly intractable or slow-moving social processes of educational inequity at the same time that we advise the work of teachers in classrooms.

The wider the scope of educational linguistic findings, the more difficult it is to identify obvious implications for the work of practitioners. In attempt to address tensions in the problem orientation with a new approach, this study centers teachers’ encounters with language ideological conditions of their work. By studying these encounters, I can reveal more precisely how these conditions impact teachers and students and how they might be resisted. I show the maintenance of linguistic categories and how this labor becomes assumed by teachers while still identifying these categories as contingent. This approach helps fulfill the potential of the problem orientation by investigating the very social conditions that make supporting educators difficult in the first place.

Specifically, this study sheds light on problems of education that teachers may encounter through representations of languages, genres, and skills while they plan for instruction. This work offers a pathway to expanding our sense of the problem orientation. Practicality in educational research can be policed as being about solving problems. While some of the discipline-defining writings reviewed by Hornberger (2001) focus on solutions, they do include other approaches to problems as well. This study focuses on problems presented by representations of language in Eva’s classroom, but I
focus on describing those problems from a language ideological perspective. I do not attempt solutions to these problems, and the implications that I do suggest are easily interpretable as impractical. Through the analysis presented here and especially in concluding discussion in Chapter 8, I argue that we ought to preserve interpretations of the problem orientation that see it as more than an invitation to solve problems. We should also value research that shows that the problems are different than what we imagined or simply even more intractable than we feared. Although disappointingly impractical from some perspectives, this study adds clarity to the struggles of teachers like Eva as they negotiate the many representations of language deeply implicated in schooling as we know it today.
Chapter 3: Research Methods and Setting

This study investigates how teachers must necessarily represent types of language as they plan for instruction and eventually teach. Like all of us, people in schools are constantly negotiating language ideologies. But unlike many of us, teachers and other school actors are mass recontextualizers of these ideologies, continually called upon to employ a representation of language in the service of their work, whether that entails assessing a student, planning a lesson or curriculum, or evaluating a teacher. The types of language involved in instruction (such as *retellings*, *genuine apologies*, and *English*) are often highly naturalized, and the metapragmatic tools by which people discuss these types are ubiquitous. The major methodological challenge for this study is to show how highly naturalized types become represented through utterly fundamental sociolinguistic processes.

In this chapter, I describe the research methods used to conduct the study and meet the challenges outlined in the conceptual framework. First, I reintroduce my research questions and elaborate on their component parts. I then describe Eva’s classroom as a research site and a community of which I was part for a full school year. Finally, the bulk of the chapter discusses how linguistic ethnographic and discourse analytic methodologies informed both data collection and analysis.

Research Questions

1. *What events, interactions, and texts (produced by the school and sourced from elsewhere) constitute Eva’s planning for instruction?* This question expands notions of planning to include other sites from which representations of language can be recontextualized. This question refers to the opportunities Eva had to recontextualize
representations of language. These included organized or informal collaborations with her colleagues as well as the concrete resources such as state standards, lesson plans obtained from online sources, and materials mass-published for classrooms.

2. *Which representations of language does Eva recontextualize from these events, interactions, and texts?* This question broadly catalogs the wide variety of representations of language that arise in instructional planning. I did not focus on one particular representation at the outset of this study because I wanted to explore how numerous distinct representations of language at school can emerge in relation to each other. Keeping this question open contributed to an understanding of how representations of named, bounded languages are negotiated by teachers alongside representations of other types.

3. *How does Eva’s recontextualization of these representations of language structure opportunities for evaluating and perceiving student language?* This question refers to the consequences of a recontextualized representation of language. These representations underly assessment of student language and other classroom activity in which student language is evaluated or otherwise perceived.

**Linguistic Ethnography and Discourse Analysis**

The combination of linguistic ethnography and discourse analysis establishes how people interacting with one another accomplish social action that reflects and affects the contexts in which they live, with ethnographic data often providing a sense of what meanings or practices are relevant to a particular interaction (Blommaert, 2005; Gee, 2011; Heller, 2007; Martin-Jones, 2007; Palmer, 2008; Wortham & Reyes, 2015). Palmer (2008) describes this combination as one that “builds a more critical and contextualized
account of the micro-analysis of discourse” (p. 282). These approaches try to make sense of what have been called ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ social phenomenon, though increasingly it is argued that the best way to do so is avoid that dichotomy (e.g., Lempert, 2012; Mortimer, 2012; Rymes, 2012; Warriner, 2012; Wortham, 2012). These concerns align with my study in that representations of separate named languages (such as English and Spanish) and rigidly separated types of language (such as fairy tales, retellings, and “higher order questions”) are historically stable ways of approaching elementary instruction but are also continually reanimated in the daily professional work of teachers.

A fundamental methodological similarity between discourse analysis and ethnography is that both highlight the continuity of research with constant human engagement in the socially located meanings all around us. Hymes (1980b) writes that “Our ability to learn ethnographically is an extension of what every human being must do, that is, learn the meanings, norms, patterns of a ways of life.” (p. 98). In outlining the basic goals of discourse analysis, Gee (2011) similarly argues that ordinary people face the same exact problem as discourse analysts whenever they interpret the actions of another person. Both ethnographers and discourse analysts face the problem of contextualization (Blommaert, 2005; Wortham, 2005) in order to ensure a valid interpretation of available data. Contextualization refers to both how people establish a relevant context that is linked to their communication and how analysts may reconstruct that relevant context. Contextualization mobilizes and continually challenges justifications in any discourse analytic or ethnographic study.

The fact that we can signal a relevant context for interpretation to our interlocutors means that it is possible for a discourse analyst to determine aspects of this
relevant context as well, provided sufficient ethnographic data related to the situation. Gee (2011) describes this issue (he calls it “The Frame Problem” rather than contextualization) with the example “The coffee spilled, go clean it up,” which has a very different meaning “when I hand you a mop than when I hand you a broom” (p. 30). What counts as sufficient context often cannot be determined finally or objectively because “context, is in a sense, infinite. We can always learn more about the context in which an utterance was made. [...] Isn’t it always possible that, if we consider more of the context, we will find out that claims about meaning we thought were true are, in reality, false?” (p. 31). Gee’s solution is to adopt a standard of seeking contrary evidence, to “always be willing to push the context a bit further than we would in everyday life to see if we can falsify our claims about meaning.” (p. 32). Related to this study’s concern with recontextualization across events, Wortham (2005) argues that “the indeterminacy of contextualization that inhibits the clear interpretation of signs at the moment of utterance can also inhibit the interpretation of single events along a trajectory.” (p. 98).

Methodological responses to contextualization, in both data collection and analysis, link models of social life with procedures to document it.

**Linguistic Ethnography of Multilingualism**

This study focuses on how representations of language are recontextualized in the classroom. As Chapter 2 explained, even the existence of named languages themselves is such a representation. As this study relies on work from the sociolinguistics of multilingualism that has increasingly questioned the analytic utility of ‘languages’ as objective categories, it confronts methodological challenges inherent in these critiques. Linguistic ethnographies of multilingual contexts focus on how linguistic forms become
understood and employed as significant along axes of social identity and in performance of social action (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Link, Gallo, & Wortham, 2014; Rampton, 2006; Rosa, 2014). To illustrate those processes, studies attend to participants’ explicit reporting or implicit reliance on representations (or models) of language use.

Blackledge and Creese (2010) adopt critiques of languages in order to investigate “the interstices of linguistic practices, language ideologies, and identities in multilingual contexts” (p. 16). They pursue this goal by applying critical and social understandings of multilingualism (including much of the work cited above) to linguistic ethnography, drawing on linguistic anthropology, ethnography of communication, sociology, and applied linguistics. In making their argument for the necessity of this approach, they show just how pervasive and consequential the languages concept is: we need a comprehensive understanding of social action and meaning-making in order to document how people learn new ways of languaging.

Interestingly, their description of one of their most basic methodological choices shows just how difficult it can be to work through the implications of moving beyond languages. As they explain regarding their transcripts:

In keeping with the theoretical approach to linguistic practice which emerged from this work, we make no distinction between different ‘languages’ in the transcribed data. We use romanized transliteration for all languages other than Cantonese and Mandarin, where we retain Chinese orthography (Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p. ix).

Though this move certainly extends in a new and productive direction, as in other critical examinations of transcription (e.g., Bucholtz, 2000), it is remarkable that in a statement about not making distinctions between languages, several languages are distinguished from one another. They write as if they expect none of their readers will struggle to
interpret what they mean by referring to “different ‘languages’” even as they promise not to mark those differences.

Certainly the goal Blackledge and Creese express is not to ignore emic distinctions between languages but to exclude languages from their own lens on communication. Explicitly contrasting how approaches to understanding language classrooms might use ‘languages’ as analytic tools, Blackledge, Creese, and Takhi (2013) propose an ethnographic approach in which researchers do not ask “‘which language is in use?’ but ‘what signs are in use and action and what do these signs point to?’” (p. 77). Even if researchers do not ask what language is in use, students and teachers in a language classroom are constantly making claims about what language or what type of language are in use. My study also faces challenges in the transcription of bilingual data and in references to designations like “English” and “Spanish” which are both important representations of language at DLCS and categories whose construction and impact the study seeks to understand.

Other researchers of multilingualism have also highlighted methodological approaches needed to fully embrace the implications generated by critiques of ‘languages.’ Like Blackledge and Creese, Li (2011) is concerned with showing how an instance of translanguaging creates a particular kind of social and cultural space. His attention to creativity and criticality mirror Blackledge and Creese’s attention to negotiations of transnationalism, ethnicity, and the carnivalesque. (He was in fact a co-researcher, though not a co-author, of the study that Blackledge and Creese describe.) Li’s methodological proposal of moment analysis (Li, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013) includes a focus on individual choices of (trans)linguistic form that are both situated within
interaction and informed by speakers’ attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies. His concerns mirror the components of Silverstein’s (1985) *total linguistic fact* (including form, use, ideology, and domain), especially as glossed for applications in linguistic ethnography by Rampton (2012). Rampton argues that sociolinguistic methodologies have shortcomings when they only consider part of the total linguistic fact, which he glosses as *linguistic forms, situated discourse* (Silverstein’s *domain and use*), and *ideology*. In fact, Rampton identifies a lack of attention to one of these strands as the hallmark of some approaches to studying language: where Conversation Analysis focuses on interaction and form to the exclusion of ideology, Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on form and ideology to the exclusion of situated interactional processing. If we use Rampton’s methodological checklist as a heuristic for evaluating the *languages* concept, it seems that the concept does not exactly ignore these strands but rather limits or freezes them. All are still investigable but distorted through the lens of *languages*. Forms are always understood as members of *a language*, discourse always takes place in *a language or several languages*, and *ideology* can only be documented in a way that takes *languages* as real objects.

As discussed in Chapter 2, critiques of languages significantly rock the conceptual boat of educational linguistics. However, the methodological boat is more steady, to the extent we can recognize negotiation of representations of separate languages as taking place through similar interactional means as other types of language, as one of the many social processes mediated through communication. Critiques of the objective nature of boundaries between languages do not demonstrate that the boundaries are illusory. Instead, they demonstrate that the maintenance of those boundaries requires discursive
work. To say that representations such as monoglossic ideologies are highly naturalized is to say that they require an immense amount of work to continue. Ethnographic studies of multilingualism illustrate how such work is situated within the whole of social life, accordingly attached to diverse particular projects of identity, positioning, socialization, and other social actions. Accordingly, this study examines both representations of named languages along with other descriptions of how language works as they are raised in Eva’s classroom.

**Representations of Language across Events**

Wortham and Reyes (2015) discuss how discourse analysis of a single event is not sufficient to chart social processes like socialization and learning, which necessarily take place over time. A single lesson may contain a representation of language that is suggestive of wider scale relationships of power or the historical development of monoglossic language ideologies, but to analytically establish such a link requires additional evidence of how else that representation of language works in a classroom or school. Classroom observations reveal instances of teachers and students recontextualizing representations of language. This shows the bulk of student experiences with language in schools since almost all of their time in schools is in a classroom. But to better understand teacher roles in recontextualizing discourses of named languages, among many other representations of language, this study also included data collection that attends to other school settings where teachers do their work.

The framework of curricularization discussed in Chapter 2 also suggests that representations of language are recontextualized in the work of many more people besides one classroom teacher. Classroom interactions alone cannot suffice as data to
reveal how a teacher might be interpreting, using, or challenging a representation of
language sourced from elsewhere. Thus, the design of this study includes the events and
sources in addition to classroom in which representations of language are
recontextualized by teachers, although specific case representations varied in how much
they were discussed in detail at DLCS planning events. However, even this classroom
and school data collection cannot tell the entire story of the representations of language
presented here, as each of them has been the subject of significant curricularization or
other metalinguistic labor in other spaces distant from DLCS and in some cases, in time
long past. This fact is both a major contributor to the scope of my study (and any
linguistic ethnographic study) as well as a revealing feature of the life of teachers. Thus it
was a deliberate choice in the design of the study to focus on the many representations in
Eva’s classroom as Eva encountered them rather than combine classroom investigation of
a single representation of language with significant historical data collection (as in Lewis,
2017). In data collection and analysis, I limit my discussion to sources of representations
of language that Eva herself dealt with, with rare exception.

Dual Language Charter School (DLCS)

DLCS is a K–8 charter school located in a heavily Latinx area of Philadelphia. The proportion of enrollment from low-income families according to state measures is
above 85%, and the student body is recorded as almost nearly 90% Hispanic (the term
used in the statistics) and approximately 10% Black or multiracial (Pennsylvania
Department of Education). Its mission to promote bilingualism in its students and its
formation as a charter school speaks to a history of local bilingual education activism,
disinvestment in publicly funded education, and a withdrawal of bilingual services in the
School District Philadelphia (Cahnmann, 1998; Flores & Lewis, 2016; Flores et al., 2018). In terms of reporting on students’ linguistic background or abilities, approximately 20% are classified as English Language Leaners or Limited English Proficient. No languages besides Spanish and English were ever described to me as a part of students’ or families’ linguistic repertoire. However, this limited reporting cannot capture the diverse ways that Spanish played a role in students’ lives in a long-standing bilingual community. School home language surveys reviewed by a PennGSE research team in 2014 showed that many parents responded to the question “Which language is spoken most at home?” by listing both English and Spanish, either deliberately rejecting the monoglossic framing of the question or otherwise not finding it a useful question.

My year in Eva’s classroom followed three years of classroom observation of this school as part of a separate research project. This previous work focused on students but nevertheless revealed the high degree to which English, Spanish, and other categories of language were being typified and negotiated by both students and teachers in classrooms. It was through this work that I first met Eva and spent time in her classroom. This long-term involvement consistent with ethnographic methods (Maxwell, 2012, p. 125) helped me consider the representation of types of language as a “foreshadowed problem” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 21). Hammersley & Atkinson expand earlier definitions of foreshadowed problems beyond being theoretically based to also include personal experience and pilot or related research. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 1, my sense of the challenges and complexity of elementary teaching with respect to language were also foreshadowed by my own teaching experience, and my identification
as a former teacher had a large impact on how I formed relationships with Eva and others at the school. These relationships are discussed in the next section.

**Visiting DLCS**

A typical day of fieldwork for this study began before the school day officially started. Not only did I enjoy my morning conversations with Eva, it was good to avoid the rush of parents signing in their kids who were slightly late to school. If the front desk were staffed by one of the usual staff members, we would chat briefly as they gave me my Visitor sticker badge to walk up to Eva’s room. If the desk was staffed by someone new for the day, we almost always shared a laugh at the ridiculous photograph of me in the system (and printed on every one of my Visitor badges), showing me in mid-“I didn’t hear you” gesture right after someone had said (as I learned) “Look in this camera so we can take your picture.”

If I arrived before Eva went out for admission on the blacktop schoolyard, we would catch up recent events in class, her expectations for the day, and the NPR segments we had both listened to on our commutes to DLCS. Before too long, it would be time to meet the students who were lining up outside. Along the way we would meet Carmen, Eva’s assistant teacher, and Lupe and Alice, the other homeroom teachers in second grade. Alice, who was responsible for teaching in Spanish, and Lupe, who was responsible for teaching in English, switched their classes in the middle of the day. Eva was a *self-contained* teacher who kept the same set of 24 students the entire day and was responsible for teaching in both languages.

These were the students who awaited us outside. Eva, Carmen, and I greeted them and keep the group organized until it was time for all the students outside to file into the
school. Back in Eva’s classroom as students took off their coats and unpacked their homework, I might listen in to Eva and Carmen discuss the agenda for today, sit with a student who wanted to read to me, or find an out of the way place to observe how Eva started to describe the coming day to her students.

In the classroom I tried to balance being both helpful and unobtrusive. If possible, during individual worktime, I would circulate to assist students while at the same time taking note of feedback that Eva gave or other ways that she described language to her students. My most common notetaking practice was to write just a few words next to the time of day, or the current runtime of the audio recorder. With very few exceptions, I did not act in full teacher mode in the sense of leading the class in anything, but I did act as another pair of eyes during some classroom management situations, as when I would instinctively walk at the back of the line moving through the hallway if Eva was at the front. During whole group lessons, I usually sat to the side, behind students as they faced the front of the room where Eva or she and Carmen both were set. Eva sometimes called on me or otherwise brought me into a class conversation, especially about ways that students got along with each other or other complex topics where she was interested in my perspective.

There was one way in which it was helpful to Eva for me to do very little obvious instructional help—her desire to not be known as having “three teachers” in the classroom. Because classroom management and providing individual attention to students are constant challenges for teachers, adult presence is a hot commodity. Since my changing schedule and the needs of the study could not possibly allow me to have the
kind of educational impact an actual additional teacher might generate, Eva was keen to ensure that I wasn’t seen by her colleagues as assisting too significantly.

In my work and relationship with students, my approach often differed from Eva’s, and students approached us differently as well, based on our distinct personalities, gender identity, use of Spanish, and responsibilities in the classroom. There were some students, like Joseph, whose slightly oddball comments and usually cheery attitude charmed and delighted both of us equally. (He also intensely reminded me of my former student Oscar, the author of “NO NAME” quoted in Chapter 1.) In other cases, a student who instantly clicked with one of us was a source of irritation to the other throughout the year. Eva and I both recognized these dynamics, and many of our deepest conversations centered on those of her students’ needs that had little to do with the subject of my study.

My time with the class was punctuated by regular meetings, assisting Eva during her prep periods, and having lunch in her classroom with her and others whose office or classroom were nearby. Among other DLCS staff, I particularly got to know Lupe and Alice, the other homeroom second grade teachers, as well as Michelle, who coordinated the PYP curriculum with the team. Through the year I had some contact with the second grade special education teacher at grade level meetings, but Eva did not collaborate with that staff member because she had no students with a special education plan in her class.

Dismissal was a drawn out process in which we went with the whole class, except for bus riders, down to the blacktop again as family members or staff from after school programs picked them up individually. For some of the week, a meeting would be scheduled for the last chunk of the contractual workday after dismissal, but on others things quickly wound down as Eva got ready to return home. When I stayed until the
very end of the day, Eva and I got a chance to check in about issues that had come up earlier. A day of teaching is always a long day, and I was always grateful when Eva and I had a chance to reflect on the day together.

**Data Collection**

Data collection methods in this study consisted of ethnographic participant observation of meetings and classtime, audio recording and transcription, interviews, and document collection. These methods were used through the entire school year, starting with preparatory all-staff meetings in August and ending with a day spent helping Eva pack up her classroom before leaving for summer break in June. Collected data was intended to allow me to representations of language as they were recontextualized by Eva. Eva’s work in her classroom was used as a vantage point from which to observe these circulating representations, which were invoked or reproduced in numerous contexts within DLCS. These representations and not Eva were the focal cases of the study. While Eva was the primary participant, others with whom she had meetings, especially other members of the second-grade team, were participants as well. In all of these data collection methods, I was driven by attention to typification, metacommentary, and reflexive language, an attention which narrowed when focal representations of language were selected, in a recursive process of preliminary analysis informing further data collection (Maxwell, 2012). Specifically, it was always the intention of data collection to record how both named languages and other linguistic types were described for Eva’s students and in her work.

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3 As part of my efforts to preserve the confidentiality of Eva’s participation in the study, I omit references to the exact year that the data collection took place.
The remainder of this section provides brief rationales for each method of data collection.

**Ethnographic Participant Observation**

Observations and fieldnotes have been essential in studies of sociolinguistic and language ideological processes unfolding over time (Mehan, 1996; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Wortham, 2005). Observing events in which participants act is fundamental to a study of a social process that occurs among people in publicly perceivable ways. Furthermore, in my study and some of the past studies that inform my work, the process at issue in the research occurs in specifically ratified settings. In my study for example, the bulk of typifying specific language practices takes place in classrooms and professional meetings at schools. Both classroom interactions and meetings were pivotal events in the practices I am studying. To clarify, when I refer to classroom instruction, I mean to point to all the action involved in classtime that might potentially be relevant to the research questions—not just the times when the teacher is addressing the class. This means that both teacher activity and student activity were observed during this time, with primary attention on the ways that they talk about language, the official activities of school, and each other.

I visited Eva’s classroom or attended professional development sessions with her on 77 days, equally spread through the school year. I recorded ethnographic fieldnotes at these observations (R. M. Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Because the study’s rationale and goals already involve a specific focus on representations of language, my fieldnotes were specifically targeted toward documenting them. In deliberately being selective, I acted from the principle that “fieldwork is
continuously analytic in character, as fieldnotes are always products of prior interpretive and conceptual decisions” (R. M. Emerson et al., 2011, p. 198). I audio recorded every classroom observation and transcribed selected lessons and conversations with Eva involving focal representations of language. Where audio recordings were transcribed and presented as data in this dissertation, I cite the transcript as (Audio Recording). When quotations are based on contemporaneous notes, I cite them as (Fieldnotes). Some interactions were transcribed immediately upon contemporaneous expansion of field jottings, while others were transcribed only much later as focal case representations were clarified.

**Eva’s classroom.** I acted as a participant observer in the focal teacher’s classroom. During whole group lessons, I observed the instruction, sometimes helping students stay on task or getting called on by the focal teacher to give an opinion or response to the lesson at issue. Eva occasionally asked me to run a center, administer an informal assessment, or review content for students who had been absent. In addition to being a form of reciprocity that made my presence in the classroom a benefit to the teacher, these ways of assisting helped me understand the needs of the students, thus contextualizing my discussions with the focal teacher about her plans for the classroom.

Throughout the life of the project, my focus in classroom observation changed from general participation to more focused investigations of particular practices. For example, as I became interested in Eva’s recontextualization of reading skills, I asked to directly observe her guided reading lessons rather than help monitor students who were working independently at centers.
**Meetings.** I followed Eva to any meetings during my visits to DLCS, with the exception of her meetings with a junior teacher in her role as a mentor, in order to preserve the personal nature of that relationship. While I became familiar with other members of the second grade team, it was rare for me to contribute actively in the common planning meetings or PYP meetings I participated in. Not wanting to get in the way of the work the team was doing, I usually restricted my contributions to those through which I could help Eva directly, such as contributing recollections of classroom events that Eva and Carmen were asked to recall during reflections.

Similar to classroom observations, my goal in observing meetings changed over time. In early meetings, I used my observations to construct my own understanding of what purposes the meetings served and how they arose out of school policies. Starting in the fall, after the team had gotten to know me and better understood the purpose of the study, I began audio recording common planning meetings and PYP meetings. All-staff meetings were never audio recorded. They varied in topic, from professional development to review of school policies. I participated in a week of these meetings in August before the school year started. Other whole school meetings, oriented to professional development, were scheduled during entire days devoted to staff development throughout the year, approximately once per month. I attended all such professional development days.

Common planning periods were set aside for team members to meet and prepare plans for upcoming instruction or events such as a field trip. PYP meetings were typically facilitated by Michelle, who coordinated the program at DLCS, and they involve planning for upcoming PYP units. Regular discussions between Eva and her assistant
Carmen, whose official title was given at one point as an “intervention teacher,” were themselves a form of ‘meeting’ though they occurred so frequently (during prep periods or even brief down time during instruction) that they would not be found on a schedule or calendar. Eva and Carmen’s planning relationship was not a focus of the study because Eva kept most of the ultimate responsibility for planning and because Carmen did not work in Eva’s class for the entire year.

**Interviews**

Interviews served as opportunities to learn how Eva, as part of her role as a teacher (a) represented language and instances of language use, (b) recontextualized these representations, and (c) described other events when they have also done (a) and (b). Generally speaking, the goals of many interviews would be to “describe process” or “how events occur or what an event produces,” (Weiss, 1995, p. 9), the events here being ones related to classroom planning or instruction. Specifically, the interviews provided data that showed how Eva linked her planning resources to each other or how particular sources, especially those I could not observe, contextualize the representations of language that I observed directly.

Some conversations with Eva were much like semi-structured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) in which I focused on gathering information about the planning process at the school. As the year went on and I became more integrated into the Eva’s classroom, conversations clarifying her planning process or the goals of the lesson became briefer and more overlapping with the normal flow of the day. These shorter conversations would be even less structured, as part of participant observation as I assisted in the focal classroom, but they provided similar data to interviews. In the small
gaps around time with students, like admission, dismissal, or picking them up from lunch, our talk about her work was interspersed with gossip, or political discussion, or theories about the television show *Westworld*. Such conversations were valuable in their non-obtrusiveness, and we both enjoyed talking throughout the day.

Simple questions “how did you think that lesson went?” or “how has the inferencing unit been going this week?” were genuine curiosities as I spent the year rooting for Eva and her students, and they provided relevant data at the same time. This meant that in addition to directly observing some lessons, my data included the ways that Eva narrated lessons I was not present for. These conversations also included discussion of pre-service preparation or other past DLCS events I was not present for. While I was able to directly observe many planning events, some kinds of planning will not be observable or accessible.

**Document and Artifact collection**

I received a copy of physical handouts given to Eva through professional development sessions and other meetings, and all these artifacts were logged and preserved to contextualize fieldnotes. I also obtained copies of team and school plans for second grade as well as team documents in which they planned and reflected on PYP units. To understand these plans further, I reviewed relevant Pennsylvania Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards. Eva’s lesson plans were obtained after the year ended. I used these primarily to supplement analysis of classroom interaction, returning to the lesson for that day when more context was sought. Finally, in very limited cases, I reviewed testing materials or conducted searches on Pinterest (one of
Eva’s planning resources), as discussed within analysis sections where such data is presented.

**Data Analysis**

Like data collection plans, data analysis strategies emerge from my conceptual framework and research design (Maxwell, 2012). Specifically, data analysis proceeded from the conceptual framework that representations of language were recontextualized through forms of reflexive language and metacommentary that are involved in any linguistic typification. As discussed in the previous section, the first stage of analysis was in focusing fieldnotes and other data collection techniques on the ways that Eva and her colleagues typified language for their work. Both fieldnotes expansion and jottings included contemporaneous reflections on the impacts of these types and how they might relate. As my goal was to describe the pathways (Wortham & Reyes, 2015) through which types of language were represented in multiple sources, I sought and noted connections between sources. Wortham and Reyes argue that establishing and illustrating these linked events in a pathway are the primary tasks of the discourse analyst.

As fieldnotes from visits to DLCS were coded using Nvivo, I focused on identifying types of language and the events and sources in which those types were represented. At the same time, I used open coding to note general themes relating to the culture of working at the school, Eva’s priorities as a teacher, and other potential themes (Maxwell, 2012). As cases of types of language emerged that recurrently were represented or appeared to have important consequences for students or the organization of Eva’s classroom, I considered possible relationships or similarities between cases. Several conference presentations during and after data collection were opportunities to
analyze and present single cases, such as *author’s purpose* or *inferencing* before understanding them as fitting broader patterns or seeing them as examples of genres (discussed in Chapter 6) or skills (discussed in Chapter 7).

In considering consequences of these representations for students and for Eva, I triangulated preliminary analysis with returning to fieldnotes and continued memo writing. This memo material often emerged from the conference paper process in which draft material was removed, saved for the eventual dissertation writing, then reconsidered and compared to other reflections. It was also at this point of data analysis that I considered a limited amount of planning sources directly (such as by reviewing Pennsylvania Academic Standards or browsing teacher spaces on Pinterest). It was in the later stages of data analysis and of writing that my positionality as a former elementary teacher became highly salient again. As I worked recurrently through fieldnotes and memos, I was strongly reminded of my own struggles as a teacher. Where I made clear use of this experience interpreting classroom life from a teacher’s perspective, I show those connections explicitly. Finally, writing the dissertation was itself an important stage of analysis, as I engaged in the work of distilling the connections between descriptions of language that might take only a few moments to recontextualize but also indexed years of past metalinguistic labor and foundational assumptions of schooling.

Reflecting early data analysis and my first research question, I devote the next chapter to exploring the events, interactions, and texts that constituted opportunities for Eva to recontextualize representations of language in her planning for instruction.
Chapter 4: “I thought you wrote this”: Eva’s Planning Resources

This dissertation examines the consequences of representations of language Eva recontextualized in her classroom. This chapter lays groundwork for specific analysis of focal representations of language in later chapters, by explaining the many planning sources Eva drew on. Similar to how a material understanding of language ideologies guides attention toward concrete representations of language rather than ideas and beliefs, this language ideological lens on teacher planning approaches teachers’ task of planning by attending to specific resources from which these representations are recontextualized.

Planning itself is not usually independently theorized in teacher education or teacher evaluation literature. For example, although planning and preparation represents a quarter of the widely used Danielson framework for teacher evaluation, the terms planning or preparation are not independently described or defined (Danielson, 2014). Commonly, these terms are treated as having an apparently plain meaning, at least when teachers do it. At DLCS, teachers often referred to all this work as prep. This term referred to the work involved preparing for instruction as well as the times during the day set aside for this work. So powerful was the influence of this time in influencing the flow of a teacher’s workday that because this time overlapped with students’ attendance in special classes like music and physical education, specialist classes themselves were sometimes called preps by general education teachers, a pattern discouraged by administrators for its implication that the specialist classes did not have value independent of occupying students’ time while main teachers were prepping. Although I believe the emic term prep better captures the breadth of tasks teachers undertake before
instruction, I use the term *planning* in this study as part of arguing that teacher planning should be understood as involving more than is usually supposed.

Like that of her colleagues, Eva’s planning included decisions about lesson activities, tasks to assign to students, and materials to use. As part of this preparation, her written lesson plans included specific utterances she planned for herself (as is common). However, teacher planning is more than the process of creating documented lesson plans, as it can involve decisions made while the lesson is taking place. While Eva often collaborated with her team members to plan, sometimes as consultation and sometimes as sharing materials, planning represented her individual final decisions about instruction in her own classroom.

This study uses Eva’s planning as a vantage point through which to observe individual cases of representations of language being recontextualized into instruction at DLCS. Using a single teacher as a vantage point reflects the ways that any teacher’s planning is both personal and institutionalized. Planning contains singular creativity in the midst of a system of schooling that rests on the same assumptions it did hundreds of years ago or more. Eva made choices that only affected her own classroom, but she dealt with constraints and opportunities in her work that impact hundreds of others. The language ideological lens of this dissertation helps to unpack how the experience of teaching relates to the reproduction of representations of language. In Chapter 2, I already described how schooling depends on representations of language that identify target uses of language for students to gain proficiency in. Eva’s plans involved a number of sources of language ideologies that influenced her teaching. This chapter focuses on fundamental
aspects of Eva’s planning: the resources used and the events during which they were used.

This study’s attention to the actual resources teachers draw from in planning follows the trail of existing educational linguistic scholarship on schools and teaching. When Valdés (2015) describes the curricularization of language as a condition of language teaching, she highlights the processes that cast features of a language into “a finite, agreed-upon set of structures, skills, tasks, or functions” through inputs of “various informing disciplines and theoretical perspectives, by ideologies of language, by traditions of instruction, by existing textbooks and materials, and by language policies that define unit/credit institutional requirements” (p. 262). Curricularization of language has deep historical roots in the institution of schooling, so while it is continuously refreshed, most products of curricularization, including physical materials and actual curricula but also routines and habits of practice, are well established before any single teacher, such as Eva, begins their career.

While curricularization results in structures that strongly shape teachers’ work, language policy and planning scholars argue that the resources teachers encounter in their planning do not result in instruction that is “already decided” (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 422). Instead, mirroring some emphases in curricularization, official policy texts are seen “in context as part of a larger sociocultural system” (McCarty, 2011, p. 2). Teachers and other school actors are thus active appropriators of language policy, rather than simply (non-)implementers (García & Menken, 2010; Hélot, 2010; Johnson & Freeman, 2010; Lo Bianco, 2010). In this understanding of language policy, it is not only
curriculum directors or lawmakers that are seen as making policies, but also teachers themselves.

This study adds to work in curricularization and language policy and planning in two ways. First, by investigating the many sources from which one teacher is able to recontextualize representations of language, I show how sources that have been long included in discussions of policy are made to interact with sources that have not, as teachers also appropriate sources not seen as “policies” but that nonetheless make available representations of language. Second, by investigating a wider array of representations of language, beyond policies in named languages or varieties that have been the focus of LPP research, I apply insights of LPP to even those representations of language intertwined with basic assumptions of schooling. This chapter represents the first goal and shows why a wider consideration of planning sources better captures teachers’ negotiation of claims about language as part of their practice.

**Resources**

A professional development session that took place in September illustrates some of the distinctions in how planning resources are potentially recontextualized by teachers. At this session, a group of mostly K-2 teachers, who had chosen it from a list of breakout sessions for the day, was being introduced to new software called Skill Link⁴ (September 30, Fieldnotes). Sitting in a third grade classroom where the chairs fit adult bodies, they learned that this software integrated with the platform that DLCS used to produce report cards and update parents on students’ progress. Skill Link contained a bank of questions

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⁴ A pseudonym.
that teachers could draw from to make short tests called “skills assessments,” all aligned to reading level benchmarks and, of course, the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. (It’s unlikely this sort of software could ever be successfully marketed to schools without aligning with state standards.)

The presenter, a representative from the makers of Skill Link, gave examples of content that the software had tests, worksheets, even suggested lessons on: compare and contrast, main idea, and a few more reading skills. Technical difficulties started to creep in to the session. Skill Link had been piloted at DLCS already. The kindergarten results from last year were supposed to be findable by first grade, but they weren’t, at least not for all the first grade teachers. Something about the homeroom system had messed up that feature. Teachers had brought their school-issued laptops and looked over the shoulders of those who had gotten Skill Link to work the way it was supposed to. There were questions about how scanning in the test results worked, and what a ‘tag’ was. Someone said that using Skill Link will be optional, then that was corrected. No, actually they’ll be used in January and May, at least for some grade levels. A school leader also described plans to use Skill Link assessments by making them look like the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment exams.

Sitting in the audience of a presentation like this one among a large group of teachers, the sense of “is this worth my time?” is palpable. In a group of two dozen, it’s a good bet that a handful of teachers at any given time is writing back to a parent, planning a lesson, cutting out materials, or grading homework. At the Skill Link meeting, the room’s attention was drifting. Perhaps some teachers had doubts about if this whole Skill Link thing was going to get off the ground, or if it was going to make a difference in their
practice. It wasn’t the only resource they had that aligned to the Pennsylvania Standards, after all. There was Reading A-Z, Lexia, WriteSteps, not to mention all the materials each grade level had developed already. In Eva’s classroom at least, it was never spoken of again. But Eva did get one thing out of the session that she wouldn’t have if she had chosen differently that morning. She saw some hand-made charts on the third grade classroom wall, showing short attention getting rhymes. She snapped a picture on her phone so she could try them out for her own class.

In this particular professional development, there are many sources of representations of language, but Eva did not interact with them in the same way. State curricular requirements were invoked as a background assumption. Such claims about what students need to learn about language are always claims about how language works. The particulars of the Skill Link assessments, although many in the room did not seem to come away feeling like they knew exactly what was on them, recontextualized these claims as well, offering examples of what it was students were said to need to learn. Finally, while not on the official program for the session, the environment of the third grade class gave Eva a chance to recontextualize a representation of how teachers and students ought to manage and live out their roles in classroom life, through her photo of the attention-getting rhyme.

This chapter reviews the planning resources available to Eva. I organize this review based on the expectations for teachers to use them: sources that Eva was required to use (e.g., the Pennsylvania Academic Standards), sources she was offered as potentially helpful (e.g., Reading A-Z), and sources she explored on her own professional
judgment (e.g., Pinterest). This organization helps to illustrate the centrality of Eva’s individual use of these sources in how I understand their role in her planning.

**School-required Resources**

School-required resources are those that Eva was required to use according to school policy. The reach of these sources was vast in that they could potentially be referenced, even if implicitly, every day. However, even though they were so readily available and often served to set up fundamental assumptions about language in numerous instructional contexts, their use did not preclude the recontextualizations of other representations. These sources are similar primarily in that Eva was required to use them, but there are other important differences. That these are all school-required sources sets up some basics of Eva’s experience with them, but as in the case of the other categories, it is the actual recontextualizations from these sources on which I base my understandings of their effects on Eva’s teaching.

**DLCS curriculum.** DLCS is responsible for following the Pennsylvania Academic Standards (PAS), which amount to the ultimate school-required resource in Eva’s planning. For classroom teachers like Eva, applicable standards include math, reading, writing, social studies, and science. Eva reported that she occasionally sought guidance for instruction by directly viewing the standards herself, and she could sometimes use standards to coordinate Google or Pinterest searches yielding relevant activities or lesson plans. For the most part, however, work with the curriculum was done by a dedicated team at DLCS that was responsible for packaging and setting goals for teachers to follow. The result of this work was called the scope and sequence, a document crystallizing all the pieces of the curriculum, which Eva would see directly and used at
team-based meetings and by herself to orient upcoming plans. On curricular documents like the scope and sequence, as well as PYP planning documents, standards were often reported in abbreviated/titled form that could be seen as relying on a teacher’s familiarity with the expanded form of the standard or as indicating the absence of an expectation that teachers consider standards directly. For example, “5.3.2.B. local government leader” on the scope and sequence substituted for “Identify local government leaders” in the PAS, and “CC.1.2.2.A identify the main idea” on the scope and sequence substituted for “Identify the main idea of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text” in the PAS.

These curricular documents were the primary source from which representations of language from the PA standards were recontextualized into Eva’s planning and instruction. It was less common for Eva or her colleagues to directly access the PA Academic Standards. One notable example occurred the year prior to my work in Eva’s classroom, when the team determined that the PA Academic Standards included requirements about Pennsylvania history that weren’t addressed in any PYP units. Therefore, they decided to create an entire day’s activities (which they called Pennsylvania Day) late in the year when the last PYP unit was nearing completion, in order to satisfy this requirement.

In the case of reading and writing standards in English, the PAS were the ultimate authority. In the case of science and social studies standards, DLCS combined its adherence to the PAS with its decision to become an accredited implementer of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, or PYP. The PYP is a framework for six “transdisciplinary” and thematic units of inquiry (each lasting six weeks) within
which DLCS situated science and social studies content. The coordination of PYP plans
with the Pennsylvania science and social studies standards occurred at curriculum team
level planning and was only revisited in part at PYP meetings. The PYP framework for
every grade is organized around these themes: Who We Are, Where We Are in Place and
Time, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, How We Organize Ourselves,
and Sharing the Planet. All of these themes are addressed in every grade level of the PYP,
but with different emphasis and sophistication. Thus, there was a careful effort in
planning kindergarten to fifth grade to align the PYP curriculum across grade levels so
that each grade addressed unique content and its relevant state standards. For second
grade, this was the Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood. The
accompanying Middle Years Programme at DLCS began in sixth grade.

Each PYP school is charged with figuring out the intricacies of each of those units
themselves, consisting of a central idea and three lines of inquiry. PYP guidance is that
central ideas are to be determined in school-level planning, while the development of
lines of inquiry should involve student input (International Baccalaureate) An example of
a central idea is “Personal choices impact the environment” for the transdisciplinary
theme of Sharing the Planet. While the PYP officially suggests that students are heavily
involved in creating lines of inquiry, DLCS grade level teams in practice drafted lines of
inquiry as part of the collaborative PYP planning. Eva often pointed to the tensions of
planning ahead for lessons based on student inquiry, part of the requirement that all
lesson plans be submitted for administrator review.

Almost all of this coordinating work was already finished before the period of
data collection and was done by members of the curriculum team or by last year’s
second-grade team. This broader work was sometimes revisited in PYP meetings, weekly grade level meetings that had a curriculum staff member present and were explicitly designated for the purpose of figuring out upcoming PYP units or reflecting on previous ones. But this revisiting was rare—even when choices were debated or criticized, they couldn’t be changed. For example, in advance of the fifth PYP unit, How We Organize Ourselves, Eva raised questions about how it did not address PYP goals. The How We Organize Ourselves unit as taught by second grade involved aquatic animals, how animals relate to their habitats, and how types of animals are organized, as a way of addressing Pennsylvania standards in science. However, the PYP transdisciplinary theme for this unit was essentially about social organization among people: “An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.” The PYP coordinator acknowledged the discrepancy but stated that the decision was the best and only way of addressing the PA standards while getting as close as possible to the PYP goals (October 31, Fieldnotes). This conflict was a direct result of contradiction between two required sources. PYP curricula prioritized “transdisciplinary” inquiry that could freely bridge science and social studies content, as flexibly directed in individual classrooms, but DLCS curricular planning was also guided by PAS that strictly separated between science and social studies.

**DLCS assessments.** As far as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is concerned, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is the student assessment of record, the most important measure of a school’s success in supporting its students to reach the goals outlined in the PAS. Pennsylvania does not mandate that schools use any
other content area assessment along the way. But DLCS combines some assessments they developed themselves along with widely marketed and used corporate products. DLCS used its own developed rubric for writing and the DRA/EDL for reading. I discuss both in this section.

The DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) and EDL (Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura) are standardized reading assessments for English and Spanish texts, produced by Pearson Education. DLCS used these assessments, conducted at the beginning and end of each year, to track student progress, reporting students’ achievement in Spanish reading and English reading separately. Students’ absolute or current score, as well as their recent growth in scores are a key component of student files charting their academic success, and they also factor into reported academic achievement on report cards. At DLCS there are quarterly and end of year award ceremonies for a variety of awards recognizing students, and the awards for reading growth and achievement are based on DRA/EDL scores. Both formally and informally, growth in DRA/EDL scores comprise part of how teachers’ work is assessed. The end of year measures of growth in DRA/EDL score for Eva’s students served as an important site of reflection between Eva and me as well as Eva and other staff at DLCS. Just like other educational materials companies who publish reading assessments and leveled materials, Pearson provides suggested benchmarks for what grade levels align with what scores. For example, a “second grade reading level” according to Pearson guidelines is passing a 28

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5 Like schools in other states in the WIDA consortium, DLCS administers the ACCESS for ELLs to measure English language proficiency. However, almost none of Eva’s students during the study were designated as receiving ELL services, so her classroom was not directly shaped by that assessment.
in both fiction and non-fiction at the end of the year (not all levels have both kinds of texts; most are only fiction). At DLCS, these benchmarks were connected to the dual language model through the drafting of new benchmarks depending on a student’s assessed L1 and L2.

To be administered the DRA/EDL, a student reads a standardized text and answers a prescribed set of questions asked by the teacher. At lower levels (including almost all second-grade reading levels and all DRAs/EDLs administered to Eva’s students), the evaluator listens to the student read aloud and marks their performance at the level of individual words as well as their “fluency and oral expression.” Standard protocol for administering the DRA is to give students the level at which they can be independent. If they pass a 12 within a certain threshold on the rubric, they are scored at a 12. If they score under that threshold, they are given a new assessment at Level 10. If they score well over that threshold, they’d be administered a 14. Whether a student passes or fails a DRA/EDL at a given reading level depends on several factors; students must be successful in all of them as a failure in any results in failing that level. They include: reading quickly enough, their fluency (the conventional prosody of oral reading), their answers to comprehension questions, their retelling of the plot of the text (for fiction texts) or their recalling facts from the story (for non-fiction texts), and responses to other questions about the text. In addition to a pass/fail, the DRA rubric is intended to be used to identify areas for future reading instruction to focus on.

DRA/EDL levels are assigned to students as well as to texts. The practice of guided reading, in which a small group of students at a similar reading level reads the same book with teacher support, depends on teachers knowing the reading level of a
particular text. Thus, the DRA/EDL levels, along with similar systems such as Lexile or Fountas and Pinnell, interact with book publishing worlds as well as classroom instruction. The DRA/EDL and the PAS aren’t explicitly aligned with each other. However, they overlap in practice. For example, the standards CC.1.3.2.E “Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action” is very similar to the portion of the DRA that asks students to produce retellings. When it came to practicing retelling however, students were nudged toward practices that the DRA assessed. Further discussion of how representations of language in the DRA/EDL were recontextualized into the classroom is included in later chapters.

DLCS produced its own eight stage writing rubric that could be used across grade levels from K-2. Writing assessments in grades 3-5 use the state rubric used on the PSSAs. The stages range from Stage 1 that includes drawing and “using oral language to ‘read’ drawing” to Stage 8 that includes following “conventions of writing,” “clear organization,” and “a developing sense of voice” among other attributes. Teachers were responsible for using this rubric regularly, particularly at the end of the year when preparing student portfolios to give to next year’s teacher. Eva was not involved in the production of the rubric, and the possibility of revising it was not raised at any meeting I attended. This resource figured into the dual language model through stated end of year benchmarks in a student’s assigned L1 and L2, terms which on one occasion were glossed as “native language” and “second language” for the benefit of new staff (Fieldnotes, August 17). Despite the grade level benchmarks, the rubric was designed in part to acknowledge students’ varied development in writing at the K-2 level. Beyond the
earliest stages, each stage has six to eight attributes, and a student achievement most of them was said to be sufficient to be counted at that stage; judgments of being in between certain stages were also common. The writing rubric was widely used enough that it was often referred to in shorthand. Teachers discussing a student’s writing might stage the piece without elaboration on the qualities that warranted that assessment. Occasionally, Eva would use the stage description in feedback to students. “I love that you’re including dialogue,” Eva once told a student whose writing she was editing. “Do you know you’re one of the only people at a stage six?” (Fieldnotes, March 9).

School-required resources provided numerous representations of language that Chapters 5, 6, and 7 discuss further. In their monolingual organization, these resources recontextualized representations of language separation and language dominance. They defined classroom textual genres and linguistic skills. These resources did not provide much opportunity for critique or negotiation. They represented final standards for evaluation. The entire school’s image depended in part on PSSA scores, more than once discussed in all-staff meetings. Even though the PSSA was first administered in third grade, Eva and other K-2 teachers were keenly aware of the role their work was seen to play in those results. Once when Eva caught up with third grade teachers at all-staff meetings, she received praise for the language practices of her former students (since she taught second grade the prior year), including once for the fact that her students answered in “complete sentences,” giving the example that if asked “¿Qué es tu comida favorita?” they would answer “Mi comida favorita es…” and not simply “Pizza.” (December 5, Fieldnotes). Because this style of “flipping the question” is commonly used in third grade
to prepare students to write in ways that will satisfy PSSA rubrics (Phuong, 2018), this informal conversation recontextualizes a very formal resource.

Analyzing the representations of language embedded in sources like the PAS through their recontextualizations is vital to understand precisely how they come to impact Eva’s planning and teaching. For the most part, in emphasizing Eva’s view on these representations of language, I do not explore much of the histories of individual resources and representations. The development of the PAS and the Common Core State Standards on which they are based is its own important story of metalinguistic labor and curricularization, but by the time Eva encounters representations sourced from those texts, the details of how they were selected do not matter very much. Eva’s teaching had a good chance of being impacted only by the final decision reached by the educational actors who perhaps argued over but eventually determined the PAS. Once when describing the writing rubric, Eva describes this element of her relationship with required sources. “I like it,” she said. “But I don’t know what it was based on. I don’t know if it’s realistic. Like, who decided you need to be on this stage? That knowledge I don’t have” (Audio Recording 5, January 20).

School-offered Resources

Skill Link never made an impact on Eva’s repertoire of planning resources, but if it had, it would have joined a host of other school-offered resources, ones that DLCS provided, sometimes paid for, but didn’t require that teachers use. Eva could use these whenever she found it helpful to do so. Such resources were often vast, comprised of a larger amount of material (e.g., more worksheets, books, or lesson plans) than Eva ultimately decided to use. Eva’s use of these resources helps illustrate that every
recontextualization of a representation of language is a choice not to use something else. Eva could choose what would make the most sense for her needs and for how she understood her students’ needs. Her use of these resources also changed over time. What she described to me and what I saw her use during the study cannot be a complete picture of Eva’s planning over her career, but it does show the kinds of choices teachers make in selecting planning resources and thus in selecting representations of language.

School-offered resources often overlapped each other, and in terms of the basic ways they partitioned and described target linguistic skills for students, they were often redundant of the Common Core State Standards that over 40 US states use. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 describe the impact of how the more concrete school-offered materials further specified those standards. This section describes how such sources fit into Eva’s planning routine.

“This makes that easy”: Classroom materials. One of the ways I found early in the year to lend Eva a hand was to help prepare guided reading materials from Reading A-Z. The books she often used started out printed on standard 8.5 x 11 inch paper, then had to be cut, folded, and stapled according to a careful procedure. When I first offered to help, Eva had to make sure I understood the process. Mess it up, and the pages in the book won’t turn, or they’ll be out of order, or the odd-numbered ones will be upside down. Looking at this resource up close for the first time once I had mastered the construction techniques, I saw that the books were bundled with accompanying activities that highlighted particular skills, such as sequencing, asking and answering questions, or phonological awareness. I asked Eva about them. Did she find these useful? She retold her early experience with Reading A-Z and how it enriched her guided reading lessons.
“When you’re starting with guided reading,” she told me, “it might seem like it’s just reading the book together, but no. It’s more. And I’m trying to really up my guided reading game” (September 15, Fieldnotes). She went on to tell of a formal observation from a few years ago when she was teaching kindergarten, when an administrator suggested she have students do followup work after guided reading. “This makes that easy,” she said, referring to some of the Reading A-Z books and worksheets around her desk. The Reading A-Z library is an enormous set of classroom materials, including lesson plans, leveled texts, worksheets, and components for small group activities. It includes Spanish and English texts and materials. The short printable books, which while less durable than published books have the advantage of being easy to give away to students forever, are packaged with accompanying activities. Use of this resource was possible through an institutional subscription, which costs around $100–$150 per classroom, depending on selected options.

Even Eva’s extensive use of Reading A-Z falls short of what its designers imagine for the product. Reading A-Z entails a complete system of reading leveling and assessment in competition with Pearson’s DRA/EDL and other similar systems. DLCS did not use Reading A-Z assessments as part of school records as it did for the DRA/EDL, and Eva chose Reading A-Z resources based on her understanding of her guided reading groups’ current needs. In its presenting itself as practice for specific skills, Reading A-Z recontextualized descriptions of skills like sequencing, make inferences and draw conclusions, and problem and solution, which reflected broader school-required imperatives but through the style of Reading A-Z.
Reading A-Z was one of several school-offered resources that Eva selectively used according to her own professional opinion of what her students needed. Another resource, Lexia, was used as supplementary practice in reading and decoding skills for some students, by themselves during some center activities or in the morning. Lexia is a computer adaptive reading practice computer program designed for “at-risk” or below grade level students. The software requires an institutional subscription, which DLCS has had for several years. Lexia Reading Core5 is marketed across the US, and its scope and sequence is, once again, aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Lexia generates detailed score reports and assessments of student progress, which is intended to be used as part of planning instruction. Contrary to the intentions of the designers of Lexia, Eva did not regularly use score reports when planning lessons or further interventions for particular students. But she did value Lexia as a tool to support her students assessed as below grade level readers. While she didn’t draw on it to plan her lessons per se, the frequency with which she used it as a supplement for students could be seen as faith that Lexia approached literacy priorities that she also attended to in her whole group instruction. In the ways that Lexia isolated separate comprehension skills from fluency, and in its levelled conception of progress in reading, Lexia was most similar to the DRA/EDL. However, the DRA/EDL were seen as the more important assessments whereas Lexia was seen as a tool for supporting students. Lexia was seen as filling the need for students reading below grade level to have individualized practice in the component skills of reading. Lexia was more capable of providing this practice through the computer-adaptive format than a student-managed center would otherwise be. Thus,
Eva saw it as a precious additional support for her students who she saw as struggling in reading, another part of her work that a school-offered resource made easier.

Part of making decisions about how students would practice writing was made at a curricular level. The second-grade team over previous years (which included both Eva and Lupe) had determined what kinds of writing pieces would fit with which PYP units, all while meeting PAS requirements, of course. But exactly how to go about teaching second graders to write, for example, a persuasive letter, was left to individual teachers. For a number of years, DLCS teacher had used lesson materials from WriteSteps, a web-based collection of writing lessons and units aligned to the Common Core. This was another subscription-based resource (list price: $4,995 per year for a school subscription), and DLCS teachers were supported in its use through professional development sessions. However, they were repeatedly told it wasn’t “the gospel” or required to be followed exactly (August 17, Fieldnotes).

WriteSteps resources were used on an ad hoc basis as teachers found them useful. Grades beyond second grade followed it more closely, having found it more useful to do so. Eva said that she used it more in the past than in the year we worked together, and that her preferred materials were now well incorporated into some writing units, in consultation with the second-grade team. WriteSteps provided specific lesson plans (e.g., a one-day lesson on “the six quality traits of writing,”) unit plans (e.g., multiple connected units on persuasive letters), graphic organizers for students, and sample student work for viewing by either students or teachers (at various levels of achievement). Writesteps reliably included descriptions of the genres in which students were expected to write, particularly in the form of student example work. It also reflected the common model of
the “writing process” with stages of pre-writing, revising, editing, and publishing, which Eva used to structure her writing units and which also served as a structure through which her assessments of writing conventions were delivered. Finally, WriteSteps units that Eva used reached not only to the genres students produced but also into the particulars of their prose, as in one September lesson that asked students to consider the differences in “quality” between the sentences *The pizza was good.* and *The hot pepperoni pizza tasted spicy and delicious* (September 26, Lesson Plans).

Promotional materials on the WriteSteps website offer a distilled example of how school-offered resources present their benefits of making things easier for teachers. If we take WriteSteps’ word for it, teachers “struggle with teaching writing” for three reasons: “lack of time, lack of knowledge, [and] lack of quality resources” (Writing City, n.d.). While clearly a self-interested and profit-motivated description of writing instruction in the United States, this description is an accurate reflection of typical understandings of many school-offered resources. They don’t set additional goals for teachers—they closely reflect the standards that schools are held accountable to. But they “make things easier” by providing more detailed specifications of and lessons for those standards.

**Visitors to the class: DLCS partnerships.** Not all school-offered resources were built on such transactional relationships with their producers. DLCS partnered with many local Philadelphia organizations to better support its students. Eva drew on these exchanges as she wished for model lessons or approaches to teaching. As discussed in Chapter 7, some of these partnerships also served as windows on how her students interacted with people who did not regularly work with them. In a key difference to the classroom materials offered in the resources just discussed, organizational partnerships
involved more niche content than the wide catalog of reading and writing materials of Reading A-Z, Lexia, and WriteSteps.

DLCS partnered with City Theatre under a model in which educators on staff with the Theatre visited DLCS classrooms regularly to conduct theater-based lessons. According to a leader of the partnership during a professional development session, the goal of these lessons was not training theater skills in themselves, but to provide students with multiple ways of showing their learning, practice in “the presentational or communication part of their life” in the sense of public speaking, and additional ways of developing self-esteem (September 30, Fieldnotes). The lessons that City Theatre delivered were also intended to serve as models for ways that DLCS teachers could incorporate similar techniques. City Theatre educators conducted these lessons at a professional development day in September and provided detailed lesson plans, which naturally listed related Pennsylvania Academic Standards. Eva generally enjoyed the visiting lessons but never directly attributed a planning decision to the partnership.

The most personal and extensive partnership that impacted Eva was with the Kids’ Reading Collaborative (KRC) a nonprofit based in Philadelphia. Eva was partnered with a specialist who modeled and observed an activity called Amazing Message, which KRC developed as an extension of widely practiced morning message routines in which teachers prepare a short written message that they discuss with students as one of the first activities of the day. Amazing Message is a significant component of its coaching and professional development services, or at least the services that Eva interacted with, and

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6 A pseudonym.
7 Kids’ Reading Collaborative and Amazing Message are pseudonyms.
Eva went through several observation/reflection cycles. Amazing Message was an activity the whole class took part in, and it included modeled writing and shared reading that were intended to develop alphabetic and phonics knowledge.

Reflections and planning with the KRC consultant focused predominantly on Amazing Message and recent lessons—it was not designed as a broad coaching experience. Eva rarely conducted Amazing Message lessons outside of the coaching/observation cycle. However, since some of the baseline assumptions of the KRC approach differed with Eva’s usual practices, there were occasions in which Eva noted that difference. Her exchanges with the KRC coach were thus opportunities to represent the linguistic skills involved in students’ reading as well as ideal overall classroom discourse practices between teachers and students.

For example, the KRC coach highlighted the importance of giving students the opportunity to share their writing with the class in small and large group settings. Eva stated her intentions to have students share more, but this new routine proved somewhat difficult to implement. Once when addressing the entire class during a writing block when students were especially talkative, Eva explicitly retold her interactions with the KRC coach for the class, on the subject of the appropriate amount of student discussion:

**Eva:** You know what, the lady at the KRC said—
I’m talking, I’m talking.
The lady at the KRC said,
“When I walk into a classroom and they are writing and I hear silence, it worries me.”
The talking, that is happening right now has nothing to do with the writing.
So, I’m going to say, in this case, I want silence.

(March 6, Audio Recording 3, 1h42m0s)
Eva’s comment to the student is an explicit example of how representations of student language are offered to teachers for their final decision about how to incorporate them into instruction or not. At this instance, Eva is very skeptical of the writing workshop model of student language that, at least as expressed by the KRC coach, is too optimistic and ignores classroom management concerns. As in the cases of other school-offered resources, recontextualizations of representations of language that emerged from the partnership with KRC occurred at Eva’s discretion and did not usually overlap with other resources.

**Teacher-explored Resources**

From a perspective attending to recontextualization, Eva had many opportunities to encounter planning resources through unofficial channels. Teacher-explored resources are those that were known to Eva because of her own initiative and exploration, not because of any DLCS requirement or institutionalized offering. As such they offer even more flexibility in their use than school-offered resources described in the last section. Additionally, the teacher-explored resources discussed here show a contrast with the others in that they are much less bounded and unitary than other resources. As such, they are inherently more difficult to enumerate and are the least generalizable in terms of the representations of language they tended to make available. Ultimately, Eva’s persistent use of resources she identified and explored on her own initiative was an important part of her planning, even as these resources do not lend themselves to easy counting. This section introduces Eva’s regular use of online-based teacher-explored resources and raises some of the ways that interactions with her colleagues served to consistently offer opportunities to introduce even more.
“When in doubt, pin it”: Online resources for teaching. By far the most important of Eva’s teacher-explored resources was Pinterest. Marketed as a “catalog of ideas,” Pinterest is a social media platform used by people planning anything from a wedding to a Dungeons & Dragons campaign to a second-grade reading lesson. The platform allows users to share and collate content (called pins), almost always containing images, that serve as an inspiration for a project. Pinterest’s general reputation for unattainable but visually striking projects has spawned both a Netflix comedic cooking show (*Nailed It!*)) and a blog (PinterestFail) that center the experience of failing to meet Pinterest standards. Owing perhaps to its cultural impact and certainly to its wide adoption, Pinterest has been specifically criticized for contributing to teachers feeling pressure to live up to the images at the expense of pedagogy (D. Miller, 2015).

Nevertheless, because it is populated by so many users who are teachers, it is undeniably well adapted as a search engine for teaching materials.

In the spaces on Pinterest that focus on teaching, pins consist of images of anchor charts, explanations (visual and print) of activities or centers for students, or even links to full lesson plans, sometimes on third-party sites like Teachers Pay Teachers or corporate resources. Teachers Pay Teachers contains a similar breadth of material, and as the name suggests was built for that specific purpose. It includes careful filters and other search tools to help users find material for specific grade levels and topics, so it necessarily is organized in a way that closely mirrors the representations of language rooted in typical curricula. Second-grade team members often turned to either Pinterest or Teachers Pay Teachers to ground their discussions of what material for an upcoming lesson might look like. Eva tended to use Pinterest as a first stop. Though she never specifically named this
is an advantage, Pinterest is notably free to use, while Teachers Pay Teachers obviously charges fees.

Unlike offered resources like Lexia or WriteSteps, a teacher’s use of Pinterest required no formal or institutional relationship between the school and the resource. Yet Pinterest proved to be a crucial resource for Eva, as it was for many other teachers at DLCS. Pinterest was just starting to launch when I was a teacher, so I was initially surprised to find how frequently it was referred to by teachers at DLCS. A representative example of how Pinterest was used is presented as part of the closing of this chapter. Eva regularly used Pinterest to get ideas about how to structure her anchor charts, looking for visual appeal and clear definitions and text. She needed charts in both English and Spanish, and sometimes translated texts from Pinterest depending on her needs. Pinterest searches were sometimes spurred by looking up Pennsylvania standards or PYP elements. A sufficiently large number of other participants on Pinterest included teachers in Pennsylvania, PYP teachers all over the world, and dual language teachers in the US. Eva additionally sometimes sought material from curated independent websites for teachers that only offered materials in Spanish (Mundo Primaria and Orientación Andújar), but for most purposes the US-based dual language teacher community allowed Eva to access material for Common Core or PA Core goals in Spanish.

Given their crowd-sourced nature, Pinterest and other online resources theoretically offered additional representations of language beyond those present in school-required resources. However, as discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7, the materials Eva obtained largely reproduced those representations or even made them narrower. Partly this might be attributable to the fact that Eva’s and her colleagues’
Pinterest searches were structured around topics set out by the curriculum. For example, in an impromptu discussion after school between Eva and Lupe, discussing an upcoming unit on identifying *cause and effect*, Eva suggested, “Let’s see what’s on Teachers” (January 20, Fieldnotes). They found several worksheets recontextualizing *cause and effect* as an assessable skill bridging linguistic and reading capacity through which children describe causal relationships in texts and in the world.

**Not on the schedule: Less durable planning resources.** The resources discussed so far in the chapter exhibit a degree of durability that makes their use relatively easy to identify. Even Pinterest and the other online resources Eva explored on her own, while ever-changing, were organized and stable enough that Eva’s colleagues could trace a reliably similar path to hers if they chose to. However, acts of recontextualizing representations of language could also occur from sources that were fleetingly accessible, not widely distributed, or unique to an individual teacher’s experience.

For example, Eva and other staff members would sometimes refer to their understandings of educational research in presentations to or discussions with their colleagues. Several professional sessions (delivered by fellow staff and outside consultants) were based on research ranging from the impact of brain physiology on students’ and teachers’ behavior to the benefits of inquiry-based teaching, and these sessions often involved handing out summaries or original research texts for teachers to read or use as a future reference. During some of these same conversations, it was common for the audience of DLCS teachers to refer back to previous sessions (even from several years ago) or other sources of their professional preparation. In principle anyone could invoke research about any topic. Because it was rare that a particular piece of
research was scrutinized, any research recontextualized into a planning discussion had a good chance of being acknowledged as a valid input on a problem.

Another part of Eva’s work that served as a resource for representations of language was her routine conversations with colleagues in other grades. These conversations were sites for exchanging relevant representations of language, such as what kinds of student language to value, or how to tackle challenges in instruction. For example, in the discussion mentioned previously in which Eva’s former students were praised for speaking in “complete sentences,” Eva was pleased to hear it and confirmed that she had practiced that pattern of talk. While she did not evidently make a new planning decision in that moment, the discussion with her colleague still comprised a recontextualization of a representation of language, one that presupposed “complete sentences” as both a worthwhile academic goal and a sensible theory of talk. Such brief conversations will never be found on the schedule for a professional development day, will never be published by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and could never be monetized by educational materials companies. But from the language ideological perspective on teacher planning on which this study is based, even Eva’s unstructured exchanges with colleagues were an important planning resource.

On a more structured basis within the team, stories of the previous year worked as an interpretive resource to understand and respond to the current year’s challenges. These narratives of “how we did it last year” were naturally accompanied by materials ready for reuse, especially given Eva’s incentives to save time where possible in an environment with so many demands on her work. Reflections on PYP units were actually institutionalized in notes to the future teachers of that grade. This is usually for the
teacher’s future self, but not always: when Eva knew that she would not be on the second-grade team in the next year, she still participated fully in these reflections. A future teacher will have Eva’s reflections available as a planning resource of their own.

Discussion

Planning for instruction involves drawing representations of language from these many sources. While sources vary in the institutional expectations for their use, they were all available to Eva, and she could incorporate multiple sources at a moment’s notice. Recontextualization means bringing a representation of language from a planning resource into an instructional decision. By analyzing planning as comprised of these separable recontextualizations, it becomes easier to see consequences of language ideology on teacher and students. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 describe such recontextualizations in detail. For now, I close this chapter with a brief example of how planning events easily and quickly come to recontextualize several sources at the discretion of Eva and her colleagues.

Back to School Night is an event early in the school year where students’ caregivers (often with students themselves coming along) visited the school during the evening. At Back to School Night, teachers are supposed to introduce themselves and meet students’ families. They also had the responsibility of discussing the general outlines of the curriculum for their grade. At a common planning meeting early in the year, Eva, Alice, and Lupe were reviewing preparations for the upcoming event. To begin their preparation for the event, the team pulled up last year’s PowerPoint presentation. While each classroom would give a presentation separately, they collaborated on a single basic format and presentation. The presentation identified inferencing as an important
reading skill that would be emphasized throughout the year—a “BIG DEAL” as the presentation slides said. No other skills were identified in this way in the plans for the night. This treatment of inferencing recontextualizes representations in the Pennsylvania Academic Standards as interpreted by the school’s curriculum team. At the same time, it was not the standards directly but last year’s materials that served as a one-time planning resource providing a starting point for explaining this language practice. Not every teacher at the meeting had the same relationship to that resource; Alice was in her first year at DLCS, whereas Eva and Lupe had worked on creating this resource the year before.

Planning Back to School Night offered a chance for the representation sourced from last year’s materials (and before that, the Pennsylvania Academic Standards) to be revisited and revised. When the team was looking at the definition they had given of the term inferencing, they weren’t happy with it because they felt it would be unclear to parents. Eva drew the team’s attention to this problem. With a scrunkled expression, wrinkling her nose at her laptop screen, she asked “Who wrote this?”

Lupe answered, “I thought you wrote this.”

“I did? I don’t think I did.”

“Maybe it was Megan.”

Megan was now a third grade teacher but had taught second grade the previous year. The team members went back and forth for a few minutes, trying to determine if there were important distinctions between the terms “personal experience” and “what we know.” Lupe referenced the formulation “what we know plus what we see” as a mnemonic of sorts for explaining inferencing to students.
“It’s a connection,” offered one teacher.

“It’s reading between the lines,” said Carmen.

“It’s hard to explain,” Eva declared. “Pinterest!”

“When in doubt,” Carmen agreed, “Pin it.” (September 14, Fieldnotes).

Pinterest was thus introduced as another planning resource. After only a few seconds of searching, Eva had pulled up a satisfactory definition from the following anchor chart on Pinterest (Figure 1), which they then incorporated into the PowerPoint with some changes.8

![Figure 1: “Making Inferences” anchor chart from Pinterest](image)

8 The chart is titled Making Inferences. The top two thirds of the chart read: “When authors of books don’t tell everything about characters and events and readers have to use story clues and background knowledge (schema) to make an inference.” An illustrated equation shows an illustration of a book (text clues) plus a thinking face (schema) equals a lightbulb (inference). Finally, four thinking stems are provided: “I can infer… Perhaps… This could mean… Maybe…”
The definition they settled on is one representation of how language works—specifically, a representation of how reading works and what second graders should do when they read.

Eva’s question of “Who wrote this?” suggests an individual author for descriptions of inferencing, and in the context of her meeting with colleagues, she is wondering, in a lighthearted way, who among the second-grade team is responsible for producing and including a somewhat vague definition. However, from a perspective centering recontextualization of language ideologies, it would be a mistake to identify a single author for the definition the team ended up using. In fact, the teachers themselves never bothered determining for good who the “real” author was either. Past curricularization contributed to the description of inferencing in the Back to School Night presentation. This Year’s Back to School Night presentation as a whole contained contributions by the Pinterest user as well as by This Year’s Eva, Lupe, and Alice, but also Last Year’s Eva, Lupe, and Megan. The work done by all the DLCS teachers also depends on the recontextualization done by the curriculum/language teams (in prior planning events where Eva was not present) reviewing the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and determining that inferencing deserved special focus by the second-grade team. The Pinterest user, a teacher at another US school, is also connected to the Common Core State Standards (to which Pennsylvania’s standards are closely related) or a similar standards document through other chains of recontextualization. All these recontextualizations would eventually have consequences for how students were understood as thinkers and readers; the case of inferencing is further discussed in Chapter 7, picking up after this meeting.
Many planning decisions are made in similar ways, by combining representations of language from diverse sources, some of which are school-required, but some of which depend on teachers’ choices to explore additional resources. Eva’s instruction involved many more representations of language than this one about inferencing, and these representations had a variety of consequences for her and her students. To understand these consequences, it’s vital to see the representations specifically as emerging from complex events of recontextualization as in the Back to School Night meeting. This approach captures both the personal and institutional aspects of teacher planning. Planning resources do not typically become relevant in isolation. Instead, they become relevant to teachers through their recontextualization for specific events and as tied to other resources. Later chapters trace how representations of language were recontextualized from one or several of these resources, sometimes in conflict, and ultimately emerged in instruction. This chapter’s account of the breadth of Eva’s sources suggests the potential for complex recontextualization, but fully grasping how these pathways carried representations of language depends on specific forthcoming cases. The range of sources Eva encountered in her work is a testament to the depth of curricularized material available to teachers. Each of the durable sources described in this chapter is the product of hundreds or thousands of workhours, created through a myriad of decisions about how language ought to be represented. This depth of material shows that curricularization is an important factor in the experience of teaching as a profession, at the same time that it shapes institutional expectations for and categorizations of students, processes which are the main focus of current research applying the curricularization framework (e.g., Kibler & Valdés, 2016).
Additionally, the variety of sources impacting Eva’s instruction might extend of
typical discussions of how teachers appropriate language policy. This study’s attention to
ways that Eva appropriates representations of language in her instruction is directed by
language policy and planning frameworks, but some of the sources for these
representations, particularly the teacher-explored sources, would not be typically
considered policy. I do not go on to argue that the definitions of policy should be
expanded or that other methodological emphases in LPP should shift greatly. However,
this study does suggest that researchers and others concerned about languages ideologies
in schools that marginalize student language examine sources like Pinterest in addition
conventionally recognized policy-like sources such as textbooks and curricula. As I argue
in future chapters, it is not only the presence of a narrow representation of a language in
an official policy source that impacts teachers, but also the redundancy with which that
representation is found in much less official sources such as the school-offered and
teacher-explored sources discussed in this chapter. Standards and textbooks are rightfully
the target of critical scholarship already, and I see this finding as fitting alongside that
work as we continue to uncover the workings of ideologies that delegitimize students’
language.
Chapter 5: “Miss, why do you got two of those?” Models of language dominance and separation in Eva’s classroom

All schools rely on representations of language. Language education in particular involves representations of what languages are and how they might be taught. Bilingual schools, which have the expressed goal of instructing in two named languages, offer a unique context for understanding these representations. Bilingual schools recontextualize representations of the languages they teach (or teach in) as well as representations of desirable bilingual practices, both of which have important consequences for how students’ knowledge and experiences are valued (Baker, 2006; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Fishman, 1982; García, 2005, 2009; Hornberger, 1989; Moll & Díaz, 1985; Moore, 2012), as teachers and other school actors reconcile instruction with the complexities of bilingual practices and experiences (e.g., E. Allard, 2017; Cahnmann, 2003; Hymes, 1980b; Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2015). This chapter applies a language ideological lens to Eva’s classroom to understand how representations of language were recontextualized at DLCS, particularly how Eva worked with representations of language dominance and language separation that emerged from her planning resources.

The representations of language discussed in this chapter relate to the boundaries of English/Spanish, of language competence of bilingual students, and of what counts as the right kind of bilingualism. Such representations are central to perennial issues in bilingual education. First, I show how representations of language separation and language dominance recurred in the field of bilingual education as part of understandings of what languages are in the first place, which strongly shaped program development, a relationship I term ‘turning languages into a school.’ Next, I connect this history to
contemporary sociolinguistics of multilingualism exploring modern languages ideologies that turned language into languages. Then, I draw on the framework of curricularization to highlight the importance of examining how representations of language become redundantly incorporated into planning resources, turning languages into a curriculum. In turning to analysis of how representations of language are ultimately recontextualized in Eva’s classroom, I show these processes as embedded in planning relationships and classroom materials, implicit and explicit metacommentary arising during instruction, and assessment practices deriving from school-required monolingual assessments.

**Turning Languages into a School**

From an early point, questions of allocation or distribution have occupied bilingual educators in ways that put the notion of language boundaries at the heart of program models (Flores & Baetens Beardsmore, 2015). For example, Wong Fillmore (1982) argued that bilingual teachers’ working to keep language separate was crucial for students’ successful second language development (cited in Walker de Felix, 1990, p. 28). Jacobson (1990) reviews methods of distribution in transitional bilingual education and experimental investigation of their effectiveness. With a careful typology that includes sub-types of distributions both concurrent (New Concurrent Approach, preview-review, flip-flopping, concurrent translation) and separating (by content, time, person, and place), Jacobson proposes continued research in each possible distribution to determine the optimal arrangement. With a concern for allocating languages came a concern for the optimal allocation of students. Walker de Felix (1990) proposes further “objective studies in bilingual programs” addressing both issues and answering “questions regarding the amount of time needed in each language, given specific
background variables such as student proficiency in each language, age, and sociolinguistic characteristics of the community” (p.27). Managing the competencies of students entering bilingual schools reinforced monolingual norms of assessment that assumed linguistic competence could be measured and that children entering bilingual schools could be labelled with a dominant language. Measurements of student competence were essential to conversations about optimum bilingual allocation as it aligned with non-linguistic academic goals, as in Milk’s (1990) discussion of how instructional separation of languages may be sensible if the goal is the development of a second language, but that if academic content is emphasized, “prohibition of access to the native language become a highly debatable proposition” (p.41).

Overall, representations of language dominance and language separation were evident across such debates about best practices in bilingual education, reflecting representations of bilingualism and language competence that bilingual educators have encountered for decades, sometimes with difficulty reconciling. To be clear, bilingual educators in the mid- and late 20th century were certainly not developing representations of language separation or language dominance for the first time. Instead, these representations could be found in multiple institutions and were aligned with the consensus of linguistic and applied linguistic research at the time. Indeed, the language ideological shift occupying much of the attention of bilingual educators was arguing that schools ought to or could value bilingualism at all (e.g., Fishman, 1977).

While all these kinds of decisions were departures from previous policies in that they valued bilingualism, the representations of language dominance and language separation have subsequently been recognized as aspects of monoglossic ideologies, in
which monolingualism is normalized even in assessing bilingual languaging (García, 2009). Thus, new strands of contemporary research on bilingual schools and classrooms focus specifically on the challenges that bilingual schools face in valuing the full range of bilingual practices shown in a community (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009; García & Leiva, 2014; Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014; Valdés et al., 2007).

Describing one way that bilingual educators have wrestled with these issues in instruction and allocation, Flores and García (2017) describe a shift from bilingual education towards dual language education that took place in 1980s and made these programs increasingly intertwined with monoglossic ideologies. They argue that while dual language education seeks to teach two languages, thus encountering “the dynamic bilingualism of Latinx and other minoritized communities” as a barrier, previous bilingual education approaches are better described as seeking to teach children bilingually, in which case it was more likely, though not guaranteed, that “dynamic bilingualism and cultural identities are made central to the curriculum in ways that are meant to instill cultural pride and improve their self-esteem” (p. 25).

Like other urban schools with an advertised dual language model, Dual Language Charter School faces the conflicts presented by Flores and García’s distinction. However, given its ties to the Philadelphia Latinx community and its place in a hypersegregated city and school system, DLCS is perhaps better described as a “one way dual language program” that “serves language-minoritized students whose language performances fall along different points of the bilingual continuum and not just those labeled as English learners” (Sánchez, García, & Solorza, 2018, p. 40). On the other hand, such
Programmatic typologies are not objective designations and rely in practice on how students’ bilingualism is assessed, a process involving multiple staff members and the application of school-required planning and instructional resources. As a result at DLCS, there is not school-wide consensus about the best way to understand students’ language proficiency and thus, the overall goals of the school as specific to language. But DLCS as a bilingual school is not at all unique in this regard. The tensions between teaching two languages and teaching children bilingually, which complicate efforts to turn languages into a school that fully supports commonplace ways of languaging, are rooted in the instability of languages themselves as categories.

Turning Language into Languages

Because models of bilingual education rely on representations of languages, scholars seeking to address the inherent tensions of bilingual education explore the production of languages themselves as representations. Scholarship in the (dis)invention of language explores the development of modern representations of language practices as separable into named languages. The conditions in which these representations emerged were rooted in the European colonial project, particularly its links between nationalism, race, and language (Bonfiglio, 2010, 2013; Flores, 2014; Makoni & Mashiri, 2007; Makoni & Meinhof, 2004; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). Makoni and Pennycook (2007) describe the invention of language as a set of efforts to isolate both the notion of languages as enumerable and separable entities as well as particular languages, tied to colonizing and colonized populations. Seeing languages as social or political constructions draws attention to the consequences for people whose experiences or choices do not adhere to conceptions of languages as separate and in need of defense.
against contamination, when they are held accountable to such conceptions as a matter of law, school assessment, or other censure. They argue that while the ‘languages’ concept is a highly naturalized understanding of human language, it is also necessary to describe and work against the “collateral damage” that these understandings produce (p. 16). They articulate a project of disinvention that is not about returning “to some Edenic pre-colonial era” but rather to “find ways of rethinking language in the contemporary world” through a project of continually uncovering of the ways that societies produce claims of truth about language and languages, and how these claims are taken up in projects of marginalization and counter-marginalization (p. 3). This objective inspires part of this dissertation, as a project that seeks to understand how claims of truth about languages work in the profession of bilingual teaching and what their consequences are for Eva and her students.

The disinvention scholarship largely treats the invention of languages as a definite historical event, not necessarily excluding possibilities of seeing the invention of languages as ongoing, but certainly not emphasizing that aspect either. For example, Heryanto (2007) describes the invention of languages as “irreversible, though incomplete” (p. 42) and Makoni and Pennycook’s overview contains only oblique reference to “the processes by which these inventions are maintained” (p. 21). However, a language ideological lens on teacher planning applies this scholarship as describing an ongoing (or incomplete) process, directly focusing on the ways that the inventions of ‘languages’ require ongoing maintenance, proceeding with particular intensity in bilingual education contexts.
Bilingual education, especially as it is mediated by assessment, is a context in which categories of named languages continually come into contact with practices that potentially do not fit (e.g., Flores & García, 2017; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000; Rosa, 2016) just as monolingual schooling contacts language practices that do not meet idealized or standardized models (e.g., Heath, 1982; Lippi-Green, 1997; Rickford, 1999). By making the comparison between language ideologies encountered in bilingual and monolingual education, I am not equating the politics or struggles of these contexts, but clarifying that bilingual educators are not unique in their confrontations with historically shaped ideologies (Flores et al., 2018). However, more so than monolingual schools, bilingual schools are rooted in explicit missions of valuing community language practices, which necessitates understanding not only what language ideologies are present in a school (such as those relating to student language “dominance” and the separation of languages in instruction), but also how educators struggle with those ideologies. Ultimately, representations of languages as separate that are recontextualized to guide instruction in bilingual schools can necessarily be used to ignore, delegitimize, or change practices that do not adhere to the representations. This chapter shows how representations of separate languages become recontextualized into instructional logics in multiple, redundant ways.

The sociopolitical aspects of the disinvention scholarship overlap with longstanding concerns within educational linguistics about how schools are programmatically structured around languages, scholarship that emerged partly as continuations of the problem orientation (Hornberger, 2001; Spolsky, 1974). This work highlights ways for bilingual schools to better represent and support the practices of
bilingual communities. Hornberger’s (1989) continua of biliteracy seeks to address complexities of biliterate events and practices and how they are understood in schooling. It recognizes the limited utility of strict boundaries and categories when it comes to describing language and seeks to describe variation in biliterate events/practices along multiple intersecting dimensions. The monolingual-bilingual continuum in particular draws attention to the ways that schools could more clearly value expressions of bilingual competence in practices “different from those of monolinguals of either language” (Hornberger 1989, p. 280). Hornberger and Link (2012) use the continua of biliteracy to highlight the greater potential for ideological and implementational spaces (Hornberger, 2002, 2005a) in bilingual education when we can see the interrelationships between continua (the contexts, media, and content that contribute to biliterate development). The central notion of the continua, that individual nameable points exist along infinite other points and are not themselves “finite, static, or discrete,” suggests the impossibility of final objective categorization of linguistic and cultural practices but simultaneously highlights processes by which practices do gain recognition or undergo typification in specific contexts.

Hornberger and Link (2012) connect the insights of the continua of biliteracy to scholarship in translanguaging that also explicitly critiques the tendency of schooling to attempt freezing or fixing language practices into standardized, assessable forms. While translanguaging originally referred to specific pedagogical strategies in bilingual teaching (Baker, 2006; Williams, 1996), it was further developed to consider both the political dimensions of the schooling of bilingual people, including the very representations of bilingualism underlying current and possible realities (Baker, 2003;
Blackledge & Creese, 2010; García, 2009; García & Leiva, 2014; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Li, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013). Translanguaging scholarship as educational theory imagines an expanded and deepened bilingual education that better serves language minoritized communities, motivated by the goal to eliminate “the hierarchy of language practices that deem some more valuable than others” (García & Leiva, 2014, p. 200). This hierarchy relies on (and is expressed through) monoglossic ideologies that leverage conceptions of separate bounded languages to marginalize multilingual practices that do not adhere to forms of competence in which “monolingualism in each of the two languages [is] the norm.” (García, 2009, p. 115). As García (2009) explains, both typical schooling and early linguistic scholarship on multilingualism includes this monoglossic view. In contrast, translanguaging scholarship defines multilingual practices from the perspectives of those who engage in them, producing the definition of translanguaging as “the multiple discursive practices with which bilinguals make sense of their bilingual worlds” (García, 2009, p. 45). Arguments for applying translanguaging theory to restructure schooling continue to be developed, and for example Sánchez et al. (2018) argue for a more translanguaging oriented language allocation policy for dual language education to make them truly “dual language bilingual programs (DLBE) that are attentive to dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging” (p. 39, emphasis in original). Such recommendations are rooted in explicitly political projects to ensure dual language schools value and benefit the most linguistically marginalized populations.

Bilingual teachers are recognized as having to negotiate monoglossic ideologies as well as the heteroglossic perspective of translanguaging that is increasingly included in the teachers’ preparation or professional development. Palmer and Martínez (2013)
identify the ideological awareness of teachers as essential to create more just bilingual schools, if teachers could “actively recognize and disrupt inequitable relations of power in classroom interaction and create spaces for at least momentary equity, spaces where bilingual students can have a fair shot at learning” (p. 282). Martínez, Hikida, and Durán (2015) show the multiplicity of such negotiation as dual language teachers both articulate and embody (Kroskrity, 2004) monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies. Similarly, Hélot (2010) describes teachers struggling to create space for multilingual students outside the policy emphasis on monolingual education, even when the teachers themselves are bilingual speakers of minoritized languages. Efforts to open wider ideological spaces for pedagogies recognizing and validating a wider range of bilingual/biliterate languaging will be aided by such investigations of teachers’ encounters with representations posing not only separate languages but accompanying representations of how people in schools ought to use these languages. However, there remains a need to better specify precisely how teachers encounter such representations, particularly in recognition of the many ways the concept of separate languages is embedded into schooling practices. The framework of curricularization, discussed in the next section, helps to specify how such encounters occur.

**Turning Languages into Curricula**

The connections between language and schooling infrastructure are significant because even languages, socially constructed as they are, do not inherently come ready for teaching. For that, they must first be *curricularized* (Valdés, 2015). Valdés (2015) explores how language instruction is treated similarly to instruction in mathematics,
science, or other content areas, and she defines the work necessary in this process as 

**curricularization:**

This process of curricularizing language—an essential aspect of all language teaching—

involves the activity of organizing and selecting elements from a particular dialect/variety of a language (e.g., Spanish, English, French, German, Chinese) for instructional purposes as if they could be arranged into a finite, agreed-upon set of structures, skills, tasks, or functions. (Valdés, 2015, p. 262)

Valdés (2015) highlights schools’ “views of ‘named’ languages as autonomous systems,” as a major challenge in theorizing social justice in educational linguistics, and she aligns her work on curricularization with other critical sociolinguistic work including translanguaging and the disinvention of languages (p. 267). The framework of curricularization draws attention to the institutionally constructed nature of familiar representations of language, along with the inherent limitations and partiality of the skill-focused representations that schooling requires. Valdés poses curricularization as the processes by which language is turned into academic content from its uncurricularized form, which she defines as “a species-unique communicative system acquired naturally in the process of primary socialization” (p. 262). From the perspective of seeing language invention as ongoing, we can pose schooling as one of the ways in which practices are turned into (or maintained as) languages. Although both (dis)invention and curricularization emphasize different aspects of the connections between language practices, schooling, and languages, they are compatible if we understand language ideologies as becoming relevant to teachers’ and students’ lives only through their ongoing recontextualization.

Valdés stresses the many inputs on the process of curricularization, which includes models of “standardized or prestige varieties of language” as well as specific
conceptualizations of language (e.g., language is structure, language is use, language is action) drawn from various informing disciplines and theoretical perspectives, by ideologies of language, by traditions of instruction, by existing textbooks and materials, and by language policies that define unit/credit institutional requirements (Valdés, 2015, p. 262). Her work points to the importance of the ways that schooling enacts self-justifying representations of linguistic competence as something obtainable only with the approval of schools. Valdés draws needed attention to the work of educators and linguists in designing curricula with unexamined ideological decisions that attempt to reduce the complexity of language into a neatly curricularized bundle.

Kibler and Valdés (2016) argue that teachers and other educators “inevitably make a series of assumptions in the name of institutional efficiency, even if rightly understanding such assumptions to be problematic,” (p. 97). At DLCS, as in other bilingual schools, program models depend upon unstable, invented categories of bounded languages, and from these categories emerge consequential representations of language dominance (describing students) and language separation (describing languages). This chapter approaches what Kibler and Valdés call assumptions as representations of language available for recontextualization, and I explore how Eva’s work at DLCS involved language separation and language dominance in particular as assumptions/representations about language that were redundantly distributed throughout Eva’s planning resources which made them ready elements of the curricularization of language and the instructional logic at DLCS and in her classroom.
Eva’s Encounters with Languages and Curricula

This chapter examines the representations of Spanish and English as named languages that became recontextualized in Eva’s planning. These representations include claims about the borders between the languages, the competence of students, and ideals of the right kind of bilingualism. My study confirms that the ideologies of English and Spanish as bounded and of students as dominant in one language or another receive constant maintenance, in spite of opportunities, often arising from students, for these representations’ difficulties to be witnessed or discussed. As discussed above, allocation policy has been recognized as a site for consequential representations of language to affect everyday classroom life, and I use it as a point of entry to consider the recontextualization of representations of language that came to bear on Eva’s classroom.

In my analysis, I attempt to honor the sense expressed by many DLCS staff that “it’s not perfect.” As discussed in the previous section, bilingual education presents many challenges that its practitioners have long wrestled with. My hope is that, by exploring how these challenges are revealed by tracing representations of language through planning resources, I can add to understandings of why these challenges have been so intractable.

First, I consider the allocation policy as a whole and show how struggles with applying it reflect underlying tensions in the representations of language that any traditional allocation relies on: language separation and language dominance. Next, I discuss how these representations were recontextualized and occasionally contested in grade level team structures reflected in planning relationships and classroom material choices. Third, I show how monolingual language assessment products, in combination
with the allocation policy, allow monoglossic ideologies to become recontextualized for instruction.

**Language Separation and Language Dominance in DLCS Allocation Policy**

DLCS uses a 50-50 language allocation policy, meaning that students spend half their time in officially designated English instruction and half in officially designated Spanish instruction. Teachers are expected to adjust their instruction to the students’ level of proficiency, and both Spanish language and English language support staff are distributed where there is a need assessed. Some teachers were *self-contained* teachers who taught both in English and Spanish, while other teachers taught in only one language and switched classes with a partner. Eva was a self-contained teacher, and her second-grade colleagues Lupe and Alice taught English and Spanish respectively.

Allocation policies are essential to the logic of instruction at DLCS, and it came as no surprise that Eva’s teaching was strongly shaped by the 50-50 model. However, I argue that even more can be learned about the impact of this program model by understanding the representations of language it relied on—language separation and language dominance. In this way, we can observe these representations recontextualized in multiple, redundant ways across planning resources, not simply in predictable top-down ways. Traditional allocation policies require a notion that languages are separate—any instructional time that is designated in one language cannot be in the other. Because they are so foundational to instruction at a bilingual school, how allocation policies become enacted is an important lens on how English and Spanish were represented and bounded at DLCS.
The allocation policy affected practically any other requirement on how teachers (and students) had to spend their time. Guidance to teachers about devoting time to content always incorporated this 50-50 allocation. For example, at the August professional development and planning sessions, administrators discussed one possible way of giving enough time to guided reading and writing in both English and Spanish, suggesting this arrangement (August 16, Fieldnotes).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week A</strong></td>
<td>3 guided reading, 2 writing</td>
<td>2 guided reading, 3 writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week B</strong></td>
<td>2 guided reading, 3 writing</td>
<td>3 guided reading, 2 writing</td>
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In terms of this suggested schedule, English guided reading implies student groups will read English texts and discuss those in English to the greatest extent possible. Spanish writing implies that students will be given instructions in Spanish about a writing piece that they would compose using as much Spanish as the teacher deemed appropriate. In using English and Spanish as linguistic categories, this proposed schedule not only recontextualizes language separation but also anchors this representation to state requirements for subject coverage in elementary schooldays and recommendations for the frequency of the literacy blocks.

Accompanying this model distribution of instructional time to content in two languages, every student at DLCS was categorized as to whether English or Spanish was their L1 or L2, which relied for the most part on home language surveys. *L1* and *L2* were the terms used in documents about this policy, and teachers and other staff additionally sometimes used the term *dominant language* to refer to this designation. On at least one occasion, Eva used the term with her students (January 20, Fieldnotes). Reading and
writing grade level benchmarks had separate tracks for teach language depending on if they were the L1 or L2. For example, while the DRA has standard grade level benchmarks for its scores, DLCS had produced alternative grade benchmarks for DRA scores if English was a student’s L2. The decision to structure assessments with distinct goals for an ascribed L1 and L2 served as just one instance of the representation of language dominance.

Challenges of the DLCS allocation policy were discussed at the highest level of leadership and usually invoked the related representations of student language dominance. At the opening of a professional development session that took place in August, before the school year began, the school’s CEO spoke about the complexity of allocation policies and repeated a goal of not valuing English over Spanish, a temptation that she attributed in part to the fact that the PSSA is in English. In contrast, she expressed a commitment to valuing “the language and communication of the students.” (August 15, Fieldnotes). In identifying this complication, the CEO ties two apparently divergent representations of language. From the perspectives of DLCS’s stated mission to promote bilingualism as part of students’ futures, both English and Spanish language development are important, whereas from the perspective of the PSSA, an assessment by which the quality of DLCS is rated in highly consequential ways, English as the language of the test holds primary importance. Drawing these representations together, she also invoked a representation of the student body as largely English-dominant to further describe the tension produced by the contrast between the DLCS mission and the PSSA, saying “We can’t be so afraid of failure or mediocrity in Spanish that we just default into English so that the kids will get it” (August 15 Fieldnotes).
The representations of language and bilingualism presupposed by descriptions such as “English-dominant” (a phrase not uttered by the CEO at this event, but widely used elsewhere at DLCS) were thus recontextualized at this event for the purpose of grounding the contradiction between DLCS’s mission and the standardized testing regime materialized in the PSSA. But in another sense that representation of “dominant in Language X” is already anticipated by the PSSA English representation. Both the PSSA and the “English-dominant” representation implicitly position monolingualism as normal. Completing her reinforcement of these contrasts, CEO approvingly cited a several years prior presentation by Nelson Flores and other representatives from PennGSE that argued for the possibility of flexible bilingual pedagogy that contrasted a previous representation of bilingual education where the languages must never be mixed.

Where educators are experiencing and reflecting on their work, multiple representations of language are recontextualized in narratives that illustrate complexities of bilingual education. In the CEO’s reading of conflicts in the logic constructed by the allocation policies, representations of language separation and language dominance did not come from the allocation alone but were reproduced in school-required sources like the PSSA as well. That these representations could be recontextualized from multiple sources adds an intensely structured redundancy to these representations of student language use. This redundancy is also evident in how the CEO positioned the PennGSE presentation as a contrast to earlier models of bilingual education. With this description in mind, that intervention might seem to have been evenly matched—two pedagogical models based in linguistic research, one contemporary and one historical. However, if we consider all the sources of representations of language dominance and language
separation—not only previous linguistic research but also the PSSAs, DLCS uptake of the DRA/EDL, and the scheduling demands of a bilingual allocation policy—the intervention of flexibly bilingual pedagogy appears much more challenging to implement.

**Allocation Policy in Team Planning**

The representations of language involved in the DLCS allocation policy were not only available for Eva’s recontextualization in the form of school-wide guidelines policies to which all teachers would be held accountable. Models of language dominance and language separation were made available not only because allocation policies inevitably objectify languages (Sánchez et al., 2018) but also because they are vital in coordinating staff activities, especially when teachers teach in one language and switch classes. In this way, monoglossic ideologies became multiply structured within DLCS and multiply available to inform Eva’s planning. Three aspects of this structure are discussed in this section: planning relationships, classroom materials, and classroom library texts.

**Relationships for planning.** In second-grade common planning meetings, the allocation policy provided a framework for the collaboration of all three classroom teachers. Eva would sometimes say, only half jokingly, that she was “planning for two” as the only self-contained teacher on the team. It was certainly true that the team’s collaboration was fluid, with Eva arguably collaborating most frequently with the most colleagues. Besides larger goal setting among the entire team and issues related to the shared classrooms worked out between Lupe and Alice, other shorter term monolingual tasks were coordinated by pairs. Carmen, Eva’s assistant teacher, would also give some
input on directions for future units and activities or work with either Alice or Lupe on a particular assessment.

For example, spelling tests offered multiple possible collaborations because content vocabulary related to PYP units would be discussed by everyone, basic Spanish reading vocabulary would be coordinated between Alice and Eva (or Carmen), and English spelling and reading words would be coordinated by Lupe and Eva (or Carmen). Through these shifting collaborative relationships, the designations of English and Spanish were used to label spelling words or worksheets as belonging to these separate languages, but they also took on uses of labelling domains of responsibility. In other words, in the organization of team planning meetings, Spanish was not only invoked as a set of phonological and grammatical structures as in a traditional linguistic sense. It was also a set of instructional demands that Eva and Alice were responsible for. Eva could not have unilaterally shifted away from daily schedules that were less reliant on representations of language separation without severely disrupting her planning and exchanges of materials with her teammates who had monolingual teaching responsibilities. This redundant structuring of language separation suggests that calls for flexible bilingual pedagogy (e.g., García & Leiva, 2014; Palmer et al., 2014; Sánchez et al., 2018) do not only face barriers from explicit monoglossic ideologies but also resistance to norms of work and professional responsibility. The assignment of responsibility according to language boundaries was thus an active way that monoglossic ideologies could be continually recontextualized in Eva’s planning.

**Materials and team responsibilities.** The arrangement and availability of materials in Eva’s classroom also reflects the distribution of languages into teaching
responsibilities. Eva worked hard to create a richly supportive classroom environment with tools available to aid in students’ language development and academic achievement in both English and Spanish. Throughout the year, the classroom contained books of many levels, anchor charts serving as reminders of recently discussed concepts, examples of student work from English time and Spanish time, journals and other materials assigned to individual students, and games and activities suitable for literacy and math centers. These materials were almost exclusively monolingual, which aligned with DLCS’s allocation policy in two ways.

First, having two sets of monolingual materials mirrors how Lupe and Alice’s classrooms would be structured with one set (but two sets of students that switch part way through the day). For example, Eva’s students had individual Spanish and English PYP Investigations journals—composition books ready for students to jot down notes or prewriting activities in. This separation reflected the arrangements of Eva’s teammates’ classrooms. Alice’s classroom had two student sets of Investigations journals in Spanish, and Lupe’s had two English sets. Thus, if Eva mirrored this arrangement by having a Spanish set and an English set, her collaboration with her teammates would be simplified. This arrangement of materials physically grounded an institutional logic of language separation, offering a layer of redundancy for the recontextualization of monoglossic ideologies. Second, monolingual materials aligned with norms of monolingual assessment. The recontextualization of representations of language separation and language dominance within classroom assessment is discussed in another section below.

Although curricularized through classroom artifacts, language separation was not always transparent or easily taken up by Eva’s students. For example, in the very last
week of school, when class time became more loosely structured to accommodate wrap up activities, a student watched Eva start packing up some of the many components of the two calendars on the wall. Classroom calendars at DLCS, as elsewhere, were tied to mathematics-related activities around concepts such as number patterns and place value, in addition to target vocabulary like days of the week and months. So, there were many stickied pieces Eva could begin packing up.

“Miss, why do you got two of those?” asked one student, indicating the monolingual Spanish calendar next to the monolingual English calendar. She received a questioning glare from Eva in return, as if the answer were obvious. “Unos en inglés y unos en español,” Eva replied. [Some in English and some in Spanish.] (June 13, Audio Recording 3, 14m55s)

From the perspective of the allocation policy as it is enacted at DLCS, the answer is certainly obvious. But this student’s question is a reminder that while representations of language underlying bilingual education result in specific instructional logics, there are always alternatives. Common sense arrangements of materials, such as having two calendars, are open to questioning and reconsideration, presenting opportunities for destabilization of curricularized categories. However, as in this case, clear breaks with representations of language separation are difficult to sustain.

The instructional logic of language separation, seen in both teachers’ work assignments and the arrangement of durable instructional materials in Eva’s classroom, relies not only on interconnected policies and assessments, but also the role of publishers of classroom materials in distributing materials like Spanish and English calendars. Having a dual language calendar with identical designs depended on publishers’ choices,
not just the choices of teachers and administrators. When Eva described challenges of the
dual language model of DLCS, she noted a lack of appropriate curriculum resources, or
the use of inappropriate resources, as a contribution. For example, when noting that
Spanish conjugation was a weak point for many students, Eva also said that on the other
hand, curricula used in Puerto Rico or countries in Latin America wouldn’t necessarily be
appropriate either, implying that those resources were developed for students with more
and a greater variety of experiences using Spanish outside of school (August 17,
Fieldnotes). Educators throughout DLCS had to accommodate and adapt to what
materials were made available by publishers, and thus the representations of language
supplied implicit by those resources as well.

**Eva’s classroom library.** Besides anchor charts and student’s personal materials,
the most linguistically divided materials were books in the classroom library. Some parts
of the library, like those containing books for the PYP units or recent readalouds, were
divided by language. Other parts, such as the 100 Book Challenge bins made available
each morning, were not. This was an intentional decision. When discussing this
arrangement, Eva said that students should be able to pick whatever book they wanted as
long as it was the right level. However, this didn’t mean that the categories were never
used to describe books. In fact, book choice was sometimes remarked upon in ways that
recontextualized the ascribed language dominance of a particular student, as in the case
of Eva praising a student picking a Spanish book if she judged them to be normally less
inclined to choose Spanish books (October 24, Fieldnotes).

Classroom library arrangement choices are significant given that students do not
always instantly recognize how a book would be categorized. On more than one
occasion, students asked me or each other, “Is this book in English or Spanish?” In this way, students were recontextualizing the categorization scheme for books when it was unclear to them. It’s impossible to conclusively know what knowledge these students were drawing on to attempt categorizing the books. For example, we can imagine cues they might have attended to even if they weren’t independently able to read words they recognized as belonging in one language or another. If we took on the perspective of language separation and school assessment data, I believe we could conclude that students could have recognized enough Spanish or English words in print to make an ‘accurate’ determination. Thus, since they did not apparently pursue making that conclusion or were not clear enough about how to represent languages as separate to do so successfully, their questions about placing books into language categories shows the instability of language separation from the students’ perspective.

On the other hand, it appears the instability was precisely what the students were trying to resolve: the fact that they sought to impose the categorization is an indication of the intensity with which language separation had become part of the instructional logic of DLCS, and thus, the students’ experience while they attended. Questions like these from students indicate that choices about bilingual classroom libraries are indeed sites of recontextualization of representations of language and multilingualism. Even if the books are mixed, the representation that sees the books as easily separable is involved, much as the metaphor of “code-switching” implies separate codes to be combined (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015).

As with other classroom materials, the availability of books with largely monolingual composition, and thus the possibility of non-monoglossic classroom
libraries, depends in part on publisher choices made beyond Eva’s classroom or DLCS. Neither the choice to have separate picturebook and PYP book libraries and the choice to have combined 100 Book Challenge bins should be seen as entirely independent. Instead, both choices recontextualize other decisions and representations sourced from other planning resources (such as publisher’s catalogs) or events (such as school book buying decisions, or school-wide decisions to participate in 100 Book Challenge). Bilingualism in bilingual texts more often consists of constant parallel translation rather than translanguaging approaches that might destabilize efforts to categorize them as an English or Spanish book (Pérez Rosario & Cao, 2015). The recontextualization of monoglossic ideologies includes the normative monolingualism of school-offered resources like Reading A-Z, which includes English and Spanish leveled texts (in addition to several other languages), including translated works, but apparently no bilingual texts, despite its world languages section highlighting its usefulness for bilingual and dual language teachers. The monolingual organization of a school-offered resource gives monoglossic ideologies redundancy in that while resources like Reading A-Z is not the origin of the ideologies of separation that directly inform allocation policies, its inclusion in Eva’s and colleagues’ professional repertoire makes moves to disrupt monoglossic ideologies more difficult.

As discussed in this section, the language separation representation, which is reflected in the DLCS and other allocation policies, is additionally reflected in and redundantly supported by (a) the planning relationships resulting arrangement of some classes at DLCS (and in second grade) as bilingual and others as monolingual, (b) the particular distribution of language and materials in Eva’s classroom, and (c) the
availability of monolingual or bilingual books through publishers. Because each of these three interrelated structures involves its own continual recontextualizations of representations of language separation, they are best understood not as simply reproducing the allocation policy but as creating redundant opportunities for its underlying representations of language to be encountered by Eva and her colleagues.

**Teaching and Curricularizing Language Separation and Language Dominance**

While the previous section considered the allocation policy and its accompanying representations of language through durable relationships and materials, this section considers instruction directly, along with commentary that arose during class between Eva and her students about Spanish, English, and their boundaries. Eva generally adhered to the school’s allocation policy, but this policy was not intended to preclude her from using English occasionally during Spanish time, or the reverse. Through the embedded pairing of language separation and language dominance, deviations from a strict 50-50 model (which depends on language separation) were seen as accommodations to students (which depended on language dominance).

Typically, instances in which those boundaries were reinforced were rarely remarkable. Looking for the constant maintenance of linguistic categories suggested by disinvention literature, it is possible to consider every instance of the daily, usually explicitly announced transition to English, as well as every use of Spanish during Spanish time or English during English time, as uncontested recontextualizations of named language categories. In other words, talk about the daily classroom schedule and implicit adherence to it were the most common forms of metacommentary reflecting English and Spanish boundaries. Even cases in which one language was used instructionally in time
reserved for the other (usually this was English used instructionally during Spanish time) can be seen as recontextualizing language separation rather than critiquing it.

For example, during a Spanish lesson on the characteristics of fish, within the How We Organize Ourselves PYP unit, a detour in mostly English of about 6 minutes occurred after the introduction of the learning target (“Puedo identificar las características de los peces”) when no student was able to provide a satisfactory definition of either características or characteristics. Frustrated, Eva gave an extended definition of these terms, reminded students of their recent work on the characteristics of mammals, and reviewed the transdisciplinary theme of the How We Organize Ourselves unit. Then, once students began providing characteristics of mammals with some prompting, Eva recorded them on the board in Spanish (e.g., “los mamíferos respiran con pulmones”) [mammals breathe with lungs.] (October 27, Fieldnotes).

Based on the school’s recognition of most students as “English-dominant,” these linguistic decisions by Eva were in accordance with expectations for allocation, since the content was ultimately presented in Spanish although with substantial English support when Eva deemed it necessary. Ultimately, if her choice was a deviation from the aspects of the allocation policy that recontextualized representations of language separation, it was compensated towards recontextualizing a representation of language dominance by viewing students as insufficiently bilingual in order to accommodate to them. The survival of such representations despite bilingual teaching practices (in the sense that Eva instructed in two languages) illustrates the capacity of representations of language to be recontextualized via curricularizing structures even when they are apparently not being adhered to. The language dominance representation appears influential on Eva’s decision
even though students were seemingly unclear on some aspects of the content in any language. In general, Eva was likely to use English during Spanish time when she believed students were confused or not properly paying attention.

One regular but less directly instructional way for Eva to recontextualize elements of the allocation policy was in acknowledging the difficulties of language learning and encouraging students to work diligently. In this example, Eva connects dual language allocation to her retelling of research on bilingual education in order to encourage students to use strategies in writing.

Eva: I understand that when you are writing in a language that you don't know, it is difficult. But we are giving you strategies. And you are not following the strategies. Researchers—people who make a living out of writing books to help teachers, to help professionals in education, and kids? Eva: they realized ultimately, researchers, if they help teachers they're helping kids. So yes. Researchers said “OK we have found out—” Can you put that away? “We have found out that if you don’t know how to write your second language,” which for most of you is in Spanish. “But you know how to write in English, guess what? You can learn how to write in Spanish.” They did. I’m not making this up. (October 4, Audio Recording 4, 1h20m48s)

Eva’s recontextualization of research on language learning brings with it a representation of language not-knowing. While she aims to respond to students’ difficulties and ultimately support their bilingual and biliterate development, a commonplace combination of monoglossic ideologies appears to be her most available tool to do so, given their strong uptake by DLCS policies and school-required resources that include monolingual assessments. There is significant slippage here between the categories of a non-dominant or second language (categories used school-wide at DLCS), and a
language that the students “don’t know.” In light of the redundant inclusion of language dominance in the allocation policy broadly, this shift does not show an inaccurate reading by Eva of relevant research, especially since much of the research tradition she invokes works from a similar perspective. Instead, Eva’s comments are best understood as an illustration of the scope of the instructional logic that defines students’ language proficiency.

Such encounters with monoglossic ideologies tied into school materials may be seen as the continuation of the curricularization of English and Spanish at DLCS. Considering the impact of curricularization on Eva’s practice is a way of highlighting the significant amount of labor devoted toward sustaining deeply institutionalized claims about how language can be broken down into assessable practices and knowledge. It is impossible for Eva to undo the weight of that labor. While the tasks depending on curricularized representations of language were unstable at times, but this instability did not automatically result in clear moves to reject linguistic boundaries. Next, I consider a spontaneously student-generated literacy center as an example of the opportunities presented by this instability, as well as indications of how curricularized representations of language structure possibilities for instruction.

**The impromptu translation center.** During a center block in June, when classroom schedules were less structured with the approaching end of the year, a student who was using Spanish-English dictionaries as part of a center, requested a new task:

Antonio: Miss, I want there to be a center where you give us words that are in English and then we look them up in there in Spanish.
Eva: No problem. Alright.
Antonio: Can we do it now?
Eva: Claro.
Antonio: Yay::!

(June 8, Audio Recording 1, 58m16s)
As Eva soon began writing a list of words, she wanted to confirm Antonio’s request. For most of the year, student 22 was often closed off from other students and all the adults, regularly outbursting through anger or frustration. But he would sometimes open up and recognize the support offered by Eva and Carmen or some students he was close with, like Ernesto, with whom he was working with the dictionaries. This earnest request for a special center activity was thus a valuable opportunity for Eva to emphasize to Antonio the positive aspects of their relationship. This discussion took place just a minute after his request:

Eva: English to Spanish?
Antonio: No, Spanish to English.
Eva: Spanish to English? Okay.
Antonio: No, in English to Spanish
Eva: Okay. All right. Um,
S?: Did you call me?
Denise: Miss, do you want to make words with me?
Eva: No, voy a hacerle palabras. So, voy–
[‘I’m gonna make him words. So, I’m gonna–’]
Antonio: She’s going to put words uh somewhere–
She’s gonna put words and then we need uh (((look for them)))
Eva: English to Spanish?
(((inaudible, presumably Antonio nods)))

(June 8, Audio Recording 1, 59m41s)

The back and forth about the direction of translation shows that the categories of English and Spanish, for the purposes of this center at least, will not coexist, a reflection of the language separation representation. As bounded categories, words and centers can move from one to the other via translation, but they cannot occupy both spaces. A bidirectional center where a list of Spanish and English words is translated into the other language, is not proposed by either Antonio or Eva. Only in an instructional context in which the two languages are routinely separated can Antonio’s request be read as both sensible and a potentially valuable learning activity.
Eva starts drafting a list of words and decides to add the words *toe, nail,* and another word related to current political events discussed that morning to the list. She soon asks Antonio for more ideas:

**Eva:** Say words for me in English that you don’t know in Spanish. Help me.

**Antonio:** ((shrugs))

**Eva:** Celery?

**Antonio:** Index?

**Eva:** Index? Index is index.

**Antonio:** Index? They’re the same word?

**Eva:** Mmhmm. Celery? ((hands over a paper with the four English words)) And next to it— Look. I just made up a center. Next to it, you write what you find. Now, this is what is going to happen. There are some words in the dictionary like sexy, OK… And you’re going to come across those words, and you’re going to be like— this what you’re going to do. ((acts like sneaky student, pointing to the dictionary)) “yo!” “hah hah” So, let’s be mature.

((Antonio and Ernesto begin work with their dictionaries))

(June 8, Audio Recording 1, 1h1m19s)

Both Antonio’s request for the center and Eva’s directive for Antonio to provide words he only knows in English aligns with the language dominance and language separation representations recontextualized elsewhere. Yet Antonio’s inability to quickly provide a word in English that he did not know in Spanish is perhaps surprising considering his requested format for the center requires just that.

Antonio was recognized by Eva as having proficiency in comprehending Spanish. Throughout the year, their conversations regularly involved Eva speaking in Spanish and Antonio responding in English (as can be partly seen in the first excerpt about this center discussion). Thus, their communication does not remain within the same boundaries that make Antonio’s center idea workable, nor as it turns out does Antonio’s first idea for a word he does not know in Spanish. When he suggests a word he only knows in English, *index,* Eva tells him it is the same word in Spanish, a claim he finds puzzling. In this case,
his confusion may indicate a recontextualization of a monoglossic perspective on translation, which deemphasizes language contact phenomena described as loan words, borrowings, or cognates. This emphasis on translation is mirrored by classroom materials and the attention to literacy content in both English and Spanish instruction. He has previously, perhaps mainly, encountered the word index in lessons during English time about non-fiction text features. Essential literacy skills and related terms (further discussed in Chapter 6) were always packaged in translated pairs (main idea and idea principal, author’s purpose and propósito del autor, etc.), partly aided by a thriving Pinterest community of dual language educators who translated key skills in US standards into Spanish. This pattern likely heightens Antonio’s surprise when he stumbles on a content word that is its own translation.

Both Eva and Antonio co-construct and refresh the normalcy of translation between English and Spanish, and the instabilities of such a representation of bilingualism is not substantially pursued. In the moment, Eva is concerned that Antonio and Ernesto will use their relatively unstructured time using the dictionary to sneakily look at words like sexy, and she doesn’t pursue the “index is index” notion that Antonio is struck by. Perhaps the form of a center, as a relatively simple activity that students can accomplish independently, precluded a more complex investigation of words belonging to two languages. Also, the kind of direct lexical translation Antonio is interested is mirrored by some of the spelling and content assessments that were mainstays all year. After so much work done to frame translation as the main valid relationship between English and Spanish, it becomes harder to unpack the significance of “index is index” or what it suggests about the constructed (and maintained) nature of named linguistic
boundaries. On the other hand, the fact representations of language separation must constantly be recontextualized and openly examined in cases like Antonio’s center idea means that opportunities to explore the limits of those representations will continually arise.

**Classroom Language Assessment**

Every assessment, no matter the content area, rooted in the English- or Spanish-allocated portions of the school day, consistently recontextualized the same boundaries produced by the allocation policy. Where school structure or the allocation policy centered on what language practices the school sought to deliver, assessment centered on what language practices students could produce. Almost all assessments had a monolingual emphasis, meaning they were conducted monolingually or students were expected to produce monolingual products. These assessments including spelling tests in both English and Spanish, math tests (which were always in English), PYP summative assessments at the end of six-week units, standardized reading assessments (the DRA/EDL, discussed below), writing pieces to which the DLCS writing rubric was applied, and various formative assessments on literacy skills in the form of worksheets.

Assessments of spelling and related skills strongly reflected the monoglossic assumptions of language separation applied to a bilingual classroom. In Eva’s classroom, as in many DLCS classrooms, “privacy folders” or “writing folders” were made available in both languages. Made of two manila folders laminated together and covered in print, they were intended to support student writing or other literacy work with basic sight words and an alphabet chart with vocabulary words. Students are expected to use these resources when they write. The “privacy” feature works because they also function to
block the view of other students who might be tempted to look at a seatmate’s answers.

On assessments like spelling tests, which include the very content that the folder is
supposed to help with, students were given the folder for the language not being assessed.
In other words, during an English spelling test, students would use Spanish
privacy/writing folders. This is an almost poetic illustration of how assessment offers an
opportunity to recontextualize monoglossic ideologies. In a context of monolingual
assessment, any reminder of the non-assessed language is assumed to be essentially
useless, and a folder covered in Spanish literacy material is equivalent to one that is
blank. Students, when they comment on this system, embrace the folder organization,
sometimes chiding those who return folders to the “wrong one” (October 3 Fieldnotes).

Language assessment inevitably recontextualizes language ideologies because
evaluating students requires information about what language proficiency is, who has it,
who is likely to have it, and its importance. Language assessment is comprised of
representations of desirable language practices, often framed as objectively measurable,
in terms like *developmentally appropriate* or *on grade level*. Thus, Eva’s classroom
assessments reveal downstream effects of the representations of language separation and
language dominance. Once languages are separated in instruction, that separation echoes
through assessments based on that instruction. This continued recontextualization of
separate-language representations presents opportunities for the allocation policy to be
joined with products designed by educational materials companies, school actors, and the
state. Assessment practices in Eva’s classroom strongly aligned with a representation of
students coming to school with a single dominant language, especially the assignment of
different reading and writing benchmarks. As discussed above, both DRA/EDL scores
and scores on the DLCS writing rubric had differing grade benchmarks depending on a students’ L1 and L2, as designated based on a judgment based on student home language surveys. Progress in English and Spanish reading are reported separately on report cards and in student award ceremonies.

Specific assignments within content areas overlapped with representations that one’s competence in an entire language could be assessed, a representation not so distant from one ascribing language dominance to students. Eva’s own English languaging provided opportunities to recycle representations of linguistic competence that aligned with monolinguistic assessment. In preparation for an English spelling test, after reviewing an accommodation to aid students’ recall of spelling, Eva passed responsibility for reading out the spelling words to Carmen:

Eva: Take a last look. Ms. Carmen is doing the test, so English is perfect. Because let’s face it, I have an accent, and sometimes, you know, it is what it is.
Rafael: What’s the first one?
Carmen: I haven’t said it yet.
Eva: She hasn’t said it yet.

(October 27, Audio Recording 2, 1h23m50s)

Eva’s explanation for why she won’t read the words herself is not picked up on by any students, and Rafael, the first to respond, is focused on hearing what the first word on the test is. This introduction to the test recontextualizes, for the purpose of explaining Carmen’s responsibilities, a representation of English as something that can be perfect, something that can be known with or without an accent, and something with a border that for the moment Eva has put herself on the wrong side of. The fact that this rationale was not questioned by Carmen or any student in the room would appear to align with their familiarity with this representation of English. At the same time, on other occasions when Eva spoke about her proficiency in English, she would emphatically state that it was not
her second language, but her third, after Catalan and Spanish. In these self-presentations, she affirmed the value and importance of multilingualism, representations which are not incompatible with monoglossic perspectives.

To further explore the typical recontextualizations of language ideologies embedded in assessment, I consider a guided reading lesson showing repeated instances of the expectations of the EDL being applied to student assessment.

**The EDL and guided reading.** The DRA and EDL were standardized measures of reading level, tied to grade level expectations. As measured by the EDL and DRA, progress in Spanish and English reading achievement is considered as part of evidence of a teacher’s effectiveness, included (separately) on student report cards, and even involved in awards given to students for academic work. The EDL and DRA extend monoglossic representations of language separation to say that not only are English and Spanish naturally separate domains of reading, but they are separately assessable. The possibility of objectively assessing reading in the first place is a tie to its curricularization from a range of literacy practices to a skill consisting of measurable comprehension and fluent reading behaviors. (Further analysis of the DRA/EDL’s role in curricularization of reading skills is presented in Chapter 7.) The pairing of these assessments can be seen as reflecting a goal of becoming a “balanced bilingual” whose abilities in each language are best assessed monolingually, especially given that the EDL’s texts and instructions for students are a translation of the DRA. The assumptions inherent in these assessments, particularly in the EDL, presented some instructional and planning problems, and the frustration they caused both Eva and her students make them well worth understanding in
a more detailed way. Additionally, understanding how assessments extend monoglossic ideologies may help deepen our critique of those ideologies.

The need for data created by the DRA/EDL assessments is a pathway by which language dominance is ascribed to students. Administrators and members of the curriculum team who set achievement benchmarks, basically recognizing that the more familiar you are with a language the more you might be expected to accomplish in that language. So in order to make both the EDL and DRA more appropriate and useful, students are assigned different benchmarks depending on what is their “L1” and “L2.” When one student made more progress in their designated non-dominant language, Eva texted me to express her surprise. Her reaction indicates that she interpreted such students’ unexpected progress as something unusual about the student, rather than evidence that the L1-L2 benchmarking did not provide a helpful or accurate account of language development.

The use of reading assessments led to some tensions when applying them to the students. Eva once asked me for my opinion about whether or not it would be okay for the students to use English when they did their EDL, which requires students to ask standardized questions in addition to reading aloud. I told her that it wasn’t unusual for children who are developing as bilinguals to use one language to speak about text they read in another, noting that some of the foundational studies in my field were about reading groups being more effective when students could use two languages (thinking of Moll and Díaz, 1985). But ultimately I said it depended on how the school wanted to use the EDL. I used the analogy of “glasses on a vision test vs. glasses on a reading test” I’d heard in other discussions of adaptations for assessment. This analogy notes that
adaptations are appropriate except where they directly conflict with what is supposed to
be measured. Thus, wearing glasses is an appropriate “accommodation” for a reading
test, since any vision problems would conflict with the validity of the assessment of
reading. However, wearing glasses would be inappropriate during a vision test, the
purpose of which is to assess the unaided capabilities of a person’s eyes.

Applied to the EDL, the opinion I gave to Eva was that if it was an assessment of
a students’ reading of Spanish text alone, they ought to be able to speak about what they
read in whatever language they felt most comfortable in. From this perspective, Eva felt
convinced that ideally, students should be able to speak using more of whatever language
they were more comfortable in (English for most students). Ultimately it was clarified at
a Team Meeting that students were expected to use Spanish on their EDL to receive
credit. Eva regularly recontextualized such requirements in instruction with students, for
example explaining the importance of the skill of picturewalking with reference to the
EDL and “the people who invented guided reading” (December 15, Fieldnotes).

In the remainder of this section, I analyze the entirety of a guided reading session
to show how representations of language dominance and separation were
recontextualized in instructional choices and feedback to students. Naturally, reading
instruction was the time most apt for recontextualizations of the representations of
language presupposed the DRA/EDL. Eva’s instruction during a particular Spanish
guided reading lesson set up the same issues raised by the CEO’s comments discussed
earlier: the dual language allocation model, testing demands, and representations
ascribing language dominance to students. After explaining that the outcome of the
guided reading lesson would be to connect the text to the recent PYP unit on
conservation, Eva began the preview (also called a picturewalk) by asking individual students to give one page’s worth of a preview. Recontextualizing representations of language separation from the EDL and DLCS policies on administering the EDL, she gives an explicit direction to use Spanish. Recontextualizing representations of language dominance rooted in the DLCS program and its relation to decades of research on organized bilingual education, she shows different expectations for different students, depending on how they are read in relation to proficiency in Spanish.

1 Eva: So, vamos usar el prev—
2 Eva: Vamos hacer el preview del libro, We’re going to use the preview—
3 Eva: So todo el mundo tendría que ya abierto la primera página. So everyone should already have their book open to see the first page.
4 Eva: OK? Y, um, vemos que And, um, we see that—
5 Eva: ¿Qué está pasando en este dibujo? What’s happening in this picture?
6 Eva: ¿Qué es lo que tú crees está pasando en este dibujo? What do you think is happening in this picture?
7 Eva: Antoine. En español, eh? Antoine. In Spanish, OK?
8 Antoine: (inaudible)) ((inaudible))
9 Eva: Puedes hablar más alto, por favor. You can speak louder, please.
10 Antoine: Un niño es limpiar la... living room? A boy is cleaning the… living room?
12 ((looking at Miguel)) ¿Qué más vemos que está pasando? ((looking at Miguel)) What else do we see is happening?
13 Eva: ¿Que más vemos que esta pasando? What else do we see is happening?
14 Eva: (4s) (4s)
15 Eva: Miguel, tú hablas el español en tu casa con tu padre Miguel, you speak Spanish in your house with your father
16 Eva: porque tu padre no habla el inglés. because your father doesn’t speak English.
17 Eva: ¿Qué está pasando en esta foto? What is happening in this picture?
18 Eva: (13s) (13s)
19 Eva: Te vas a quedar castigado durante la hora de comer como te niegas a contestarme la pregunta. You’ll be punished during lunchtime because you refuse to answer my question.
20 Eva: ¿Qué más está pasando en este dibujo? What else is happening in this picture?
21 Eva: Hay un niño, que está limpiando y ¿qué más? ¿Qué más? There’s a boy, he’s cleaning, and what else? What else?
22 Miguel: Mm, El papá The dad.
23 Miguel: (13s) (13s)

(Miguel frequently responded to questions by being silent and still, and Eva apparently recognizes his nonresponse as part of that pattern. Eva expects more from Miguel, and...
because he doesn’t meet expectations, he is threatened with discipline in the form of staying over his lunch to complete the activity. Notably, he is expected to be able to use Spanish on the basis of Eva’s knowledge that his father “doesn’t speak English” and that Miguel “speaks Spanish in his house.” However, Miguel was officially designated as English-dominant. Eva’s feedback to Miguel throughout this lesson illustrates the difficulty of applying representations of language dominance and language separation to individual students.

25 **Roxane:** La papá– *[The dad–]*
26 **Eva:** El papá. El papá. ((recasting grammatical gender))
27 **Roxane:** El papá put his feet up
28 **Eva:** El qué? *[He what?]*
29 **Roxane:** Put his feet up ((on the xxx))

(January 18, Audio Recording 1, 1h35m7s)

Along with Antoine (“living room”), Roxane has incorporated English (“put his feet up”) into her answer. Eva responds to this pattern by explaining her expectation that students use as much Spanish as possible, and she puts this requirement in terms of the requirements of the EDL:

30 **Eva:** Okay so let’s use words in Spanish that we know, OK?
31 I know that you might want to say
32 “I see a dad and he has his feet up on the couch”
33 but you might not know how to say that– all of that in Spanish.
34 So you need to look for words that you know in Spanish
35 even though if that you are not saying what you really want to say. Why?
36 When we do the EDL, your preview cannot be in English.
37 I’d rather you to have a limited preview with Spanish
38 because that gets you more points,
39 than a huge preview but all in English which gives you 0 points. OK?
41 ¿Qué está haciendo el Papá? What is the dad doing?
42 ¿Está en el parque? Is he in the park?
43 ¿Está en un sofá? Is he on a couch?
44 ¿Está mirando la tele? Is he watching TV?
45 ¿Qué está haciendo el Papá? What is the dad doing?
46 Roxane.
47 **Roxane:** La papá–
48 **Eva:** El papá. El papá. ((recasting grammatical gender))
49 **Roxane** El papá is
Because of the decision relayed to her in a team meeting by members of admin and the language team, she can only record components of a student’s preview as successful if they are in Spanish. Thus, the conditions of standardized assessment are recontextualized as a language policy on how students are expected to preview books. Her personal statement of this requirement (“I would rather”) aligns with a professional context in which student performance on assessments like the EDL/DRA is seen as reflecting, even if imperfectly, the success of a teacher. This restriction can only apply because “previewing,” in addition to being a common pre-reading activity, is part of the EDL (and DRA), where students are supposed to look at each page of the book and explain what’s happening in the picture. Evaluators are supposed to count how many relevant vocabulary words students use and to what extent they connect story events with transition words (which could be as simple as and or then on the DRA). In reusing this activity as a guided reading lesson component, the connection task is essentially eliminated since an individual student is previewing one page at a time. In this guided reading session, not only has a testing procedure been recontextualized into the format of a lesson, but a monolingual representation of reading competence is recontextualized to set up expectations about how students should discuss the book. The need for separating English and Spanish, the need for language-specific reading assessments, and the production of monolingual texts by educational materials publishers all reinforce each
other in constructing an instructional logic built on language separation and language
dominance as representations of DLCS students.

As students continue, Eva continues encouraging them to use more Spanish in
their preview statements. In the following exchange directly continuing, she incorporates
Elena’s knowledge of the word lavadora to support other students.

55 Eva: Alright, ¿qué vemos en el próximo dibujo? What do we see in the next picture?
56 ¿Qué está pasando en el próximo dibujo? What’s happening in the next picture?
    Rafael. Rafael.
57 Rafael: El niño se pone The boy puts
58 Eva: Muy bien, Rafael. Very good, Rafael.
59 Rafael: la... la... um... blanket the... the... um... blanket
60 Eva: Muy bien. Very good.
61 Rafael: en el in the
62 Eva: Muy bien. Very good.
63 (3s)
64 Rafael: washing machine. washing machine.
65 Eva: OK, ¿hay alguien qué sabe cómo se llama Is there someone who knows what a
    washing machine en español? washing machine is called in Spanish?
66 Elena: Lavadora. Lavadora.
67 Eva: Muy bien. So, dí tú lo que está pasando en Very good. So, say what is happening in
    este fotografía this picture.
68 Elena: ((inaudible)) ((inaudible))
69 Eva: El niño. The boy.
70 Elena: ((inaudible)) en la lavadora ((inaudible)) in the washing machine.
71 Eva: Muy bien. So, dí tú lo que está pasando en Very good. Very good. Antoine,
    este fotografía what do you think is happening in this
    picture?
72 ¿qué crees que está pasando en este dibujo? ¡The boy... is... ((inaudible or stops
    speaking))
73 Antoine: Un niño... es... ((inaudible or stops speaking))
74 Eva: Lucas. What is happening here?
    ¿Qué está pasando aquí? So, um Elena nos ha dicho que washing
75 So, um Elena nos ha dicho que washing machine es lavadora, OK? machine is lavadora, OK?
76 So, Lucas, ¿qué está pasando aquí? So, Lucas, what is happening here?
77 Lucas: El niño– The girl–
78 Eva: La niña. ((recasting grammatical gender)) The girl.
79 Lucas: La niña está… (6s) The girl is…
80 ((Eva points to Rafael or Rafael raises hand)) ((Eva points to Rafael or Rafael raises hand))
81 Rafael: El ni– El ni– The gi– The gi–
    [La niña] [[The girl.]]
82 Eva: [La niña]] ((recasting grammatical gender)) [La niña]]
83 Rafael: se pone la– ella teddy bear– puts the– her teddy bear–
84 Eva: Muy bien. Very good.
85 Rafael: en la lavadora in the washing machine.
86 Eva: Muy bien. La niña pone el osito en la Very good. The girl puts the teddy bear in
    lavadora. OK? the washing machine. OK?
87 Ant– um, Miguel. Ant– um, Miguel.
(January 18, Audio Recording 1, 1h36m36s)
Eva faces a familiar teaching challenge here in that her feedback must be selective. Not all aspects of a student’s response are ideal, from the perspective of the requirement to use entirely Spanish, even if that means omitting the things students know how to communicate in English. Thus, Rafael’s use of washing machine, but not blanket is singled out as needing translation into Spanish.

As the lesson continues, we can see another recontextualization of EDL requirements in Eva’s feedback to Miguel, motivated with accompanying representations of language dominance.

86  Eva: Muy bien. La niña pone el osito en la lavadora. OK?
87  Ant– un, Miguel. ¿qué está pasando en la página seis?
88  ((aside to other student in class)) Go back, go back and walk. Go back.
89  Miguel. ¿Qué está pasando en la página seis?
90  Miguel: El niño...
91  Eva: ((Another student is interrupting Eva with papers)) En mi mesa. En mi mesa. En mi mesa.
92  Miguel: Él se ponen...
94  Miguel: Un– un niño.
95  Eva: Pues dí “El niño…”
96  Miguel: El niño se pone... (13s)
97  Eva: Hijo mío, ¿que está poniendo el niño?
98  Miguel: El niño se pone... (13s)
99  yo veo ice cream, veo vegetales.
100 ¿Cómo se le llama eso? (2.5s) Antoine.  
Eva presses Miguel to use the specific vocabulary el niño rather than pronouns like él. It’s possible Eva didn’t hear Miguel use the full noun phrase when she was distracted by another student interrupting her. Her attention is also likely keyed into this issue because on the DRA/EDL, previews are scored higher when more relevant and specific vocabulary is used, and retellings or summaries are scored higher if readers use specific
names (where available) instead of generic terms like the boy or el niño. Her continuing feedback on this issue transitions into another attempt to get students to use more Spanish vocabulary:

97 **Eva:** Hijo mío, ¿que está poniendo el niño? Miguel, what is the boy putting?
98 ¿Qué es eso? What is that?
99 Yo veo ice cream, veo vegetales. I see ice cream, I see vegetables.
100 ¿Cómo se le llama eso? (2.5s) Antoine. What is that called? (2.5s) Antoine.
101 **Antoine:** ((groceries))
102 **Eva:** Pero, ¿cuál es otra palabra para groceries? But, what is another word for groceries?
103 Busca una palabra. Think of a word
104 Busca una palabra que tú sepas decir. Think of a word that you already know how to say
105 ((brief side conversation with assistant teacher about the fact that gym is starting soon))
106 **Lucas:** Yo veo helado. I see ice cream.
107 **Eva:** Helado, pero ¿cómo se llama todo esto? Ice cream, but what is all of this called?
108 ¿Qué son jugetes, materiales de la escuela? Are they toys, school supplies?
109 ¿Cómo se llama todo esto? What is all of this called?
110 Empieza con la silaba “co.” It starts with the syllable “co.”
111 (4s)
112 **Rafael:** Cosas? Things?
113 **Eva:** ¿Qué tipo de cosas, cosas que se comen? What kind of things, things that we eat?
114 ¿Cómo se le llama las cosas que se comen? What do we call the things that we eat?
115 **Rafael:** Um, comida. Um… food.
116 **Eva:** Comida. So, el niño pone comida... ¿dondé? Food. So, the boy puts food… where?
117 ¿Dónde pone el niño comida? Elena? Where does the boy put food? Elena?
118 **Elena:** Refrigerator. Refrigerator.
119 **Eva:** ¿Pero como se llama refrigerador? But how is a refrigerator called [in Spanish]?
120 **Elena:** Um... Um...

Next, as Eva wraps up the lesson shortly after most of the class has already left for gym class with the assistant teacher, Miguel receives further feedback, combining reprimand and encouragement:

120 **Eva:** OK, so, lo vamos a dejar aquí, um muy bien. OK, so, we’re going to stop here, um, very good.
121 ((addressing three individual students in turn)) Mucho empeño en el preview, Great effort in the preview.
122 mucho empeño en el preview, Great effort in the preview.
123 mucho empeño en el preview, Great effort in the preview.
124 ((turning to Miguel)) Le tienes que poner more empeño en el preview. ((turning to Miguel)) You need to put more effort in the preview.
125 Esta mañana no me estás trabajando bien. This morning you are not working well.
126 Estas jugando con repetir segundo. You are playing with repeating second grade.
Te lo he dicho ya muchas veces, ¿verdad? ¿Verdad que sí? I already told you many times, right? Isn’t that right?

Miguel, no depende de mí. Depende de tí. Miguel, it doesn’t depend on me, it depends on you.

((speaking to another student)) Deja de hablar por favor. ((speaking to another student)) Stop talking, please.

No depende de mí. Depende de tí. It doesn’t depend on me, it depends on you.

Y como continuas así, yo no puedo dejar que tu vayas a tercero. Y vas a repetir. And if you continue like this, I can’t let you go to third grade, and you’re going to repeat.

Estas enterado, ¿verdad? You understand that, right?

No le estás poniendo ningun esfuerzo. You are not putting forth any effort.

De todos estos niños se nota que Elena, su abuelo le habla en español. Of all the kids—except Elena, her grandfather speaks Spanish.

Pero que tu padre no sabe el inglés. No pasa nada, eh? [Your family member] tampoco habla bien el inglés. But your father doesn’t know English. [Your family member] doesn’t speak English very well either.

Yo sé que la madre de Antoine, y el padre de Antoine, I know that Antoine’s mother, and his father,

no hablan nada de español, they don’t speak any Spanish,

y este niño está levantando la mano. and this boy is raising his hand.

Y está poniendo esfuerzo. And he is putting forth effort.

Y Antoine ha sido primero que en esta foto ha levantado la mano. And Antoine came here in first grade, and for this picture he raised his hand.

Y tú dale que te pego como yo no te pregunté tu no haces nada. What’s up with you, if I didn’t ask you anything, you wouldn’t do anything

Todo que– todo en tus papeles todo– a mejorar a mejorar a mejorar In all— In all of your report cards, it’s needs improvement, needs improvement, needs improvement

Rafael, muy bien preview. Rafael, very good preview.

Tu español está muy bien, OK? Your Spanish is very good, OK?

Vamos a ver si la próxima vez que nos reunimos we can stop doing the preview of the book

podemos terminar de hacer el preview del libro and read really well to see if some of you

y leerlo todo bien y a ver si algunos de ustedes can go up another level, OK?

pueden subir a otra nivel, OK? Go to gym, Very good.

Vaya al gimnasia. Muy bien. (January 18, Audio Recording 1, 1h40m35s)

Miguel is singled out for his performance in the lesson and was reminded that he might have to repeat second grade. Overall, Miguel wasn’t seen as meeting second grade expectations and did eventually get selected to repeat the grade, although at the time of this lesson, that hadn’t been decided. His silences in this interaction were not unusual—Eva, Carmen, and I frequently were met with silence when we tried to engage him about his work. However, in this activity, while there were long silences, his eventual responses
to Eva’s questions did not set him significantly apart from other students in terms of his incorporation of recognized Spanish into his answers. Like other students he produces noun phrases about people (e.g., *el papá, el niño*) and verb phrases (e.g., *se pone*). In fact, one thing that sets him apart is that he does not include English in his answers like Rafael (e.g., *blanket*, line 59; *washing machine*, line 62,) and Roxane (e.g., *put his feet up*, line 27).

One possible interpretation of Miguel’s answers is that he is following Eva’s direction to use only Spanish in practice for the EDLs but that he does not have vocabulary for other parts of the picture that would be recognized as Spanish. Eva doesn’t strictly keep reminding students to use Spanish vocabulary, perhaps with an understanding that some words are potentially known to them, like *lavadora*, which she asks if anyone knows (line 65), or *comida*, which she presses Rafael to remember (lines 107–114). There are other words that she supplies to the students directly, perhaps in the belief that they are less likely to know them or that they would not have been involved in academic work in Kindergarten or 1st grade (e.g., *osito*, line 86).

However, Eva does not take this interpretation and instead concludes that Miguel hasn’t put enough effort into his work previewing the book. Eva cites the language competencies of two other family members, his father (“tú hablas el español en tu casa con tu padre porque tu padre no habla el inglés” line 16) and another person “tampoco habla bien en inglés.” line 135). An assessment that a student isn’t putting in enough effort depends on finding both unsatisfactory work and an absence of explanatory context. In other words, a student who doesn’t meet expectations, but for good reasons, won’t be seen as not putting in enough effort. Feedback to Miguel indicates the
recontextualization of a representation of how multilingual families with children use language and what this means for a seven-year old’s language abilities. This representation is taken up in the curricularization processes required by the monolingual EDL, then involved in assessing Miguel’s preview of a book. The representations of monolingual assessment, language dominance, and language separation are also used to compare Miguel to other students in the guided reading group who Eva believed knew less Spanish based on their family language practices (like Antoine, line 136), even though Miguel was classified as English dominant. Overall, the EDL, as a monolingual assessment, does not allow a teacher in Eva’s position much flexibility to consider bilingual competence from the perspective of her students.

Of course, while Miguel receives the most direct and extended feedback, the language practices of all students in the group are evaluated against representations of what their dominant language is. Under a logic of differential L1 and L2 assessment, Eva and her colleagues are positioned to continually consider a student’s monolingual performance in light of their ascribed language dominance. In this way, monolingual assessments provide redundancy to monoglossic ideologies. Even though the EDL does not make explicit claims about bilingualism, its design as a monolingual assessment creates difficulties for bilingual students and teachers at DLCS.

Discussion

Bilingual education scholars note the importance of how allocation policies relate to underlying monoglossic ideologies of bilingualism that can marginalize many bilingual language practices (e.g., García, 2009; Jacobson & Faltis, 1990; Sánchez et al., 2018). Models of language separation and language dominance are essential to monoglossic
ideologies. In Eva’s classroom, allocation policies are indeed an important source of representations of Spanish and English as separate, but it was not merely in encounters with school-wide policies that Eva recontextualized representations of language separation and language dominance. In this chapter, I showed that representations of language separation and language dominance were so thoroughly available for Eva to recontextualize because they were distributed redundantly across planning sources that were school-required (e.g., the EDL), school-offered (e.g., Reading A-Z), and teacher-explored (e.g., Pinterest). Representations of English and Spanish appear in scheduling choices, allocation policies, teacher and student metacommentary, assessment, and classroom materials. These representations consistently drew boundaries between the two languages, centered the importance of student language dominance, and posed language competence as objectively assessable. In light of the multiple redundant representations available, there was little apparent room to seriously destabilize curricularized representations of language, even though Eva’s teaching included bilingual interactions with her students.

Moments of struggle of the kind presented in this chapter, even situations where we may be tempted to see an ineffective lesson or interaction, are better understood as products of myriad representations of language in service of its continued invention into languages than as products of individual teachers’ choices. “It’s not perfect” is an evaluation I heard many times at DLCS. Here, surely as in other schools, teachers notice and must find some way to live with that which is not perfect—about their materials, their preparation, their capacities, or the demands on their time. It is my hope that a language ideological lens on teacher planning offers an additional way of understanding
the tension produced by monoglossic ideologies embedded in multiple sources available to teachers, sometimes in unexpected places. This lens suggests that reforming allocation policies alone (in the sense of adjusting the use of named languages in classroom interactions, instructional materials, or student work) will not be sufficient to radically weaken the presence of monoglossic ideologies in bilingual classrooms, given the potential for these ideologies to be recontextualized from so many other sources.

In early writing on curricularization, Valdés writes that “the curricularization of language as complex and multifaceted has not yet been closely examined” (p. 267). In describing the recontextualization of representations of language separation and language dominance in Eva’s classroom, this chapter is intended to fulfill the promise of attending to curricularization that Valdés identifies. Informed by a methodological focus on language ideologies as discursive, material representations of language, this study suggests that the “complex and multifaceted” nature of curricularization depends in part on the redundancy with which specific representations are available to teachers. Evidence that sources other than school-required ones were part of the maintenance of monoglossic language ideologies reinforces understandings of curricularization as not only resulting in texts which are literally called curricula but also resulting in wider reaching effects.

The redundancy of curricularized representations of language also helps to explain how the invention of languages is sustained. While scholars theorizing the invention of language include contemporary projects such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics in their analysis and do not locate invention as a remote historical event (Makoni & Meinhof, 2004; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005), this chapter further establishes the ongoing maintenance of language invention as an essential aspect of its impact in
schools. As representations of language separation and dominance were explicitly evident in school-required sources but also apparent in talk among teachers and students in Eva’s classroom as they discussed their own communication, the DLCS dual language allocation policy, just as in similar settings, continually recontextualized monoglossic understandings of bilingualism. This connection is not cause for criticism of dual language promoters or DLCS staff, but it is evidence of the challenges of bilingual teaching that seeks to center students in language minoritized and/or bilingual communities. Curricularization, schools and the planning resources therein ask educators to affix boundaries and categories on the language their students produced. In light of the endurance of these boundaries, projects that seek to counter the impact of these inventions will be better positioned for this goal by taking into account the redundancy of materially available representations of language in schools. Makoni and Pennycook (2007) propose that in projects of disinvention, “it is more realistic to think in terms of viable alternatives than solutions” (p. 30). In the remainder of the conclusion, I consider how these findings complicate typical solution-oriented understandings of teachers and monoglossic ideologies.

Evidence that monoglossic ideologies are curricularized independently and redundantly through multiple sources should inform approaches to teacher education and development seeking to enact alternative representations of language. Without past work in this area, this study could not have been developed, and in returning its findings to the tradition of teacher education for multilingual education, I seek to extend theory in this area to better achieve goals that have been so personally influential. For example, in a representative study, Hélot (2010) raises the issue of how to best support teachers by
“translating” sociolinguistic understandings of ties between standardization, the promotion of monolingualism, and nationalist political and ideological projects (p. 54). She examines the case of DB, a student teacher with “a personal experience of [Turkish and French] bilingualism” (p. 58) and who was seeking to support his young bilingual students to “participate in school activities” and acquire “basic skills” (p. 59). Hélot vividly presents DB’s struggle to consider incorporating multilingual teaching and interaction with his Turkish speaking students even has he recognizes he would have benefitted from the same in his own primary education. Hélot describes DB as having “not been aware he had internalized a covert policy forbidding the use of the home language” (p. 61). Furthermore, she argues that “DB’s position towards Turkish in his professional space is an example of how the French education system reproduces a monolingual ideology.” (p. 61). My study examines similar questions to Hélot’s and our arguments share a desire to foreground the institutional processes that result in normalizing monoglossic approaches to teaching. However, the approach of this study (partly aided by intermediately published work on curricularization) differs in that it brings closer attention specific encounters that teachers have with language ideologies or covert policies.

By specifying how these encounters do not only consist of “teacher vs. policy” or “teacher vs. education system” but rather multiply and in some ways unendingly “teacher and reading assessment,” “teacher and planning structure,” “teacher and materials availability,” “teacher and Pinterest” and so on, I show the non-dyadic and redundant ways in which teachers encounter the monoglossic and other marginalizing ideologies that obstruct the linguistically inclusive education hoped for by Hélot, myself, and other
scholars of language in education. Recognition of these redundant barriers cautions against strategy of seeking “solutions” to eliminate the hydra-like representations of language that so easily regrow elsewhere in a teachers’ responsibilities. This understanding of the problem suggests seeking “alternatives” by not only producing new counter-representations but ensuring they can take multiple redundant forms as well. Such alternatives pertain to other representations of language presented in Chapters 6 and 7, and I return to further implications of this work in Chapter 8.
Chapter 6: “There’s a science to this”: Genres in Eva’s classroom

When I was a second grade teacher, I wanted to have the kind of well-organized, tidy, and inviting classroom library that would support my students and make it look to me (and my colleagues) that I knew what I was doing running a classroom. I inherited a set of small red bins specifically produced for classroom organization, the perfect size for books. I had plenty of markers and masking tape, and I had seen labeled bins in other classrooms, bins with sensible labels like fiction, animals non-fiction, poetry, space, Clifford, and so on. But instead of starting with labels, I followed the suggestion of a literacy coach at my school, who told me sometimes teachers tried to get their students involved in setting up the library. So I chose to start the year not with a beautifully laid out classroom library, but with a pile of books and a set of empty bins. This way, the thinking went, students would get to talk a lot about books, get to exercise some autonomy, and be more invested in keeping the library tidy, maybe along with other areas of the classroom too.

This experience began with what has remained a powerful image for me: the pile of unorganized books surrounded by about two dozen children, choosing how to set up the bins under a little time pressure. The bins were useful, but their use required compromise. I remember thinking, Here’s two things you’re not supposed to do—judge books by their covers and put things ‘into boxes.’ Working with my students to organize the library was exciting and it got messy, but at the end of the day—literally by the end of that school day—we needed to have a classroom library that was usable and organized. We ended up putting some fairly distinct books in the same bin. Large categories like fiction did not come naturally to students, and my attempted introduction of realistic
fiction as a subcategory, which I had seen in other rooms, was no help. Ultimately, we had some fun, we made a mess, we cleaned up the mess, but we came away with a classroom library that looked a good deal like other libraries at the school. I was left wondering if either the students or I really got to exercise much autonomy after all.

In my later reflection on this experience as a researcher, I think of this exercise as an example of language ideologies in classrooms that simplify complexity to serve teachers’ needs. This study seeks to better understand the underexplored consequences of language ideologies in classrooms, while acknowledging the ways that many of them relate to keeping things organized and manageable, teachable and assessable. Genres, like languages, are typified widely beyond schools. There are other libraries besides classroom libraries, large ones that use the Dewey Decimal system or the Library of Congress system. Bookstores are organized into genres. We can use genre labels to tell other people what kind of books to get us for our birthday. The idea that texts are separable into genres does a great deal of work out in the world, much of which is essentially innocuous, or at least is not apparently related to educational problems. At the same time, conflict about the utility and boundaries of genres within literary publishing is a reminder that no genre is without contention and commentary (e.g., Le Guin, 2016). Some of the ideologies discussed in this chapter, such as the difference between fiction and non-fiction, are widely reproduced and not seen to be relevant to any pressing educational problem (meaning they may appear to be uninteresting targets of analysis). I show in this chapter that genres can have costs when they are aligned with structures of schooling and assessment. Specifically, many of the genre distinctions discussed in this chapter became barriers to students being able to show their understanding or
interpretation of texts. Practices about genres intended to serve as a scaffold for understanding ultimately served as a wall preventing academic success.

By examining these taken-for-granted representations of texts as assignable to genres, I pursue two goals. The first is to apply the core contributions of disinvention and curricularization scholarship to categories other than named languages. The second is to use a detailed and broad account of these ideologies to portray teachers’ work in a way that centers the negotiation of language ideologies inherent in their profession. This chapter presents ideologies dealing with genres, only a subset of the ideologies Eva negotiated, and it only addresses a few representations of genres that were present. While the representations of genres I discuss here do appear to have had negative impacts for Eva and her students, I do not argue that categorizing texts into genres is inherently good or bad. I set out to investigate these categories to denaturalize them, not to reject them, a similar goal to Makoni and Pennycook’s statement that while the collateral damage of the languages concept ought to be a focus of language policy researchers, it is not a helpful goal to return to an imagined “Edenic pre-colonial era” where communication would no longer be understood in terms of named languages (p. 3). I do not expect that investigating genres in schools would or could lead to a liberation from these categories. Teachers’ encounters with language ideologies can be resisted, and educational linguists ought to strategize for that resistance where the effects are particularly dire, but we all will continually be held accountable to respond in some way to our current language ideological landscape.

In the remainder of the introduction, I use Bakhtin’s work on speech genres and linguistic anthropological frameworks of enregisterment and metalinguistic labor to
further explain the conceptual stance of seeing genres as language ideological and based in social practices of recognition. I then further review the work of Valdés on curricularization, arguing how the insights of that framework can apply even outside of what is considered language teaching.

**Turning Genres into Curriculum**

Bakhtin (1986a) argues that our use of language is describable in terms of the numerous genres we regularly use. In defining the term *speech genres*, he wrote “each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres*” (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 60, emphasis in original). Bakhtin stresses that the range of possible speech genres is “boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible” (p. 60). No matter how many people engage in the use of such a type and no matter the range of signs it includes, such a type can still be considered a speech genre. Bakhtin himself acknowledged that “It might seem that speech genres are so heterogeneous that they do not have and cannot have a single common level at which they can be studied.” (p. 61)

Bakhtin’s work articulates the ways that communication with others is predicated on recognizable genres. Thus, schools must rely on typified language as well. Furthermore, and specific to this chapter, his combined theories of genre, text and utterance, and dialogism articulate the fundamentally social character of how we recognize texts. The dialogic nature of the utterance means that meaning is negotiated and heard, rather than transmitted. Thus, texts belong to genres in which they are recognized. From this perspective, genre is not best understood as an inherent characteristic of texts.
Bakhtin’s work in this area is now recognized as largely commensurable to (and influential of) linguistic anthropological research into processes of enregisterment (Agha, 2007a) and metalinguistic labor (Carr, 2011). The framework of enregisterment, seeing registers as functioning in much the same way as Bakhtin’s speech genres but not limiting them to linguistic signs alone, identifies the processes by which behaviors are stereotypically linked to personae, within a particular social domain (group of people). The three parts of a register’s recognition (behavior, domain, persona) are inextricably linked—none is definable alone. Agha’s work on this process is not particular to a scale or context. Metalinguistic labor, on the other hand, is defined by Carr as work that “protects, patrols, and produces […] highly naturalized assumptions about language” (p. 125). She focuses more closely on institutional settings where such labor is intentionally undertaken. Bakhtin’s work focuses on the argument that wherever and however we examine language, we will find it bundled into recognized genred forms. Agha’s and Carr’s work show how the development of that recognition required past social activity to make that genred link known to a community of people, even a community subsisting on just knowledge of that register alone.

Thus, when teachers and students enter a classroom and see carefully labeled red bins in the library, or hear texts described as fiction, non-fiction, fairy tales, folk tales, persuasive, or factual—all these designations and more denote past labor, past typification, past representation. In this respect, genres and languages are similar. Typification of both genres and languages has proceeded over a significant timespan, but the invention of most classroom genres is much more difficult to locate historically compared to the invention of languages alongside European colonialism discussed by
Makoni and Pennycook and others. However, through the process of *curricularization*, which I argue acts through representations both of languages and of genres, both inventions become contemporary in that they are available for Eva’s recontextualization.

As discussed in Chapter 5, curricularization was defined in terms of its specific use in language teaching and especially “the direct teaching of English in bilingual education programs and the teaching of Spanish as an academic subject to heritage students” (Valdés, 2015, p. 262). The DLCS dual language system is not a perfect match for this context as so many students were seen as English dominant, and thus not in need of English teaching. Yet at the same time, a commonly professed school-wide value at DLCS among the teachers was that “we are all language teachers.” This was understood to refer to the language learning within a student’s assigned dominant and non-dominant languages. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 5, representations of language dominance were continually recontextualized and applied to instructional decisions in myriad ways, so it would be fruitless to attempt to objectively determine when English was being taught or when Eva was merely teaching in English. Curricularization as a framework addresses precisely these and other ideological readings of student language use, readings made possible through metalinguistic labor within schooling and other related institutions.

Thus, while curricularization has been applied to specific educational contexts so far, it is a broadly applicable and generative perspective on schooling. I apply it here in this chapter to an area of elementary teaching that would also exist in monolingual education, for two reasons. First, curricularization is a special form of metalinguistic labor that draws our attention to the labor done to regiment language for the purposes of
schooling, which is not always in children’s interest. Valdés (2015, 2018) argues that curricularization is inseparable from language teaching as it typically is structured in schools, as a reflection of how schooling itself is structured, not as a reflection solely of some aspects of language teaching. In this way, curricularization not only sheds light on classroom consequences for children deemed language learners, it connects these consequences to some of the same process that have been identified as part of schools’ production of student failure in other areas of the curriculum as well (e.g., Anyon, 1980; Carrington & Luke, 1997; McDermott, 2015).

Second, curricularization presents insights on how schooling makes language learning and teaching more difficult. Valdés discusses a history of scholarly perspectives that note typical schools and classrooms are “less than favorable” for language learning (p. 262). As a teacher educator myself I recognize this theme (especially comparing first language acquisition environments to classrooms) as a common way of encouraging general education teachers to consider the needs of language learners in their classrooms. (e.g., Levine & McCloskey, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Valdés highlights these issues as part of showing the urgency of understanding the tradeoffs inevitable in curricularization of language. Again suggesting the broad applicability of curricularization, many of the critiques in second language acquisition literature are mirrored in sociocultural perspectives on literacy development and learning (e.g., Fisher & Frey, 2008; Gee, 2012; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The search for tradeoffs, complications, and tensions within language teaching and education broadly fits the mission of this study, which is not to catalog how a teacher like Eva makes right or wrong choices but rather to reveal how any instructional choice is
situated within a pre-existing and continually renewed infrastructure of representations of language. The primary contribution of curricularization to this study, and the reason for its importance in considering genres, is its insistence that classroom life cannot be fully understood without accounting for that infrastructure of representing and regimenting language.

**Genres in Eva’s Classroom**

In this section I analyze interrelated representations of genres and reading practices that involve designations of fiction and non-fiction, the three genres of “authors’ purpose” (*inform, persuade, and entertain*), and other textual genres like fairy tales and fables. This section considers the ways that Eva’s instruction recontextualized previously curricularized representations of all these genres. All of these genres were posed as emerging from inherent characteristics of texts and utterances rather than as the social practices of recognition that sociopolitical perspectives on language reviewed above would see them to be. In my analysis, I show how these representations of language arise from prior curricularization, and I describe the obstacles they ultimately present for Eva and her students. In all cases, representations of genres appear arguably stricter than intended, yet still aligned with the overarching purposes of standards and assessments to objectively define linguistic practices students are expected to identify or engage in.

**Fiction and Non-fiction**

As nonfiction and fiction are the broadest categories, they offer a good starting place for recognizing the language ideological basis for even familiar genres in classroom. Among school-required resources, categories of fiction and nonfiction are
implicated throughout Pennsylvania Academic Standards (PAS) and the DRA/EDL. The PAS contain two Standard Areas within English Language Arts\(^9\) for “informational text” and “literature,” which at a broad level are almost identical except for the name.

Reading Informational Text: Students read, understand, and respond to informational text – with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence. (CC.1.2)

Reading Literature: Students read and respond to works of literature - with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence. (CC.1.3)

Each of these areas contains 11 distinct standards, one of which appears to acknowledge some potential ambiguity about the division between literature and informational text by referencing both “literary non-fiction” and “informational text” as texts students should be reading (CC.1.2.2.L). Uniquely among the genres discussed here, the categories of literature and informational text were even included as separate components on students’ report cards (January 20, Fieldnotes). The inclusion of informational text in the elementary curriculum that has risen over the last 20 years is typically linked to claims about what is needed for future success, and relies on clear distinctions between genres (e.g., Duke, 2004). The DRA/EDL’s inclusion of nonfiction accords with specific standards for informational text or nonfiction in the standards of all Common Core states.

The DRA/EDL includes nonfiction texts\(^10\) at grade benchmark levels, including 16 (for first grade), 28 (for end of second grade), and 38 (for end of third grade). Fiction and nonfiction as they are posed in the PAS and DRA/EDL are types of text, but they are

\(^{9}\) The other Standard Areas in Grade 2 ELA standards are Foundational Skills, Writing, and Speaking and Listening

\(^{10}\) As a reminder, the DRA/EDL are administered using standardized texts that students have not read before.
not just independently typified. They are simultaneously described in terms of what kinds of tasks students will be asked to perform. The nonfiction DRA/EDL include text features like headings and charts, and on some nonfiction assessments students must successfully explain why those features were included in order to achieve a high score on the assessment, within the overall comprehension rubric, further discussed in Chapter 7. As designed, a student must pass an assessment of both a fiction text and a nonfiction at those levels in order to proceed to the next one. Likely influenced by trends affecting and affected by Standards’ inclusion of non-fiction or informational texts, the upcoming third edition of the DRA includes a nonfiction text for every reading level (Pearson Education).

Assessments like these, as part of curricularization, help to create or sustain norms about language that structure the work of teachers and the lives of students, as can be seen in the ways they are recontextualized in classroom materials that students will encounter more directly. To illustrate discussions in Eva’s classroom about the genres of fiction and nonfiction, I will discuss an anchor chart about those differences (shown in Figure 2), then present classroom discussion about these genres. This chart was added to the classroom wall before it was explicitly discussed. This anchor chart was one of many that I learned that Eva sourced from Pinterest or other online communities. This recontextualization brought a chart from online relatively unrevised from examples found on Pinterest, in both its visual design and content.

The distinction between “made up” and “not made up” is canonically definitional, although even this characteristic emerges from ideological representations of the
relationship between authors and texts (e.g., Bakhtin, 1986b; Foucault, 1998; Goffman, 1981; Trimbur, 1990). Other parts of the chart are tendencies at best rather than strict rules (e.g., having illustrations, photos, and a table of contents). Still other qualities, such as “read to enjoy” being limited to fiction, are so ideological that I was baffled when I first read the poster. (After all, some of us enjoy reading Bakhtin; you are occasionally enjoying reading the present work of non-fiction, I hope). I did not observe Eva use the terms “fact talk” and “story talk” in lessons on fiction and nonfiction or any other topic, beyond the introduction of the chart discussed below. While it is clear that those terms contribute to an enregisterment of the language forms used in fiction and nonfiction text, they lack any further explanation on the chart. In the days leading up to the chart’s presentation to the class, I wondered how Eva might explain each of the items if asked.
Seeing some potential problems with the fiction and nonfiction text features chart, and armed with a language ideological view of genres, it might be tempting to criticize Eva’s selection and recontextualization of such a resource. However, this criticism would be a failure to understand the conditions of the Pinterest chart’s creation and Eva’s need of it. In other words, instead of asking why Eva herself appears to have chosen to create a chart with objectionably inconsistent descriptions of apparently important genre categories, I argue that this chart should be understood as rooted in two tasks simultaneously: describing characteristics of texts and justifying academic tasks in an elementary classroom.

The same combination of genre and task is seen in the DRA/EDL and Pennsylvania Academic Standards. For example, the inclusion of headings as a characteristic of nonfiction aligns with a Common Core State Standard (National Governors Association, 2010) on the use of such text features:

Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.5)

In turn, this standard appears to serve as the basis for the relevant Pennsylvania standard:

Use various text features and search tools to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently. (CC.1.2.2.E)

Other traits listed in the chart that would later become (or were already) lessons in Eva’s classroom (as would be standard in many other primary classrooms across the US) include “Photos, diagrams, charts, etc.;” “table of contents;” “Index, glossary, bold words, labels;” “Beginning, middle, end;” “characters, setting;” and “problem, solution.” In Eva’s introduction of this chart to her class, the same combinations of task and genre are recontextualized in her and Carmen’s discussion of the features for students. Even
when she finds occasion to subtly critique or adjust some aspects of the chart, she continues the recontextualization in ways aligned with eventual tasks.

Eva begins the lesson by explaining to me how it came about. It built from student responses from the day before, when I had not been present. Well aware of my interest in her planning, Eva specifically addresses the background as being helpful for my understanding. Interwoven with this explanation, she writes a learning target on the board.11 This leads to an exchange with Francisco about the meaning of the word *characteristics*, key to representing genres of text, and also common to other lessons so far in the year on characters in fiction (as *character traits*) and on the differences between various animals:

**Eva:** Alright, so I’m going to write the learning target on the board. This is something that went really bad yesterday, Mr. Lewis, so I don’t know if it’s important to have some background information. But yesterday this did not go well at all and on my five mile run I was thinking, “How can I make this lesson better?” And ((clears throat)) ((begins writing))

**Ss:** ((reading along with Eva’s writing)) I… can...

**Eva:** ((continues writing))

**S(?)**: identify.

**Eva:** a word that came up this morning in Spanish identify.

**Ss:** [identify.]

**Eva:** [beautiful.]

What does identify mean?

**Rafael:** find.

**Eva:** find. You said it? Identify— when you find. When you look for something, and you find it. “Oh, I…” You identify, okay? ((reading learning target)) “I can identify…” ((continues writing)) ((continues writing)) (18s) ((Ss inaudibly chatter))

**Francisco:** characteristics.

**Eva:** Beautiful. Characteristics. What do the word characteristics mean? Francisco.

**Francisco:** A list of things that that are about the— person or animal.

**Eva:** So, we can find characteristics about anything,

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11 Displaying learning objectives is commonly required of teachers, as it was at DLCS.
not necessarily persons and animals. Characteristics means a list of features. A list of things that, um, something needs to have to belong to that category. So I can identify characteristics of…? ((writing))

Eva: [[nonfiction texts.]]

Ss: [[nonfiction texts.]]

Francisco’s impulse to understand the concept of characteristics as applying to very narrow contexts, such as describing people and animals, rather than anything at all, is emblematic of struggles students had throughout the year with category-oriented lessons. Unlike Eva, they did not appear to treat categorization as self-evidently useful. With the learning target written, she returns to the theme of how yesterday’s lesson didn’t work, shifting her address mainly to her students rather than addressing me.

Eva: Alright?
Now, we started the lesson and the lesson did not go well because Ms. Eva and Ms. Carmen– Ms. Carmen and Ms. Eva– assumed that you knew what were the differences between fiction texts and nonfiction texts. […] ((Eva arranges for all students to be able to see her anchor chart)) Alright so Ms. Carmen and I, she will do fiction, I will do nonfiction. We will speak about how it’s different. So, alright, so Ms. Carmen can have a fiction book to demonstrate. And I’ll have a nonfiction book to illustrate so it’s clear. So before we remember what were the characteristics of nonfiction text features, let’s talk about what makes a book a fiction book– or a text a fiction book, and what makes a book nonfiction or a text not fiction.

Eva explains the purpose of the lesson as making up for students not knowing the differences between fiction and nonfiction texts. Thus, she positions these genres as important, but largely unknown for students. Immediately following, Carmen begins with the fiction characteristics, at first combining the first two on the chart:

Carmen: So, a fiction book is made up. It’s story talk, meaning it’s like–
Eva: Oh, so you do one, I do the other.
Carmen: OK, sorry.
Eva: because I– ((suckteeth))
I found a lot of anchor charts that said “that is not real.”
And you said that. You said,
“A fiction book is not real
and a nonfiction book is real.”
I don’t like that.
I feel it’s better–
and this is this was on an anchor chart–
the fiction stories–
Yes, they are made up.
Okay like an author sat down one day and said
“Well, I would like to write about a boy who’s really naughty and–
but he’s very sweet–”
and David Shannon decided to write the David book.
And we know that the David book is fiction because David does not exist,
so it’s made up.
Um, non-fiction books are not made up.
No body made them up.

Gabriela: It’s real. They [[got pictures.]]
Eva: [ [[they are true.]] You can, you know? [[They are not made up.]]
Gabriela: [[Tigers are real,]] lions are real.

(October 27, Audio Recording 1, 3h14m41s)

Eva takes care to make a distinction between categories of real and not real on the one hand and made up and not made up on the other. In explaining this distinction to her students, she reveals concerns of accuracy that guide her planning as she makes use of teacher-explored sources that offer her multiple possibilities (as opposed to school-required resources, which provide fewer choices of representations).

The choice between what she sees as more and less accurate definitions of fiction and nonfiction, however, exists within a broader context in which she is required to assess students against norms that inescapably require strict categories of fiction of nonfiction. This requirement is most directly expressed in Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the DRA/EDL, but it is also echoed by school-offered sources like Reading A-Z or Writesteps, sources of lesson planning materials and texts for students that are designed to follow representations of genred language.
It is not clear at this point in the lesson how well students are understanding Eva’s concerns. Gabriela herself keeps using the terminology *real* to show her understanding, perhaps indicating that she is not yet grasping Eva’s distinction between *made up* in the sense of a created story versus *not real* in the sense of a text that represents impossible things. Her concerns resonated with a memory of discussing fiction and nonfiction from my own teaching, one that I have recalled often after I left classroom teaching. After reading a picturebook dramatizing the Apollo 11 moon landing, I asked students if they could say if the book was fiction or nonfiction, a question aligned with our curriculum. Lucía, the student who wrote her own doctor’s note, was the first student to answer, and she said that it was fiction because people can’t go to the moon. I awkwardly responded with an attempt to positively acknowledge her understanding of the category of fiction while also correcting her understanding of the reality of the moon landing. This exchange stuck with me in part because at the time I felt foolish for asking a question that I hadn’t realized depended on a student’s background knowledge and not the understanding I was attempting to assess. Watching Eva, I empathized with her attempt to address potential ambiguities in the definitions, partly by highlighting the importance of readers’ knowledge about the creation of a text, or what exactly happened when “an author sat down one day.”

With an explanation of this definitional issue accomplished to Eva’s satisfaction, she and Carmen continued down the chart, addressing *story talk* and *fact talk* next, which proves difficult to describe for both teachers:

**Carmen:** For fiction books we use story talk.

(2s) Meaning, like– ((looking at Eva))

((laughter / inaudible))

**Eva:** The characters talk:
Carmen: It’s like a story, like using your imagination.
Eva: Um, fact talk.
S? A fact.
Eva: fact is something that is true.
So, here, the Tigers, uh don’t really talk to each other
S? They can’t talk
and say
“Hey for Ms. Eva,
you know she’s always so nice
and some students give her attitude,”
“Yeah, I know, I’m smelling trouble coming up.”
“I see trouble.”
“I smell it.”
Now they’re talking about facts,
they’re saying mira los ojos, [look at the eyes]
mira la nariz, [look at the nose]
and it tells you
los tigres tienen un buen sentido de ((dramatic sniffing sound)) olfato [tigers have a
good sense of smell]
Ss: Smell.
Gabriela: They got good smell.
Carmen: ((showing her fiction book)) While here we have a cat that talks,
and we all know cats don’t talk
Joseph: They don’t talk!
Gabriela: The Cat in the Hat.
Eva: OK?
Joseph: Pete the Cat.
Antonio: The Cat in the Hat is real!=
Carmen: OK
Antonio: =I seen the movie when he chopped his tail off
and then he went like ((physical demonstration))
Joseph: What the!

Carmen stumbles on defining story talk, and at the time I thought that I would have
stumbled as well, since the chart poses the existence of story talk as self-evident yet
offers no elaboration. Is story talk the sort of talk one uses to tell a story? Such a
circuitous definition points to the centrality of recognition in defining genres. We all
engage in the continued enregisterment of fiction generally and storytelling acts
specifically every time we compliment or critique the language an author chooses to tell a
story. But the terms story talk and fact talk attempt to freeze all those acts of social
engagement around texts into characteristics of two mutually exclusive genres. Eva steers
the conversation in the direction of when “the characters talk” but this offers an odd
contrast to the inclusion of facts in nonfiction, her explanation of fact talk. Carmen continues what appears to be an attempt to describe story talk by pointing to the socioculturally embedded ways of using language that push readers to use their imagination.

Following this, as students find room to participate, they show themselves easily able to think of counterexamples to Carmen’s declaration that cats do not talk. These students who join in show they can recall books they have read and argue for distinct interpretations of how to best describe or compare them. Antonio’s assertion that The Cat in the Hat (as a character) is real could be influenced by the fact that the 2003 movie he references is a live action adaptation, with the Cat in the Hat portrayed in costume by Mike Myers alongside human actors on a set (based on a trailer, it appears that the rule-abiding Fish is the only CGI character). Joseph’s comment “What the!?” questions Antonio’s assertion, but as silly as it may seem to Joseph or others to claim that the Cat in the Hat is real, his equating of a live-action film with realness in a discussion of fiction and nonfiction actually aligns with the distinction of “illustrations” vs. “photos, diagrams, charts, etc.,” discussed a little later in the conversation.

However, at this point, neither teacher picks up on any of these student comments, and the lesson continues from here:

**Carmen:**  Fiction book.  
You read it to enjoy it.

**Joseph:**  Yeah.
You grab a book and you’re like
“This is like a fun book,
let me read it, so I can laugh.”

**Eva:**  And I had a little bit of a problem with this
because growing up I— I—
So, for example, I love to read about the true story of queens and kings.
A lot of people that have to do research on that.
I don’t want to read about queens=
Antonio: ((loudly)) Queens are–
Eva: =You are interrupting me.
    I don’t really want to read about this queen, I’m gonna have to do a paper on it, so–
    Some of us, we love tigers so much that we can say
    “But I love, I enjoy reading about tigers.”
    But nonfiction books, a lot of them, you read them to learn.
    But you can enjoy them too.
    So this one, it’s a little bit tricky.
    But it cou-. Be–
    But if you were to say,
    “Well I don’t–”
    I mean, I’m sorry.
    Maes– ((apparently saying half the word maestra [teacher]))
    I’m going to be very honest.
    Would I pick a book about tigers to read it to enjoy?
    No, I would not.
    But I would pick The Cat in the Hat.
    But maybe Hector–
    and it’s not a maybe because I’ve seen him–
    Hector most likely will pick before
    this book to read before he picks that one.
    Because he is a true-born paleontologist.
    He loves animals.
    He wants to research ah–
    dead animals like dinosaurs
    and find out more about them.
    [[So this one–]] ((negative facial expression at fiction book.))
Antonio: [[Yeah me too]]
Joseph: That’s not nice
Eva: So this one– Yes it is.
Carmen It’s an opinion.
Eva: It’s a little bit of an opinion, OK?

(October 27, Audio Recording 1, 3h17m25s)

After the assistant teacher Carmen dutifully elaborates the “read to enjoy” characteristic,
Eva again destabilizes the distinction and uses both her own reading habits and those of
Hector to question the distinction between reading to enjoy and reading to learn. While
Eva sometimes chose to edit and combine anchor charts that she sourced from Pinterest
(March 9, Fieldnotes), the acknowledgment that “it’s a little bit tricky” did not cause her
to omit the read to enjoy / read to learn distinction from her version of the chart. Joseph
reacts to Eva’s ventriloquated frown (on behalf of Hector as a participant example) at the
fiction book she held, claiming it’s not nice to so negatively regard a book. Carmen and
Eva use this opportunity to reinforce a closely related categorization of the genres of fact and opinion.

As the discussion of the chart continues, at several points further, characteristics are tied to academic tasks. For example, when describing the “read in any order” characteristic of nonfiction texts, Eva tied that style of reading to a school project:

**Eva:** Non-fiction books, they have something that we will talk about in one minute, that you don’t have to read them in order. Because maybe for your project you only need to write or read about how tigers eat, so you can go to… ((models using the table of contents))

(October 27, Audio Recording 1, 3h19m25s)

Later, a reference to *characters* and *settings* caused Gabriela to respond with her partial rote memory of the definition of setting, the subject of lessons earlier in the year where students were shown the definition and demonstrated their knowledge both by stating the definition and by identifying the settings of texts the class had read:

**Carmen:** Fictional books have characters. So like you have the Cat in the Hat and the kids. We have a setting.

**Gabriela** Setting is a stage.

**Eva:** Yes. Where the action takes place. You’re on fire, sister. Here we go. Turning around for honor roll. And if not honor roll, great grades.

(October 27, Audio Recording 1, 3h21m11s)

Eva first extends Gabriela’s answer to the full definition before acknowledging the response with heaping praise. The remaining discussion of the chart took each text feature in turn and pointed out examples in the book Eva was using to demonstrate features or other books she and Carmen had at hand. The purpose of this review was to set up the students to complete a “nonfiction text features scavenger hunt” using a worksheet obtained online from Teachers Pay Teachers, either by Eva and Carmen or Lupe, who also taught English content on the second grade team. The worksheet, shown
in Figure 2 below, asks students to find examples of a table of contents, bold print, photographs, maps, captions, labels, and a glossary.

![Non-fiction scavenger hunt worksheet](image)

**Figure 3: Non-fiction scavenger hunt worksheet**

Fitting the learning target, the worksheet asks students to identify and locate nonfiction text features, but it does not assess students’ use of the features to aid in their understanding of the texts. As she described in the opening to the lesson, Eva planned the discussion of the characteristics of nonfiction and fiction as essentially a remedial lesson in preparation for this worksheet, so knowledge of these genre differences was seen as an essential prerequisite (or at least an important aid) to more advanced work with these texts.
This illustrative discussion shows how Eva’s representations of fiction and nonfiction responded to several aspects of related curricularization. Fiction and nonfiction are invoked by relatively general standards, to which exacting and detailed assessments like the DRA/EDL respond as well. These school-required sources pose the existence of separate genres of fiction and nonfiction and identify essential features that students must recognize and describe in order to be understood as competent readers of those genres. Motivated by a desire to scaffold necessary student understanding, Eva recontextualizes representations of those essential features through the anchor chart. Some of these features prove resistant to simple explanation (e.g., story talk vs. fact talk), and others are seen as in need of revision by Eva (e.g., read to enjoy vs. read to learn). Students have some opportunities to give input on what they notice about texts or other ways they make sense of fiction and nonfiction distinctions, but their comments are largely not responded to by Eva and Carmen. The lack of engagement with students during the discussion (with the notable exception of when Gabriela quoted parts of a definition for the term setting) is likely influenced by Eva’s description of the class as not knowing the difference between the two genres, perhaps reinforced by statements like Antonio’s somewhat puzzling assertion that The Cat in the Hat was “real.” However, since the representations of fiction and nonfiction are not only thoroughly recontextualized in available school materials but also accompanied by numerous future assessment tasks that require students to precisely describe nonfiction text features (as on the DRA/EDL), the genres as represented through the curricularization that precedes Eva’s lesson admit little opportunity for student discussion and the possible interpretive conflict that it could invite.
Author’s Purpose

Although seemingly less expansive than representations of fiction and non-fiction, author’s purposes activities were similar to lessons on fiction and non-fiction in that they too implied universal claims about how texts were constructed. Activities in which students were asked to assess the author’s purpose combined several representations of language. Author’s purpose activities involved claims that writers write with specific purposes, which characterized texts so deeply that these were also claims about what kinds of texts exist. Author’s purpose activities also involved claims about what good readers should do to determine an author’s purpose whenever they read. But students are also told that these purposes can be three things: “persuade / persuadir, inform / informar, and entertain / entretenir.” Author’s purpose work took place in English and in Spanish. Eva spent about 4 weeks incorporating author’s purpose activities into literacy and related PYP content, through readalouds, shared reading activities, occasional targeted worksheets, and goals for guided reading sessions.\textsuperscript{12} In all these formats, students were asked to define the term “author’s purpose” or to explain which of the three purposes characterized the purpose behind a given text.

The basis for author’s purpose activities in the standards or other school-required sources is atypically unclear compared to other cases. The decision to focus on the PIE purposes occurred previously at the grade level, in meetings prior to the data collection period, by which time all second grade team members took author’s purpose as centrally

\textsuperscript{12} Readalouds include a teacher’s reading of a book to a group of students, typically the whole class. Shared reading is also a whole class activity, but involves students reading text with support, or reading chorally together. Guided reading is focused small group instruction where all students have their own text and read independently, then discuss the book together.
including the PIE triad. (As I return to later, by the end of the year there were plans to replace author’s purpose activities with ’author’s point of view’ activities.) The resources that had most helped Eva in the past to define the three purposes, and which she continued to rely on, were concise student-friendly descriptions of the three author’s purposes she and her second grade teammates expected students to recognize. These descriptions are not supplied by the PA Academic Standards, and they were sourced primarily from Pinterest and other online sources like Teachers Pay Teachers.

In the rest of this section, I first explain what definitions were used in Eva’s classroom and how they were recast from teacher-explored and school-required sources, then I show how these strict definitions made instructional conversation around relevant issues difficult. Lastly, I further consider what prior recastizations led to the ubiquity of such strict representations of language.

**Persuade, inform, entertain.** Definitions of the three purposes were present most prominently in anchor charts in many forms in the classroom. An English language poster, shown in Figure 5, contained definitions for *inform* and *entertain.* I did not observe Eva discuss this chart in a lesson like the fiction and non-fiction discussion presented earlier, but its description of informative and entertaining texts is strict in ways that could present similar problems if the categories were taken to be mutually exclusive.

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13 The chart is split in half horizontally, with the headings “Inform” and “Entertain” as titles for each half, with the reminder “don’t forget to show the proof” printed underneath them. The bullet points under “Inform” read “Is it non-fiction? Does it give me facts? (that can be proven!) Does it only have real people, things, places? Did I learn something new?” The bullet points for “Entertain” read “Is it fiction? Did it make me happy, sad, or curious? Does it have rhyming words. Did the author tell a story?”
The chart in Figure 4 forms the image of a foot because foot is the English translation of the Spanish word pie. (English language charts found on Pinterest that discuss these three author’s purposes often include images of pies.) Spanish-language charts for US standards were abundant online because of the growth of dual language classrooms responsible for similar standards as Eva was. As a reminder, Pennsylvania adapted and revised the Common Core State Standards (sometimes only slightly revised, as seen in excerpts presented in this chapter), so Eva’s potential Pinterest community is much larger.

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14 The chart’s contents are organized in a line drawing of a person’s right foot. In the big toe is written “Propósito del autor. la intención del autor cuando escribe” [Author’s purpose. the intention of the author when they write]. On the four toes, an uppercase P, I, and E, with the words “persuadir, informar, entretenier” written beneath them. The three definitions are written in the space making up the body of the foot. “Persuadir: El autor te trata de convencer, de hacer o creer algo. Informar: El autor te da información sobre un tema. Entretener: El autor nos cuenta un cuento o historia divertida (o miedo)” [Persuade: The author tries to convince you to do something or think something. Inform: The author gives you information about a topic. Entertain: The author tells us a story or a fun narrative (or a scary one).]
than other teachers in Pennsylvania alone. Eva’s Spanish-language author’s purpose poster was directly inspired by Pinterest search results.

Figure 6 is one of the top search results on Pinterest for “propósito del autor,” and was part of Eva’s inspiration for her chart. She has chosen to write specific definitions of

15 The chart is cut in the shape of a person’s right foot. In the big toe is written “Propósito del autor,” and on the four toes, from left to right, “persuader, informar, entretenerte, expresar sentimientos.” [author’s purpose; inform, entertain, express feelings]. The text in the body of the foot shape reads: El propósito del
the three purposes (persuade, inform, and entertain), rather than a definition of author’s purpose (propósito del autor), but has retained the visual design. Part of the definition on the left, “un autor puede tener una o mas razones para escribir” (an author can have one or more reasons to write) was not kept and wasn’t part of the lessons in Eva’s classroom.

Another difference is that the Pinterest propósito del autor anchor chart includes the purpose of “expresar sentimientos,” [express feelings] which was not included on Eva’s chart.

The closest apparent basis in Common Core standards for activities to identify author’s purposes consists of the following:

Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.6)

This is a CCSS, not a Pennsylvania standard, which doesn’t have any explicit author’s purpose standard. The most relevant standard quoted in second grade planning documents is this one:

**CC.1.4.2.A: Write informative/explanatory texts** to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. [emphasis added]

Only the bolded portion was present on team unit planning documents. While it invokes the existence of texts that aim to inform, it does not ask that students identify when this is so. In fact, as a writing standard, it imagines the students themselves as authors doing the informing. As I show below, the distinctions between author’s purpose activities in Eva’s classroom was quite strict, more so than the relevant CCSS standard, which includes ‘answer, explain, describe’ as possible main purposes of an informational text. There is

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autor es la razón por la cual un autor escribe un texto. Un autor puede tener una o más razones para escribir. Esas razones pueden ser: persuadir, informar, entretenér, y expresar sentimientos.” [Author’s purpose is the reason why an author writes a text. An author can have one or more reasons for writing. These reasons can be: to persuade, to inform, to entertain, or to express feelings.]
also additional space for complexity in the mention of a main purpose as if it could have multiple secondary purposes. As in other cases where Eva and her colleagues desired more clarity and specificity, Pinterest served as a ready source of additional representations of language beyond those contained in school-required sources.

Teacher-explored resources contributed to the curricularization of PIE only to the extent that explanation of PIE was needed, which was a contingent curricular decision at DLCS reportedly slated for change. Through a decision process not clearly described to Eva and me, curriculum team members had been discussing focusing on “author’s point of view” rather than “author’s purpose” in the future, across the grades that dealt with those activities. The members of the language team who were responsible for these kinds of curricular decisions said that author’s purpose was “too surface.” The second grade team did not make the switch during the data collection period but expected to in the following year. Eva wasn’t involved in this decision and was not particularly invested in understanding the change, owing to her expectation that she would be reassigned to a cross-grade special education role.

During the year of the study, Eva focused on the PIE version of author’s purpose that had also been a part of her teaching second grade the previous year. This was a unit where it often seemed to her that students were struggling to understand the content. As I show next, part of this struggle seems to originate from the difficulty inherent in applying strict essentialist categories to complex and socially situated writing and reading practices.

**Author’s purpose activities and the ambiguous worksheet.** Over the course of many lessons, Eva typically referred to there being three author’s purposes, asking
questions like “How many author’s purposes do we have?” (December 15, Fieldnotes).

Some students showed they could recite the focal purposes when reminded, but this did not necessarily lead to discussion of the meaning of these purposes, as can be seen in this exchange between two students seated next to each other, of whom the first to speak has just finished reading a book during independent reading in the morning:

Student A: This was entertaining.
Student B: Information! Persuade!
Student A: Nuh-uh!

Fleeting exchanges like this one were common and likely contributed to the difficulty that students had being recognized as understanding the ways that author’s purpose activities represented genre (December 19, Fieldnotes).

The class’s encounters with an author’s purpose worksheet further illustrates what happens when strict genre boundaries are used as the basis of understandings of reading. This worksheet, completed by students as formative assessment, was given well into the unit on author’s purpose. It contained three short paragraphs in Spanish with simple illustrations. At the top of the page, the three purposes were listed in a word bank, meaning that each purpose needed to be identified once and only once. Figure 7 reproduces the main text of the worksheet and provides a translation into English:

El reciclaje es importante. Todos los días tiramos cosas que están vacías, rotas, usadas o no deseadas. El reciclaje transforma estas cosas en cosas nuevas y útiles. El reciclaje utiliza mucho menos dinero, energía y ahora mucho los recursos naturales de la Tierra.

Recycling is important. Every day we throw away things that are empty, broken, used, or unwanted. Recycling transforms these things into new and useful things. Recycling uses much less money, energy, and it saves more of the Earth’s natural resources.

El Pastele es el postre más delicioso. Es dulce y sabroso. Hay tantos sabores diferentes como chocolate, vainilla e incluso sabores de fruta. No tiene que ser un cumpleaños para que comas pastel. ¡El pastel puede ser un postre diario!

Cake is the most delicious dessert. It is sweet and tasty. There are many different flavors, like chocolate, vanilla, and even fruit flavors. It doesn’t
have to be a birthday for you to eat cake. Cake can be an everyday dessert!

Once upon a time there was a duende, who had an ant as a pet. He loved his little pet so much that he would give her what she wanted to eat. The ant would devour it, lick her lips and ask for more. The more he fed the ant, the bigger she was. Until one day the ant didn’t even fit into the bedroom, and the duende had to give it to the zoo.

Figure 7: Reproduced “Propósito del autor” worksheet text

This sheet served as an individual assessment of how well the students were understanding the concept.

But Eva encounters a problem as she starts reading the example and starts to see it as ambiguous.

Eva: OK. El primero… (5s) ((begins reading)) “El reciclaje…” ((turns to assistant teacher Carmen, lowers voice)) Este es difícil, no?

Carmen: ((questioning look))

Eva: Estos son muy difíciles, porque ni yo misma sé esto, qué es informar o persuadir?

Carmen: ((inaudible)) ((says it’s informar))

Eva: ((to class)) So—

Carmen: ((inaudible)) ((further explanation))

Eva: Tu no sabes nada de reciclaje, OK?

No sabes nada de reciclaje. Vamos a leer.

OK. First… (5s) ((begins reading)) “Recycling…” ((turns to assistant teacher Carmen, lowers voice))

This is hard, right?

These are really hard, because even I don’t know this is this inform or persuade?

OK?

You don’t know anything about recycling. Let’s read.

You don’t know anything about recycling.

(January 10, Fieldnotes, Audio Recording 1, 1h53m17s)

While skimming ahead while she starts reading, Eva notices a source of potential confusion. Turning to her assistant teacher, she tries to work out how to resolve this ambiguity. This assessment was given overlapping with a social studies unit on natural resources, part of the PYP unit Sharing the Planet, and practically every other time students had read or talked about recycling, it was to persuade them that recycling was
good and that they should do it. A writing assignment they had already begun work on was to write to the Assistant Principal to persuade her to make recycling a school rule. As indicated by conversation between Eva and Carmen after students started working, Eva understood that this text offers both information about recycling and reasons to participate in it. In the brief aside between Eva and Carmen during the instructions, Carmen points out that the second paragraph (about eating cake) is unambiguously persuasive, thus by process of elimination the first must be informative. To resolve the ambiguity, Eva tells the students in the last line they don’t know anything about recycling, even though they know a lot, because that might clue them into all the information the paragraph is offering.

Enough students provided incorrect answers on this worksheet for Eva to still take goals of the unit as still unmet. Producers of the worksheets and anchor charts that Eva used would likely acknowledge that they simplified issues for the benefit of students, as Eva herself noted. But in the discussion of this worksheet, the ambiguities loomed so large as to warp the task into one that was easiest to approach if students ignored their background knowledge, even though using background knowledge in interpreting a text is an important reading practice in itself, that Eva supported students to practice on other occasions. But in using these author’s purpose distinctions strictly, Eva is satisfying the standards, teaching in accordance to an interpretation agreed upon at in-school planning, and satisfying schooling’s demand for assessable language skills. Once again, strict representations of genred linguistic categories ultimately serve to construct students as not understanding target content. It also can make teaching them quite difficult as
teachers like Eva attempt to rationalize categories so strict that they present barriers to understanding.

**Why PIE?** Author’s purpose activities quickly drew my attention during data collection. Prior observation of other DLCS classes suggested author’s purpose activities tended to make strong claims about language, reminding me of many issues in language arts that teachers discuss amongst ourselves as “helpful simplifications.” Given the problems caused by adopting a strict representation of language in the case of the Eva’s use of the PIE format, I sought to understand the origin of this model. The PIE format is ubiquitous in teacher-explored resources like Pinterest. In a Pinterest search conducted January 2019 for “author’s purpose,” of the first 40 results, 26 results were materials related to “persuade, inform, entertain,” 9 results were paid ads for other classroom materials, and only 5 results were materials related to author’s purpose that include purposes beyond those three. The more extensive forms include a four item list, which includes ‘explain’ and a five item list, that includes ‘describe.’

While Eva’s most proximal planning source for the PIE format was Pinterest, it was unclear at first why Pinterest was rife with activities based on a representation of text genres not endorsed by CCSS. The “identify main purpose” standard quoted above does not directly require the strict regimenting of texts seen in classroom activities Eva supervised, which often included materials from online teacher-explored sources. The standards quoted in team planning material were also not a helpful clue in understanding the inspiration for activities on author’s purpose per se, but the fact that a writing standard was included there was a clue about the probable origin of the PIE format. While some events in this apparently largely unofficial curricularization will remain
unclear, I argue that the PIE representation almost certainly originates in the CCSS in Writing.

While the Common Core does not name author’s purposes to be discovered by readers, it does list five kinds of texts that students should be writing, across these three standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.1
Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2
Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3
Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

Each of these descriptions of text types comes with the key characteristics they will exhibit, to the exclusion of any sociocultural or interactional understanding of these purposes. Similar to the case of fiction and non-fiction, these genres are described in terms of measurable and demonstrable qualities, not practices of recognition or convention. This list of text types produces a more elaborated PIEE acronym if “opinion pieces” are understood as persuasive (P), the combined informative/explanatory are represented (IE), and “narratives” are understood as entertaining (E). Further supporting this conclusion, the PIEE occasionally preserved in online resources, such as the Spanish anchor chart Eva used as an inspiration, although in most resources we see the shortened PIE version. The individual identity of the person who developed either acronym (by introducing new terms for the Common Core types) is almost certainly impossible to recover, so it is only possible to speculate on choices leading specifically to PIE.
Dropping the E for explain could have been motivated simply by the desire for a shorter more mnemonic-friendly acronym or by a lack of clear distinction between informative and explanatory, although it is easy to find resources online that offer to describe to teachers and others the differences between informative and explanatory texts, indicating a community of teachers curious about the correct interpretation of CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2. It does not appear that Eva ever sought out such resources distinguishing inform and explain, since in a past DLCS decision, PIE became the focus of author’s purpose work in second grade. Today, the three letter acronym and its accompanying representation of textual genres has become so accepted that posters on Pinterest and other developers of educational materials search for the best way to present it in an attractive anchor chart or give students a way to practice recognizing these text types in a center¹⁶ activity. They do not in large part seek to suggest new heuristics for thinking about author’s purposes as text types.

The ubiquity of PIE ensured a similar kind of redundancy to this representation as was observed about representations of language dominance and language separation discussed in Chapter 5. Eva did not discuss any strong doubts about dividing author’s purposes in this way, although she did have to confront the problems of these strict definitions, as in the classwork described above. The main cause of obstruction for Eva and her students appears rooted in the ways that this theory of text types that students were to produce became constructed as knowledge about texts that students were asked to exercise in decontextualized ways. Although not directly supported by relevant standards,

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¹⁶ Centers are small-group student activities that they can do independently. Often when a teacher conducts small group instruction, all other students are rotating through work at centers.
author’s purpose activities were well-founded and widely available through other sources. While they involved problematically strict definitions of genres, the strictness of genres was not atypical of other aspects of the second curriculum or relevant school-required sources. The storytelling genres discussed in the next section, such as fairy tales and fables, showed similar patterns of strict categories making it harder for students to be recognized as competent.

**Fairy Tales and Fables**

Terms like “fairy tales” and “fables” are more traditionally attached to genres. Tracing these descriptions and related ones reveals similar dynamics as cases dealing with fiction, non-fiction, and author’s purpose. The questions, observations, and writing of Eva’s students were ultimately assessed according to strict representations of what fairy tales and fables were. The representations were strict in that fairy tale-ness and fable-ness were conceived of as qualities inherent to texts and objectively determinable. Where PA Standards as a school-required source were broad, additional specificity was developed at in-school processes and in Eva’s individual planning, aided by teacher-explored resources, chiefly Pinterest.

“I want you to write what types of stories you know.” Fairy Tales and Fables as categories of texts were discussed as part of the PYP unit How We Express Ourselves, for which the second grade team had developed units on storytelling traditions, which had the central idea of “People express their beliefs through storytelling.” Students would eventually work on two major projects, a fractured fairy tale (in English) and their own

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17 Fractured fairy tales, a term popularized by or developed in *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*, refer to a reimagined version of a classic story in which key details of character, setting, or plot are changed.
fable (in Spanish). Both projects were ones that had been done in second grade in at least the previous year, which Eva and Lupe wanted to maintain. Decisions about which writing assignments to keep were coordinated at the scale of an entire year. In fact, at a September Common Planning meeting, we discussed ways of doing a narrative so that the project could be different enough from the fractured fairy tale they would do so many months later.

As part of the beginning of the storytelling unit, Eva had planned a provocation lesson. The goal was to get students started thinking and talking about types of stories and for this perspective to be “brushed upon”\(^ {18} \) so that they would be ready to take up those differences in their own fairy tales and fables later in the unit. At this point, students have already spent about 10 minutes writing down “stories that you know” in table groups. Now Eva introduces a new question, about types of stories.

**Eva:** So, if you have space on your paper,
Let’s see how I can formulate this question.
I want you to write now, what type of stories you know.
And what type of stories is not the name of the story.
So if you already wrote like Pinocchio or Aladdin,
when we have— when we—
Those are the stories you know.
So when we—

**S?:** (inaudible)

**Eva:** OK. When we categorize these stories they go under uh, a genre.
So stories can be of different types of genres.
So, if you don’t know what I’m talking about,
if you cannot answer what type of stories you know, then leave it blank.
I’m like interested in that because
we’re going to be talking about how we can group stories and different types.
So write what types of stories you know.

**Joseph:** We already did it!

**Ss:** (begin talking in their groups))

**Eva:** (to class) Two minutes.
((to Mark, quietly)) It’s difficult.

**Mark:** Yeah.

(February 3, Audio Recording 4, 11m13s)

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\(^ {18} \) Transcription confirmed.
There’s already a clue that Joseph at least does not understand the prompt, since he claims that they already did what Eva is asking them. Continuing our conversation, I ask her what she hopes to cover.

**Mark:** So, do you all have in mind like the types that you’re trying to cover?

**Eva:** So we are going to cover like fairy tales and fables because they are part of—of like some of the stories that we’re going to read and then folktales. Even though they’re not going to be learning like specifically what are the characteristics per se.

Like it’s not going to be a test like “What’s the difference between a fairytale in a fable?” You know what I mean?

But to understand that they do have to have certain comp—certain elements.

To be considered that part of story.

And that’s going to be happening on, you know, maybe in story writing.

(February 3, Audio Recording 4, 12m50s)

By the time that Eva is calling students back to the carpet, I saw that while all students had written titles of stories, at least three groups had no list of types of stories ready.

**Eva:** Before we start with you telling me what are the names of stories you know, I’m going to start with the last question.

And I would like you to tell me what types of stories you know.

So all the stories that we are going to share today, they all are going to belong to a type. To a group.

And this- We were discussing with Mr. Lewis this is difficult because you might not know the type.

But, what did you write? What type of stories do you know? Jada.

**Jada:** I know:

**Eva:** We know:

**Jada:** We know The Boy Who Cried Wolf.

**Eva:** Those are titles of stories. (4s) Amaya?

**Amaya:** Moana.

**Eva:** Ah?

**Amaya:** [[Moana.]]

**Celestina:** [[Moana.]]

**Eva:** Qué— what is that?

**Amaya:** A movie— and a book.

**Eva:** So those are types— those are— uh— names of stories. Types of stories. Isaac?

**Isaac:** Miss Nelson?

**Eva:** That is the name of a story. Elena.

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19 My backchannels due to background noise have been omitted from this transcript.

20 This is a reference to *Miss Nelson is Missing*, written by Harry Allard and illustrated by James Marshall (H. Allard & Marshall, 1977). Its current publisher, Scholastic, provides the genre “Fiction” for this book on its online store, along with its DRA Level, Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Level, its Lexile measure, and suggested grade levels of Pre-K to 5 for readalouds.
Joseph is of course correct. While students successfully show they know many stories, they cannot successfully show they have knowledge of the genres Eva planned to discuss. At this point in the lesson, Eva changed course and shifted to trying to support students to ask questions about the types of stories they could not name. Students did not ultimately ask questions in the ways Eva sought. Chapter 7 discusses the ways that asking questions became constructed as a skill (including in this lesson). After the exchange about questions, which lasted several minutes, Eva shifts to providing the categories directly so that the class can focus on placing stories into the correct categories.

It was not unusual for Eva to involve me in this way in a class discussion by asking my opinion of a complex issue or confirming her understanding of a linguistic issue. This case was complicated for me because I recognized during the lesson that the confusion students were facing was strongly tied to the topic of my study. This lesson took place in February of the data collection year. I began data collection knowing that representations
of textual genres were deeply involved in elementary teaching and the second grade curriculum at DLCS. If I had had any doubt about including fairy tales and fables in the first writeup based on this study, it had been burned away by seeing the confused looks on students faces in the previous 20 minutes when they were asked to name types of stories. So when Eva asked me if I thought Disney Stories could count as a type of story, I felt responsible to give my best instructional rationale as fellow teacher, while at the same time respecting the basic idea of my host’s lesson, even though I could anticipate it becoming even more confusing. In my answer, I try to address the most urgent possible confusion, that depending on the categories Eva wanted to introduce, stories can belong in more than one category. I also tried to allow some space for thinking of genres as involved in social practices like recommendations.

Mark: Um, that’s a great question I was thinking about that because I know a lot– a lot of the students=
Eva: Mmm
Mark: =know a lot of Disney movies and Disney stories.
Eva: Mmm.
Rafael: Me too, we have a ((inaudible))
Antonio: Pinocchio
Mark: Um, if– if– we’re going off of what they know then that could be a good category. As long as we know there might be some stories that are Disney stories and fairy tales.
Eva: Yes. OK. So, let’s– Do we agree that we can make a category “Disney Stories”? Ss: Yes.
S?: Finding Dory.
Mark: Because it would make sense, Ms. Eva, to hear a student say, “I love Disney stories”
Eva: Yes.
Rafael: Me too!
Joseph: Yeah!
Mark: And then Rafael, so you know= ((Joseph and Rafael have a rapid, partly inaudible conversation))
Mark: Yeah.
Eva: I’m not sure why you were talking with Mr. Lewis is talking.
Mark: So, Rafael, Joseph, if I said “I love Disney Stories,”
You would know “Oh Mr. Lewis loves Aladdin, Mr. Lewis loves Moana, Mr. Lewis loves The Lion King, Mr. Lewis loves The Little Mermaid”= 
Celestina: [Mickey Mouse?]
Antonio: [What?]
Celestina: Mickey Mouse.
Mark: =because those are all Disney stories, right?
Eva: So.
Mark: So that would help us know some stories that fit that category, right?
Eva: Now, also, we have stories that— they are what we call folktales.
And folktales, remember how—
I’m loving how— I am— I am—
I’m really loving how you are being really good attention to this and there are
different types—
We’ve been talking in our meetings about how there are different types of inquiry
and investigations.
And when you are engaged like this, this is a really good investigation,
because right now you are all finding out all of us together that
all the stories that we’ve said are going to fall into one of these types of stories.
Okay?

(February 3, Audio Recording 4, 23m9s)

My justification for including Disney stories was that we could talk about Disney stories
(as by recommending them, or saying we like them) and be understood as pointing to a
specific range of work. There is no evidence that my point was taken up by the students.
In particular, Rafael’s reaction to my hypothetical quoted statement “I love Disney
stories” could indicate he was not understanding it as the hypothetical I intended it to be.
I interpreted Antonio’s surprised “What?” as a reaction to my saying I love The Little
Mermaid, a stereotypically feminine Disney movie. (I actually do not care for it.)
Ultimately, no stories were placed in multiple categories.

A few minutes later, at the end of drafting categories with the final list of folk
tales, fairy tales, Disney stories, and nursery rhymes, Eva then previews future discussion
about what makes stories belong in these different categories. She turns to the task of
having students contribute the list of stories they drafted into the categories that she
largely provided and made herself responsible for applying to the stories students would
supply.

Eva: So now has come the time
for you to share with me what are the stories that you know,
and I will do my best to put them under the category.

180
Hopefully, I will know under what category, under what type of story, your story goes. So let me start with Jada.

Eva: (5s) ((or Jada declines inaudible))

Eva: OK, let me start with Amaya.

Eva: (8s) (inaudible, Amaya is apparently not ready to respond)

Eva: OK. Can you please tell me the types of-- the stories that you know. I’m now asking you to tell me the name of stories that you know. Ian. On your paper. You have a paper.

Ian: Um:: (6s)

Eva: All right, Jada.


This starts out with a story that is easy to categorize and which they had read versions of in class. Next though, Joseph once again wants to add Miss Nelson is Missing to the list. However, this does not fit into any of the categories already listed on the chart. Eva quickly decides to add another, which she calls “fiction”

Joseph: Um, Miss Nelson?

Eva: So, I am going to have to create the category of (3.5s)

S?: Scary! (1.5s)

Eva: Of, um– (2.5s)

S?: Scary. (2.5s)

Eva: Miss Nelson is not a scar–

S?: Put [that stuffed animal] back [where you got it]. (2s)

Um, what about I’m going to write “fiction”

Ss: Oh.

Lucas: Yeah.

Eva: Fiction stories.

Celestina: Fiction and non-fiction.

Eva: Narrative.

S?: Frozen?

Eva: I’m going to put Miss Nelson. ((writes ellipses for the rest of the title)) Blah blah blah blah. Ian.

Ian: (((xx)))

Eva: Ah?

Ian: Cat in the Hat.

Eva: Cat in the Hat. Be another fiction story. ((writing)) Cat… in… the… Hat. Celestina.

Celestina: Um, Mickey Mouse.

Eva: Mickey Mouse would be a good example of Disney story. (2.5s)

Roxane: The Lion King?

Eva: The Lion King. I’m going to put it under Disney story.
The lesson closed shortly after. The ultimate listing on the chart paper is reproduced in Figure 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fairy Tales</th>
<th>Folk Tale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cinderella</td>
<td>The boy who cried wolf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinocchio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nursery Rhymes</th>
<th>Fiction Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humpty Dumpty</td>
<td>Miss Nelson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cat in the Hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pete the Cat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fables</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[no stories listed here]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disney Stories</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mickey Mouse</td>
<td>Frozen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the lion king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty &amp; the beast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(March 2, Photograph)

*Figure 8: Reproduction of “types of stories” chart paper*

Because students could name any story to try to add it to the chart, more and more categories had to be added. Another category, *fiction stories* in practice denoted “none of the above” but conventionally would have included everything on the chart.

Overall, the lesson did not go completely as Eva intended. At a later PYP meeting where the second grade teachers were tasked with reflecting on the How We Express Ourselves unit, Eva described feeling like this activity, which was intended as a provocation at the beginning of the unit was “very lame” because it only involved writing down what students were saying (March 9, Fieldnotes). As she also reflected to the team, she was subsequently convinced activities around the definitions of the storytelling
genres was worthwhile when towards the end of the unit six weeks later, many students, according to Eva, came to enjoy recalling the anchor charts that explained specific characteristics of fairy tales and fables. In the same meeting, she made it clear she believed that there was “a science” to demarcating the boundaries between fairy tales, fables, legends, and other genres, a conclusion supported by the wide reproduction of relevant anchor charts. In a follow-up interview that day, I asked her more about her anchor chart search process. She acknowledged that there was a danger in using online sources, since “these charts were created by people” comparing their sourcing to Wikipedia, an encyclopedia editable by anyone. Eva generally interpreted consistent Pinterest descriptions as authoritative. In other words, if a wide range of the online teacher community was invested in explaining the characteristics of a fairy tale or fable in specific ways, and there was a grade level consensus that these genres fit a larger thematic unit on storytelling, then it was sensible to use and apply the genre distinctions she found.

In the next section, I discuss more of the unit’s opportunities for Eva to apply the genre characteristics curricularized largely by Pinterest sources. These characteristics were sometimes recontextualized in ways that discouraged students from participating. I focus on the most confrontational recontextualization I recorded. I do so to argue not only that some recontextualizations of strict categories can have negative consequences for students but also that these recontextualizations are best understood as such in a context of intense curricularization and not understood as isolated to individual teacher choices.

**Lucas and the dragon.** The most vivid application of the standards of one of these genres occurred in feedback to a student, Lucas, on his fable project. As during
many writing workshop blocks, Eva was sitting at a student table with an empty spot. Students were working on various stages of their fable. Some were finished. Students who wanted to be cleared to advance to the next stage in the writing process had to bring their work to Eva to be approved, and in almost all cases, edited for conventions. When Lucas brought his writing to Eva, she quickly looked over his work and illustration. “Lucas,” she said, “A dragon is not an animal. This is not a fable.” Lucas walked away with a disappointed look on his face. It seemed it was too late in the project for him to change course, and he could have logically been expecting a poor grade. Dragons may be commonly found in stories called fairy tales, but fairy tales were the English writing assignment, not the Spanish one. While Lucas’s behavior often frustrated Eva for a number of reasons, their relationship alone does not explain why she applied a strict standard that resulted in Lucas’s work being discounted for not following genre conventions.

How did this happen? Understanding the genre of fables as a language ideological construction helps shed light on why this feedback seemed reasonable to Eva. I devote the rest of this section to examining descriptions of fairy tales and fables as text genres that were recontextualized in Eva’s classroom choices. First, I consider more of the pathway that led to the fable description being imposed on Lucas’s writing. I then discuss classroom and meeting discourse about how these categories were represented in Eva’s classroom.

Most proximal to Eva’s feedback to Lucas, we can consider the description of the fable project, as contained in the team’s planning documents:

Fable Project: In Spanish class, the students created a fable of their own. After reading and viewing some fables such as the turtle and the hare, the lion and the mouse, the crow
and the fox, amongst others, the students created their own fable following the following guidelines: The students had to pick between two or three animal characters, the problem in the story had to be clear (showing a character flaw such as selfishness, laziness, not sharing etc.), and a resolution in which the character’s flaw changed to a positive trait. Students’ work was graded based on their creativity, following writing conventions (beginning sentences with capitals, ending sentences with periods, correct spelling of basic sight-words, and ability to organize sentences into two paragraphs) and the ability to clearly develop the character’s flaw. (How We Organize Ourselves six week planner)

Notably, the rules of a fable are developed in the same breath as the characteristics of conventional writing. Including a dragon in your fable was a mistake just like misspelling a sight word would be. The inclusion of basic writing conventions into the assignment description fits Eva’s frequent reminders to her class about these issues. Her feeling that second graders should have good control of standard sentence capitalization and punctuation conventions aligned with the DLCS writing rubric, which places “uses end punctuation” and “uses capital letter” at the same stage as “writes at least one complete sentence to convey a message or information” at Stage 4, which would be in the middle to end of first grade. Since in terms of the content, students in Eva’s class were asked to do multi-paragraph stories, the fact that some were inconsistently using capitalization and punctuation was a source of frustration.

Additional instructions in the 6-week planning document included:

The students will create their own fable based on their personal experiences. They will describe animal characters’ feelings, thoughts and actions. They will relate events in action using sequence words: Había una vez, entonces, después etc.” [once upon a time, then, after]

The last direction there shows the genre-emblematic phrase ‘había una vez’ combined with far more mundane words that would also be emphasized in lessons on ‘beginning, middle, and end’ (recall that this is a characteristic of fiction from the anchor chart discussed previously in this chapter.) Similar English words often used as centerpieces in lessons on this topic include first, next, then, last. This way of representing desired
student language mirrors the description of the animal fable writing piece in that it closely links general content expectations with specific genre conventions. In both cases, these links tie curricularization of genre conventions to the curricularization of standard language ideology (as seen in punctuation conventions) and reasoning about the language involved in showing reading skills (as seen in the sequencing words).

For comparison to the more student-facing directions, these are the PA Standards listed in the 6-week planning document that relate to the fable project:

- CC.1.4.2.N Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters.
- CC.1.4.2.O Include thoughts and feeling to describe experience and events to show the response of characters to situations.
- CC.1.4.2.T With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
- CC.1.4.2.M Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
- CC.1.3.2.C Describe how characters in a story respond to major events.
- CC.1.3.2.A Recount stories and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- CC.1.3.2.H Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story by different authors or from different cultures.

None of these standards explicitly mention fairy tales and fables, so it might appear that it is not a requirement in PA to learn about them. However, the standard about comparing and contrasting versions of the same story from different cultures is difficult to imagine without the availability of multiple culturally inflected versions of stories like Little Red Riding Hood, such as Lon Po Po by Ed Young (2012). (Pinterest searches conducted for terms ‘Cinderella text set,’ ‘red riding hood text set’ and ‘fairy tale text set’ readily produce results of suggested books.) Due to the influence of the Aesopica (known as Aesop’s Fables), which includes moral advice as the closing to each of the story, ‘morals’ are understood to be a part of the stories labeled today as fables. Comparing these PA standards to the Common Core Standards on which they are based bolsters this connection, as seen by the bolded text representing text omitted from the PA standards:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. [emphasis added]

Decisions involved in the changes from CCSS to PAS is one of many examples of metalinguistic labor which took place in a related educational institution but was not recovered in data collection for this study and may never have been recorded at all.

Perhaps authors tasked by state authorities did not find fables and folk tales important, or perhaps they wanted to remove the reference to ‘diverse cultures.”

As noted above, Eva’s reflections at a PYP meeting on this unit make clear her faith in online descriptions of the genres comes in part from the availability of consistent anchor charts in online sources like Pinterest, combined with the need to design assessments of the fairy tales and fables genres. Figure 9 shows Eva’s anchor chart about the traits of fairy tales. 21

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21 The anchor chart is organized around a main title in the center written in stylized, colorful script: “¿Qué hay en un cuento de hadas?” [What’s in a fairy tale?] Around this central question are stems to the following ascribed traits of fairy tales: “bien vs. mal,” “cosas vienen en 3s o 7s,” “animales que hablan,” “final feliz,” “Realeza: reyes, reinas, principes / princesas,” “Un principio especial: Había una vez…,” and “magia.” [good vs. evil, things come in threes or sevens, animals that talk, happy ending, royalty: kings, queens, princes, princess, A special beginning: Once upon a time...]
Eva’s anchor chart was based on a Pinterest source that described fairy tales in terms of many of the traits included in her poster. Eva translated a Pinterest anchor chart from English to make hers. Eva added “final feliz,” elaborated on “realeza” by providing examples, omitted “special powers,” and modified some illustrations. Otherwise the charts contained the same information. Both described fairy tales in terms of their traits.

The fairy tales and fables standard presents a theory of texts as tied to distinguishable cultures and specifically frames some of these texts as having that specific feature of a moral. Even a simple and maybe seemingly innocuous language ideology (that fairy tales are different from fables; and that fables contain animal characters) was able to be used to discourage a student contribution. This language
ideology about genre conventions was seeded by the PA Core standards, recontextualized through an anchor chart on Pinterest, and encountered in the classroom by both Eva and Lucas. Ultimately this ideology became more important than recognizing what else may have been successful about Lucas’s story.

The once and future word wall. The Fairy Tale and Fable unit offered some concrete indication of how future recontextualization of these categories might occur. Lucas’ negative encounter with genre characteristics took place through the inclusion of a dragon in his story. Other similarly classic Fairy Tale elements were included in Eva’s classroom word wall. Figure 10 shows Eva’s classroom word wall, where the words *magia, rey, and reina* can be found [*magic, king, queen*]. Creating, printing, and laminating these word cards is a significant investment of labor and time, not all of it necessarily conducted by Eva, but significant nonetheless. At the end of the year I spent with her, since she wasn’t going to be teaching second grade again next year, these were packed up with other materials and most likely put in a box labeled “SECOND GRADE” for whatever new teacher took her place. It is common for teachers to inherit physical materials beyond standard issue materials if they are taking over another teacher’s classroom. The case of Lucas and the Dragon suggests one way that physical media might pull future instruction in the direction of labor already done by someone else. In
this case, a future teacher who takes over Eva’s room is more likely to use representations of “fairy tales” that emphasize they contain those words. There wasn’t a similar set of words identified for fables, and in fact Fables were not characterized on an anchor chart like the one provided for Fairy Tales. Any case representation of language discussed in this study can be expected to continue to be recontextualized through sources like Pennsylvania Academic Standards or the DRA/EDL. Yet beyond those school-required sources, these laminated word wall materials suggest the possibility of another potential teacher-explored source (inherited physical materials) that the study otherwise would have difficulty describing, since during data collection Eva was returning to the same room and grade as the prior year.
Discussion

Within the DLCS planning events Eva was present for or which were directly described to her (and me), the pathways of recontextualization for all these genres were similar. Representations of each are suggested, usually indirectly, by Pennsylvania Standards or Common Core State Standards. Specific tasks tied to some of these genres may appear on the DRA/EDL, or they may appear through assessments created by the second grade team. The second grade teachers draw on their own past work, and where more information or ideas would be helpful, Eva and her colleagues were able to find it in online sources like Pinterest. What was similar about all these genres was preceded by prior metalinguistic labor by other educational actors, such as the authors of the Common Core. While this study does not explore the historical development of these genres over a longer time span, representations of these genres no doubt circulated in processes of enregisterment involving contexts other than schools, long before the rise Common Core or even the development of public education in the United States. In other words, although all three kinds of genres are now the subject of anchor charts on Pinterest, at a time 50 or 100 years ago, there was almost certainly no single context where representations of all these genres were found. But recently tied to assessment and other needs of schooling, these genres all became curricularized. While Valdés (2015) describes curricularization processes that apply most to contexts of world or “foreign” language teaching, the analysis of this chapter shows that there are clear parallels to other

22 Famously, in Plato’s Apology, Socrates is said to have lamented the work of the Sophists, whose work attempted to persuade audiences without regard for the truth, and in Plato’s The Republic, he is presented criticizing the work of poets, whose speech for the purposes of entertainment alone he deemed harmful.
aspects of language that become the subject of metalinguistic labor producing representations of language that impact the possibilities for instruction in classrooms like Eva’s.

All the genres discussed here—fiction and non-fiction, author’s purpose, and fairy tales and fables—are examples of how seemingly simple classroom activities rely on universalizing descriptions of how texts work in the world. Representations of language in elementary classrooms can set out to simplify a complex reality only to actually make it more difficult for students to reconcile their knowledge and experience with what they are expected to do in school. Eva was interested in making content understandable and doable for her students, as indicated by in her intervention in the ambiguous worksheet and in questioning her own anchor chart’s distinctions between fiction and non-fiction. Yet if the underlying representation of language that drives instruction is not easily reconcilable with everyday complexity of genre, there is a limit to her or any teacher’s ability to make language curricula inclusive to students. Exhaustive descriptions of language leave little room for asking students what they already know or believe about the texts available to them. Given the negative impact these representations had, I close by briefly considering possible points of intervention, or sites that the problem orientation of educational linguistics might suggest this study be applied.

The intensity with which these genres are embedded in schooling and other contexts suggest that simply ignoring or omitting discussion of any problematic genre is impossible. A teacher-focused intervention on these issues may have to center on supporting teachers to deal with the inherent dangers of categories of language rather than attempting to provide strategies to avoid categories altogether. This would echo
literature on language ideologies generally, which argues that total separation from these ideologies is impossible. Even a little separation may be difficult for teachers to manage. The nature of support for teachers to strategize around strictly curricularized standards would have to confront the possibility that efforts to do so may be institutionally evaluated as insubordinate.

It is tempting to suggest that the standards be modified to allow more ambiguity. What if, instead of Writing standards that listed mechanical components of an opinion text, teachers were permitted or encouraged to explore with students what they themselves might find persuasive? Under some alternative standard, a wide array of persuasive techniques might be permitted. It is certainly possible some schools and teachers already facilitate such discussions under current standards. Yet we also have to recognize that standards excise ambiguity for a reason. Standards are tied to assessments. State assessments like the PSSA have specific writing rubrics, instructions for legions of readers that score the work of Pennsylvania students responding to standardized prompts under standardized conditions. Striving for standards to allow for a larger range of acceptable work would essentially be an attempt to decurricularize the curriculum—an impossible reform.

I imagine the best interventions yet to be developed and refined will require revisiting some of the typical techniques by which educational linguists exercise our duty to the problem orientation. I see this study as joining a growing trend in educational linguistic research that, as discussed in Chapter 2, describes why it is so very difficult to offer practical solutions. This chapter addresses the problem of teaching about genres, but in order to offer teachers the best possible guidance, the approach of this study is to show
exactly why the problem is worse than it may have first appeared. From a language ideological perspective, there is no “science” of genre in the sense that genres can be assessed in a timeless and objective way, contrary to Eva’s assertion about the teams’ genre units in a team meeting. Yet there certainly is a “science” of genre in that mechanisms of curricularization do frame all these issues as objectively decided and position teachers as needing to guide students to recognize, define, and enter these generic practices. Addressing the consequences created by such teaching requires investigating and attacking curricularization itself—not simply one of its many products—as their ultimate cause.
**Chapter 7: “They weren’t understood”: Skills in Eva’s Classroom**

Educational linguistics has long critiqued understandings of language that are said to underly school actors’ decisions. Some critiques point to the ways that schools privilege ways of using language that are not essential to the academic task but simply associated with a powerful group (e.g., Gee, 2012; Heath, 1982; Smitherman, 1998). Other research focuses on what are deemed linguistically misinformed language-in-education policies (e.g., Bauer & Trudgill, 1998; Labov, 1982). Schools have been criticized for taking insufficient account of student language practices in classrooms (e.g., Au, 1980; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Philips, 1983). These classic critiques point to both language policies and instructional practices as potential sites of improvement for schools. Where they address linguistic skills, these critiques raise questions about which skills schools should focus on, how these schools’ linguistic goals can include students’ prior knowledge, and how to judge students’ mastery of these skills more fairly.

Some scholarship on schooling and language is even more critical of schools as institutions and calls into question the very possibility that merely altering language-in-education policies or the understandings of language that seem to inform schooling can have a serious impact on the structural injustices linguists widely acknowledge (e.g., Bourdieu, 1991; Flores & Chaparro, 2017; Flores et al., 2018; Kubota, 2014; Lewis, 2018; Sledd, 1969). These critiques identify the origins of problems deeper in the nature of schooling itself. In the terms of curricularization, critiques from this perspective do not place the blame for linguistic marginalization in schools on the results of curricularization but rather on the curricularizing processes of identifying language forms.
as a target of assessment. This chapter continues in the direction of these critiques and highlights the readiness with which narrowly curricularized linguistic skills can be recontextualized to construe students as failing to reach academic goals. The language ideological framework I adopt shows that representations of skills are deeply implicated in the structure of schooling itself.

This chapter shows how representations of language skills in Eva’s classroom were recontextualized in ways that made it easier to interpret children’s linguistic practices as deficient. I focus on the skills of inferencing, asking questions, and comprehension. Representations of inferencing and asking questions emerged early in data collection. I was drawn to analyze these further because they seemed to denote basic functions of language and thought rather than trainable skills. As I re-encountered the importance of the framework of curricularization for understanding representations of language in Eva’s classroom, these two practices seemed to resonate with Valdés’s (2015) description of language merely as a “species-unique communicative system” and not as a curricularized object. In other words, it felt easier for me to imagine these as something other than skills. Yet at the same time I realized that to truly imagine them in unskilled ways would mean seeing them not as something that school age children would ever “make progress in” but as basic activities of communication. Thus, I was drawn to understand how their representation at DLCS and in Eva’s classroom created such a shift from these alternatives.

The reading skill of comprehension, with two of its main component speech acts retelling and making connections, was already known to me as a skill. As a teacher, I taught comprehension lessons, planned with other teachers to improve my students’
comprehension, celebrated student work in comprehension when it was successful and regretted my failings as a teacher when it wasn’t. Before starting the study, I had administered the DRA dozens of times, and I suspected it would serve a crucial planning resources for comprehension, a skill for which the DRA contains an extensive rubric. In my preparation as a teacher, I was inclined to picture comprehension more flexibly than my eventual professional responsibilities demanded. In particular I often thought back to an article arguing that even describing details of a text in ways that would be considered ‘wrong’ may amount to engagement with and comprehension of a text (Aukerman, 2007). Observing teaching and discussion of comprehension again as a researcher allowed me to see how the components of comprehension all required individual language ideological maintenance to sustain their recontextualization for evaluating students.

In the next section, I extend the argument of the previous chapter that curricularization can usefully be applied to contexts other than language teaching. I point to aspects of curricularization that are particularly relevant to the representation of linguistic skills, showing that an account of this curricularization addresses essential educational linguistic questions about how schools judge student language. Following that discussion, I present the three focal cases of skills in this chapter: making inferences, asking questions, and comprehension.

Curricularizing Skills

Valdés (2015) makes explicit reference to the production of skills in her discussion of curricularization, which renders language “as a curricular subject or skill the elements of which can be ordered and sequenced, practiced and studied, learned and
tested in artificial contexts within which learners of the target language outnumber proficient speakers” (p. 262). As she goes on to describe, among other results for language learning students are the production of ‘levels’ and certifications such as advanced, proficient, or Long Term English Learner. In this way, the “skill” that Valdés refers to is often a totalizing one, creating a single result to sum a person’s entire competence with a language (note, as Valdés does elsewhere in her argument, that the objectification of named languages as bounded objects is essential for this aspect of curricularization).

The skills discussed in this chapter, although they may seem broad from their labels alone, are not totalized measures of language competence. They are granularized and specified beyond even the point of being “elements” of a broader language skill in the way that Valdés discusses in the last quoted section. Representations of skills were sourced by Eva from familiar planning resources like Pinterest, the DRA/EDL, and standards. However, even though skills are products of familiar curricularization infrastructure, there are distinct consequences of their recontextualization as curricularized objects. These distinctions are rooted in the fact that it is possible to distinguish language learning in schools from language learning out of school, an essential conceptual touchstone of educational linguistics that Valdés relies on to theorize curricularization. However, when it comes to learning the skills presented in this chapter, I argue that it is inadvisable or even impossible to imagine them being learned or taught outside of school, since in Eva’s classroom these skills served largely to identify academic failure.
In pointing to school structures that represent the abilities of students, curricularization resonates with research describing schools’ production of entextualized representations of student talk or other behavior (e.g., Mehan 1986, Wortham 2005, Taylor 1991, McDermott 1993). Such scholarship attends to the ways that students are described in ways that assign value or recognition to the ways they use language or otherwise behave. These assignments rely on representations of desirable language specially designed in and recontextualized from planning sources earlier in the chain of curricularization, and those representations may not be amenable for any other purpose. The language ideological approach of this study bridges this work with curricularization by highlighting the breadth of representations and resources involved in these processes, showing the close ties between skills and schooling itself.

These ties raise an important distinction between genres and skills. All the represented types described in the study, including English and Spanish, are arguably speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986a), each undergoing a continual process of enregisterment (Agha, 2007a) that continues through Eva’s work as a teacher. However, while the genres and languages raised in Eva’s teaching have been represented in contexts outside schools for centuries or longer, the skills discussed in this chapter seem to have been enregistered almost entirely within and for educational institutions. Furthermore, in the case of skills, it is exclusively student actions that are the focus of these representations. While representations of genres were recontextualized to frame texts produced for students (e.g., versions of Cinderella) as well as texts produced by students (e.g., Lucas’s failed dragon fable), representations of skills are almost exclusively used to describe students’ talk and texts.
Representations of skills are used to evaluate student talk, most often negatively, but they are not recontextualized neutrally or without attachment to other ideologies of language. In the conclusion to this chapter, I specifically consider how representations of skills intersect with raciolinguistic ideologies structuring the perception of the language of racialized students in ways that reproduce presupposed deficiencies. (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Representations of skills are particularly readily combined with raciolinguistic ideologies and ensure numerous opportunities for deficiencies to be heard in the language of racialized students. Given the easy ties between representations of skills and raciolinguistic ideologies, understanding the ubiquity of curricularized skills will be crucial to imagining alternatives or interventions to this and other forms of linguistic injustice in education.

Skills in Eva’s Classroom

In this chapter, I discuss the skills of inferencing, asking questions, and comprehension. Of the many skills I saw represented in and through Eva’s instruction, I focus on these because they appear to have the highest consequences for students in terms of how they are judged to be achieving. Each of these case representations illustrates the extreme specificity with which skills can be defined through curricularization. Additionally, each skill is deeply implicated in instructional logics of success and failure. In the cases of inferencing and asking questions, where students are eventually seen as successful, it is in spite of their concurrently represented weaknesses and past failures. In the case of comprehension, while almost all students were seen to make some progress over the year, the individual components of comprehension were often points of struggle. As I consider in the conclusion and discussion section of this chapter, the representations
of these skills encountered by Eva are readily intertwined with broader deficit discourses about the mostly poor Latinx and Black students who attend DLCS.

**Making Inferences**

_Inferencing_, also called *inferring, making inferences,* or *hacer inferencias,* was a skill usually described as part of good reading, aligned with the inclusion of ‘textual evidence’ as a component of Common Core standards. This was a skill that the entire second grade group of students was seen as generally having difficulty with. It was first explicitly taught in January of the school year, but Eva indirectly introduced it by labeling student conclusions as inferences as early as September. Inferring is usually a form of response to text, but when giving examples of inferences, Eva did not limit situations to reading alone.

As with other cases of skills, I do not attempt to present an objective definition of *inferring* but rather show how it was defined by Eva and her colleagues. Some representations of inferencing were already discussed previously in Chapter 4 as an example of how planning for instruction recontextualized multiple sources, including relevant Common Core and Pennsylvania standards, teachers’ represented memories of a prior year, material artifacts of previous years’ work, and online sources like Pinterest. The Pinterest-sourced definition they found favorable and used as the basis of their PowerPoint presentation for Back to School Night was the following: “when authors of books don’t tell everything about characters and event and readers have to use story clues and background knowledge (schema) to make an inference.”

Like other skills represented for instruction, the definition came with prototypes of student responses. These prototypes usually come in the form of partially completed
model utterances that students are supposed to fill with their own ideas. These models are known as “sentence frames,” “sentence starters” or “thinking stems.” Sentence frames are widely practiced and recommended as a language learning and general education teaching strategy. They are meant to serve as scaffolds for students to do the prototyped skill, but they are also readily used as representations to which teachers compare students’ talk, as a formative assessment. The thinking stems on the poster the second grade team found during the Back To School Night Planning meeting (Figure 1 in Chapter 4) included “I can infer…,” “This could mean…,” “Perhaps…,” and “Maybe…”

A Pinterest search for “inferencing” yields numerous results, including lesson plans, activities, and visual aids for the classroom. Figure 11 shows a reproduction of one of the top results (as of January 2019), an anchor chart showing a common linguistic formulation that students were supposed to produce to show that they could make inferences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Making Inferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The text says ___________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I already know ___________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therefore, I can infer ___________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text + what I know = my inference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 11: Reproduction of “Making Inferences” chart from Pinterest*

This basic three-part structure of text, knowledge, and inference was reproduced in numerous worksheets and other assessments in Eva’s classroom. In some class discussions it appears Eva saw individual students as successfully making inferences, but
in assessments, students were seen as being able to inference if and only if they could produce the sort of justification the form demands. Not every worksheet asked students to supply each of the three parts. For example, the worksheet reproduced in Figure 12 provides a short paragraph about which students are asked to make inferences, then highlights specific sentences and phrases for students to make further conclusions about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>La sorpresa de Pepito</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pepito tenía una sonrisa enorme cuando vio que su mamá y su papá pusieron una caja con un moño gigante debajo de un árbol con luces. Cuando Pepito abrió la caja, encontró lo que siempre había pedido. Con ese aparato ahora sí podía tomar fotos, meterse al internet y jugar muchos juegos. [Pepito had a huge smile when he saw that his mom and dad had put a box with a huge bow under a tree with lights. When Pepito opened the box, he found what he had always asked for. With this device, now he could take pictures, get on the internet, and play a lot of games.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lo que dice el texto: [What the text says:]</th>
<th>Yo puedo inferir que… [I can infer that…]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pepito tenía una sonrisa enorme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su mamá y su papá pusieron una caja con un moño gigante debajo de un árbol con luces.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con ese aparato ahora sí podía tomar fotos, meterse al internet y jugar muchos juegos.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 12: Reproduction of “Inferencias” worksheet*

Used in Eva’s classroom on a day I wasn’t present, this worksheet is available on Teachers Pay Teachers, as part of a pack with 16 other *Inferencias* worksheets, for $4.50. When Eva and her colleagues described students as struggling with inferencing, they relied in part on assessments like these. This worksheet is representative of other texts about which students were asked to make inferences in that it appears deliberately crafted to avoid direct descriptions or names of key details in the narrative.
“They’re not good at inferencing.” Students’ ascribed inability to infer well, when it was discussed, was often put in general terms, as if a recurring problem or baseline characteristic. For example, in a whole group PYP discussion on contenders for the greatest invention ever, I wrote the following in my fieldnotes:

Carmen says in her opinion the greatest invention is this thing called a Baby Brezza. It’s kind of like a Keurig machine but for formula instead of coffee. She says she’s going to give one to Eva. The two teachers laugh a little together and Eva says, “It’s a good thing they’re not good at inferencing,” meaning the students, then looks over at me and laughs. The implication is that Eva is trying to have a kid relatively soon and that’s the reason why Carmen would give her the Baby Brezza. None of the kids show that they are picking this up. This is the only joke about inferencing that I’ve heard. It’s probably going to be the only joke I ever hear about inferencing. (December 15, Fieldnotes)

Not only was I wrong about hearing more jokes about inferencing, I was also wrong about the inference Eva thought could be drawn from Carmen’s comment. Eva was actually already pregnant at this point and had told Carmen privately. It would be about another month before she told me (or perhaps, told me for the second time, since I didn’t infer it here).

One way that students were read as “not being good at inferencing” was in their inability to provide satisfactory definitions of the skill. In a lesson earlier in the inferencing unit, Eva wanted students to explain it if they could, asking “¿Hay alguien que se acuerda de lo que es hacer una inferencia o que puede explicar un poquito con sus propias palabras?” [Is there someone who remembers what making an inference is, or who can explain a little bit with their own words?] Students’ responses show a common pattern of students’ difficulty defining the skills that they are practicing in class, beginning with Antonio’s answer:

Antonio: En una inferencia hacer um, like it makes you like, like do stuff? Uh, it’s like a thing or someone that like makes you do something?

Carmen: Oh he’s talking about persuasion.
Eva: Ah, persuading?
Antonio: No=
Eva: OK, so explain that— expícame lo en inglés. [Explain it to me in English.]
¿Cómo me lo explicarías? [How would you explain that to me?]
So, yes, tú tienes— [You have—]
cuando tú haces inferencias, tú tienes que hacer algo. [when you make inferences, you do have to do something.]
(2.5s)
A ver, entre Antonio y Roxane— [Let’s see, between Antonio and Roxane—]
that’s right, tú también veniste aquel día, Roxane. [you also came in that day, Roxane.]
Díme, Roxane. [Tell me, Roxane.]
Roxane: Inferencing is when=
Eva: Muy bien. [Very good.]
Roxane: somebody makes you do something and that makes you feel something, makes you feel right in a good way.

(February 14, Audio Recording 1, 53m19s)
Carmen believes Antonio is confusing inferencing with the author’s purpose of persuading, described in the propósito del autor anchor chart as something when “el autor te trata convencer, de hacer o creer algo” [The author tries to convince you to do something or think something.] Eva appears unsure if Antonio truly is getting this confused, and she does not find out, since he declines her request to explain his answer further. Roxane’s response also does not meet the expected definition of inferencing, but her response is calmly and kindly acknowledged by Eva, who then calls on Celestina.

Celestina: Inferencing is something good and something bad?
Eva: N— no, but I’m impressed that uh todo el mundo [everybody]
yo no hay— yo no haya dicho “inferencing” [I didn’t—I didn’t say “inferencing”]
y they know I’m talking about inferencing,
yo no haya dicho inferencing. [I didn’t—I didn’t say “inferencing”]
And I love it, yo sé he dicho “hacer inferencias.” [I know I said “hacer inferencias”]
So I love that everybody—
Well, not everybody. The three people that raised their hand—
understood that hacer inferencias means inferencing.
So, Jada, qué se significa inferencing? [What does inferencing mean?]
What do we do? We do something. What do we do?
Jada: You, you like like you inferen— like
(3.5s)
like, um you like (((xx))) and then you inference what’s gonna happen next
Eva: Beautiful. Could you give me another word instead of “you infer what’s gonna happen next.”
Could you a give me a different word so it’s not—
we don’t use the same word to explain the word?
You’re on the right track. Amaya.
Pero gracias por levantar la mano, eh? [But thank you for raising your hand.]
Amaya. S1.
Denise: That we can read a book and we can figure out what’s going on
Eva: So, cuando tú haces inferencias, [So, when you make inferences,]
es como ser un detective ((English phonology)), un detective ((Spanish phonology)).
[it’s like being a detective.]
El autor, o yo, te hacemos preguntas, ¿verdad? [The author, or I, asks you questions, right?]
Y tú no tienes las respuesta de ese pregunta. [And you don’t have the answers to that question.]
Está en el libro? [Is it in the book?]
No. OK?
Tú. Usas. Lo que ponen en el libro mas lo que tú sabes. [You. Use. What they put in the book plus what you know.]
¿Verdad? para hacer una inferencia. [Right? For making an inference.]

Celestina’s contribution “something good and something bad” is acknowledged and praised only for her understanding that hacer inferencias means the same thing as inferencing. Jada is seen as “on the right track” because of her mention of one inferencing situation of “what’s gonna happen next” but cannot think of another way to discuss inferencing without using the word itself. Finally, Denise gets the closest by her reference to the general idea of figuring out “what’s going on.” Even this response is not explicitly approved by Eva, who goes to recast the concept in terms of the questions raised by an author or by she herself, the answers to which can only come from readers acting like a detective and using what they know. This lesson took place early in the unit intentionally teaching students about inferencing, so Eva was less bothered about the students’ inability to define the practice at this point. A few months later, she would be frustrated by some of the same kinds of responses and students’ struggles to distinguish focal skills from each other by giving definitions.

One extraordinary reading of a student’s ability to inference, showing how high the bar is for this skill, came in the final weeks of school. Eva was due to give birth early in the next school year, and as was the case for other staff members who were pregnant, a baby shower was being planned for her. She’d been told the shower would be held next
year, not very long before she was due. She was not looking forward to that and was frustrated that the planning committee would wait so long, expecting that the celebration would be more pleasant at a time not so close to her due date. On one of the last days of school, when her students were returning from lunch in the cafeteria, Antonio asked her, “Miss, they’re doing your shower today?” Eva told him no, it was just a staff lunch, and her shower was next year. Antonio insisted, “No, miss, there are pink balloons in the cafeteria and they say It’s a Girl! and your baby is a girl!” At the time, Eva wasn’t quite convinced. About 20 minutes later, after dismissal outside (where she might have been able to see the balloons for herself through the cafeteria window), she joked about how Antonio had spoiled the surprise, since she had been convinced the shower wasn’t going to be until next year (June 14, Fieldnotes).

When we arrived at the staff lunch and end of year meeting, the cafeteria was indeed set up for Eva’s baby shower. Still delighted, even relieved, about the more conveniently timed shower, she was also amused that Antonio had figured it out, especially now that she was seeing the It’s a Girl! balloons he had told her about up close. She retold the story of Antonio’s comments to several groups of teachers along with the key quote “No, Miss, there are pink balloons in the cafeteria and they say It’s a Girl! and your baby is a girl!” To at least one of these audiences Eva said, as a sort of punchline to the story “That boy didn’t infer all year!” to the amusement of her colleagues (June 14, Fieldnotes).

Although he did not explicitly label his own utterance as an inference, Antonio’s conclusion that Eva’s baby shower was being set up downstairs in his cafeteria shows the three-part structure inferencing reflected in classroom materials. He used what he already
knew about the world and what he was reading and seeing in front of him to make a conclusion, as he surely did every other day of his life. Perhaps the fact that he was explicitly challenged on his conclusion made him state his evidence in such a way that it was read as meeting the academic skill of inferencing. But Eva’s retelling of this story represents this skill as if it were unusual for him to accomplish it. The baby shower inference indicates the narrowness of the available representations of inferencing regardless of how we understand Eva’s intentions in telling the story. Even if Eva’s pronouncement that Antonio hadn’t inferred all year is understood as an exaggeration in service of storytelling, it is nevertheless a recontextualization of representations of inferencing, both in its retelling of Antonio’s key argument in the classroom as a prototype for inferencing and in its representation of inferencing as difficult for many students.

**Representations of inferencing.** While representations of skills can serve to show how students do not possess those skills, they are also important resources in directing teachers’ attention to new ways of supporting students to develop the skill. In this way, curricularization proceeds not only as a laying out of requirements for teachers, but also in their self-directed efforts to meet those requirements as effectively as possible. While Eva often described students as struggling with inferencing, she was also dedicated to seeking out the tools she needed to change that fact. This search was well anticipated by the designers and creators of representations of this skill found in teacher-explored and school-offered resources alike. For example, recontextualization of definitions of skills like inferencing was reflected in teaching practices around selecting books. School-offered resources that include leveled texts, such as Reading A-Z, promote texts in this way. Reading A-Z offers 13 “comprehension skill packs” for second grade, including one
on “make inferences and draw conclusions.” Considerations of what skills a book will supposedly help students practice are essential to how books are marketed for and consumed by Eva and teachers like her. Descriptions of books as suited for particular skills occurred at an interpersonal level as well, sometimes forming the basis of a recommendation from one teacher to another, or in Eva’s describing to me why she chose a particular book.

In Eva’s choice of reading materials for readalouds and guided readings, this certainly wasn’t her only consideration. She and I shared a love of good children’s literature and discussed works for children throughout the year. Working from my own experience as a teacher, I could perfectly understand how she might both enjoy a children’s book experientially while at the same time noticing how it might help her meet her professional responsibilities to create lessons around specific curricularized skills. One example of this dual engagement with a children’s book occurred on the very last day of school, when I read aloud two books to the class. I discuss this readaloud not only as an example of how Eva could describe a book as valuable for a skill, but also as way to show a time in Eva’s classroom during which the usual representations of how language works and what school was for were disrupted.

I had asked Eva a few days earlier if she would let me read as a favor, since reading books aloud to kids is the one thing I miss about being a teacher that cannot be substituted for by doing classroom research. One of the two books I chose to read was I Want My Hat Back. In the beginning of this story, the main character, a bear, asks a succession of several animals, and eventually a rabbit, if they have seen his hat. Most of the animals say in various ways that they haven’t seen the hat, but the rabbit, who is in
fact wearing a hat in the illustration, says “No. Why are you asking me. I haven’t seen it. I haven’t seen any hats anywhere. I would not steal a hat. Don’t ask me any more questions.” At the same time that she was thoroughly enjoying the book and reacting to the drama along with her students, Eva remarked that this would be a great book to practice inferring.

Orienting to this book from the perspective of the definitions of inferring shared in class, *I Want My Hat Back* is a good book to practice this skill with because important plot events are not directly stated, and thus readers must “make inferences” or “draw conclusions.” This is particularly true of the climax of the book. Once the bear sees through the rabbit’s dubious assertion that he hadn’t seen the hat, he rushes back to confront the suspected thief. But most of their confrontation, whatever form it takes, is not shown directly and instead occurs between pages. Following an intense, wordless stare down, the next page’s illustration shows the bear sitting atop ruffled grass, calmly declaring his love for his hat. The rabbit is nowhere to be seen. A squirrel arrives on the next page, asking the bear if he’s seen any rabbits around who were wearing a hat. “No,” says the bear. “Why are you asking me. I haven’t seen him. I haven’t seen any rabbits anywhere. I would not eat a rabbit. Don’t ask me any more questions.”

Did students infer during the readaloud? Because inferencing is a language ideologically defined practice, this question cannot be answered objectively. Student comments may or may not be recognized as inferences depending on the representations of the practice that their listeners recontextualize for the purpose of assessing student talk. Students responded during and after the readaloud with assertions about the book’s plot events. Many declared, in the early parts of the book and before the bear reached this
conclusion, that it was the rabbit who had the bear’s hat in the first place. After I finished reading the book, several students cried out their reactions to the ending, all of them claiming the bear had eaten the rabbit. They referred to key parts of the text and illustrations as they made this claim, even asking me to read some pages again so they could point out things they believed their classmates had missed. Students’ grasp of the book’s tension and of characters’ perspectives was on full display, even when their spontaneous explanations of their reasoning would be confusing at best if uttered outside the context of a readaloud, as when Celestina pointed to the conversation between the squirrel and the bear and told me (and the class), “Mister. Look. He said, ‘I didn’t eat a rabbit.’ That means he **did** eat the rabbit.”

From the perspective of the representations of inferencing most often recontextualized by Eva, students arguably did not make inferences because they failed to use the prescribed form. Their talk was overlapping and rapid, and students who spoke were not always recognized by me to take the floor. Neither Eva nor I told students that they were inferring during the readaloud. Also, at no point in the discussion did we ask students to rephrase their explanations into the prototypical form of an inference. Such a request would have meant asking Celestina (who, four months prior, said that inferencing was “something good and something bad”) to elaborate her comment with explicit use of the three-part structure of inferencing and say something like “The book says the bear said, ‘I didn’t eat a rabbit.’ I know that sometimes people lie when they’re trying to hide something. I infer that he did eat the rabbit.”

In fact, from the perspective of the demands on Eva’s instruction that shaped her work throughout the year, my readaloud would be evaluated negatively in several
respects. I did not identify a learning target for the lesson. I did not assess the students afterward. We talked about I Want My Hat Back, and then I read the second book I had brought that day. Of course, this was no accident. It was the last day of school. I wasn’t a DLCS employee. Eva and I intended my time reading aloud as purely time for fun, and a way to keep the class’s focus and attention on a day that their emotions would be running high.

In choosing the book, I was motivated only by my own enjoyment of it. I expected Eva’s students would enjoy it too, as I had seen groups of students in the past roiled with emotion when they see the bear fail to recognize his own hat on the rabbit’s head, or when they see him respond later in a storm of anger in which the entire page, except for the whites of his eyes, is tinted deep red. I had no expectation that a representation of inferencing, which was by then long a special target of my attention and data collection, would enter into the discussion, nor did I anticipate hearing so many comments by students that could be seen as inferences under more expansive definitions than the ones used at DLCS. While the readaloud shows students’ response to literature when they are less impeded by a curricularized representation of inferencing, it also shows the usual procedures of the classroom being almost totally suspended. Thus, this unusual readaloud suggests some of the costs of strict representations of skills, but it can’t by itself serve as a model for a better way of teaching if it is incompatible with demands to explicitly instruct students in language skills such as inferencing.

Inferencing and schooling. Overall, during my time in Eva’s classroom, inferencing was the representation of language that frankly I was most baffled and concerned by. I was and am still troubled by conversations with students that seem to me
to serve mainly to show children as unable to show abilities they obviously possess because they unsuccessfully use highly prescribed forms for showing this ability. I imagine other observers may have a similar reaction. I have been tempted to argue that inferencing never be taught, if not in this dissertation than surely in some future article or when working with pre-service teachers. After all, if students will show that they can make inferences long before they control the precise linguistic forms meant to indicate an inference or provide their own definition of the practice, does it not waste everyone’s time to ask teachers to provide the kind of instruction seen in Eva’s class?

However, it is in the cases of these particularly troubling representations that language ideological and curricularization perspectives are most revealing. These perspectives point to the origins of restrictive definitions of inferring and other skills, origins which serve as limits to the ability of Eva or a similarly situated teacher to omit discussions of inferencing in their instruction. Setting aside any objections to this definition of inferencing and attending instead to the recontextualization of that definition to materially enter Eva’s classroom, I saw that Eva’s students regularly did fail to meet the target linguistic skills as they had been curricularized. From this perspective, Eva faithfully applied the representations of inferencing available to her from a variety of planning sources: a consensus within DLCS indicated by team planning and prior years’ materials, a consensus within available teacher-explored resources like Pinterest and Teachers Pay Teachers, and an emphasis in relevant standards on identifying textual evidence.

If teachers saw inferencing as something children did all the time, there would be no purpose in assessing it. Only a practice that children might or might not be able to do
aligns with assessment practices at DLCS or any typical school. In this way, the 
assessment of curricularized of linguistic skills necessitates alignment with a language-
as-entity paradigm (Park & Wee, 2013) that sees linguistic competencies as potentially 
present or absent. Thus, a curricularization perspective suggests that inferencing must be 
understood not as merely a poorly defined language practice with easy uptake to 
language ideologies more widely recognized as marginalizing, but rather as deeply 
implicated with processes of curricularization that make some teacher planning decisions 
far more likely than others. The connections of inferencing to the structure of schooling 
itself show the breadth of curricularization beyond explicit language teaching alone. 
These connections should temper how we imagine interventions on such structures where 
they create restrictive representations of language, a theme I return to at the end of this 
chapter.

**Asking Questions and the Representation of Discussion**

Representations of asking questions emerged in one of the all-staff meetings at the 
very beginning of the year, before the students had even started attending school. Two 
leaders on the curriculum team, including Michelle, who facilitated the weekly PYP 
meetings, were giving a presentation on inquiry methods of teaching that formed the 
basis of the PYP. As they explained, inquiry teaching requires shifting typical 
arrangements of authority in the classroom, necessitating changes to many practices 
usually seen as normal or that teachers themselves likely encountered when they were 
students. Such shifts, combined with the importance of the PYP at DLCS, made inquiry 
teaching a good target for continued staff development that revisited key themes of the 
approach.
The session opened with a lengthy discussion period in which the staff was presented with statements about inquiry they could agree or disagree with. The third statement was “Inquiry is asking students a lot of questions.” This was seemingly intended to generate discussion about who precisely should be asking more of the questions in an inquiry classroom, and the prompt successfully did so. As part of this discussion, one specialist teacher stated that among the ways that teachers can ask questions, there are better and worse options. As an example, she argued that “What makes you say that?” is more productive and less antagonistic way than asking “Why do you say that?” Her comment illustrates the close attention to classroom discourse that characterizes many approaches to teaching. It was aligned with many discussions about classroom talk I’ve been part of as a teacher and as a researcher at DLCS, in which variations that are perhaps marginal from a grammatical perspective are imbued with significant pedagogical implications. But teachers’ questions were not the only questions at issue during the session.

Still on the subject of the statement “Inquiry is asking students a lot of questions,” the discussion soon turned to students’ abilities to ask questions. A kindergarten teacher said that in her experience “some kids don’t even know what questions are.” As an example, she said that if students are given the task of asking questions after a show and tell activity, they will sometimes say “Good job!” or “That’s cool!” instead of asking a question. In response, another teacher familiar with upper grades instruction mentioned that on the DRAs and EDLs, students need to pose questions, and some up to fourth and fifth grade have trouble doing that, especially asking “high level questions.”
At the time, I taken aback at these claims. They may seem extreme even from a perspective that language acquisition can be objectively assessed. The conversation in the staff meeting about *asking questions* is a reminder that no linguistic practice, no matter how fundamental it may seem, is free from social acts of recognition. While these teachers at the meeting did not specify further what an acceptable question would look like, the fact that they specified school activities in examples of students’ ascribed inability is vital to understanding this representation of language. Both the kindergarten teacher’s lament and her colleague’s follow-up drawing a connection to the DRA/EDL illustrate the readiness with which academic performance is taken as an index of generalized linguistic ability.

Examining the actual content of the DRA/EDL further indicates the narrowness of the *asking questions* tasks there, and thus the great faith placed in such assessment tasks to generalize a students’ supposed ability to ask questions at all. On the DRA,\textsuperscript{23} at a non-fiction Level 28 and 38 (posed by Pearson Education as a benchmark for end of second grade and third grade, respectively), under the heading of *predictions*, students are asked to read the title and table of contents page, then orally prompted to give three questions the book will give them answers to, which the administrator of the test is supposed to record. The Level 40 DRA in both fiction and non-fiction, also under the heading of *predictions*, asks students to write three questions they had while reading the first part of the book, after which they read the rest and answer questions on a worksheet independently.

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\textsuperscript{23} The EDL instructions to students, not quoted here, are a direct translation of the DRA, just as the texts students read are.
The responding teachers’ representation of the needs of the DRA does not match the task that the kindergarten teacher describes. Reporting on questions that one has about upcoming text in a book is a different task than asking a classmate questions about their show and tell presentation. The retelling of the DRA also appears to differ from the actual text of the DRA prompts—the comments seems to suggest that students will need to produce novel questions motivated by their own curiosities. But the DRA, especially at Level 40, asks students to phrase in the form of questions their expectations for the contents of the work they are going to read.

The DRA/EDL\(^\text{24}\) represents skilled reading as involving a very specific form of *asking questions*, and so it requires a rubric for evaluation of those questions. In the rubric, the connection to the kindergarten teacher’s broad comment is more evident. The DRA rubric spans a point value of 1 to 4, with a score of 1 assigned to “illogical” and “unrelated” questions, a score of 2 assigned to “1-2 reasonable questions and/or predictions related to the text,” a score of 3 assigned to reasonable questions and predictions that “go beyond the text read aloud,” and a score of 4 reserved for three questions that go beyond the text and are also “thoughtful.” It almost certainly is not the intention of the authors of the DRA/EDL for the descriptors ranging from “illogical” or “thoughtful” to be applied not only to questions but also to the children who ask them. Yet this fractal recursivity (Irvine & Gal, 2000) is precisely what is enacted in the recontextualization of description of the *asking questions* skill by teachers at the all-staff meeting.

\(^{24}\) The rubric of the EDL is in English and is identical to the DRA rubric.
The curricularization of *asking questions* as a skill is also represented in Pennsylvania Academic Standards (PAS) along with school-offered resources. The PAS references to asking questions, like other representations embedded in standards, could potentially align with a wide variety of specific tasks. For example, this is one standard that often appeared in PYP plans:

> Ask and answer questions such as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (CC.1.2.2.B)

Other references to questions in the PAS similarly hold the potential of being met in a variety of tasks. None are so generalized as to suggest there is a global ability to know what questions are. The closest the standards come to what the kindergarten teacher described as a targeted skill is this element in the Pre-Kindergarten standards:

> Ask questions about topics of personal interest to gain information; with teacher guidance and support, locate information on the chosen topic. (CC.1.4.PREK.V)

However, this standard’s inclusion of “personal interest” would suggest that it goes quite apart from these expectations to look for students to ask a question after any show and tell or similar presentation.

*Figure 13: Book page with “Hacer preguntas” insert*
Aligned with such standards focusing on asking questions about texts, leveled texts provided through resources like Reading A-Z and other providers of books for elementary classrooms present worksheets and books themselves as especially helpful for asking questions. Figure 13 shows an example of how some texts even include inserts within the pages of the book that remind students and teachers of this skill. The curricularization of asking questions throughout PAS and to such an extent that texts for children are published with such inserts does not fully explain the circulation of representations of students who could not ask questions at all. However, the existence of asking questions as a skill makes such explicitly deficit representations far more available for recontextualization.

Next, I examine a classroom lesson that includes the recontextualization of representations of asking questions as something the students were generally incapable of doing. I then consider how attention to asking questions partly reflects a general and far less restrictive goal of attention to all classroom discourse. In the conclusion to this chapter, I return to Eva’s reflections on the instability of asking questions as a category as a way of understanding all the skills discussed in this chapter as intersections of multiple ideologies negotiated by teachers.

“So, what would be a good question to ask me?” In the classroom, there were a limited number of occasions where asking questions was explicitly invoked. But when recontextualized, it was always linked to representations of some students who were

25 The image shows a text box insert in the upper corner of one of the pages of a picture book. The insert includes the text, “Hacer preguntas ¿Qué te hace preguntarte este imagen?” [Asking questions: What does this picture make you ask?]
unable to accomplish this skill. The lesson on types of stories discussed in Chapter 6 was also a site where Eva attempted to guide students to ask questions. As a reminder, this lesson was intended to be a provocation lesson to introduce concepts of genres like fairy tales and fables, to find out what types of stories students were familiar with, and to push students to practice categorizing stories. Through the course of this activity, Eva determined after a few attempts that apparently no student could name a type of story, and furthermore that when asked to, students responded with names of stories instead, apparently not grasping the subject of the question. As a result, Eva took the opportunity to encourage students to ask questions about what they did not know about. The first attempt to solicit questions takes place immediately after several students provide titles of stories rather than types of stories:

Eva: I heard Antonio saying one—Sit down please. Celestina.

Celestina: Um, Mickey Mouse?

Eva: That is a name of a story. (2s)

So, who has a question then?

What would be a relevant question to this? (2.5s)

I am asking you to tell me what types of stories you know.

You are saying names and I’m just telling you that is the name of a story, that is not a type of story.

What could be a good question you could ask me right now? (1.5s) Jada.

Eva apparently is pushing students to recognize that they do not know something and follow their inability to answer their teacher’s question with a question of their own. Jada, the first to be called on, is not seen as successful in forming her question:

Jada: What does—What is—Wait, I forgot.

Eva: Excuse me, Jada? I can’t hear you.

Jada: What is the ((xx))

Joseph: She said What is the…

(6.5s)

Eva: So we have a problem asking questions. OK?

And right now, I just asked you a question that you are not able to answer.

What could be a logical question back to me?

((some student talk, inaudibly))
Jada.

Jada: What is the um, the um, the, the um, thing?
Eva: So I’m asking you to give me different types of stories, so what could be the question to this? Not “the thing.”
Jada: What is the...
S?: They don’t got like, types of stories.
Eva: So, “What are:
Joseph: different types of stories.
Eva: The different– There you go.
the different
[[types of stories.]]
Ss: [[types of stories]]
Eva: There you go, OK?
Ss: (inaudible talk))
Joseph: That’s what I call a question.

(February 3, Audio Recording 4, 19m56s)

Jada’s halting response leads Eva to generalize that “we have a problem asking questions,” a recontextualization of a representation of students’ skill in this practice commonly asserted by other DLCS staff members beyond the day of the meeting discussed above. Joseph succeeds where Jada does not, by completing a stem that Eva began (“What are…”), which is different from how Jada was going to start hers (“What is…”), and he congratulates himself for doing so. Continuing the conversation, Eva echoes the positive description of Joseph’s question. In an unusual step, she brings the PYP system of question types26 into the conversation, identifying Joseph’s contribution as a “form question.”

Eva: All right, that’s what I call a question too.
So, I think that this is, um– ((turning to PYP board of question types))
a form question, “What is it like?”
So what would make a story belong to a certain type of story?
Joseph: That’s actually a good question.
Eva: What do you think? So let’s put it under form. OK? So, all right.
So, when we talked about different types of stories, OK?
We can have fairy tales–

(February 3, Audio Recording 4, 21m12s)

Eva rarely recontextualized the PYP question types in class discussion, nor did the second grade team often discuss them at meetings, although the question types were present on a bulletin board for most of the year in Eva’s classroom. With the question “what are the different types of stories?” now on the table, but this time asked ostensibly by a student rather than Eva, she added genres like fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and fables to the chart.

After these categories are added, Eva turns to encouraging students to ask questions about the characteristics of each type she had added. Now that Eva has identified that there is much the students do not know about the subject of this unit, she takes on an additional goal of supporting them to ask questions, even it takes a tightly controlled conversation to do so. The first type of story to get a question asked about it is folktales.

**Eva:** Ah, like [the DLCS art teacher] tells stories through art. So, one type of story are what it’s called folktales. And folktales are stories that have um— that represent a group of people or even a country, and they are known only perhaps in that country. And there might not be fairies. There might– Isaac!– There might not be magic. But it’s a type— Another type of story is what we call a folktale. [...].

**Eva:** So, there are more. But for the most part– There’s– Legend is a type of story. But for the most part, Sit down. Fairy tales, nursery rhymes, fables, Disney stories, folktales are types of stories. ((all these terms now written on chart paper)) What could be some questions that we could have in regards of this? (3.5s) What could be some good questions? Don’t you be looking at your paper. I just gave you a whole bunch of names. What could be some questions that we could ask? Antonio.

**Antonio:** What are folktales?

**Eva:** What are folktales. That’s a good question. Do you know what a folktale is?

**Ss:** No.

**Eva:** So that’s a good question. Joseph, stop. if you want to participate, raise a quiet hand. What are folktales? Celestina.
Antonio is read as successfully asking a question even though Eva has already just given information that would be an answer to it. Eva is beginning to write these questions on the PYP board. As an inquiry unit, it is supposed to be based on students’ questions. However, this results in a somewhat unique situation in which students are encouraged to ask Eva questions that in some cases she has just answered (such as the characteristics of folktales). As the discussion moves on, students are praised for asking questions that Eva has no intention of answering that day.

Celestina: (inaudible)  
Eva: Ah?  
Celestina: What are funny tales, like—  
Eva: What are f— There’s no funny tales.  
Rafael: The blue one. She’s talking about the blue one. ("Fairy Tales" is written in blue.)  
Celestina: No, the green one.  
Eva: Fables. What are fables? Great question. (3s)  
You don’t know what a fable is.  
So if you don’t know what a fable is, that’s a good question.  
Let’s start with the basics.  
"OK, Ms. Eva, you put fable on the paper. What’s a fable?"  
“What are fables?”  
Beautiful. (3s) Lucas.  
Lucas: What are— n—…  
Eva: What are nursery rhymes. (4.5) Joseph.

The students’ questions here about fables are praised as questions and added to the growing list. Her intonation and volume shift between her re-voicing of the question as coming from a student (where she addresses herself as Ms. Eva) and her reading of the question once it is written on the question board behind her. However, it is not a question that Eva plans on answering at this point in the conversation.

Next, the conversation turns to Disney Stories, the category which was added during the discussion after Eva brought me into the conversation.

Joseph: What are Disney stories?  
Eva: What are Disney stories. Who wants to answer that question? Rafael.
Rafael: Disney stories are like, Woody…
S?: But that’s Toy Story.
Rafael: Toy Story, like McQueen.\footnote{Lightning McQueen is the main character in the \textit{Cars} film series.} Bambi. Those are three types of Disney stories.
Antonio: Pinocchio.
Rafael: Moana, Pinocchio, The Lion King.
Ss: ((multiple inaudible comments))

(February 3, Audio Recording 4, 28m46s)

Here it becomes unclear what students really mean with a question like “what are Disney stories?” and there is perhaps some additional confusion contributed by Eva’s decision to let this question be answered immediately, by Rafael. Because I felt partly responsible for helping to introduce this problematic category, I entered into the discussion in an attempt to address confusion about how best to answer the question “What are Disney Stories?”

Eva: So Disney stories would be Disney movies—
Rafael: ((to Joseph)) you got- you got the book for um, ((xxxxx))
Joseph: Yeah but that didn’t tell all the stories.
That’s like diff– there’s like different–
There’s like different kinds of more stories than Disney
but we don’t know about them,
we never watch.
Rafael: Moana.
(2s)
Mark: Joseph, do you want to know
what are all the Disney stories that there are in the world?
S?: Yes!
Joseph: Yeahh.
Mark: OK.
Eva: So—
Mark: So he’s saying—
Eva: How many Disney stories are?
Mark: Or, which stories are Disney stories?
Celestina: That is on::
Mark: I wondered about your question Joseph,
because when I said I love Disney stories,
you said “Yeah!” like you knew all about what some of them were, right?
Joseph: But I didn’t know about all of them.
Mark: But you didn’t know about all of them. Yeah.
Joseph: I only know about some.
Mark: So I can tell you’re thinking about what you already know,
and what you still want to know.
Eva: I put both.
“How many Disney stories are?”
“What are fa–”
Uh, “Which are Disney stories?”
So let me ask you this. What is a fairy tale? What are fairy tales?
With the questions Eva chooses to write, we perhaps miss asking the kind of question that the students are encouraged to think about for the other categories, namely ‘what are the characteristics of this type of story?’ Eva offers the definition-like assertion that “So Disney Stories would be Disney movies.” But the only questions that get written involve members of the category of Disney stories. It is precisely these distinctions that the PYP question types were designed to address, but it was apparently not a resource that anyone in the classroom was accustomed to using.

Continuing, Eva returns to encouraging students to ask questions about fairy tales.

Eva: So let me ask you this. What is a fairy tale? What are fairy tales?
Antonio: I know.
Eva: So raise a hand if you know. What are fairy tales? Jada.
Jada: Fairy tales are:: like like– like– tales of– like tales of– of like a story– like a story like like like a fake story and they, the author’s just making up something so they maybe entertain you and then to persuade you or (2.5s) to inform you.
Eva: OK. Do all fairy tales need to have a fairy to make it a fairy tale?
Ss: No!
Eva: No? So what does a fairytale need to have to be considered a fairy tale? (11s)
Then you’re sitting there, it’s always the same people asking questions. I’m keeping tally of who’s not asking questions, Daniella. So what could be a logical question then? Because I just asked you a question and you did not know how to answer. I just asked you what makes a tale a fairy tale. (2s). Pay attention.
(5s) The only one that I can see how like= Jaime is thinking. What makes a tale a fairy tale?
(8s). Antonio. Say what you’re doing. Say. You just said, “I do::n’t”
Antonio: know.
Eva: Do you know what makes a tale a fairy tale?
Ss: No.
Eva: Could that be a question you could have?
Ss: Yes.
Eva: Okay so who wants to ask me that question? Ian.
Ian: Um:: I forgot.
Eva: OK. Rafael?
Rafael: What makes a tale a fairy tale?
Eva: OK, so I’ll be very happy to answer this question in the following weeks.
   “What makes a tale a fairy tale?”
   ((writes it on the question board with the others))
   Okay so now, it’s come the time. (5s)
   And we will be organizing these questions together. OK?
   ((writing)) What makes a tale… a… fairy…. tale.
   So now has come the time for you to share with me
   what are the stories that you know,
   and I will do my best to put them under the category.
   Hopefully, I will know under what category,
   under what type of story, your story goes.
   So let me start with Jada.

(February 3, Audio Recording 4, 30m20s)

Since this discussion took place months after the author’s purpose unit, Jada, previously seen as making unsuccessful contributions to this discussion when it came to questions, attempts to include a recitation of author’s purpose knowledge in her response. She also identifies that fairy tales are “fake” and involve the author “making up” something, likely a recontextualization of descriptions of fiction as compared to non-fiction. Eva does not respond to these contributions (which would have been difficult to parse in real time), and she turns to addressing what she perhaps worries will be a confusion later: the idea that fairy tales must have fairies in them. She also describes the students who are “just sitting there” in terms of failing to ask questions, promising to “keep a tally” of these students. It would appear that the representation of these students as unable to ask questions will go unchallenged after this lesson.

Considering what responses would have satisfied Eva and belied the widespread representation of students as unable to ask questions, it appears that a successful exchange would include this format:

   Teacher: Eric, what are fables?
   Student: I don’t know. What are fables?
   Teacher: That’s a great question.

Eva’s students find this form very difficult to replicate. Some of their difficulty may originate in the conditions for a response that shows they can ask questions, namely that
they must specify that they do not know, an unusual task for school, when students are most often asked to demonstrate what it is that they are able to do. Given that this lesson is tied to the purposes of inquiry and the opening of a PYP unit, it is notable how much of an impediment the *asking questions* skill creates for a structure that is supposed to foreground student questions. For inquiry provocations, it is common to generate a list of questions at the beginning of a unit, without an expectation that they will be answered immediately. However, the typical rationale for such activities, one represented in PYP materials shared with DLCS staff, assumes that all children naturally ask questions. The incompatibility of this type of introduction to inquiry and the representation of DLCS students as unable to ask questions would seem to account for Eva’s negative assessment for how the lesson is going.

Part of Eva’s disappointment lies in the fact that she is responsible to assess students in this skill, denoted in her promise to “keep a tally” of those students who aren’t asking questions. Even if the skill of *asking questions* is represented more strictly within DLCS staff discourse than in the school-required sources that are the ultimate legal authority on what ought to be taught in Eva’s class, the curricularization accomplished in those sources is easily attached to more totalizing representations of what DLCS students can do.

“There is talking and then there is talking.” Because representations of *asking questions* functioned in restrictive ways, as in the case of other representations traced in this study, it is tempting to declare this skill inherently troublesome. However, I see attention to student questions as aligned a real need to consider “class discussion” generally, a staple of classroom life Eva routinely described with fleeting categories and
metalinguistic commentary. Thus, any intervention on the skill of asking questions as a restrictive representation easily taken up in linguistic marginalization would have to account for its overlap with genuine pedagogical concerns.

For example, Eva would sometimes joke about giving herself or a student “the classroom sidetrack award” for raising topics that, while interesting or engaging, were deviations from the stated purpose. (December 14, Fieldnotes; February 2, Fieldnotes). All teachers, no matter what we teach, can likely recognize the task of hearing a student contribution (whether a question or a comment)\textsuperscript{28} and evaluating what ‘type’ it fits into. Is it a diversion? A good question? A thoughtful comment? Elementary teachers make the same evaluations but are also drawn in to the responsibility to actually instruct students in those various types of responses. That Eva sometimes labeled her own utterances as sidetracks reflects the inclination of some teachers to subject their own discourse to regimentations of classroom behavior and types of contribution to discussion, as in the specialist teacher’s comment about “Why do you ask that?” Additionally, like many teachers, Eva had to balance how to respond to students’ talking at times they were officially not allowed to, like during teacher addressing the whole class. It could be that an out of turn contribution is actually quite a positive one, the core of which might be encouraged. Or Eva might choose to prioritize the procedures for whole group discussion. As Eva once told the class in a conversation about norms of when they were and were not supposed to talk, “There is talking and then there is talking” (June 6, Audio Recording 3, 4m30s).

\textsuperscript{28} To say nothing of scholars’ recognition of the dreaded “Hi, this is more of a comment than a question” after a conference talk.
Even categorizing various negative contributions to classroom talk becomes an important task for teachers. For example, in an all-staff discussion on discipline, student behavior, and statistics generated from office disciplinary referrals, a disagreement emerged about the “semantics” of describing some student behaviors and utterances as *disruptive* rather than other designations such as *disrespect* and how these possibilities intersected with labels of *bullying* (August 16, Fieldnotes). The facilitator of this session asked staff not to get too caught up in the intricacies of documentation and categories, while at the same time specifying a precise definition of *bullying*. This illustrates the broad recurrence of the felt need to have some ways of categorizing and distinguishing student talk in classroom life, even though not all possible categories end up feeling useful to teachers.

Thus while *asking questions* was recontextualized as a totalizing linguistic skill within some school discussion, and while Eva’s deployment of the goal to ask questions could be seen to go awry, representations of how students ask questions are situated within a wider set of motivations for attention to classroom discussion. That being said, this study does suggest that there is significant danger in defining such a basic language function as a skill. If curricula or standards are readily interpreted as a list of things students cannot do, the door is opened to treating language practices that are “species-unique” (in Valdés’s terms) as if they might or might not be present.

**Comprehension**

Eva was responsible for improving her students’ abilities in a great number of language skills. I discuss the suite of skills known as *comprehension* and some of its major sub-skills (making connections and retelling) for two reasons. First, *comprehension*
and its attendant sub-skills illustrate the intense specificity with which some skills are curricularized. Second, it allows a further exploration of the DRA/EDL, an important planning resource in cases discussed throughout the dissertation. Comprehension was not the only reading skill of which Eva recontextualized representations, but it served as an important anchor for reading in general.

Comprehension has been a focus in elementary reading instruction in the United States for several decades, originating through the ongoing debates over approaches to reading instruction that dominated the field in the late 20th century and still linger today. Known as The Reading Wars, these frequently acrimonious debates pitted approaches labeled “phonics” against other approaches known as “whole language” (Aukerman, 2007; Cooper, 2009). Contemporary approaches to reading instruction, as seen in products marketed to teachers and school systems (e.g., Balanced Literacy), often claim to incorporate insights of both phonics and whole language approaches. However, there is still debate about whether the Reading Wars are over and if so, who won (e.g., Flanagan, 2018; Hanford, 2018; National Education Association, n.d.; Willingham, 2018).

Approaches that mainly focused on decoding strategies for rendering printed text as phonetic strings were ultimately deemphasized as a result of these conflicts. Cooper (2009) charts the rise of comprehension instruction as part of the whole language movement responding to dominance of decoding. She also ties comprehension teaching to efforts driving increased teaching of informational text into earlier elementary grades (e.g., Duke, 2004).

These debates set the stage for which representations of comprehension were recontextualized in and for Eva’s classroom. Tracing the wider debates about
comprehension would be essential to more completely historicizing the representations of reading skills the Eva negotiated. However, as was true for other focal cases, my study’s goals were not to trace a significant portion of the history of any one representation but to show a breadth of representations that Eva encountered as part of better understanding teachers’ encounters with language ideologies. While Eva’s teaching, like all reading instruction at DLCS, was distantly shaped by the Reading Wars, there was no active waging of Reading Wars debates at DLCS. Overall, DLCS uses what would be called a balanced literacy curriculum, incorporating reading in multiple contexts along with instruction in spelling, phonics, and sight words. In this way, the results of disciplinary debates of the Reading Wars had already been curricularized.

Bringing a language ideological perspective to the representation of comprehension does not attempt to intervene in debates like those of the Reading Wars. Instead, it identifies all sides of these debates as involving metalinguistic labor describing and regimenting the act of reading, whether carried out through educational research, materials development, standards writing, or curriculum purchasing. This section shows how Eva negotiated some of the end results of that labor, in particular the curricularized representations of comprehension’s sub-skills as linguistic events. Some materials on comprehension such as those from Fountas and Pinnell, important popularizers of guided reading, discuss reading behaviors as something that teachers should not only “teach” but

29 Sight words are words that occur with high frequency but use phonetically irregular or ambiguous spelling, such as said, could, or does. Although some DLCS classrooms included bulletin boards labelled palabras de vista, there is arguably not an equivalent pedagogical category in Spanish, owing to orthographic differences. Eva and her DLCS colleagues did include palabras de uso frecuencia as part of Spanish instruction, equivalent to the English reading instruction category of high frequency words.
also “notice,” thus providing an opening to see them as things children can already be capable of doing (Fountas and Pinnell Literacy, n.d.). However, these representations of sub-skills were so readily combinable with understandings of students being unable to accomplish these skills, that Eva focused on these skills almost exclusively as targets of instruction, devoting significant class time to every described sub-skill.

Overall, I argue that comprehension, while represented in distant metalinguistic labor shaping Eva’s teaching as being indicated by acts recognized as making connections and retelling along with many other skills, became, in sources more proximal to Eva, curricularized as being necessarily composed of these acts. Representations of these acts were standardized most influentially in the DRA/EDL as a reading assessment. Any ambiguities remaining were filled in by teacher-explored resources like Pinterest and Teachers Pay Teachers, where anchor charts and lesson plans for these individual strategies are easily obtainable. Eva’s lessons on comprehension skills were very closely tailored to the rubrics of the DRA/EDL.

The curricularization of these sub-skills as acts that comprise reading ability rather than acts that indicate reading ability can partly be explained by incentives in teacher evaluation. Eva knew her work was going to be partly evaluated by her students’ growth on the DRAs. Many of her students entered second grade unusually below grade level. She felt expected to help her students make significant progress in excess of a year’s growth, a fact seen as quantifiable and measurable at by the publishers of the DRA and staff at DLCS. As an assessment of reading level that tries to find out the most difficult text a student can read on their own (while still comprehending it, of course) the DRA/EDL is challenging by definition. Eva wanted her students to do as well as possible.
During the year-end DRA period, on days I wasn’t visiting her classroom, she texted me with pride when a student scored high enough to show significant growth over the year. Why would Eva, as a teacher committed to her students, ever let something like not being familiar with what’s on the DRA/EDL get in her students’ way?

**What is it like to DRA a student?**

Many of the representations of language involved in comprehension are recontextualized by the DRA/EDL. Eva’s 24 students all needed to be given a DRA and EDL at the end of each trimester. A full assessment could take approximately 15-20 minutes in total. If a student failed an assessment, that might be clear about 10 minutes in, or it might not be clear until the end. They would need a new full assessment if they failed. If they do extremely well at one level, this means the first guess at their level was too low, and they would need to be retested at a higher level DRA. Between administering the DRA and the EDL, and including re-assessments, around 65 would need to be completed. Especially at the end of the year, I assisted with some assessments when I visited Eva’s class during the testing period.

The exact texts and questions of the DRA/EDL are considered secure testing material. As such, Eva never read the texts used in the assessments to students at any other time, nor did she ever make them available to students. In light of these concerns, I limit direct quotations from the Teacher Observation Guides containing the protocols and do not present audio recorded assessments conducted by Eva. However, to provide readers a full sense of what the DRA/EDL administration entails, I include this narration of a typical session with a student, paraphrasing key instructions and substituting alternative story events in place of an actual DRA text. This narrative highlights some of
the ways that the DRA/EDL influences instruction generally. I chose to describe the entire DRA process, not only the comprehension section, so that readers might notice the detailed assessments that inform the entire interaction. Additionally, I believe it to be revealing that the comprehension section is scored with a similar exactness as the much more evidently quantifiable section on reading rate or number of words read incorrectly. For further exploration of recontextualization of representation of comprehension, following sections focus on classroom lessons.

It’s late May and you’re sitting down with Alonzo. You’ve got your Teacher Observation Guide and your copy of a book you’ve heard read dozens of times. “OK, remember when we did this at the beginning of the year? I’m going to listen to you read, take some notes, and ask some questions. Ready?” You’ve chosen a Level 16 text. Alonzo’s guided reading group has been reading Level 16 books for a few weeks and you’re pretty sure he can do this. All year you’ve been practicing the kinds of tasks the DRA asks you to ask him to do.

Every other student in the class is working on something on their own or in small groups. You’ve spent time establishing routines of centers, silent reading, and other work your students can do on their own while you administer the assessment. The other students know they’re not supposed to come over unless it’s an emergency. If you’re lucky, maybe there’s another adult in the room keeping an eye on things. Not only does the DRA take focus for you to keep track of, it’s designed as if your student is at their best focusing too. It would be a shame if they got distracted by too much noise or activity in the class and then didn’t do as well as you expected they could.
The first section is about “reading engagement.” You ask Alonzo three questions about the books he likes and who he likes to read with. There’s a rubric for this section, but at your school it’s not a part of passing or failing any level of DRA. Is it used like that at other schools? What did the trainer say about this at the DRA training two years ago? You can’t remember. Alonzo likes to read scary books, one of his favorite books is Wolves which you read aloud last week, and he reads with his baby sister, sometimes. You write all this down.

Before he starts reading, you give him a scripted two sentence introduction to the story: “In this story, Tiger Gets Lost, Tiger goes into the forest to visit her friend far away. She wants to stay away from hunters, so she gets help from monkeys who live in the trees.” Some of the standardized DRA books are a little weird, so you’re glad there’s a chance to give a bit of a preview, like you would give at other times supporting Alonzo to read, like guided reading or a readaloud.

With the introduction provided, you ask Alonzo to look at the pictures in the book and tell you what’s happening. As you listen to his picturewalk, you tally the number of times he uses connecting words: and, but, then, etc. You also note that he’s using key vocabulary from the story and from your brief introduction: hunter, monkey, cage, tiger. At one point Alonzo is lost in thought looking at one of the pictures. It’s been, what, ten seconds? You reluctantly prompt him by asking “Now what is happening?” Because he didn’t complete the preview without prompting, the most he can get in the Previewing rubric is a 2 out of 4.

With the preview over, it’s time to listen to Alonzo read the whole book. Some of the students at a higher reading level, towards a 28, read part of the book to you and part
by themselves, completing a little booklet on their own. But Alonzo is going to do
everything next to you. You read the prompt given right before reading, another chance
to remind Alonzo about the plot of the story he’s about to read: “Tiger Gets Lost. Now,
read to find out how Tiger and the monkeys help each other.” You start your stopwatch.
If Alonzo takes too long, you’ll have to stop the assessment and try again tomorrow at a
lower level. Your Observation Guide has a reproduction of the text of the book. For each
word, you record if Alonzo reads it correctly, or skips it, or self-corrects it, or repeats it,
or a few other possibilities and combinations of those. They covered all this in Running
Record training. At first it was hard to keep up with the speed of a student reading, but
you’ve got the hang of it now. You give Running Records during guided reading
occasionally, too. They’re not just for the DRA. You can analyze these records later to
help understand what information a reader is using to process the text. If Alonzo reads
“lake” as pond, that tells you something different than if he reads it as /lɛki/.

When Alonzo stops at a word without reading it, you’ve got a protocol to follow.
First, you tell him “You try it.” You can’t remind him of any of the word attack strategies
you’ve taught and practiced with him all year. That’s too specific of a prompt and would
invalidate the assessment, which is supposed to measure what Alonzo can do
independently. If “you try it” doesn’t produce anything, you tell him the word and record
the fact that you did so. This counts as an error. You’re keeping a tally of the errors he
makes (separate from the running record around the text of the book to make it easy to
read). If he makes 15 errors by the end of the reading, you have to stop the assessment,
not bothering to ask him the comprehension questions, and give him a new DRA another
day at the next lowest level.
At the same time you’re taking some basic notes about his “fluency” and “expression.” Alonzo is mostly attending to punctuation and rhythm in sections where he’s not stuck on difficult words. He’s reading smoothly, just like you’ve heard him in his guided reading group. Great. There’s dialog in this text, and Alonzo puts some effort into distinguishing the voices of the hunters. Maybe not as much you as try to model in your readalouds, but there is some expression in there. Alonzo finishes the book, and you stop the stopwatch. “OK, great job, hang on one second.” Looking back at your running record, and the tally of errors you made alongside, you quickly count nine errors. Not bad. That’s in the “independent” range. You circle that in the chart in your observation guide. And the stopwatch, let’s see. 4 minutes and 53 seconds. A little slow, but still in the independent range. You circle that too. Just 54 more seconds and he would have failed this level.

Now it’s time for the comprehension section, which starts with a Retelling. You read from the Teacher Observation Guide, even though you know you’ve probably memorized this by now, having said this a few times this morning already, and what feels like 100 times in the last few years. “Start at the beginning, and tell me what happened in this story.” Your Observation Guide contains a record of all the events in the story organized in a numbered list:

**Beginning**
1. Tiger missed her friend Bear and wanted to go see him.
2. Father told Tiger to watch out for hunters. Hunters like to catch tigers.

**Middle**
3. Tiger smelled the hunters coming, so she quickly climbed a tree to stay away from them.
4. She jumped between a few trees, but then didn’t know where she was.
5. She met three monkeys.
6. The monkeys were afraid of Tiger and the hunters too. They told her to go away.
7. Tiger tried to be nice. She promised to scare the hunters away.
8. She jumped down right into the middle of the hunters and broke their cage. Tiger roared at the hunters.
9. The hunters ran away. The monkeys were happy and told Tiger the way to the lake.

**End**
10. Tiger went to the middle of the lake and met her friend Bear.

Alonzo starts his retelling of the story he just read to you. You’ve said throughout the year that summaries need a beginning, a middle, and an end and should have important details. “There was a tiger who wanted to see her friend…” You underline *Tiger missed her friend* and handwrite the number 1 next to the printed number 1. Alonzo is including the underlined details and has retold the first event first, which is a good start. As he continues you keep underlining details he uses and tracks of the order he gives information. If he says something really off base, you’ll have to quickly jot that down. Hopefully he’ll stick to the story events.

Alonzo continues his retelling. “…and so she went out and she saw the hunters and climbed a tree and she was like ‘uh oh my dad told me to be careful.’ And she was jumping in the trees and got lost. There were monkeys there who were afraid.”

Alonzo stops. Why did he stop? Who knows. You give him a prompt, recording that you do so: “What happened after the monkeys were afraid?”

“Oh, after that, Tiger she was nice and said she would make the hunters go away and she broke their cage and then the monkeys helped her.” He pauses. You’ve already prompted once. A second prompt won’t lower his score since there’s a box for “1-2 prompts,” but if he doesn’t include an event from the “End” that will definitely lower his score.

“How did the story end?” you ask.
“Oh, she got to see her friend. Bear.” Great. He’s got the last event and used the character’s name instead of saying “Tiger’s friend” again. It looks like he’s going to pass. Just a few more questions to go.

You ask Alonzo about his favorite part of the story. This is a “Reflection” in the terms of the DRA/EDL. “I liked when the tiger broke the hunters’ cage,” he says.

He needs to give a reason, but you’re allowed to prompt no matter what here without penalty. “Tell me why you liked that part.”

“Um, it was cool.” Your meaningful gaze is not enough to make Alonzo elaborate. You write down Alonzo’s response. You’ve done enough scoring in the past to know this is going to be a 2 out of 4. But you’re pretty sure that with the good retelling that he’s going to pass.

Now onto the next question. The DRA gives you two choices of what to ask here, for the skill of “Making Connections.” You take the direct route, which you’ve done all year in guided reading and readalouds, too. “What connections did you make while reading this story?” Alonzo thinks for a moment. He’s practiced this.

“I had a text-to-self connection because sometimes my Dad tells me to be careful of stuff. Like to be careful of cars on the street.” You write down his connection. OK, a literal connection, that’s good enough for a 3 out of 4.

“Thanks Alonzo, you did great. You can pick which center to join.”

You look over the rubric at the back of the observation guide. You already calculated his accuracy and rate right after the reading. Independent range: 3 points out of 4 for each. He read with some expression, 3 out of 4. He used all the punctuation and mostly read in longer phrases. 4 out of 4. 13 out of 16 total for Oral Reading Fluency.
Now, comprehension. His previewing is 2 out of 4 due to that prompt you gave him. His retelling missed some events and was sometimes out of order. 3 out of 4. He referred to all characters by name and had most of the details in there. 4 out of 4. You judge that he had a good understanding of the essential words and concepts of the story. His retelling mentioned smashing the hunters’ cage, the monkeys being afraid, all that. He retold with 2 prompts, so he stays in the 3 out of 4 band again. His reflection of “it was cool” is a classic “limited” or “general” reason for his opinion, so he only gets a 2 out of 4. His connection wasn’t as “thoughtful” as it needs to be for a 4 out of 4, but not was it “limited” (2) or “unrelated” (1), so you’re comfortable with giving him a score of 3 out of 4 here too. Overall, he got a 20 out of 28 for comprehension. Alonzo has passed his Level 16 DRA. If he had missed two more points, he would have failed.

You thank the class for working quietly while you do DRAs. You call out for another student—it’s Carola’s turn. That’ll be the last one for the day. Only fifty more to go.

**Retelling.** The qualities of a good retelling emerged directly from the DRA/EDL as a representation of comprehension. Over the course of the year, Eva repeatedly supported students to practice retellings that included events from the beginning, the middle, and the end. Eva’s lesson plans for guided reading often closely mirror elements of the DRA, like this description of a learning target:

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I can retell the stories using vocabulary from book. I can retell the story in order. I can use characters’ names when retelling story. I can make a meaningful reflection of the story (telling favorite part of the story). I can make connections with the story. (Lesson Plans, 1/9)
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Every sentence of this target relates to a separately scored section of the comprehension rubric on the DRA/EDL. When I once asked Eva for more detail about how she judged
retellings, she flatly (and unsurprisingly) told me that “what I look for is what the DRA and the EDL dictates as a guide,” going on to explain some common problem areas for her students (Audio Recording, January 20).

Of course, Eva was not unique at DLCS in her recontextualizations of the DRA/EDL requirements. Conversations among the team, and Eva and teachers of other grades, commonly shorthanded elements of the DRA/EDL rubric. Conversations among teachers recontextualized the DRA/EDLs in the sense that the specific requirements of those assessments were taken for granted as components of the skill being assessed. For example, a discussion among Eva and Carmen about the comprehension skills of a particular student could naturally refer to whether or not a student referred to characters by name instead of generic forms like the boy (January 13, Fieldnotes). Whether the practice of referring to characters by name is evidence of greater comprehension is an ideological stance, one represented as objective by the DRA/EDL and recontextualized in Eva’s planned instruction with her students.

Eva used the DRA/EDL requirements as her guide despite recognizing the difficulty of the assessment. As she explained in the same interview just mentioned, students most commonly gave general or limited retellings and did not provide the level of detail the DRA expects (represented in the narrated DRA above by the numbered list of detailed events). At the same that she used the DRA/EDL as an authority, she implicitly questioned the appropriateness of the expectation by saying it would even be hard for her to retell a story the way the DRA/EDL expected her students to.

Indeed, the contrived nature of the DRA/EDL retelling does highlight the necessity of specific metalinguistic labor describing it. When else do we read a text to
someone only to have them ask us to give an exhaustive summary of it? The specific form of DRA/EDL-appropriate retellings is represented foremost by the testing materials and formal or informal training provided to teachers. Whenever Eva sought more specific ideas about how to support students practicing retellings, both teacher-explored and school-offered resources contained associated representations of sequencing activities, summarization practice, or descriptions of transition words that might aid a retelling.

**Making connections.** The previous narrative illustrated the material on the DRA/EDL devoted to assessing students’ abilities to *make connections* about a text they’ve read. While discussing or at least considering our reactions to texts is part of innumerable literacy practices, connections asked for during the assessment do not emerge in a conversation. While Eva would talk with her students about books during readalouds and guided reading, or encourage them to converse with each other, she and other teachers could not do so during the DRA/EDL. In fact, also as illustrated in the narrative above, when DRAing a student it’s common practice to manage the number of prompts given to a student.

The language practice of *making connections*, as it was represented through the DRA/EDL, was taught and given opportunities for practice throughout the year. In one such lesson, Eva defined connections as “A connection is when you read a story and you think, ‘wait, this happened to me as well.’ So sometimes connections can be exactly the same thing happened to you” (March 9, Audio Recording). At first in this lesson, she established that no students had an exact connection with the shared text they had just read, which involved a trip to Paris. She then expanded the possible connections student
might have to include any similar experience. She asked for a student volunteer who wanted help making a connection:

Eva: So, somebody who has not participated yet. And that could be somebody who says “Miss I don’t have a connection but I want you to help me to come up with a connection.” So if you are that person, raise a quiet hand. (3s)

David: ((raises his hand))

Eva: David, thank you for being brave. So let’s help David, because a lot of you, the reason why we’re doing this is because when we did DRAs, you were not able to have. connections, okay? And you would say “uh, I don’t have a connection.” So, David, have you ever been to a place that you really liked? Tell us. Tell us about it.

(March 9, Audio Recording 3, 1h59m26s)

Eva’s direct reference to the test her students would later take was not unusual, nor was it surprising to hear her statement that the need for making connections was driven by the DRA/EDL.

As she talked with David to understand his possible connections to the text, she learned that he loved his trips to McDonald’s and that when he went there, he was glad that his parents got him chicken nuggets when he asked. Eva uses this information for model a connection for David:

Eva: So, David, this is what you could have said to me. “Well, = “ ((raises hand)) Copy me. (. ) Copy me.

David: Oh ((raises hand))

Eva: I have a connection.

David: I have a connection.

Eva: Well, I didn’t go to Paris…

David: Well I didn’t go to Paris…

Eva: but…

David: but…

Eva: I went to McDonald’s.

David: but I went to McDonald’s.

Eva: And I had a blast too.

David: And I had a blast too.

Eva: And tell me why you had a blast.

David: Because I got everything that I asked for.

(March 9, Audio Recording 3, 2h1m35s)
Here, representations of what *making connections* look like are being used to shape student talk into a closer approximation of an expected, previously curricularized form. Even if Eva already believes in David’s ability to make connections, or notices that his reactions to books imply he personally relates to stories, she must also make sure that he can produce examples of *making connections* in ways that will count according to the DRA/EDL’s standardized and standardizing instructions.

**Representing comprehension.** Driven by the needs of assessment, specific acts of responding to texts became represented as requisites of comprehension rather than as indications of comprehension. Once *retelling* and *making connections* were successfully represented as requisites of comprehension, these acts themselves also needed to be curricularized, which inevitably standardizes their qualities and tends to exclude other student expressions of their reading. Exacting representation of the components of reading has been closely tied to the development of reading “levels” which necessitate assessments like the DRA/EDL. If students are seen as needing to practice mainly at narrow, zone of proximal development-inspired band of challenge, teachers and schools require assessments and leveled text sets that function as curricularized and curricularizing artifacts.³⁰

As I mentioned, I have administered the DRA many times myself. My analysis of comprehension is informed by my experience of conducting this assessment but also by

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³⁰These needs have more than just ideological or representational effects. The material needs of schools and classrooms operating under skill-based models of reading require considerable expense. Fountas and Pinnel’s recommended complement of leveled texts to be shared by three second grade teachers for guided reading purposes costs $8,125. A full K-3 DRA testing kit costs $435.75. While this study does not attempt to add to excellent critiques of the influence of profit motives of educational materials publishers on classroom practice (e.g., Shannon, 2008), I would be remiss if I did not make clear just how lucrative some of the metalinguistic labor discussed in this study really is.
the vivid memories of my own students’ performance on the DRA and my attempts to prepare them for it. I remember the excitement of a student passing a high level DRA. I remember frustration about doing lessons on the intricacies of retelling, making sure students would give enough detail but not too much, making sure they’d tell events in order. Through this study, I have been able to revisit comprehension from a new perspective.

A language ideological focus reveals problems emerging from a failure to distinguish between responses to text that are frequently part of reading on the one hand and responses that show successful reading has occurred on the other hand. Under representations not linked to standardized assessment, it’s far easier to see that students will make connections when they read or hear a story. Retelling, on the other hand, represents a far more contrived speech act, one whose particular characteristics are more aligned to the needs of a standard leveled reading assessment than they are reflective of common literacy practices. Language ideological examination of comprehension is not unique in pointing to the distinction between practices that emerge during reading and practices that indicate successful reading (but whose absence does not necessarily indicate unsuccessful reading). This study better defines the problems of comprehension by showing the specific resources that make available narrow representations of comprehension. I also contextualize the problems of comprehension by comparing them to those that arise from other representations of language recontextualized through similar pathways of curricularization.
Discussion

All the representations of language described in this chapter illustrated ways that language is curricularized into highly specific skills. Each case skill is represented individually across a variety of planning resources, indicating a history of metalinguistic labor whose results served as starting points for Eva’s teaching. The need for standardized and valid assessment drives many of these skills to be defined with extreme specificity, and ultimately the descriptions of what characterized a skill functioned to make it difficult for students to show they were capable at all.

The skills typified have an easy rationale for being part of the goals for students, or at least being part of a holistic understanding of goals for what they will be able to accomplish. However, when representations of these language practices served mainly to show students’ incapability, they were serving not only as goals of what student would be doing, but also as assumptions about what students already could not do. For example, inferencing is indeed an important part of participation in social life. But to actually teach inferencing as if it is a skill children cannot currently accomplish is another story entirely. Such dire assessments about children’s linguistic capacities appear to mirror familiar deficit discourses such as the word gap or the verbal deprivation hypothesis, even if they were otherwise linked by DLCS staff with benevolent desires to ensure student success. The ease with which totalizing assessments of student capacities emerged from curricularized skills suggests it is skills themselves are readily combinable with deficit representations of students.

A discussion I had with Eva near the end of the year partially reveals how she dealt with more broadly circulating deficit ideologies about her students in relation to
specifically curricularized representations. While the discussion focuses on asking questions, it illustrates connections to raciolinguistic ideologies structuring the perception of the language of racialized students in ways that reproduce presupposed deficiencies. (Flores & Rosa, 2015). I argue that the questions raised by Eva here should inform our understanding of all curricularized skills.

It was the end of a long day. We had taken a field trip to a historical museum in Philadelphia. Eva’s class, along with the other second grade classes, was accompanied by several museum guides. In brief conversations during the field trip, we agreed that it did not seem like the guide who worked the most with our class was particularly experienced in working with large groups of children. We found out that at the end of the trip that she was thrilled about the experience, as she praised the DLCS students at the end of our planned time to tour the exhibits:

**Guide:** I was so happy to meet you guys. I think I have never-- and I’ve worked here for five years-- I have never met a group that loved it and was so interested and asked the greatest questions, about everything

**Eva:** ((addressing students)) Wow, quiet applause for you because you made me proud. (Audio Recording, June 9, 2h25m7s)

In a few moments, Eva added in an aside to me, “I’m super proud of them. They did a great job. They did a great job.” Eva’s genuine pride in her students was rooted in her sense that this assessment by the guide represented their growth over the year.

Over a box lunch back in the classroom with her students, Eva, myself, and one of the parent chaperones who came with us revisited the comments of the museum guide.

31 Some details about the trip are omitted to preserve the confidentiality of the museum staff.
Eva described some of the excellent questions that apparently led the guide to praise the students:

Eva: And like Jaime—
there was a fork,
and it was a— it was um— oyster eating fork,
but it had a design on the top and I thought that maybe it was [Eva’s guess],
And Jaime was like “What makes this fork unique?”
and I thought it was such an amazing question.
And she said “It’s a fork used to eat oysters.”
And I’m= I’m like= That’s it? ((laugh))
Like why do we have an oyster eating fork? ((laugh))
So then she started explaining him what an oyster was!
I was impressed with like how good he was listening,
like he was interested. And— (3s) you know.

Mark: Yeah.
Eva: But it’s things like that like when you get someone young.
or somebody who hasn’t been a teacher—

Parent: Yeah.
Eva: But– you know– but she was like—
I was like, “Oh my gosh she’s gonna complain about us and—“
because she seemed like that person that would be like “Come on!” but–
Then she was impressed because they kept asking her questions
and I don’t think that she was ready to have so many questions.

Mark: Huh.
Parent: Yeah I don’t think she was thinking they were gonna ask questions.
Eva: Right. And everything was like,
“Miss, you don’t know how to read [language represented in museum materials]?”
and “Why is this like this?”
and “Why is this like that?” and–

Mark: Yeah.
Eva: I was like, “Way to go!”
But don’t ask me questions in the class when I go, “Do you have a question?”
((makes a blinking face that she often uses to signify students who don’t respond,
then laughs))

(June 9, Audio Recording 3, 17m38s)

In this recount of student questions, Eva is thrilled at how detailed the questions were.

She and the parent agree that it didn’t seem like the guide expected to hear so many
questions from the DLCS students. At the same time, Eva admits that in some ways, she
was also surprised, contrasting the way they asked questions in the museum with how
they responded to her prompts of “do you have a question?” Her comparison was a happy
one, more amused at the ways that students can surprise you than annoyed, at least in that
moment, about their lack of questions in class. At this point in the conversation, we were
cut off by Eva addressing students’ behavior across the classroom. In reflection with students before dismissal, she repeated the story of Jaime’s question about the oyster fork, again praising him for his contribution.

Eva and I got to discuss this further amongst ourselves. During some free choice time before dismissal, Eva asked me, as she occasionally did, if anything happened that day that was relevant to my research, joking with me and saying that it was OK if the answer was no. I understood how it might have seemed less relevant to her since there wasn’t very much typical instruction to observe, and I had decided to go that day primarily expecting to help in my role as another adult chaperone. But based on all the reflection I had seen about students asking questions that day, I told her that, well, actually it had definitely been an interesting day. I told her about noticing how some teachers were concerned that students could not ask questions, and I said it was something I knew she had emphasized in her class. She reacted still excited about Jaime’s asking about the oyster fork as an example of a great question and again highlighting the guide’s suspected unfamiliarity with the students as an indication of his improvement in this area:

**Eva:** It’s like— it was— it’s really awesome because you have them in front of you and they don’t ask me any questions.

**Mark:** Mhm.

**Eva:** And I’m tr-- I have-- I have to be constantly pushing the questions and then it was like-- The questions that they asked, what made it so awesome is that they were able to-- And this might sound very silly for other people. But our students have a really hard time [being] able to express what they are thinking in a way that maybe they are understood by other people that don’t work with them. That are not familiar with, uh-- And I don’t even want to go to “our community” because it’s more of-- I d-- ((suckteeth)) it’s not a Latino thing or it’s not-- It’s like, where we are at.
More in general terms of like down here at our area.

Mark: Hm.

Eva: What makes you say that. When you have people that come from the outside like food and nutrition or other programs I’ve seen them that—

I know what the kid meant to ask and I know what the kid meant to say but they— they don’t understand it.

Mark: Hm.

Eva: They weren’t understood.

(June 9, Audio Recording 3, 1h3m51s)

In her elaboration of their growth in asking questions, Eva does not specifically assert that they could not do it, but she does imply that at a previous point their questions needed to be “pushed.” What really cements her sense that they have grown in their skill with asking questions is that their questions were understood by “other people who don’t work with them.” She tells of prior experiences where she could tell what the students were saying but outsiders could not. These stances represent Eva’s attempt to listen on behalf of a wider society that she predicts will not listen to her students, who she cares about deeply, with as generous an ear as she does. Flores, Lewis, and Phuong (2018) show the same position taken on by other DLCS teachers who they argue are negotiating responses to their understanding of ways that white supremacist society will present their students with barriers that will be attributed to their language use. Eva notably does not wish to locate the understandability of DLCS students as a racialized “Latino thing,” a choice that our further discussion contextualizes.

After she further elaborates why she was so impressed with the growth shown in Jaime’s and other student’s questions, I decided to press her somewhat on her description of outsiders to the school as not being able understand the students as an objective

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32 This is Eva’s question to herself, ventriloquating me, since by this time of the year, I had asked her this question or similar ones many times.
reflection of student capabilities. I do so by picking up on her reference to visiting
volunteers who represent a city nutrition program:

Mark: Do you think the nutrition people are experienced teachers?
(4.5s)
Eva: I don’t–
Mark: cuz I–
you know,
Eva: It depends. Um, there’s been more– I don’t think–
There have been more that–
So when I say like experienced teachers is that–
(3s)
Mark: I mean– maybe I should tell you why I’m asking.
Eva: Mhm.
Mark: So like, I wouldn’t consider myself like, super familiar with this community
even though I’ve been=
Eva: Mhm.
Mark: =hanging out at the school for=
Eva: Mhm.
Mark: =four years.
But I’ve never thought like,
“What the heck is this kid talking about?”
(June 9, Audio Recording 3, 1h6m48s)

Flores and Rosa (2015) argue that so-called additive or appropriateness-based approaches
to language education rely on assumptions that the language of racialized students will be
heard objectively, an assumption they say ignores the raciolinguistic ideologies
structuring the perception of the language of racialized students in ways that reproduce
presupposed deficiencies. Eva’s inclusion of the museum guide and the nutrition program
volunteers serves to ground an otherwise abstract image of listeners her students will one
day face. In the way that I frame and reframe my question about the teaching experience
of the volunteers, I arguably further participate in a discourse supposing that the students’
discourse can be objectively heard, contrasting my own implied objective hearing of the
students as understandable, regardless of my lacking special knowledge of the
community, with the listening of other adults who I suggest may simply lack experience
as teachers talking to young children. As the conversation continues, Eva adds examples
of ways she has seen DLCS students be heard by outsiders to the school.
In response to my question implying another explanation for the students’ supposed lack of intelligibility, Eva reaffirms that she has witnessed multiple occasions of students not being understood. In this explanation, she includes her own assessments of the students’ utterances being difficult to parse. At the same time though, while she seems firm in her assessment that some student questions (or attempts at questions) are simply not skilled, she revisits her reluctance to identify a definite cause for this problem with their questions. In particular, while she identifies the problems as a possible “down here thing” or an “urban school thing,” she acknowledges that this has been her primary experience teaching. Addressing this theme, as she continues, Eva considers still other possibilities:

Eva: Right.
Mark: You know, like– (3s)
Eva: I’ve never felt like they weren’t making themselves understood.
Mark: so I’ve seen it–
Eva: but it sounds like what you’re saying the–
Mark: I’ve seen it like with different grades
Eva: Uh-huh.
Eva: that like, when there are people that come they don’t know…
    You know, like I’ve seen it–
    not just the food and nutrition, I mean.
    But like when the City Kids Theatre comes sometimes
    and like some of the questions they ask that are not questions, they are statements.
    And they don’t know how to turn that statement into a question.
Mark: Uh-huh.
Eva: Like they don’t know=
    “Oh is that what= are you trying to ask me if...?”
    if it’s not something super clear,
Mark: Huh.
Eva: They don’t have–
    They don’t understand what it is that this kid is trying to ask me.
    And they are like, they are trying to find out, but you know–
    So that’s why I said I don’t know if it’s like even fair that I say ‘this community.’
    Because this is all I know.
    You know what I mean?
    like I just I don’t know if I could say “down here” if it’s a down here thing
    or if it’s an urban school thing
    just because my experience has only been being here.

(June 9, Audio Recording 3, 1h7m15s)
or if it’s a school thing.

Mark: Uh-huh.
Eva: Just because, um–
Because we have made such a big deal out of like how our questions–
our kids, the way they ask questions.
Mark: Right.
Eva: So it makes me infer that maybe we have a struggle in terms of not community,
[but] in terms of as a school of where we are at.
Like if we pick DLCS and we put it in the Main Line
or if we put it in–
I don’t know, somewhere else
Would we be having those conversations about questions?
Would we be talking about how important it is?
And that’s something that I wonder, you know.

(June 9, Audio Recording 3, 1h8m24s)

Eva’s reference to the Main Line in contrast to “urban schools” serve as references to any combination of race, community wealth, and school resources. She further describes her reluctance to conclusively explain the problem with student questions by raising the possibility that even other schools struggle to get their students to ask questions. Indeed, much later in the conversation, she asks me if my school had these kinds of conversations when I was a teacher. I told her that we had not. In general, I find it extremely doubtful that teachers worry about their students’ ability to ask questions at schools where they are not similarly induced to take on the institutional listening positions of a society steeped in racialized discourses of linguistic deficiency such as the word gap.

In fact, while considering the impact of parent-child engagement on the problem of questions a few more minutes into the conversation, Eva herself refers to the word gap, quoting studies saying that “we know that our kids in urban education come to school with 2000 words less than other places.” She admits she isn’t quite sure of the number, looking to me for some validation that those studies do exist. Not wanting to change the subject to the many critiques of the word gap, I merely acknowledge that I’ve heard of those studies. It was not surprising to hear her refer to this research, widely disseminated and popularized as it is. What is striking about her mention of the work is how low her
measure of the gap is comparing to the canonical 30 million. But whether poor racialized children are said to lack 2000 words or 30 million words, or show deficiency based on any other supposedly objective measurement, a constant feature of such raciolinguistic representations is their availability to teachers.

The widespread availability of raciolinguistic ideologies to also be recontextualized as explanations for student language appears highly influential on the ways that skills were frequently understood as linguistic practices that students lacked. This availability is what makes highly curricularized representations of linguistic skills, such as inferencing, asking questions, and comprehension, so readily combinable with understandings of children as possibly lacking those skills to such an extent that they need direct, intensive instruction, with scaffolding so high and so thick that it might be better called a wall. I have not presented evidence here to argue that these skills were specifically curricularized through the recontextualization of raciolinguistic ideologies of linguistic deficiency. However, this discussion with Eva suggests such ideologies will readily incorporate any skill that is defined both narrowly, in terms of its specific linguistic form, and as an entity (Park & Wee, 2013), in that it might or might not be possessed. Throughout this chapter, I highlighted with alarm the distinction, wrought by curricularization, between seeing inferencing and asking questions as skills and seeing them as natural, “species-unique” components of language and thought. From a raciolinguistic perspective, this reanalysis of language and thought as potentially absent is no accident. Because raciolinguistic ideologies have been and are deeply implicated in drawing boundaries between populations as human or subhuman (Flores & Rosa, 2019; Rosa & Flores, 2017), their function precisely aligns with the contrast Valdés identifies
between species-unique language and narrowly curricularized and potentially undeveloped skills.

If skills, as language ideologies, are defined as things to be added to students, they will always be easily combinable with representations of students as currently not good enough. This is seen not only in the connection of students’ supposed inability to ask questions with discourses of racialized deficiency, but also in the omission of descriptions of reading behaviors as practices to notice and not just teach. Given how necessary curricularization is for schools as we know them today, these cases raise questions about imagining the potential schools without the construction of linguistic skills. Can the consequences discussed in this chapter be avoided by typifying practices like inferring, asking questions, or comprehension in new ways, or will such narrowly curricularized practices always serve well established deficit ideologies? Additionally, given the reliance of Eva’s instruction in skills on school-required sources rooted in policy imperatives, could an intervention ever serve to shift individual teachers’ practices absent wider change? The ease with which the focal skills discussed here align with raciolinguistic ideologies suggests significant dangers in any attempt to preserve these skills. Although these binds are most acutely felt in the cases of skills, representations of genres and languages raise similar questions. Thus, with the benefit of drawing on examples from all the cases of the study, these questions are fully pursued in the next and final chapter.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

In fulfilling her professional responsibilities and supporting her students, Eva constantly drew on a store of planning resources as she produced and recontextualized representations of numerous types of language in her classroom. Her planning did not consist of a single linear pathway from a predetermined source. Instead, school-required, school-offered, and teacher-explored sources all played distinct roles in her planning depending on the representations. In the ways that these representations impacted life in her classroom, they revealed the contemporary results of curricularization as it unfolded for 24 students and their teacher.

Representations of named languages, as separate entities and forms of communication that can be dominant within a bilingual speaker, were recontextualized from school allocation policies, arrangements of team planning, and monolingual assessments and classroom materials. Where students’ explicit and implicit reflections on their emergent bilingualism might have suggested possible deconstructions of monoglossic ideologies, the curricularized structures that defined classroom activities offered little room to pursue these opportunities. Viewing these structures and activities from a language ideological perspective, rather than attempting to assess the extent to which Eva embraced flexible bilingual pedagogy, I showed how her teaching made sense of language through the DLCS allocation policy and other planning sources that redundantly provided assumptions of language separateness and language dominance.

Representations of genres, including fiction and non-fiction, persuasive or informative or entertaining texts, and fairy tales and fables, were recontextualized into Eva’s classroom from state standards, the DRA/EDL standardized readings assessments,
and online teacher-explored sources like Pinterest. Students were expected to recognize and produce texts belonging to these genres. In all cases, though opportunities for exploring ambiguity in definitions constantly presented itself, genre characteristics were taken as intrinsic qualities of texts and not as aspects of socially situated recognition. As a result, Eva and her students’ efforts to make sense of language as composed of genres was often obstructed by the very materials and lessons meant to scaffold their student understanding.

Representations of numerous skills were reanimated in Eva’s classroom, and the skills of inferencing, asking questions, and comprehension were both consequential for how students were assessed as well as closely related to circulating deficit discourses that would define DLCS students as linguistically deficient. Representations of the focal skills described in this study are present in the school-required resources, such as state standards, that often draw critical attention from scholars of education. But relatively less specific descriptions in school-required sources became recontextualized as quite strict in the school-offered and teacher-explored planning sources that Eva interacted with more directly. In the ways that Eva and her DLCS colleagues made sense of language through these sources and in professional discussion, these skills were represented and curricularized in ways that excluded them from the intrinsic linguistic capabilities of children.

I undertook this study with an interest in how representations such as these might accrue consequences that got in the way of Eva’s teaching and her students’ life in school. Where these representations were, as often, unrelentingly narrow, they made it more unlikely that students would be recognized as successful. In this way, since Eva was
committed to her students and was frustrated with herself when she couldn’t get something across to them, these representations also made her job harder.

My study confirms and details one of the primary assertions made in its proposal: that elementary teaching is awash in language ideologies, ranging from those that relate to entire named languages but also to sentence-length utterances fulfilling an academic task. Taking the methodological stance that these ideologies were separable and locatable as they emerged from specific planning resources, this study could show the range of their consequences and their origins. In the remainder of the chapter, I consider what theoretical and practical implications emerge from these findings.

**Curricularization and Representations of Language**

A major theoretical implication of this study is that *curricularization* as described by Valdés (2015) points to crucial aspects of how schools manage and represent language in ways that extend beyond the metalinguistic labor done especially for language teaching which was Valdés’ focus (although she never claimed curricularization was only about language teaching). This suggests that existing critiques of curriculum and instruction related to language can be strengthened and deepened by responding to the fundamental assumptions of curricularization itself and the role it plays in schooling and assessment, rather than only on the results or particular end points of that process. In other words, curricularization and its applicability beyond language education suggests the need to move beyond discussions or critiques of how skills are taught or which skills are selected for teaching. Thus, my study does not suggest a better way to teach a skill like *asking questions*. Instead, it suggests that there is no way of teaching *asking questions* that
avoids problems created in its curricularization, in particular its alignment with
discourses of student incapability.

This study portrays the costs of curricularizing language in the first place. Under a reading assessment regime that did not rely on representations of language separation and language dominance as did the regime of the DRA/EDL, Eva would have had little reason to press Miguel so intently on his use of Spanish, motivated by conclusions about his family’s language use. If the second grade curriculum did not ask students to produce fairy tales and fables, and if Eva had not been convinced by teacher-explored and other sources that these works required specific characteristics, she would have had no reason to reject Lucas’s fable about a dragon. If Eva had had the option of giving students numerous opportunities to draw conclusions about texts without having to stop and assess their ability to infer, her students may have had more positive and validating experiences with reading. Changing these conditions requires shifts that not only go beyond pedagogy but also impinge on the foundational policy assumptions of schooling, such as the very need for assessment. It is my hope that continued attention to curricularization will clarify the targets of efforts to change these conditions, efforts which should include political and material dimensions beyond the knowledge-focused contributions that have typically characterized scholarly interventions on the problems of language and education (Flores & Chaparro, 2017; Lewis, 2018). This study suggests the value of continued investigation of the curricularization of representations of language, both in comparing the pathways of recontextualization and in historicizing particular representations through institutional phases of their development (as in Lewis, 2017) in addition to classroom and school phases (as in this study).
In asserting that representations of language in schools are curricularized through deeply entrenched institutional mechanisms, a question naturally arises about whether it is possible for language to be uncurricularized or decurricularized. Valdés asserts the “species unique communicative system” as the un- or perhaps pre-curricularized form of language. I do not take this definition to denote language practices that are free of ideologies, which Valdés and many others would describe as impossible. Instead, an un- or pre-curricularized language is one apart from the demands of schooling structures in the ways that Eva, her students, and many other people know them. In a strict sense, language cannot be decurricularized as long as it is taught and assessed.

But language ideology frameworks, even when they describe deeply entrenched ways of understanding language, also always suggest the possibility of alternatives. From these perspectives no norm about language is simply just the way things are. Instead, every representation of language that Eva and her students struggled with is the way things are for now, in this place, for these people and not for others, because of the actions that keep it this way. That Eva and other teachers struggle with these representations and that these representations are rooted in institutional curricularization should inform any intervention seeking to create more linguistically inclusive education.

Implications, Practicality, and the Problem Orientation

As discussed in Chapter 2, one motivation of this study was rooted in a desire to preserve the expanded sense of the problem orientation of educational linguistics as suggested in its early descriptions. In this expanded sense in which both defining and solving problems are given weight, this study fulfills the duty to the problem orientation not by attempting to solve the problems arising from narrow representations of
bilingualism, genres, or skills, but by better defining the problems emerging from curricularization itself through the lens of its impact on Eva’s classroom. As I began to suggest in discussion sections of previous chapters, any intervention on these problems would be more immediately productive in attempts to mitigate, rather than eliminate them. However, even these interventions have intrinsic limitations that reflect the foundational role of curricularization in schooling.

If curricularization ensures the availability of narrow representations of language which are easily combinable with representations of students as deficient, how might teachers be prepared to notice and mitigate the impact of these representations? This question attempts to productively acknowledge the impact of constraints on teachers’ work, such as the mechanisms by which they are evaluated, while still looking for opportunities for them to disrupt the impacts of curricularization.

As I analyzed data and wrote early drafts of this study at the same time that I worked as a teacher educator, I incorporated what appeared as emergent implications of the study into my teaching. I began to tell some of my students *The curriculum isn’t a list of what students don’t know.* This study shows ways that curriculum will recurrently impact teachers through its recontextualization of narrow representations of language, particularly those that inevitably imply some students will be linguistically incapable. Given that curricularization is a fundamental ingredient of schooling, one theme of suggested implications should relate to how teachers interpret their curricula. Interpreting it as something other than *a list of what students don’t know* may be a way of productively describing resistance to its effects. Interventions along this theme would advise deliberate and constant attempts to notice and value student language according to
students’ own purposes. Applied to a representation from this study, such interventions would also suggest changes like deemphasizing *inferencing* as a target skill and recognizing that students are already engaged in what that representation purports to describe. However, this change would require significant shifts in organizational or structural conditions would give teachers the ability to treat students as already capable of a skill named in the curriculum. It is difficult to imagine such radically transformed conditions, which I take as indication of the depth of this problem.

One intervention that could perhaps encourage teachers to use the curriculum differently is incorporating histories of school language ideologies into teacher education and development. This intervention would attempt to contextualize and historicize contemporary constraints on teachers in an effort to destabilize those constraints. This destabilization would involve engaging with teachers about that ways that any representation of language involves tradeoffs and simplifications. Such teacher development would not consist supplying teachers with new representations but encouraging them to take on opportunities for imagining alternatives, even if those alternatives can only be animated briefly in a context where most instruction will be shaped by officially sanctioned representations.

After analyzing and reflecting on my experience in Eva’s classroom, I fear that when some teachers admit *It’s not perfect* about their own practice, there is an implication that somebody else’s might be. In contrast, the approaches encouraged by a historicized perspective on curricularization would take the refrain *It’s not perfect* not as an admission of personalized imperfection but as a license to strategically undermine representations where they made supporting students more difficult. In the time since the
study was conducted, I have wondered at Eva’s mention to her students of “the people in Harrisburg,” and “the people who invented guided reading,” naming the other actors engaged in metalinguistic labor that strongly impacted the demands on her work as a teacher. Historicizing approaches to teacher education would involve more direct discussion of the choices of such actors: their limitations, the mistakes they are prone to making, and the ways their interests differ from those of teachers and students.

Yet this teacher-focused intervention, as consistent as it may be with some findings of this study, cannot transform the fundamental structures of curricularization from which the problems discussed here emerge. Depending on how definitions of practicality are operationalized within educational linguistic research, these interventions or similar ones are either promising under the circumstances or woefully inadequate to meeting relevant structural challenges. Similarly, the radical transformation of schools to desist in the assessment of linguistic skills is either the only practical solution to the problems of curricularization or a hopelessly impractical suggestion.

Recognizing all children as whole and complex communicators has not been the function of curricularization or indeed the function of schooling in the United States. Political and economic interests are alternatively served or thwarted by representations of how language works and what students and teachers should do with it at school. By encouraging interventions that confront the ties between curricularization and ideologies of linguistic deficiency, while also noting the intrinsic limitations of these interventions, this study reaffirms the need and opportunity for educational linguists to link our understandings of language ideologies in education to political struggles that name and disrupt the problems embedded in the structure of schooling.
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