A NONSTANDARD APPROACH TO STANDARD ENGLISH

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This paper proposes a nonstandard approach to standard English as a second dialect (SESD). It rejects assimilationist ideology as a way of legitimizing the educational experience of language minority groups, advocating instead a pluralist position which views the acquisition of standard English by native speakers of other varieties as "additive bidialectalism" rather than remediation.

The paper begins by clarifying "dialect," "creole" and "standard" as necessary background to a discussion of the ideology of linguistic prescriptivism. Research in two areas is then reviewed: (a) studies examining dialectal differences and their influence on cross-dialectal communication, and (b) sociolinguistic research on classroom participation structures involving language minority students. It is concluded that dialectal differences are not trivial, and that culturally appropriate modifications to classroom discourse patterns, such as those implemented in a program for Hawaii Creole English-speaking children, are useful models for other SESD settings.

Introduction: The political context of Standard English as a second dialect (SESD)

It has become increasingly difficult over the last few years for language professionals to ignore ill-informed public discussions of language and education. In the United States, the US English movement (Donohue 1985) and the proposed English Language Amendment (ELA) to the U.S. Constitution (see Marshall, 1986, and Judd, 1987, for excellent discussions), in particular, pose a serious challenge to the progressive philosophy of TESOL. Although the TESOL organization has recently reaffirmed its strong support for cultural and linguistic pluralism through its adoption of a resolution opposing the ELA, more remains to be done. There is a need for substantive discussion of both the ideological and empirical issues involved in language policy formulation and implementation.

Such discussion must extend beyond the important, long-standing debate over bilingualism and various forms of bilingual education, however, to include issues concerning schooling in and through Standard (British, American, Canadian, Australian, etc.) English as a second dialect (SESD) for speakers of minority varieties of the various national English standards.

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Alongside native speakers of minority languages—Spanish, Vietnamese, Ilokano, Inuktitut, Navajo, Punjabi, and so on—there are often native speakers of minority dialects: Black English Vernacular (BEV), Appalachian English, British West Indian English, Louisiana Creole English, (South Carolinian and Sea Islands) Gullah, Chicano English and Hawaii Creole English (HCE), to name but a few.

Recognizing these varieties as valid systems of communication, the present paper adopts a "nonstandard" approach to SESD. It rejects assimilationist ideology as the only way of viewing the experience of minorities in the US, arguing instead for a pluralistic position in which the acquisition of standard English (SE) is seen as additive bidialectalism rather than as remediation.

Aside from the furor over Black English Vernacular (BEV) during the 1960s and '70s, insufficient attention has been paid to minority varieties of English or to the educational life chances of the children who speak them. A new generation of teachers has appeared in US public schools since the period of the Civil Rights Movement, many of whom have had little meaningful exposure to the history of their current "problems" in teaching SESD students (Giroux, 1983; Giroux and McLaren, 1986; Whiteman, 1980). Yet blacks, Hawaiians and other second dialect groups consistently underachieve, and children in strongly second dialect-speaking states regularly do worst on national standardized examinations, e.g. the Scholastic Aptitude Test, especially on the verbal sections of such tests. In contrast, some immigrant groups speaking English as a second language equally consistently excel in many areas of the curriculum.

Part of the latter groups' success probably owes much to socioeconomic status, parents' educational levels, and to attitudes toward the value of education, while part of the SESD groups' problem is no doubt tied to the larger context of socioeconomic and ethnic stratification in American society. However, a growing body of research in communities and classrooms (e.g. Boggs, 1985; Cazden, John and Hymes, 1972; Gilmore and Glatthorn, 1982; Heath, 1983; Philips, 1983; Schieffelin and Gilmore, 1986) traces the problem more specifically to a mismatch between home and school sociolinguistic patterns as well as to linguistic prescriptivism surrounding the teaching of SESD (e.g. Milroy and Milroy, 1985; Trudgill, 1975, 1979; Wolfram and Christian, 1979).

The present paper examines problems in SESD as medium or object of
instruction. It begins by clarifying such terms as "dialect," "creole" and "standard" as background to a discussion of the ideology of prescriptivism with reference to minority varieties of English. Next, it reviews research on those varieties which provides evidence that dialectal differences are not as trivial as is commonly assumed, and can cause serious comprehension problems in the classroom. Finally, it reviews recent sociolinguistic research on minority varieties of English, pointing out its congruence with recent second language classroom process research. The paper extends discussion of issues at the macro- sociolinguistic level of language policy, national identity and cultural pluralism (see Cummins, 1986; Judd, 1984, 1987; and Labov, 1982). It seeks to engage teachers and teacher trainers in a critical evaluation of their roles in educational institutions by making as explicit as possible the links between language and educational policy, on the one hand, and classroom processes in the teaching of standard English as a second dialect, on the other.

Varieties of language: dialects, creoles and standards

It is important to begin a discussion of linguistic prescriptivism with non-prescriptive characterizations of the so-called "nonstandard" varieties of language, known as dialects and creoles. Objective linguistic definitions help reveal the inherently sociopolitical definition of "standard" varieties.

A dialect, following Halliday (1985, p. 44) and others, is

the variety you speak because you 'belong to' (come from or have chosen to move into) a particular region, social class, caste, generation, age group, sex group, or other relevant grouping within the community.

Dialects are identified on the basis of the systematic cooccurrence of particular linguistic (and discoursal) features among groups of people. In some cases, these features serve to identify an ethnic group, in others, a social class, and in still other cases, the geographical origin of speakers. Wolfram and Christian (1979) note that, by this definition,

the relative status of a dialect with respect to other dialects of the language...is irrelevant. The term used this way is completely neutral - there is no evaluation implied, either positive or negative.

The term creole is reserved for a variety of language newly created by
children in a multilingual context, typically where a pidginized variety already exists for purposes of rudimentary intergroup communication among adults who have different native languages (e.g. on sugar plantations in the early 1900's in Hawaii). A pidgin is usually said to differ from a creole in that the former is a second language while the latter is the native language of its speakers, typically the children of the pidgin speakers. As such, a creole's vocabulary and syntactic devices are, like those of any native language, large enough to meet all the communicative needs of its speakers.

(DeCamp, 1971, p.16).

A creole is just as rule-governed as any other "normal" language is. One can make grammatical errors in a creole language; one can break its rules. In Hawaii Creole English (HCE), for example, the sentence "my brother bought a car" is rendered as "mai brada wen bai wan ka," but not "mai brada gon bai wan ka," since wen is the correct preverbal past time marker, whereas gon is a preverbal future time marker. Similarly, the HCE sentence, ai gon ste kuk da fish (I'll go ahead and cook the fish) is correct, but ai ste gon kuk da fish is not, because the preverbal auxiliary gon is misplaced.

While a creole may seem closely related to a language such as English in its lexicon, it usually diverges from that language substantially in all linguistic domains, i.e. semantics, phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax. This is due to many of the rules of creole grammar having been created anew by its speakers. Even lexical items apparently "shared" by English and a related creole can have different meanings and syntactic distributions. To give another HCE example, the word neva appears to have come from the English adverb 'never,' but neva functions as a preverbal auxiliary meaning 'didn't'.

HCE: Mai nyuspepa neva kam dis mawning.
SE: 'My newspaper didn't come this morning'

The dividing line between dialects and creoles can be a difficult one to draw. North American Black English Vernacular (BEV), for example, which is commonly considered a dialect, is known to have had creole origins. HCE is sometimes referred to as a dialect when it is treated within the larger context of American English. The best cover term we have for both dialects and creoles (and any other way of speaking shared by a social group) is variety,
which may be defined simply but adequately as "a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution" (Hudson, 1980, p. 24).

What is important to note about the varieties discussed above is that neither dialects nor creoles are defined on the basis of social evaluation of particular ways of speaking. This is not to deny the existence of such evaluation, but simply to recognize that it is separable from the scientific description of linguistic variation and the identification of different varieties of English.

We can now turn to standard languages or varieties. These, Hudson (1980, p. 32) observes,

are the result of a direct and deliberate intervention by society, in that they are selected for special functions, extensively codified and institutionalized, and (hence) imbued by a society with greater prestige.

Standard English (SE), in particular, is seen by Trudgill and Hannah (1982, p.1) and by many scholars, as the variety "normally employed in writing and normally spoken by 'educated' speakers of the language." In their view, SE is defined with reference to grammar and vocabulary but not pronunciation. Strevens (1985, p.88) similarly considers SE to be

a particular dialect of English, being the only non-localized dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriate educational target in teaching English, which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accent.

There appears to be a consensus, then, that (1) SE is not tied to a particular accent, and that (2) SE is generally associated with written language. This knowledge alone has important consequences in the classroom, since it indicates that "correction" of accent and the imposition of written norms onto the spoken forms that students use is inappropriate. Put another way, different types of spoken and written discourse (e.g., "show and tell," prepared oral reports, class discussions, expository essays, science reports) have distinguishing features which should be considered in evaluating student performance. What is viewed to be standard English does, in fact, vary even among native speakers. An interesting study by Schmidt and McCreary (1977, p. 415) has shown that "there is considerable variation in both usage and judgments of acceptability within the scope of what might reasonably be
called standard English." In their study, middle-class US college students (including students in a M.A. in ESL program) used and judged as correct, contrary to prescriptive grammar rules, sentences such as the following, which involve subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent number and gender agreement, and pronoun choice in conjoined noun phrases, respectively:

(1) There's hundreds of people on the waiting list. (p. 419)
(2) Everybody started shouting and clapping their hands. (p. 421)
(3) The letter was received by my sister and I. (p. 424)

Their results led Schmidt and McCreary (p. 415) to distinguish between SE, which is characterized by forms such as the ones produced above by well-educated, middle class native speakers (some of them English teachers), and "super-standard" English, which is "either not followed by speakers or restricted to only the most formal level of style."

There is some disagreement among sociolinguists about whether SE is associated with a particular social group. Strevens (1985) claims that SE is "NOT (emphasis in original) 'upper class English'" (p. 87), i.e., it is not a class dialect. However, primarily data-based sociolinguists (e.g., Trudgill; Wolfram & Christian; J. Milroy and L. Milroy) take the position that SE is indeed associated with educated, middle and upper class segments of English-speaking populations. Wolfram and Christian (1979, p. 9), conclude that "there is really no single dialect of English that corresponds to a 'standard' English, although the popular belief is that such a dialect exists in the speech of those who speak so-called 'good' English." Milroy and Milroy (1985, p. 23) put this view more strongly: "'Standard English' is a rather loose and pre-scientific label. What Standard English actually is thought to be depends on acceptance (mainly by the most influential people) of a common core of linguistic conventions, and a good deal of fuzziness remains around the edges" [emphasis added].

Strevens (1985, p. 87) also claims that SE is "not imposed upon those who use it" in the sense that there is no institution such as the Academie Francaise that regulates the "proper" use of SE. However, it is painfully obvious that, in the US, SE has been systematically imposed on speakers of minority varieties of English for several generations through every institutional channel in existence (see Heath, 1980 and Judd, 1987, for
historical discussion; and Sato, 1985, for an account of the Hawaiian case).

While standard English has undoubtedly become a symbol (for some) of US ethos (Heath, 1980), teachers should not confuse the rhetoric of patriotism with sound pedagogical principles, and they should be wary of falling into the role of "guardians of the language." In this role, they are particularly vulnerable to a "super-standard" (Schmidt and McCreary, 1977), elitist view of what "good" English is, i.e. a prescriptivist attitude which fails to recognize societal linguistic diversity.

Prescriptivism and resistance

With respect to minority varieties of English in the US, prescriptivism has consistently engendered resistance, although usually to the detriment of the resisters. Research on language attitudes and minority varieties of English (see Ryan and Giles, 1982, for an extensive bibliography) consistently argues that it is the negative attitude toward minority varieties that must change, since the varieties themselves will not be relinquished by their speakers. While these speakers may recognize the institutionalized prestige of SE, they are fiercely loyal to their own varieties. In the face of massive long-term negative pressure, minority varieties of English persist (L. Milroy, 1980; Ryan, 1979) and even elaborate (Labov, 1980) for a simple but powerful reason: They function as markers of social, often ethnic, identity (Baugh, 1983; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Rickford, 1985; Rickford and Traugott, 1985; Sato, 1985).

Perhaps more important to the prospect of long-term educational change is the maintenance of minority varieties as a form of resistance to political and economic exploitation. Wolfram and Christian (1979) have pointedly argued that, until social inequality on the basis of race and class are eliminated, it is futile to expect significant language shift to occur among blacks and other US minorities. Fully a decade earlier, Kochman (1969) had criticized elitist models of the teaching of SE as a second dialect in a similar analysis of the sociopolitical factors constraining educational change. These arguments have yet to be refuted.

It must be recognized, then, that speakers of minority varieties of English still have good reason to resist the status quo in US classrooms, and that minority dialect maintenance is often one manifestation of that resistance. It is with this consideration in mind that we now examine research on dialect differences and on student-teacher interaction.
The significance of dialect differences

A common misapprehension about dialects is that differences among them are trivial. One reason for this belief, even within the education community, is that their apparent surface similarity often obscures underlying semantic differences. For example, in the Hawaii Creole English sentence, *Get pleni turis in Maui* ('There are lots of tourists in Maui'), *get* is an existential marker, not a verb meaning 'to obtain' or 'to fetch.'

A second reason why difficulties caused by dialect differences are underestimated is that some early research findings on the issue were interpreted as showing an absence of SE comprehension problems for dialect speakers. Hall and Turner (1974) reviewed a number of studies which presented black and white primary school children with sentence imitation and comprehension tasks. The black children's ability to perform these tasks was taken to indicate an absence of cross-dialect comprehension difficulty.

More recently, however, these optimistic interpretations have been challenged by sociolinguists examining language variation and cross-dialectal communicative competence in adults (Berdan, 1983; Milroy, 1984; Trudgill, 1982, 1983). These writers all maintain that the communicative context of natural talk often provides enough cues for a speaker to respond appropriately, either verbally or through actions, but without a linguistic understanding of the intricacies of a SE utterance. In the case of isolated sentences used by researchers, Berdan (1983) points out that, while a (BEV) response of 'Mother help Gloria' to the SE stimulus 'Mother helps Gloria' appears to indicate comprehension by the student in spite of inability to produce the verb inflection, this response is equally appropriately judged as indicating comprehension of the stimulus, 'Mother helped Gloria.' In this instance, the child may have misunderstood the tense of the original sentence, but the linguist/tester may also have misunderstood the intent of the child.

More generally, Berdan (p. 132) suggests that sentence repetition tests "have very little to say about comprehension," and he cautions against use of the procedure across dialects without extremely careful item construction and explicit consideration of "all relevant aspects of the grammars involved" (p.134). With research of his own, he provides evidence that linguistic differences across dialects can and do lead to miscommunication.

Berdan (1983) had four classes of University of California students, two
classes of blacks in the Educational Opportunities Program and two English composition classes of whites, listen to 60 potentially ambiguous sentences and construct tag questions for them to indicate their comprehension. The sentences involved particular morphosyntactic features of SE and BEV, e.g., auxiliary verb contraction and deletion, pluralization, and past tense marking. For example, the sentence 'Her best [frenz] playing jump rope' can be interpreted by a bidialectal listener as either (a) Her best friend is playing jump rope, or (b) Her best friends are playing jump rope. BEV allows copula omission, of are in (b), and thus allows the second interpretation. Use of a plural possessive pronoun, as in 'Their best [frenz] playing jump rope', increases the chances of a plural subject reading.

The results showed that the relationship between comprehension and grammar was less direct than might have been anticipated. For some informants, contextual cues, such as the plurality of a possessive pronoun, were sufficient to override syntactic cues, such as the absence of a plural copula. Compounding of contextual cues increased the conditioning effect, the magnitude of which was smaller in the white classrooms than in the Black classrooms. It appeared that the influence of contextual cues was stronger when they did not conflict with syntactic cues, and that while most SE speakers showed no sensitivity to these conditioning factors, most of the BEV speakers did. Berdan (p. 136) concludes that

there appear to be systematic differences in grammars that lead to major differences in comprehension for certain kinds of sentences.

While establishing the existence of cross-dialect comprehension problems, Berdan (p. 135) is careful to point out that this is not a socially negative finding for the minority dialect speakers. The different responses of black and white students on the tag question task does not demonstrate a failure of the black students to comprehend. They *did* comprehend, but not in the same way that the SE speakers did. The problem in the classroom, especially where SE teachers and BEV students are involved, is that neither party may be aware of the mismatch in understandings.

Similar results from British work are reported by Trudgill and Milroy. Trudgill (1982) provides evidence that the passive competence of SE speakers vis-a-vis other dialects of British English (e.g., Scots, Liverpudlian and East Anglian English) is rather abysmal with respect to comprehension of
decontextualized sentences on a linguistic judgement task. Trudgill had hypothesized that if speakers possessed passive competence in dialects other than their own, this meant their underlying grammars included rules for variant forms, i.e., forms from other dialects; therefore, by rule extension alone, speakers should be able to interpret these dialect forms. His data showed, however, that this was not the case:

The conclusion once again is that, without any context to help them, most native speakers are unable to draw on the rule systems of their own dialect in order to understand a grammatical form new to them—even when the right answer is the semantically obvious one (1982, p.185).

In real interactions, Trudgill believes, the apparently high level of mutual intelligibility between speakers of different dialects results mostly from recourse to both linguistic and situational context.

An equally strong position concerning the non-triviality of interdialectal differences is taken by Milroy (1984, p.10),

I think that we have to treat the idea that nonstandard speakers 'understand' standard English as a not very clearly defined and quite unsupported assumption, rather than a self-evident truth...

Milroy shows that, while interlocutors can usually rely on linguistic and situational context and perceptual strategies to understand utterances, there remain occasions where these factors do not aid in the understanding of an utterance because of a difference in the grammars of the interlocutors.

Milroy compares Hiberno-English and Standard (British) English to make her point. For example, the SE utterance "How long are you staying here?" is often interpreted by HE speakers to mean "How long have you been staying here," and leads to communication breakdowns such as the following (A is a native of South West Donegal; B and C are both SE speakers and linguists):

A: How long are youse here?
B: Till after Easter
(A looks puzzled; a pause of two seconds follows)
C: We came on Sunday
A: Ah, Youse're here a while then.
Milroy notes that A's opening question would translate into SE as "How long have you been here?" B responds inappropriately, having interpreted A to mean "How long will you be here?" C then repairs the breakdown, finally recalling the fact that this was an area of difference between HE and SE. What is important, Milroy points out, is that this knowledge was not enough to prevent the breakdown. Interactions among non-linguists would presumably not be so easily or frequently repaired, since it is extremely difficult to pinpoint moments of confusion or uneasiness about what is being said in real-time interaction and to determine that the source of dissonance is specifically linguistic.

In a study of her own acquisition of Trinidad English Creole, Winer (1985) reports communication breakdowns triggered by a mismatch of conventionalized question forms. In spite of the apparent decodability of her utterances, for example, "How much are the yams a pound?" and "What is this thing called?" in the context of shopping in a marketplace and asking questions of vendors, she found that her interlocutors did not understand her. The preferred utterances, in fact, the usual way of posing such questions proved to be "What a pong (fuh di yam)?" and "How yuh call it?"

In the classroom, dialect mismatches such as these have been shown to be related to the academic performance of minority children. Over a decade ago, a study of Hawaii Creole English (HCE)-speaking children by Choy and Dodd (1976) provided the first piece of evidence contradicting the results of previous studies (e.g., Hall, Turner & Russell, 1973) which claimed that speakers of minority varieties of English were able to comprehend SE well. Like Berdan (1983), Choy and Dodd (1976, p. 185) argued that these studies were limited by their use of tasks which required subjects to process single sentences rather than extended discourse.

In their own study, Choy and Dodd had fourteen HCE-dominant and fourteen SE-dominant fifth grade public school students on Oahu listen to stories in HCE and SE, and answer comprehension questions about the stories. They also incorporated a subsidiary reaction time task to measure amount of processing effort for the story comprehension task. Results indicated that each group performed significantly better in its own dialect. The HCE speakers comprehended the HCE stories more easily and more accurately the SE stories, and the SE speakers comprehended the SE stories more easily and accurately than the HCE stories. The Choy and Dodd study thus indicates that the comprehension of SE, when presented as text and not
simply as isolated sentences, does pose problems for HCE speakers. A similar conclusion is reached by Gallimore and Tharp (1976) in reviewing findings from the first five years of a research program at Kamehameha Schools on HCE-speaking children's academic achievement. They (p.33) observe that, while speaking HCE per se does not pose a problem in the classroom context for many children, "language may be implicated in the academic difficulties of HCE speakers." For some of the HCE-dominant children in their studies,

three years of school experience would appear to have had little impact on the use of SE in a conversational/narrative setting. It seems they understand SE perfectly well, but they do not use it. Whether it is because they cannot or choose not to remains unclear. On the surface, it appears they cannot, and that the limited opportunities for classroom discussion have done little to assist them to be more fluent in SE. (1976, p.52)

The question of whether these HCE-dominant children in fact understood SE in spite of their inability to produce it was addressed in a subsequent Kamehameha study (Speidel, Tharp and Kobayashi, 1985) This research involved 60 HCE-dominant children from two public schools and 60 SE-speaking children from a public school serving a high proportion of children from out-of-state US military families. Both groups listened to tape-recorded stories in SE, SE with HCE pronunciation, and in HCE, and then answered comprehension questions based on the stories. Combined scores for the two groups revealed no significant difference between the HCE and SE groups on overall listening comprehension ability. Results on the sub-tests showed, however, that

when presented with extended oral discourse, such as stories, [the HCE speakers] comprehend better when the information is in their dialect rather than in the standard language. (1985, p. 91)

While acknowledging that differences in language use rather than language form are generally cited as the source of difficulty among speakers of "nonstandard" English in the US, Speidel et al. (p. 91) maintain that "with Hawaiian children, the linguistic differences between their dialect and standard English result in comprehension difficulties."

The same dialect differences can also impair performance on standardized tests. In an earlier study, Speidel (1981) investigated HCE-
dominant children's psycholinguistic abilities and reading achievement. Using the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) with three groups of Kamehameha laboratory school students (27 kindergarteners, 27 first graders, and 39 third graders), Speidel found that, while the children's general language development was average, they did not perform equally well on all the ITPA sub-tests. They did better on sub-tests using the visual channel and lower on several auditory sections. They had most difficulty with the automatic production of SE grammatical features in oral language. Speidel concluded that the uneven pattern of skill development appeared to result from speaking a different form of English rather than from socioeconomic factors, with the children's difficulty with the automatic production of SE syntax and grammar becoming more pronounced with age, despite four years of instruction in SE (K through 3).

In summary, the studies on Black English and Hawaii Creole English speakers reviewed above argue for a careful reconsideration of dialect differences whenever the educational problems of one or another minority group are considered. As indicated in a number of the studies, the phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic differences between varieties of English need not be as massive as those that obtain between typologically distinct languages (e.g., English and Vietnamese), nor need they occur in every instance of cross-dialectal communication for problems to arise in the classroom. Further, as is shown by the classroom process studies to be examined next, there is a yet another domain in which dialect differences occur: the organization of discourse.

Minority varieties of English in the classroom

In situations where cross-dialect miscommunication cannot be ruled out, it becomes critical to examine participant structures (Philips, 1972, 1983) in classrooms. Doing so can reveal interactional styles which mitigate the effects of miscommunication or prevent them altogether, as demonstrated by a number of studies of language use in communities and classrooms (for a review of ethnographic work in bilingual settings, see Cazden, Carrasco, Maldonado-Guzman & Erickson, 1980; see Heath, 1983, for an exemplary long-term study). The central theme emerging from this sociolinguistic research is that differences between varieties of English also obtain at the level of discourse organization and interactional patterns. Several recent studies have provided in-depth analyses of these differences for speakers of
Black English Vernacular (BEV) and Hawaii Creole English (HCE).

A striking mismatch in the discourse patterns of BEV-speaking first graders and their white teacher in a Berkeley, California, is detailed by Michaels (1981, 1986) in her study of "sharing time" activities in the classroom. The teacher is shown to have difficulty accommodating to what Michaels refers to as the "topic-associating" presentational style of the black students, which contrasted with the more "topic- centered" style of the white students in the same class.

The "topic-centered" style is "tightly organized, centering on a single topic or series of closely related topics, with thematic development accomplished through lexical cohesion, and a linear ordering of events, leading quickly to a punch line resolution" (Michaels, 1986, p. 102). The black students' "topic- associating" style, on the other hand, consists of a series of segments or episodes which are implicitly linked in highlighting some person or theme" (p. 103).

A particularly interesting aspect of Michaels' analysis concerns prosodic features of the children's speech in both styles which evoked successful teacher scaffolding with the white but not with the black children. With the former, the teacher was able to time her comments and questions appropriately, cued by the students' falling terminal intonation contours at certain points in their accounts. With the latter, the teacher appeared to misread cues such as stress placement and vowel lengthening, which resulted in her disrupting rather than supporting and elaborating on the students' presentation.

The fact that the Berkeley research was a single-classroom case study, for which quantitative evidence of the topic-centered vs. topic-associating styles is not presented, raises questions as to the applicability of its findings to other groups of black children. However, a subsequent study (Michaels and Cazden, 1986) of four classrooms in Boston public schools over an academic year has confirmed the Berkeley findings concerning ethnically based narrative styles and differential teacher treatment of these styles. The significance of this differential treatment is that "the teacher's comments did not build on what the [black children] already knew and so provide the extended practice and assistance that would lead to an expanded, lexicalized narrative- accounting style" typical of spoken and written academic discourse (Michaels, 1986, p. 110). Perhaps more harmful is the negative evaluation of students' abilities and attitudes that teachers can easily develop as a result of
black students' performances in key classroom activities such as sharing time.

At least one study reports on classrooms in which dialect "interference" is precluded by children's development of functional language skills and of situationally appropriate language use. In a study of kindergarten, first grade, and sixth grade black children in a Washington, D.C. school, Lucas and Borders (1987) analyzed video- and audiotaped classroom interactions and find variable distribution of dialect (BEV) features across activity types, e.g. whole-group-with-teacher, small-group-without-teacher, and one-on-one without teacher, and a developmental progression from kindergarten to sixth grade. By the fourth grade, the children generally did not use dialect features in the presence of the teacher.

Lucas and Borders (p. 136) conclude from their study that "there was no evidence of dialect interference resulting from dialect diversity, as far as everyday classroom discourse [was] concerned." This may initially appear to contradict the argument laid out above concerning the occurrence of cross-dialect miscommunication. However, what must be taken into account here, which Lucas and Borders do not discuss, is that three of the four teachers in the study (of the kindergarten, first, and fourth grade classes) were Black. Unlike the teachers who had difficulty interacting with Black students in the studies by Michaels and her colleagues, the teachers in this study appear to have been quite familiar with BEV and Black interactional patterns, which undoubtedly allowed classroom discourse to proceed smoothly.

While the sociolinguistic mismatches described above for Black English-speaking children appear to emphasize ethnicity, the situation in Hawaii demonstrates that children from different ethnic groups (Hawaiians, Japanese, Filipinos) as well as those of mixed ancestry (e.g., Chinese-Hawaiian- Irish-Japanese) speak HCE natively and hence encounter the same problems in the standard English classroom. As in the case of Blacks on the mainland, the sociolinguistic mismatch in Hawaii's classrooms has been traced to questioning patterns and the structure of conversational narratives.

Ethnographic research in two communities on the island of Oahu by Boggs (1972, 1985) has revealed the different functions of questions for part-Hawaiian children at home and at school. Questioning by parents and other adult caregivers generally indicates negative sanctioning, i.e., scolding, and imminent punishment. Questions are used to "extract from the child's own lips the incriminating evidence" (Boggs, 1985, p. 69):
Mother: Where's your pocket, Boy? (accuses, interrupts)
Boy: [inaudible voice] (attempts to avoid incriminating self)
Mother: Where's the pocket for these pants? (repeats; pants are inside out)
Boy: (no reply)
Mother: [inspires sharply] Look at your pants and see if you have pockets. Look! Is that how you are supposed to put on your clothes?
Boy: (no reply)

The child's response to such questioning, to avoid further self-incrimination, is silence or a minimal response.

Adults' use of questions as a friendly invitation to conversation, on the other hand, was not familiar to the children Boggs studied, and direct questions asked in informal conversations also received brief answers. In the classroom context, Boggs (1985) argues, this response style can be interpreted as indicating either hostility or cognitive inability to answer the direct questions of teachers, when these questions are intended simply to elicit comprehension of subject matter. However, when information is solicited from the group rather than a single child, or when an adult simply indicates interest in a topic or issue, without asking a direct question of a child, longer, more elaborate responses result.

A primary orientation toward one another rather than the teacher is also apparent among part-Hawaiian children, attributed largely to the predominance of sibling caretaking (Gallimore, Boggs & Jordan, 1974). This is evident, not only in their response style to questions, but in their narrative style as well.

Related research in a third community (Watson, 1972, Watson-Gegeo, 1975; Watson-Gegeo and Boggs, 1977) on five- to seven-year-old part-Hawaiian children's peer-group interactions outside the classroom revealed evidence of these children's skill at producing complex narratives. Particularly interesting was the children's production of what Watson (1975, p. 59) termed "contrapuntal talk story," a narrative performed jointly by two or more children. Detailed analysis of this type of story indicated its basis in a "contradicting routine" (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs, 1977), where an assertion made by one speaker is flatly contradicted by another, and subsequent turns at talk involve reassertions, further contradictions, challenges and even insults.
These routines contributed to story structure in that the "lead" storyteller would, in anticipation of or in response to contradiction in the course of narration, elaborate on his/her claims and allegations or accept the claims, clarifications, or counterallegations of a conarrator.

The important suggestion to emerge from Boggs' and Watson-Gegeo's work was that part-Hawaiian children's active involvement in academic tasks would be facilitated by (1) minimal use of direct questions to individual children, and (2) the creation of participation patterns similar to those produced by the children in "talk story." Both these modifications of classroom discourse have, in fact, been incorporated in a successful reading program developed by researchers at the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) (Au, 1979, 1980; Au and Jordan, 1981; Au and Mason, 1983; Jordan, 1984, 1985; Speidel, 1982, 1987a, 1987b).

The aims of the KEEP research program, to "facilitate the learning of basic academic skills and content" and part-Hawaiian children's "adaptation to conventional school situations" (Au, 1980, p. 93), motivated the modification of reading lessons toward "talk story"-like participation structures and the training of teachers in appropriate discourse-management strategies (Jordan, 1985). KEEP reading lessons follow an "Experience-Text-Relationship" format (Au, 1979) in which the teacher first elicits personal experiences related to events, characters, or topics in the material being read. During this phase of the lesson, the children are encouraged to engage in highly interactive, collaborative discussion of their experiences, as in talk story. They then silently read a page or two of the material in order to find answers to specific questions posed by the teacher. In the "Text" phase, the teacher checks on student comprehension of the material through questioning and then, in the "Relationship" phase, links ideas from the text with those provided earlier by the students.

Micro-analysis of a videotaped lesson of this type with a group of four 7-year-olds (see Au, 1980; Au and Jordan, 1981) revealed that more than half of the 66 turns at talk in the lesson involved "cooperation and precise synchronization of talk among two or more children and the teacher" rather than single-speaker turns (Au, 1980, p. 97). The teacher maintained control of the lesson and yet gave children "breathing room" by refraining from criticizing their answers (in HCE) and "equal time" by allocating speaking turns equitably among the children during the lesson (Au and Mason, 1983, p. 149).
In another investigation, Au and Mason (1983, p. 150) viewed the talk story-like KEEP reading lessons as achieving a "balance of rights" between students and teachers, where the former are able to exert control over some, though not all, dimensions of the lessons. In order to test findings from earlier studies and to explore the academic effects of talk story and more conventional reading lessons, Au and Mason compared the interactional styles of two teachers, one who had worked extensively with part-Hawaiian children and one who had not. Using selections from the same basal reader, each teacher taught two lessons on alternate days over four-day period to the same group of HCE-speaking KEEP students.

Through a microanalysis of participation structures in the videotaped lessons, Au and Mason found significant differences between Teacher HC (who had had High Contact with Hawaiian students) and Teacher LC (with Low Contact). Teacher HC established a clearly talk story-like framework in her lessons. In sequences where she controlled the topic and nominated individuals to respond to questions, Teacher HC did not prevent other students from commenting, as did Teacher LC. Teacher HC also initiated sequences by posing a question or providing an explanation, without nominating a particular respondent. The students were free to comment, either individually or jointly, i.e. to negotiate turntaking among themselves during these sequences. Neither of these participation structures occurred in Teacher LC's lessons, which were dominated by sequences in which individuals were nominated by the teacher to speak one at a time.

Au and Mason conclude that Teacher HC created a more culturally congruent learning context for the children, negotiating the balance of rights in such a way that she controlled either the turntaking or the topics addressed during a given sequence in the lesson, but not both in the same sequence. This style proved more effective than Teacher LC's style, as it led to more productive achievement-related behavior by the students on a variety of measures, including time-on-task, correct responses, and text content discussed (p. 165).

Other researchers at KEEP have argued that culturally congruent participation structures in the classroom not only foster reading achievement, but facilitate the development of spoken SE as well. In yet another discourse analysis of a teacher's reading lessons, this time with 6 other Hawaiian, HCE-speaking KEEP children, Speidel (1987) examines the linguistic input available to the children for acquisition of SE grammatical forms. Earlier
testing on a sentence repetition test (Day, Boggs, Tharp, Speidel & Gallimore, 1975) and on the Grammatic Closure subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability (Kirk, McCarthy & Kirk, 1968) revealed that entering KEEP kindergarteners had great difficulty with the "automatic, intuitive production of some standard English grammatical features" (Speidel, 1982, p. 39), and did not achieve scores comparable to those of SE-speaking kindergarteners until at least two years later. The aim of Speidel's (1987) discourse analysis was to determine whether "conversational reading lessons," i.e., the talk story-like lessons, (1) stimulate HCE speakers to use SE features more frequently and (2) improve their SE grammatical skills, the latter as measured by standardized tests.

An analysis of the first 50 utterances from each of three different lessons for the six students revealed that they all repeated many words previously spoken in the lessons; and almost one-fifth of their utterances consisted of incorporations from one another's contributions to the discussion. Particularly interesting are Speidel's examples of the immediate influence of modeled speech on the children's use of various SE forms. Here is one such example (adapted from pp. 124-125) involving the substitution of Hawaii Creole English om, the third person object pronoun, unmarked for number or gender (it covers SE 'him, her, it, them') with SE 'it':

Mileka: No, get the knife and put that in. ("That" refers to knife)
Teacher: Oh, all right. I stuck it in the peanut butter. (Replaces "that" with "it")
Mileka: Then put om in on there. (Referring to the knife)
Teacher: You have to tell me what to do with the knife.
Jude: Put it in. (Peer models "it")
Teacher: I did put it in. (Teacher models "it")
John: Put it in. (Another student models "it")
Mileka: Now put it on the bread. (Uses "it" to refer to the knife)
One minute later:
Mileka: Rub it on the bread. (Uses "it" with a different verb and no immediate model)

While the crucial kind of evidence for acquisition of the grammatical feature as opposed to its transitory use will come from longitudinal study of such behavior (See Sato, 1986), Speidel's results do suggest the discourse
mechanisms by which the opportunities for use of SE features are created in teacher-managed interactions.

Some indication of the development of SE grammatical features was obtained from the children's performance on two standardized tests, which was compared with that of a group of first graders from a public school. Unfortunately, the lessons in which this group of children participated were not observed. Both groups of students were tested in the fall and spring semesters of the academic year on a sentence repetition test (the Carrow Elicited Language Inventory, Carrow, 1974) and the Grammatic Closure subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability. On each of these measures, both groups performed similarly in the fall testing, but the KEEP group made greater (although not statistically significant) gains in the spring testing than the public school group. Although she is careful to note limitations in the design of the study, Speidel (1987) argues that these results do show a relationship between teacher discourse modifications in small-group lessons and dialect-speaking children's use of SE grammatical features.

The studies reviewed above indicate the existence of systematic differences at the discourse level between BEV and HCE, on the one hand, and SE, on the other. Such differences undoubtedly exist for other, as yet unstudied, varieties of English as well, and the findings reported thus far are likely to be confirmed in future work on other groups of minority students.

Of course, classroom discourse modifications of the type suggested here for BEV and HCE speakers have been frequently observed in English as a second or foreign language classrooms (for a comprehensive review, see Chaudron 1988). Various kinds of adjustments in teacher talk and classroom participation structures appear to facilitate learners' understanding of content material. More importantly, a positive effect on second language acquisition is hypothesized. There is no reason to think that SESD learners would not also benefit from interactional patterns in which they are able to negotiate meaning in both socioculturally and academically appropriate ways. As indicated by the research on BEV and HCE speakers, the particular adjustments to be made in classroom interaction need to be derived from systematic sociolinguistic studies of the different language minority groups.

Beyond such studies lies another problem. Modifications of academic tasks such as "sharing time" and reading lesson activities seem to provide a concrete means of circumventing, to some extent, potential cross-dialectal communication problems between students and teachers. However, recent
research by Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (in press) shows the effectiveness of these modifications to be seriously limited by the larger institutional context in which they occur.

Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (in press) link "macro" factors which constrain schooling with microsociolinguistic characteristics of classroom participation structures. Along with a number of educational sociologists (e.g., Apple 1978, 1982; Giroux, 1983; Giroux and McLaren, 1986), they view schools as institutions which produce and reproduce unequal power relationships within the larger social order. "How patterns of knowledge and authority are played out moment-by-moment in routine-governed classroom interactions" (p. 2) is the focus of their study of writing conferences between teachers and Portuguese students in two sixth-grade urban classrooms in the northeastern US.

The teachers in the study were ostensibly following an innovative "process" approach to writing. However, they were found to stifle the productive engagement of certain learners in the writing process because of their own need to maintain control over knowledge (about the world and about language), which was in turn constrained by bureaucratic pressures on them to keep the machinery of schooling going. Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (p. 29) comment,

The resulting factory model for producing the final draft of the composition involves the teacher as manager assigning consecutive tasks to students as workers, and retaining responsibility for quality control of the final draft. The students carry out the tasks with little investment in the product ... and resist doing too much on their own. In turn, the teacher assigns small tasks that work at bits of the composition until it passes final inspection. The end result ... is the communication of a very simplistic, mechanical knowledge about writing.

Minority students are especially vulnerable to such treatment in the classroom, precisely because teachers often have lower expectations of success for them (see Ford, 1984 for a recent study of this well-known phenomenon), and because these students are unfamiliar with the sociolinguistic patterns of the classroom. Even highly praised and widely adopted innovations such as the process approach to writing are subject to powerful institutional constraints on discourse processes in the classroom.
Conclusion

The central argument of this paper has been that a deeper understanding of the political context of teaching SESD and greater familiarity with recent research on dialect differences and the classroom experiences of minority students are necessary for both policy-making and pedagogical practice. However, it is relatively difficult for teachers and researchers alike to make the connection between policy and practice, since research in one area, e.g. language planning, sociolinguistic variation, cross-dialectal communication, and classroom interaction, is usually conducted independently of work in other areas (for a noteworthy exception, see Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo, in press).

On the basis of the research reviewed here, it is clear that dialectal differences cannot be dismissed as trivial. The extent of differentiation between home and school varieties remains an empirical question for each community and school system. Second, in understanding the problems encountered by speakers of minority varieties of English in school, we must allow for the possibility suggested by the research on cross-dialectal miscommunication. Although students do rely on both linguistic and situational context to make sense of SE teacher talk, they are probably doing so without internalizing all of the linguistic rules that would allow them to produce SE themselves. To the extent that academic discourse is decontextualized, of course, the problem is compounded. The findings underscore the importance of teachers' being very familiar with the linguistic varieties of their minority students.

The classroom discourse studies also demonstrate that the consequences of communication breakdowns, even if they do not occur frequently, become quite serious as "gatekeeping" interactions (Erickson, 1975; Scollon and Scollon, 1983). In such encounters, the teacher as "gatekeeper" can and does make judgments about the personal characteristics and academic potential of the subordinate interlocutor, the student, on the basis of a single moment of interactional dissonance. It is therefore important for teachers to guard against the insidious effect of social stereotyping on their daily interactions with students.

In sum, the "nonstandard" approach to the teaching of SESD suggested here takes as fundamental (1) the social and linguistic integrity of minority varieties of English and, therefore, (2) the necessity of beginning with students' native variety of English—whether dialect or creole—in academic
tasks. Rather than remediation of students' language and replacement of minority varieties with "proper" English, the teaching of SESD may prove more successful if systematically practiced as a form of additive bidialectalism.

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REFERENCES


A NONSTANDARD APPROACH


