Language Ideologies and the Schooling of Caribbean Creole English-speaking Youth in New York City

Dale M. Britton
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!
Follow this and additional works at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds
Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons, and the Secondary Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/2132

This Dissertation is brought to you by CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact deposit@gc.cuny.edu.
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND THE SCHOOLING OF CARIBBEAN CREOLE
ENGLISH-SPEAKING YOUTH IN NEW YORK CITY

by

DALE MICHAEL BRITTON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2017
Language Ideologies and the Schooling of Caribbean Creole English-speaking Youth in New York City

by

Dale Michael Britton

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

________________________
________________________
________________________
Ofelia Garcia
Date
Chair of Examining Committee

________________________
________________________
Date
Anthony Picciano
Executive Officer

Supervisory Committee

Ofelia Garcia
Nicholas Michelli
Tatyana Kleyn

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Language Ideologies and the Schooling of Caribbean Creole English-speaking Youth in New York City

by

Dale Michael Britton

Adviser: Ofelia Garcia

This dissertation seeks to illuminate the ways in which Anglocentric ideologies operate to marginalize and exclude the linguistic and cultural resources of Caribbean Creole English (CCE)-speaking in New York City’s education system. Data was gathered from youths and teachers, and then analyzed to identify the language practices and ideologies relating to both Standard English (SE) and Creole varieties and how they shape teaching and learning for these two groups.

Several broad themes were identified. First, CCE-speaking youths are homogenized as simply black students and as a result, their specific cultural and linguistic resources are rendered invisible and are not included in teaching and learning. Secondly, teachers’ language ideologies are mostly Anglocentric, focusing on the value of Standard English especially for society at large, but also for academic contexts. On the other hand, students’ language ideologies are mostly Creolocentric as they view CCE as valuable for the home and for other cultural expressions such as reggae and dancehall musics. At the same time, students also hold some Anglocentric ideologies as they believe that CCE is inappropriate for writing, other school-based tasks and professional environments. Lastly, because both teachers and students agree that CCE is not appropriate for school-based tasks (and sometimes even in a school
environment), CCE-speaking students are often subjected to symbolic violence, a phenomenon in which fellow linguistic minority students are often complicit.

The dissertation concludes by suggesting that language programs should be developed and implemented to help CCE-speaking youths acquire the standardized varieties needed to successfully navigate academic texts and contexts. In addition, teachers and students should be introduced to sociolinguistic research and culturally responsive pedagogies that explicate and counter the role of language ideologies in shaping how CCE language varieties and language features are perceived and positioned in the sociopolitical and educational spheres. My hope is that this study will lead to a greater focus on the lived experiences of CCE-speaking youths and will generate critical and transformative knowledge that helps to improve their educational performance in New York City high schools.
Acknowledgements

Completing this dissertation has been a long, physically and emotionally taxing but exciting journey of learning, laboring and confronting my own strengths and weaknesses, both in my personal and academic life. I am overjoyed to have arrived at the end of this process which I could not have completed without the love, forbearance, support and encouragement of a wonderful group of mentors, family and friends and former teachers.

I would like to express heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to each of the participants, the eight resilient and resourceful students with whom I came to identify with culturally and linguistically in so many ways. Many of you will succeed despite the odds you face and have faced because of where you come from, who you are and how you talk. My hope is that your courageous voices and stories will benefit many who come after you. I must also thank the five generous and dedicated teachers whose voices and struggles to teach in complex and dynamic spaces I often identified with, being a teacher myself. All of us attempt every day with varying degrees of success to empower youths with the knowledge needed to prepare for college and career. I would also like to thank the four principals who allowed me to interview their teachers and students. I hope many of you will be able to draw something of value from this research to enhance the great work you already do.

Without the help, support and encouragement of the members of my committee, I could not have achieved this milestone in my life. At the CUNY Graduate Center, many individuals helped me to successfully realize this endeavor. I am so grateful to you, Ofelia, for your unflagging belief in my potential and your investment in the conceptualization and completion of this dissertation. Nick, you have inspired me to challenge my thinking, inspired and pushed me to generate better work. Tatyana, thanks for bringing that infectious
intellectual energy to this process and interrogating me in ways that helped me improve the quality of this project. I will always be appreciative to you all. A massive shout out to Christine (hamps), the hardest working executive assistant at the Graduate Center. Thanks for the hugs and warm words of support on some days when I felt intellectually and emotionally deflated.

To my wife, Michele and my daughter, Nadja who had to endure absences, missed vacations and loss of quality time as I spent time in classes, in the library or reading and writing at home, I say thank you. Your patience, love and encouragement helped propel me through this process. Nuff respeck and big up to Clinton and Lurine Roper, my second parents, whose investment of love, time and money in my education starting at Pepper All-Age School, continuing through Manchester High School and the University of the West Indies laid the foundation for everything I have achieved as an adult. Mi cyan evah pay unnuh back fi everyting unnuh do fi mi. My dearest mummy who inculcated a love of the English language (a little too much mummy, LOL) a heartfelt thanks to you too. You laid the ground for my now more critical appreciation of my language repertoire. Thanks dad for always encouraging me to pursue a PhD. Mi wish yuh did live fi si dis day Dad. Thanks to my eternally beloved grandma, Mama. You left me a legacy of love for books, language, learning and reading. I will always remember your sweet and patient voice reading to me when I but a wee little boy.

Lastly, thanks to you Mrs. Roach and Mrs. Dixon, two of the most compassionate teachers I have ever met. Mrs. Roach, thanks for all the free lunches and the free workbooks that helped me succeed on my high school entrance exam. Mrs. Dixon, you prepared me to do well in the annual Spelling Bee and to do as well as I did in elementary school. The two of
you gave me more than classroom instruction. You saw my needs and you met them. The memories of your generosity and dedication to teaching and caring for the whole child continue to inspire me as a teacher and more importantly, as a human being, each and every day.
# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................ iv
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................................. vi
List of Tables .......................................................................................................................................... xii

## Chapter One ........................................................................................................................................ 1
   Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 1
   My Narrative/Story ............................................................................................................................... 3
   Rationale for the Study ......................................................................................................................... 12
   Purpose of the study ............................................................................................................................ 13

## Chapter Two ......................................................................................................................................... 16
   Theoretical Framework: Teaching for Social Justice ............................................................................ 16
      Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 16
   Bourdieu’s theory and CCE-speaking Youth ......................................................................................... 19
   Field .................................................................................................................................................... 20
   Varieties of Capital ............................................................................................................................. 20
      Cultural Capital ............................................................................................................................... 21
      Cultural Capital in the Embodied State ............................................................................................ 21
      Social Capital .................................................................................................................................. 22
      Linguistic Capital ............................................................................................................................ 25
      Linguistic Market ............................................................................................................................. 26
   Transnational Theory and CCE-speaking Youth ................................................................................ 28
   Transnationalism and Schooling ......................................................................................................... 37
   Theories of Coloniality ........................................................................................................................ 39
   Critical Pedagogy: Emancipatory Possibilities for CCE-speaking Youth ........................................... 41
   Conclusion ......................................................................................................................................... 47

## Chapter Three .................................................................................................................................... 49
   Speakers of Caribbean Creole English in Schools .............................................................................. 49
      Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 49
   CCE-Speaking Students: A Definition ................................................................................................. 49
   Immigration to the United States .......................................................................................................... 50
   Education Systems in the “Anglophone” Caribbean ............................................................................ 53
   Education of CCE-speakers in the “Anglophone” Caribbean ............................................................. 55
   Caribbean Creole English: Its Origins and Development .................................................................. 59
   The Creole Continuum ......................................................................................................................... 62
   Caribbean Creole English Varieties: Linguistic Features ................................................................... 66
   Attitudes to Varieties of Caribbean Creole English ........................................................................... 70
   Language Use in US Schools .............................................................................................................. 73
      Language Varieties for Academic Contexts .................................................................................... 73
      Bidialectical Education for AAVE- and CCE-speaking Students ................................................... 79
   Bilingualism and Education in the US ............................................................................................... 82
Chapter Four .................................................................................................................. 114
Research Methodology ............................................................................................... 114
    Introduction ................................................................................................................ 114
Epistemological Research Framework and Considerations ............................................. 116
Design of the Study ....................................................................................................... 118
Profiles of Research Sites ............................................................................................ 119
    Marcus Garvey High School .................................................................................... 120
    High School for Digital Careers ........................................................................... 121
    Brooklyn Academy for Social Justice ...................................................................... 121
    Academy for Urban Studies .................................................................................... 122
Impact of Socioeconomic, Racial and Linguistic of Student Backgrounds ..................... 122
Participants .................................................................................................................. 124
    Student Participants (All names are pseudonyms) ................................................ 125
    Teacher Participants (all names are pseudonyms) ................................................ 126
Defining the Interview .................................................................................................. 127
    The In-Depth Phenomenological Interview ........................................................... 130
Narrative Analysis ......................................................................................................... 133
Data Analysis ................................................................................................................ 135
Consent ......................................................................................................................... 136
Validity and Reliability or, Rather, Trustworthiness ...................................................... 136
Limitations of this Study ............................................................................................... 137
Subjectivity and Reflexivity .......................................................................................... 139
Chapter Five .................................................................................................................. 143
Cultural, Racial and Linguistic Homogenization of CCE-speaking Students ................. 143
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 143
    Cultural Homogenization of CCE-speaking Youth ................................................ 144
    Racial Homogenizing of CCE-speaking Youth ......................................................... 147
    Linguistic Homogenization of CCE-speaking Youth ................................................ 150
    Disruptive Responses to the Ideologies of Homogenization .................................. 151
    Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 153
Chapter Six ..................................................................................................................... 155
Teachers’ Language Ideologies: Yuh Haffi Talk Propa Inna American Skuuls ............... 155
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 155
List of Tables

Table 1: Research Design .............................................................................................................116
Table 2: Research Sites ............................................................................................................120
Table 3: Student Participants ..................................................................................................126-127
Table 4: Teacher Participants .................................................................................................127
Chapter One

Introduction

Caribbean Creole English-speaking youths (hereafter referred to as CCE-speaking youths) from the Commonwealth Caribbean (countries that were formerly colonized by Great Britain) are migrating into US schools that have been increasingly shaped by logics and politics of neoliberalism and the free market economy. One result of the rise of these forces is that policy makers and politicians have established accountability regimes that seek to reward or punish teachers based partly on their students’ performance on standardized tests. Ostensibly, one objective of these regimes is to produce more efficient and effective workers for the capitalist economy. While that is a worthy goal in some respects, the pursuit of this objective has distorted and damaged the potential of schools to adopt more equitable plans and policies that attend to the linguistic situation of minoritized and subjugated populations.

The vision and development of a more socially just and democratic kind of schooling remains just that. Teachers are under pressure to prepare students for success on standardized tests in educational environments shaped by global capitalism. They often respond to this pressure by teaching from culturally irrelevant pre-packaged curricula that fail to take into account the linguistic and cultural resources of students. All this occurs despite research showing that culturally responsive and relevant pedagogies can engage students more deeply and is likely to result in higher levels of academic performance (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). One significant result is that CCE-speaking youths are being educated in an educational system that does not recognize or honor their particular linguistic and cultural resources and heritages. Many are underperforming and failing to meet the prescribed standards for college
and career developed by legislators and policy makers. These legislators and policy makers make policies and pass laws that are uninformed by sound research and practice in the fields of sociolinguistics, bilingual education and educational policy and by the linguistic and cultural lives of the minority students for whom they largely design these policies.

A second issue for CCE-speaking students in the US is that they often attend schools where their teachers are of different racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (although some schools do have teachers of West Indian background). Teachers and students of different racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds are likely to see the world differently, especially when such children arrive from lower- and working-class backgrounds and are of African descent. Goldstein (2014) has noted that “a half century of research and 150 years of practical experience show teachers of color are more likely to hold high expectations for students of color” (p. 76). Despite a slow increase in the number of minority teachers in American schools, the teaching force in the US remains predominantly White. Statistics from 2011-2012 indicate that of the approximately 3.4 million teachers in public schools in the US, about 82 percent were White and only about 18 percent were of color (cited in Vilson, 2015). At the same time, 52 percent of all students in public schools were White and 48 percent were students of color. New York City has a more balanced situation. A 2011-2012 report on staffing in high-poverty schools by the New York City Independent Budget Office revealed that 44 percent of teachers were White, 25 percent were Black, 24 percent were Hispanic, and 5 percent were Asian. While the predominance of White teachers in and of itself is not an obstacle to equitable education, racial, cultural and linguistic differences can hinder the development of culturally responsive and relevant pedagogies that can engage linguistic minority students.
My interest in studying the language and literacy experiences and ideologies of CCE-speaking students, as well as those of their teachers, emerged out of my experiences as an ENL (English as a New Language) Jamaican teacher. In my almost two decades as a teacher, I have often interacted with CCE-speaking youths who I believed were being miseducated due to many teachers’ ignorance of their West Indian cultural and linguistic heritages. Hence, this study emerges out of both my personal and professional interests. This study draws on my cultural, national and linguistic background and my interest in understanding more clearly how these youths can effectively acquire the valued language practices and literacies needed to succeed academically without sacrificing their own home language varieties, literacies and identities. In the next section, I explore more fully my own linguistic autobiography and identity. I also discuss how my language ideologies have changed in response to research from various academic disciplines.

My Narrative/Story

I was born on the island of Jamaica, a country that declares Standard Jamaican English (SJE) as the official language even as the majority of Jamaicans speaks Jamaican Creole (JC). I grew up in a small rural community called Pepper, in the parish of St. Elizabeth (similar to a US state) in the Southwestern region of the island. Pepper is about seventy miles from Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. It was a community of poor, working and middle class residents. Some of these residents were teachers and principals, some owned small groceries, some worked at a dairy farm in the community, at Alpart, an alumina plant in another part of the parish and others farmed and raised animals. It was in this community that my language
socialization took place and where I learned to speak and understand both language varieties fluently.

Some of my earliest memories as a child involve the language and literacy experiences that I shared with Mama (my grandmother) and left me with indelible memories. Mama, who became my primary caretaker when I was only three months old, was critical in developing my capacity to navigate both JC and SE. She was an avid reader, primarily of the Bible. More importantly, she read stories to me every evening after I got home from school. These stories were written in Standard British English. These British readers were in common use in Jamaican schools during the 1970s and early 1980s. This was before the campaign to decolonize curricula used in the education system. Mama spoke a mostly “mesolectal” variety of JC, that is, a variety incorporating features from both Creole and standardized English, the variety that I mostly came to speak over time.

Another of my language teachers in my early years was my mother. However, she primarily spoke, and indeed revered, SE. My mother was often characterized as “speaky spoky” a term used somewhat derisively to refer to those Jamaicans who used SE pretentiously, to put on airs. Mommy had been a stenographer who worked as a secretary in Kingston. She had been trained in using Gregg and Pitman shorthand, writing systems that allowed secretaries to write messages and take dictations efficiently. This required her to become proficient in standardized English. I remember distinctly that whenever I spoke JC, Mommy would often reprimand me for doing so and was often quick to correct my speech. From her perspective, JC was not the “proper” language variety. She considered JC coarse and uncouth, and consequently believed speaking it would contribute to my developing a coarse and uncouth identity and persona.
A third memory involves my time at my elementary school. Our teachers expected us to speak “proper English” in class, an expectation I often met and that other students violated with impunity. I too was often viewed as being “speaky spoky.” I stood out largely because the majority of the students came from homes where JC was the dominant variety and I came from a home where my mother sought to enforce the rules of spoken SE. Gee (2004) has written that:

Some children bring early prototypes of academic varieties of language to school—prototypes they have learned at home. Some do not. Those who do bring prototypes of academic language to school have what Snow et al. (1998) refer to as “early language ability.” Those who don’t don’t, despite the fact that they have perfectly good vernacular varieties of language and…a plethora of language abilities that don’t get rewarded at school. (pp. 16-17)

I had arrived at school with language and literacy practices that our post-colonial educational system and our society construed as advantages that would set me up for academic success. I remember that when certain students, especially boys, would misbehave, the very strict principal often referred to them as “vandals,” “Visigoths” and “vagrants.” Some of these reprimands were probably related to the fact that students used language in ways that subverted the linguistic expectations of the school authorities. There was no chance of JC being officially invited into the classroom, even as a supplementary medium of instruction. It was primarily marginalized to recess, lunchtime, the playground and the end of the school day.

Over time, this language socialization process resulted in the expansion of my language repertoire to include multiple forms and structures of JC and SJE. I developed the
ability to comprehend even the more basilectal forms of JC (more on this in Chapter 3), which
I generally did not speak. This expansion allowed me to express myself in a variety of ways
depending on the social and cultural contexts in which I found myself. Notwithstanding this
multiplicity of varieties however, I often opted to speak SJE more than I spoke mesolectal JC,
even among my friends, which sometimes made me a target of ridicule. I often sounded too
“proper” or came across as linguistically and culturally discordant. Sometimes my friends
interpreted my usage as an attempt to suggest that I was superior or more intelligent than they.
In other words, my proficiency in SJE made me seem arrogant (although not intentionally).

My acquisition of SE contributed to my (and some of my peers) becoming more
academically successful than many of our classmates to my being the local Spelling Bee
champion for three years from 1979 to 1981 at Pepper All-Age, my elementary school. My
knowledge of SJE and sundry multisyllabic words resulted in my being considered “a bright
boy.” In addition, partially because of my being an avid reader (just like mama), and being
able to manipulate SE language and literacy practices to the satisfaction of Jamaican
examiners, in the sixth grade I passed my Common Entrance Exam. The Common Entrance
Exam was an assessment in the former British colonies that was used to determine placement
in a secondary school at the time. The language of this assessment was SE and was
administered to a population of students whose primary language was JC. Every year, the
“brightest” one-third of the approximately forty thousand students who took this exam would
be tracked either into one of the nation’s prestigious traditional high schools or into schools
with lower rankings. Because of my success on this exam, I earned a place at Manchester
High School, a traditional public high school considered more prestigious than
technical/vocational schools or also what at the time were known as Junior Secondary
schools. The latter two types were reserved for students who were not “bright,” i.e., who had not done well academically.

In high school, in addition to continuing to develop my SE language and literacy practices, I also started studying two other colonial languages—Spanish and French. I seemed to have an aptitude for (colonial) languages or an inclination to make the investment (Norton, 2013) needed to successfully acquire these varieties as I did quite well. I studied French all through high school and actually earned a BA in French at the University of the West Indies. Over the years, I had developed the ideology of French as “such a beautiful language” or as “the language of romance”. Clearly, in the West, only European languages tend to be characterized as such. There is no doubt in my mind that I thought that learning French gave me added cultural capital, in addition to what I had already acquired through SE. I did study French African and French Caribbean literature that introduced me to concept of Négritude, developed to affirm the humanity and equality of people of African descent and to challenge theories that supported black inferiority. The literary works of Aimé Césaire from Martinique, Léopold Senghor from Senegal and Léon Damas from French Guiana worked to subvert the dehumanization of both diasporic and continental African. However, they did so in the French of the Académie Française, not in Creole or African language varieties. Learning French actually helped to cement for a while my belief in the superiority and the sophistication of European language varieties. I was further convinced that JC could never begin to rival those language varieties in terms of beauty or sophistication. Of course, I was not then consciously aware of the formation of my language and literacy ideologies and prejudices against JC. My tongue had become so anglicized (and in some cases francophonized) that some of my urban friends and college mates found my usage of JC strange, funny, even inauthentic. They often
wondered how it was that I, raised in rural Jamaica, could not speak JC with more authenticity or local flavor.

It is not surprising then, given my experiences with my grandmother, my mother’s constant exhortations to “speak properly,” the expectations of my teachers, and my schooling experiences, that I would be driven to become quite fluent in SE. I inherited and reproduced the Anglocentric language and literacy ideologies of school and the wider society and in the process became quite contemptuous of the language spoken by the majority of the persons with whom I interacted daily. While I sometimes spoke some form of JC, I viewed SE as the epitome of civilized and sophisticated ways of communicating, and JC as a debased form of speech, appropriate only for the most informal contexts. More importantly, if not offensively, like many others I came to believe that JC marked a person as unintelligent, undignified, unsophisticated and lacking in grace. It should be noted that such attitudes and ideologies were shared widely even by those who did not or could not speak SE fluently, including those who often ridiculed my pretentious and often verbose speech practices. Such contradictions and ironies are naturalized and normalized features of hegemonic practices and ideologies. These ideologies, which justified stigmatization of the Creole features that resided in my language repertoire, would persist deep into my adulthood.

The beginning of my emancipation from this linguistic Anglocentrism began, over the last decade, with exposure to critical social theories, linguistics, sociolinguistics and New Literacy Studies. This exposure forced me to question my assumptions about language, and examine how those assumptions implicated race, class and nationality. Exposure to these fields of knowledge has had an enormously transformative impact on my opinions of JC and SJE. My exposure to new ways of thinking about how languages are used and valued
launched a process of decolonizing myself and discarding many of the negative ideas and language ideologies I once held. While I still recognize the power and the value of SE, I have also developed a more critical stance toward its hegemonic power over individuals and throughout societies. Motha (2014) has pointed out that in spite of its complex sociopolitical terrain, as the English language has spread around the globe, assuming steadily increasing international political power, the teaching of English has historically most frequently been represented within language teacher education as a race-neutral, apolitical, ahistorical endeavor in which learners work to produce appropriate sounds, master correct grammatical structures, and acquire larger vocabularies. Such a focus on accuracy and form has contributed to the invisibility of the language’s complicated history and has made it possible for teachers to complete their teacher-education programs without ever having an opportunity to engage with the broader social, racial, economic, and political implications of their practice. (p. 2)

I have become more aware of the sociopolitical, racial and historical roles of English and the inequities these roles have engendered. I have become aware of the contradictions I embody as a SJE- and CCE-speaking teacher of English Language Learners (ELLs). Often when I reflect on my teaching practices, I recognize ever so often, way in which I end up perpetuating the dominant language ideologies I am committed to dismantling. I recognize that while I have become critical of SE and its global hegemonic position, this study, written in SE, ends up privileging this variety. This study does not pretend to escape this tension and contradiction. Nevertheless, I no longer think of SE as an inherently superior language variety. I no longer think that, unlike JC, this variety alone is the only one capable of expressing the most sublime thoughts or the most complicated ideas in our society. I have
developed more Creolocentric language ideologies. There is no doubt that Creole language varieties possess social and cultural capital that is deployed daily by CCE-speakers in ways that validate how they make sense of their world. I have now come to see the value of treating all languages as equal, as rule-governed and as capable of being used in the construction and expression of cultural, social, political and academic knowledge. I now believe that all our ideas about language varieties are socially constructed, and both reflect and help to reproduce social, economic and political inequities in society. As a result, I seek to disrupt and dismantle the construction and reproduction of hegemonic and oppressive language (and literacy) ideologies.

This transformation, or more accurately, this revolution in my consciousness has resulted in a growing love of, and an appreciation for, the richness, the expressiveness, and the rule-governed nature of JC. More importantly, although I am an educator who was educated in a British-inspired education system where the language ideologies stigmatized and marginalized JC, I have become convinced of the value of drawing on the linguistic and cultural resources of students’ home languages as productive resources that can contribute to improving their academic performance. I have even come to believe that CCE should be employed as the medium of instruction in the early primary years, since research has long shown that students more effectively develop literacy in their mother tongue (Cummins, 2000; UNESCO, 1953). Pedagogies that draw on, support and sustain the home language can help students more easily acquire the dominant languages. This acquisition has the potential to help them become more socially and economically mobile, and ultimately enhance their ability to become more informed and engaged citizens in the democracies in which they live. Paradoxically, acquisition of the dominant language allows one to develop effective critical
tools and understandings that can challenge the hegemony of the standard variety. One of my goals as a researcher and educator is to help teachers arrive at a revolution in consciousness and to draw some of the same conclusions as I have about the value of CCE. The aim is not for teachers to abandon their Anglocentric ideologies. The aim is to identify them, to recognize how they operate invisibly and oppressively. Only then can teachers begin to transform how those ideologies operate in their interactions with minority youth and lead to adoption of more socially just pedagogies and instructional practices.

As mentioned above, this study emerged not only out of my personal experiences growing up in Jamaica and speaking JC, but also out of my professional experiences as a teacher in New York City. I have been working in New York City high schools for the last fifteen years as an ESL teacher. I have met and taught many wonderful English language learners or emergent bilinguals (García, Kleifgen & Falchi, 2008) from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Senegal, Bangladesh, Guinea and Panama. Initially, when I entered the Urban Education program at the CUNY Graduate Center, I expected to focus on the struggles of emergent bilinguals in New York City schools. However, during my years as a teacher and graduate student, I became increasingly aware that many students who were speakers of CCE (especially from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago) were struggling in school and that much of this struggle was often centered on language issues. Some of my teaching colleagues would comment, “These students can’t write.” Many of these students encountered much difficulty navigating writing tasks, especially in English Language Arts (ELA) classes, which led to frustration on the part of some teachers. They struggled to pass the Regents exams, especially those who spoke more basilectal than acrolectal forms of Creole. However, despite a number of recommendations on their behalf over the years, there were no plans or programs
to help teachers address the linguistic and literacy position of these students. One of my interests has therefore been to understand how speaking a CCE variety affects a student’s ability to engage in complex and demanding literacy activities in SE. I also want to understand how the language ideologies that shape teachers’ beliefs and practices either take into account or fail to address the complex Creolocentric language and literacy practices of CCE-speaking students. This dissertation is grounded in those interests. More needs to be done to help CCE-speaking students feel welcome and improve academically in our schools, especially with the introduction of the new Common Core State Standards.

**Rationale for the Study**

The scholarly literature in the field of sociolinguistics is virtually unanimous on the need for teachers, and especially teachers of English Language Arts, to develop positive attitudes toward the ethnolinguistic diversity that characterizes contemporary academic settings (Ball & Mohammed, 2003; Godley, A. J., Sweetland, J., Wheeler, R. S., Minnici, A., & Carpenter, B. D. 2006; Smitherman & Villanueva, 2000). There has been, however, a history of denying, denigrating or marginalizing the diverse language and literacy practices and experiences of both American and immigrant students of color in favor of Standard English (Jensen, 1968). For example, Haitian Creole (HC), Spanish, as well as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and Caribbean Creole English have been “lingua non grata” in schools. This remains the case even though scholarship over many decades (especially about African Americans and their linguistic practices) has provided convincing evidence that tolerance for language diversity and incorporation of the ways students “language” in their daily lives is more likely to improve their academic performance (Baugh,
1999, 2005; Rickford, 1999; Smitherman, 1981, 1988, 2000). In fact, policies that incorporate the plurilingual and translanguaging practices and experiences of linguistic minority youths in contemporary urban spaces are likely to be more fruitful both for students of color and the wider society (Farr, 2011; García, 2009). Studies have shown, however, that schools and teachers are often unwitting agents in the reproduction of exclusionary Anglocentric linguistic ideologies.

But classrooms are also the ideal place for creating an environment of (socio)linguistic diversity and affirmation. Such classrooms, studies show, are more likely to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Following in the admirable tradition of sociolinguistic and applied linguistic advocacy for minority languages, this study seeks to generate knowledge that can contribute to improving the academic performance and achievement of CCE-speaking students in US schools.

**Purpose of the study**

The primary purpose of this study is to excavate, describe and explore the language ideologies embedded in the practices of CCE-speaking youths and some of their teachers in four New York City high schools in Brooklyn. These four schools were chosen because they have significant proportions of transmigrants from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad. This study then seeks to understand the role(s) that such language ideologies and language practices, both in and out of school, play in shaping and contributing to the educational experiences and achievements of these youths. A related purpose is to discover and describe the ways in which the language ideologies and practices of teachers differ from, or align with, the related ideologies and practices of CCE-speaking youths in New York City high schools. The
primary goal is to understand the ways in which the language ideologies of these students and their teachers enhance or hinder teaching, learning and academic achievement in high schools where CCE-speaking youths are in attendance.

Ultimately, this study seeks to do more than just generate knowledge. The study seeks to produce knowledge that can be used to create more linguistically affirming, culturally relevant and inclusive curricula. Such curricula are likely to be more academically engaging and more conducive to improved academic performance and achievement of CCE-speaking students in US schools.

I pause here to unpack what I mean by engagement. Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2008) define academic engagement as “the extent to which students are connecting to what they are learning, how they are learning it, and who they are learning it with” (p. 42). They further explore various dimensions of academic engagement, such as cognitive engagement, or, “the degree to which students are engrossed and intellectually engaged in what they are learning” (p. 43), and relational engagement, or, “the extent to which students feel connected to their teachers, peers and others in their schools” (p. 42). Gaining more insight into the lived experiences of these youths in relation to language practices and ideologies can help educators better understand how to create more engagement at school. Even more importantly, I want to generate the kinds of critical knowledge that can help, as Kincheloe and McLaren (2008) argue, “redress the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself” (p. 406). This is the kind of transformative knowledge we need to move away from, the monolingual, monoglossic orientation that characterizes how most students experience learning in the United States, among whom CCE-speaking students are but one example.
Although Caribbean CCE-speaking youths make up a significant proportion of students in some schools in the United States, and particularly in New York City, there have been relatively few linguistically-focused studies that seek to investigate language and literacy issues of this population. Few studies explore what the teachers of these youths know and believe about their language practices. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine and address the issues generated by the following questions:

1a. *What are the language and literacy practices that teachers of CCE-speaking students?*

1b. *What are the language ideologies that teachers hold about CCE-speaking youths’ language and literacy practices?*

2a. *What are the language and literacy practices of Caribbean Creole English-speaking youths both and out of school in New York City?*

2b. *What are the language ideologies that CCE-speaking youths hold about their own varieties and Standard English?*

With a view to answering these questions and meeting the purpose of this study, in the next chapter I articulate a theoretical framework through which I situate and interpret the data for this study.
Chapter Two
Theoretical Framework: Teaching for Social Justice

Introduction

This study attempts to illuminate the complex language practices and identities of CCE-speaking students and their teachers and the language ideologies that inform and influence how students and teachers make sense of such phenomena. The theoretical/conceptual framework that informs this study draws on the insights of a number of critical- and social justice-oriented theories. When combined, the collective strengths and synergies of these theories produce a potent theoretical instrument. These theories, while they differ in important ways, are similar in ideological orientation. They unite in their pursuit of social justice, especially on behalf of racial, cultural and linguistic minorities. These critical and social justice theories are largely committed to confronting, critiquing and dismantling asymmetric power relations and structures that place linguistic minorities in subordinate positions and that limit their access to radical and liberatory pedagogical innovations.

Before describing the theories, it is important to define teaching for social justice. According to Linda Darling-Hammond:

Learning to teach for social justice is a lifelong undertaking. It involves coming to understand oneself in relation to others; examining how society constructs privilege and inequality and how this affects one’s own opportunities as well as those of different people; exploring the experiences of others and appreciating how those inform their worldviews, perspectives, and opportunities; and evaluating how schools and classrooms operate and can be structured to value diverse human experiences and to enable learning for all students. (2002, pp. 201-202, as cited in Michelli & Keiser, 2005)
Teaching for social justice involves a lifelong commitment to teaching (and learning) in ways that lead to a fundamental transformation of how teachers understand themselves. This is not an easy task, given that the majority of teachers in urban schools are White and tend to be from more privileged social classes and communities while their students are primarily minorities who come from less advantaged social classes. It can be equally difficult even when teachers are from the same or similar backgrounds as minority students since teachers’ ability to be creative and innovative, and to implement social justice pedagogies, is often constrained by neoliberal politics and policies that privilege a type of schooling that educates for capitalism rather than democracy. Teaching for social justice is a challenging task that calls for all teachers, but especially teachers of European descent from socially, economically and linguistically advantaged backgrounds, to critically interrogate their own privileged social, cultural and racial origins. Michelli and Keiser (2005) point out that “teacher education for social justice must address the privilege that many teachers and pre-service teachers have relative to many students in public schools, both earned and unearned” (p. 35). This task is one that teachers should struggle to embrace and strive to enact in their classrooms. It remains an important quest even as some scholars have pointed out the limitations of schools as agents of fundamental social and economic transformation (Anyon, 2005; Rothstein, 2004). These scholars argue that the government has to invest more in programs that can alleviate poverty. Anyon (2005) has argued powerfully that "job, wage, housing, tax, and transportation policies maintain minority poverty in urban neighborhoods, and thereby create environments that overwhelm the potential of educational policy to create systemic, sustained
improvements in the schools" (p. 66). While there is much truth in Anyon’s argument, these limitations do not absolve schools of their historic mission to help bring about social justice through culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining pedagogies.

The theories from which this study draws its insights include Bourdieu’s theoretical explorations of cultural and linguistic capitals, transnational theories, post-colonial theory, and critical pedagogy. The application of such theoretical tools help to explicate the ways in which linguistic, racial, class and national identities intersect to generate the precarious and subordinate positions of CCE-speaking students within educational institutions in the United States. This has potentially negative implications for their future social and economic success. I mobilize these theories to arrive at a productive confrontation with the inequitable and asymmetrical power relations that negatively structure the ways in which the languages, literacy and identities of CCE-speaking students are perceived and are (re)produced in both schools and the wider society. In the end, what are needed are socio-linguistically informed pedagogical approaches that can help minority students to appreciate their own vernacular language varieties. At the same, students also need access to approaches that can help them to develop proficiency in SE and other language varieties appropriate for academic contexts. A combination of these approaches is likely to result in far greater academic success while helping students to recognize that their variety constitutes cultural and linguistic capital. In the next sections, I engage with these theories and their relevance to the linguistic situation of CCE-speaking youths in New York City schools.
Bourdieu’s theory and CCE-speaking Youth

Bourdieu’s social theory serves as a particularly powerful explanatory model in two important ways. First, his theory offers a description of how ideology is socially constructed by hegemonic groups. Secondly, it offers an explanation of how ideology is fostered and legitimated across communities. Bourdieu’s theory of social practice frames both language and culture as embodied practices constructed in particular contexts, and offers a model of symbolic domination based on unconscious dispositions. Key concepts of Bourdieu’s theory that are relevant to this study include *habitus, field, capital, symbolic domination* and *linguistic market*.

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as a set of dispositions that become internalized through the process of socialization. This set of dispositions then generates practices, perceptions and attitudes that become unconsciously routinized without any conscious manipulation. The unconscious nature of these practices renders them extremely durable, and this allows them to persist over one’s lifetime. It is *habitus* that leads the individual to language in particular ways. CCE-speaking students in New York City schools, for example, have a particular linguistic *habitus* that orients them to express themselves in ways that are considered deficient and contrary to the demands and expectations of schools whose linguistic and cultural demands mirror those of the White middle and upper classes in society. These youths find themselves in an academic context with a, “deep-seated habit of assuming monolingualism as the norm in a nation” (Gogolin, 2013, p. 41). This monolingual *habitus* operates in ways that marginalizes and excludes the Creolocentric *habitus* of CCE-speaking youths.
Field

Bourdieu (1986) defines *fields* as places or structures where individuals and institutions compete against each other for advantage and power. Examples include art, education, religion, sport and politics. Each of these *fields* has its own specific set of rules that regulate “play.” Each *field* is relatively autonomous, although in some instances they can and do overlap. It is within *fields* that forms of *capital*, whether economic, social or cultural, are produced, defined, accumulated and exchanged. Individuals who have accumulated and acquire the dominant share of *capital* within a specific field gain dominance, power and control over that *field*. With that dominance, power and control, these powerful individuals are able to influence, define and shape the value of capital within that field and are able to deploy it to their advantage against those who lack that capital or possess insufficient amounts of it. Those individuals who possess little of that valued capital are frequently on a quest to acquire it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Below I explore in more detailed fashion the economic, cultural and social forms of capital and their implications for how CCE-speaking students are educated in New York City schools and also in their homelands.

Varieties of Capital

One of Bourdieu’s most popular theoretical concepts is *capital*. This concept has increased our understanding of how forms of inequality are reproduced in and through educational institutions. Bourdieu (1986) conceptualized and categorized *capital* in three different forms: *economic, cultural* and *social*. Similar to economic capital, social and cultural forms of *capital* can be exchanged or converted for things of value. For example, economic
capital can be invested and exchanged for educational qualifications, an instantiation of cultural capital. In the section below, I define each of these forms of capital in more detail.

**Cultural Capital**

How are inequality and social stratification produced and reproduced in society, especially through the institution of schooling? What is the role of culture in this production and reproduction? Bourdieu (1986) used the concept of cultural capital as a theoretical tool to explain the reproduction of inequality among the various social classes. Lamont and Lareau (1988), drawing on Bourdieu, define cultural capital “as institutionalized, i.e., widely shared, high status cultural signals, (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion, the former referring to exclusion from jobs and resources, and the latter to exclusion from high status groups” (p. 156). Bourdieu argues that culture is one important medium, by, through, and in which, class inequality is manufactured, promoted and transmitted through social institutions. One such important institution is the school.

**Cultural Capital in the Embodied State**

According to Bourdieu (1986) “most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposed embodiment” (p. 85). Cultural capital thus refers to those long-lasting dispositions, ways of being-in-the-world, and types of habitus that are unconsciously internalized in the mind and the body. Embodied cultural capital is often referred to as culture or knowledge. These attributes are developed and transmitted through social interactions among persons from the
same social network, field or community. According to Bourdieu, social interactions are sites in which individuals unconsciously acquire and embody attributes, speech habits, accents, dialects and patterns that index their social class. It is through these social interactions that *habitus* itself is developed and defined. The cultural capital of individuals who inhabit the middle class and upper class come to be seen as the most valuable form of cultural capital. Such capital is frequently desired by those in the less advantaged classes.

**Social Capital**

Bourdieu uses the concept of *social capital* (Portes, 1998) to explore academic achievement and failure in urban educational institutions. Bourdieu (1985) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (p. 248). In other words, social capital is composed of material and symbolic resources that are “collectively owned,” in particular social networks and that can be accessed by individuals who belong to these social networks. Social capital is convertible and exchangeable for other forms of capital, namely *economic* and *cultural capital*. Portes (1998) notes that,

through social capital, actors can gain direct access to economic resources (subsidized loans, investment tips, protected markets); they can increase their cultural capital through contacts with experts or individuals of refinement (i.e. embodied cultural capital); or, alternatively, they can affiliate with institutions that confer valued credentials (i.e. institutionalized cultural capital). (p.4)
The acquisition of social capital is dependent on the strategic investment of both economic and cultural capital. This process implies a dynamic relationship among all three forms of capital. Individuals who possess access to the most extensive and influential social networks also tend to have more access to economic capital. In contrast, those with access to narrower and less influential social networks tend to also have less access to economic resources. It is important to note that everyone has social capital, but that social capital is valued differentially depending on the social context. While everyone and all social groups have social capital, it can only be activated by an individual in conjunction with others in the social network or society to which they all belong. Ultimately, Bourdieu conceives of social capital as a resource that is manipulated by the dominant classes in ways that reproduce unequal power relations and thereby maintain their hegemonic status in society (Lin, 1999).

Many scholars and numerous studies have used the concept of capital to explain the underachievement (and also the success) of minorities, especially African Americans and Latinos in US schools (Carter, 2003; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004; Yosso, 2005). Carter’s (2003) study (using in-depth interviews with 44 low-income African American youths from Yonkers, New York) sought to investigate how both the valued forms of cultural capital, and what he terms “non-dominant” cultural capital, impact minority youths in schools. His research revealed that these students deploy and negotiate both dominant and non-dominant forms of cultural capital in school in order to achieve both academic and psychological goals. Carter argues that while the dominant forms of cultural capital are necessary to social, academic and economic success, scholars, teachers and policymakers need to attend more closely to how non-dominant forms of cultural capital can be used together with the dominant forms in order to achieve academic success and opportunities for mobility. Carter writes that
“in their schools and communities, these young persons achieved racial and cultural 
authenticity through performances and practices they framed as ‘black’” (p. 150). It is these 
practices and performances that constitute cultural capital. Through certain styles, tastes, 
preferences and understandings, Carter’s research participants sought to enact racially and 
culturally authentic identities that often clashed with racially and culturally insensitive 
teachers. Nevertheless, these strategies allowed students to increase their self-worth. This 
leads me to reflect on the following two questions:

1. Are there forms of Caribbean cultural capital that need to be identified and 
   productively engaged in the education of CCE-speaking youths?

2. How might this be done in ways that produce the kinds of cultural capital that lead 
   to academic success?

These are questions with which my research grapples. Engaging with and studying “Black 
cultural capital” could lead to pedagogical innovations that help such students achieve higher 
rates of academic success.

While Bourdieu himself was trying to explain the reproduction of inequality in the 
French educational system, his own work may have unintentionally ended up legitimizing that 
inequality. As a corrective, other scholars and researchers have critiqued and extended 
Bourdieu’s theory of social capital in ways that locate value in all cultures (Lamont & Lareau, 
1988, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Everyone has cultural capital that has been produced in specific 
social and cultural contexts. However, not everyone’s capital is valued in society or by the 
field of education. This study, in contrast, posits the forms of capital that CCE-students bring 
into the school system as valuable, meaningful and worthy to be invited into classrooms.

CCE-speaking youths are transnational immigrants who, like other immigrant students, bring
identities and resources that educators should engage with in order to help them develop a range of social and cultural capital that prepares them to become college and career ready.

**Linguistic Capital**

In Bourdieu’s theory, a language variety is not simply a neutral, apolitical resource composed of grammatical rules and a lexicon that allows humans to communicate with one another. More significantly, a language variety can be understood as a form of capital, a linguistic form that involves conflicts and tensions. These conflicts and tensions emerge as a result of how different individuals, classes, and races wield symbolic power through specific ways of communicating (Bourdieu, 1991). Simply put, linguistic capital is a form of power.

Bertoša and Skelin Horvat (2012) write that linguistic capital is grounded in the assumption that the ability to create, organise and distribute meaning is an essential source of power and plays a crucial role in all dimensions of society. He [Bourdieu] emphasizes the importance of language as a system actively defined by sociopolitical processes, like nation-building or state formation that create the conditions for a unified linguistic market where linguistic varieties are perceived in terms of their cultural, economic, social and symbolic values (i.e. capitals), while one linguistic variety acquires the status of standard language. (p. 88)

The values and prestige assigned to language varieties is often connected to the relative social and economic status of different social classes. Hence, the standard language often derives its power from its association with the financial, political, cultural and academic elites.
in society. The elite groups then engage in what Bourdieu refers to as *symbolic domination*.

**Linguistic Market**

Bourdieu, using the metaphor of marketplace, argues that members of some social groups acquire valued linguistic capital through schooling in the same manner that one acquires financial or economic capital. Linguistic capital is then used to acquire goods and services in the marketplace of linguistic exchanges just as one would use money in a financial marketplace. But there are those who do not have access to this valued linguistic capital. Their form of linguistic capital is socially devalued and not convertible into goods and services on the linguistic exchange. For example, in many Caribbean Creolophone societies in the former British colonies those who are able to communicate in Standardized Caribbean English have access to social and political power in ways that those persons who speak only Creole do not. In other words, the linguistic capital of the educated members of the middle and upper classes is far more valuable than the linguistic capital of the average uneducated or not highly educated Creole speaker. Schools and educators then have the task of helping students acquire or learn the standard varieties of language, especially since school knowledge is developed in and disseminated through such standard languages. This is typically done at the expense of Creole or other language varieties.

Many believe that the solution to academic achievement is to help poor and disadvantaged students build a middle and upper class *habitus*. For example, teaching standardized language from correctionist or eradicationist perspectives is an attempt to give these students cultural and linguistic capital that will lead to social and economic mobility.
Bourdieu’s theories of cultural capital can be used for correctionist and eradicationist ends. The problem is that, used in this way, Bourdieu’s theories can end up legitimizing the cultural, linguistic and social capital of the dominant classes in society.

**Critical Race Theory: Community Cultural Wealth**

As an antidote to the critique of Bourdieu cultural capita construct, Yosso (2005) has extended and expanded Bourdieu’s concepts in ways that can validate the capitals of minorities such as CCE-speaking youths. Using Critical Race Theory as a lens, she writes that schools operate on the assumption that:

People of Color ‘lack’ the social and cultural capital required for social mobility. As a result, schools most often work from this assumption in structuring ways to help ‘disadvantaged’ students whose race and class background has left them lacking necessary knowledge, social skills, abilities and cultural capital. (p. 70)

Instead of surrendering to the (mis)conception or (mis)characterization of the cultural resources of People of Color, she reframes the entire debate. She argues that People of Color have what she terms “community cultural wealth,” which is comprised of six different elements. For this study, I focus on the following four elements:

1. **Aspirational capital** is defined as the ability to sustain dreams for the future, despite the myriad and intersecting obstacles that restrict and sometimes block the ability of youths to succeed academically, socially and economically.
2. *Linguistic capital* consists in the language resources that Students of Color bring to school. Such students have multilingual and translanuaging skills that should be framed as capital.

3. *Social Capital* refers to the development and leveraging of networks of people and community resources. These networks can be beneficial in providing the kinds of support, including emotional support, that help students navigate institutional spaces.

4. *Resistant capital* refers to the knowledge and skill that has been acquired by confronting inequality in the social system. Communities and People of Color have often built substantial resources to subvert and dismantle their own subjugation.

Yosso outlines these four forms of community cultural wealth to demonstrate a broader conception of cultural capital than originally conceptualized by Bourdieu. In doing so, she elevates the resources and accomplishments of People of Color. While Bourdieu’s and Yosso’s theories of capital provide important foundations to help explain the subordination of immigrant minorities (such as CCE-speaking youths), both fail to consider the transnational status of such youths. This failure is addressed by transnational theory. In the next section, I explore this theory.

**Transnational Theory and CCE-speaking Youth**

CCE-speaking students (and their families) are transnational immigrants or transmigrants. They maintain social, cultural and economic ties to their home countries in the
Anglophone Caribbean and also to their host country, the United States of America (Goulbourne, 2002; Mahoney & Matthews, 2013; Reynolds, 2005). They bring with them cultural, social and linguistic capital, which they use to navigate the communities into which they migrate and also to remain grounded in the cultures and relationships of the home country. Basch, Glick Schiller and Blanc (1994) define and develop the concept of transmigrants in the following fashion:

Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state…They are not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life of the country in which they reside. However, at the very same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated. (p. 48)

CCE-speaking youths and the members of their families are transmigrants because while they migrate to the US to seek and build better lives, they maintain and continually reproduce relations in and with the home country. In that sense, CCE-speaking persons do not uproot themselves from their home communities and cultures but rather, in many ways, expand their original communities and cultures. Thomas-Hope (2001) has written of Caribbean transmigrants as being transnationally mobile, creating:

---

1 The term “Anglophone” is a misnomer that is employed throughout this study for the sake of convenience. “Creolophone” is a more appropriate term, since the majority of the persons in these islands speak a Creole language variety in their interactions with each other.
a situation whereby Caribbean people maintain a home base in two countries between which they move with varying frequency. The extent of this phenomenon has risen greatly since the 1980s with the increased facility for travel and it may well increase further. Such mobility reflects the importance of the migration linkages not only at the country or national level but at the level of the household and family as well. (p. 30)

CCE-speaking youths then form an important subgroup of the Caribbean transmigrant population in New York City schools. As such, their lived experiences and identities forged and formed across and between borders are important phenomena for researchers and educators. Understanding these experiences and identities will create opportunities to improve teaching and learning for these youths.

To account for the dynamic status of immigrants in this globalized and digitally advanced age, scholars began to develop and apply theories of transnationalism. Basch, Glick Schiller and Blanc (1994) define transnationalism as the “...process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (p. 7). A transnational framework more accurately captures contemporary immigration as a phenomenon that is grounded in the constant and dynamic relationship between capital and labor in the global capitalist economy (Basch, Glick Schiller & Blanc, 1992; Mahler, 1998). The continued globalization of production and consumption and the increased movement of goods, services, ideas, capitals and persons has led to the emergence of a permanent demand for both highly educated professionals, and also a steady stream of low- and unskilled workers who will work for subsistence wages (Massey et al., 1993). It is this migration of laborers from the underdeveloped and developing South to the developed North that Louise Coverley-Bennett, a Jamaican poet who wrote in JC, spoke of eloquently in
her famous poem “Colonization in Reverse.” In the poem, the speaker reframes migration as a colonizing of the motherland (England) by Jamaican transmigrants who are moving to the homelands of their former colonizers.

Transnational theory can be seen as a postmodern deconstruction of the modernist definitions of ethnicity, nation, culture, and even language as stable geographical phenomena (Basch et al., 1994; Bhabha, 1990; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998). Such concepts have become destabilized as migrants cross borders. Such migrants bring their local cultural, economic and social resources and practices into new territories. While transnationalism challenges modernist notions of the nation-state and destabilizes borders, it does not erase or demolish borders between or among states. It simply makes them more porous.

CCE-speaking student-participants are more likely to maintain social, cultural and linguistic ties with those in their countries of origin. According to Basch, Glick Schiller and Blanc (1994) transmigrants are immigrants who “take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states” (p.7). First generation CCE-speaking youths find it easier to maintain such ties given the proliferation of social and electronic media, and also the ease and lower cost of communication and transportation across international borders. Second-generation CCE-speaking youths, however, engage in fewer transnational activities (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, cited in Mahoney & Matthews, 2013). This is especially pertinent to the “Anglophone” Caribbean given the relative proximity of these islands to the US.

In acknowledging the transnational status of CCE-speaking students, I employ transnationalism theory to expand and strengthen the theoretical framework. Of all the
theories that attempt to explain migration and incorporation (often referred to as assimilation),
transnational theory is the most suitable, as it acknowledges that the contemporary
phenomenon of migration is not a unilinear process. Transnational theory views migration as
a bidirectional and, in some cases, multilinear one with complex flows of information,
cultures, practices and ideas between two or more countries. In our ever-globalizing world,
migration has become a more dynamic process where immigrants retain strong family ties to
their home countries even as they forge new ties, relationships and identities in the host
country. Before venturing further into transnational theory, however, it is important to
contextualize the broader picture by looking at previous attempts to explain the integration or
incorporation of immigrants into US society.

Brown and Bean (2006) offer a useful categorization of models of immigration: the
classic assimilation model, the new assimilation model, the racial/ethnic disadvantage model
and the segmented assimilation model. Each of these models has grown increasingly more
complex as the composition of immigrant groups has become increasingly heterogeneous.
Classic and new assimilation models viewed the US as a melting pot where new immigrants
would follow a “straight-line” path, eventually adopting the customs, habits, languages, values
and characteristics of the majority group.

According to Suárez-Orosco (2002) classic assimilation was conceptualized as “a
process of change that is directional, indeed unilinear, nonreversible, and continuous” (p. 24).
They draw on Gordon’s work (1964) who proposed a number of stages that the immigrant
passes through from initial arrival of the first generation to eventual absorption and
assimilation of the third generation. First, there is cultural assimilation. At this stage, the
immigrant cultivates close social relations with the dominant group by learning their values
and language. Next, there is structural assimilation, which occurs at both a primary and secondary level. The primary level involves the immigrant’s integration into clubs and friendship groups of the dominant group, while the secondary level involves the immigrant’s integration into the dominant public institutions and organizations of the host society. The final stage is marital assimilation. This stage involves intermarriage between immigrants’ offspring, typically among second or third generation and members of the dominant groups in the host country.

One of the more powerful critiques offered against this early theory is that it was “Anglo-conformist” and ethnocentric (Nee & Alba, 2009) because it portrayed immigrant groups as overly conformist to static, middle-class and White-Protestant ideologies and values (Brown & Bean, 2006). Obviously, Gordon’s explanation has limited utility for explaining the lived experiences and trajectories of CCE-speaking persons as immigrants in the US primarily because they are largely persons of African descent whose language and skin color often restrict their absorption and assimilation into US society.

The next major model that sought to explain immigrant incorporation into American society is Nee and Alba’s (2003) new assimilation theory. This theory attempted to revise and refine Gordon’s theory into one more appropriate in accounting for a more racially heterogeneous and culturally diverse US, especially with the sharp increase of immigrants from the Caribbean and Latin America since the mid-1960s. Bryce-Laporte has written that “distinct from much of the exclusionary, selective and racist character of legislation from 1882 to 1962, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 replaced the national quota system with hemispheric ceilings” (p. 215). This new immigrant landscape in the US required new theories and explanations. Nee and Alba defined assimilation as less ethnocentric. The process
of assimilation no longer depended on the loss of ethnic identity, as was the case in relation to earlier migrants from Europe. Nee and Alba (2009) write that “members of an ethnic group can assimilate in large numbers even when the ethnic group maintains its distinctive neighborhoods and ethnic institutions” (p. 8).

The third major assimilation model is the *racial/ethnic disadvantage model*. This model posits that in some cases ethnicity and language can contribute to successful assimilation for some immigrant groups, but in general constitute obstacles for other immigrant groups (Glazer & Moynihan, 1963). In other words, ethnicity, language and cultural familiarity often do not result in assimilation. Factors such as discrimination and institutional obstacles to employment may also inhibit assimilation. However, first generation immigrants may not always be aware of these obstacles, as they often see the economic opportunities in their host countries as superior to the ones available in their home countries. It is the second- and third-generation immigrants, lacking their parents’ perspectives, who become more aware of obstacles to social and economic mobility.

Another theory/model that expands our understanding of how immigrants assimilate into a more racially and ethnically complex American society is *segmented assimilation* developed by Portes and Min Zhou (1993). According to Brown and Bean (2006), segmented assimilation draws on the insights of both straight-line assimilation and ethnic disadvantage models. Portes and Zhou argue that in order to explicate the complexity of immigration, we have to take into account the contextual, structural and cultural factors that result in successful or unsuccessful assimilation. For example, they argue that ineffective urban schools can constitute structural impediments for the children of low-income and under- or uneducated members of immigrants groups. Ineffective schools make it difficult for such children to
access job opportunities. These structural impediments can result in little or no upward mobility, or worse, downward mobility. At the same time, the children of other immigrants can follow different routes to traditional straight-line assimilation. Often these children will engage in what Portes and Zhou refer to as “selective acculturation,” which is the adoption of the local and traditional attitudes and values of their families and communities to ensure academic and economic achievement. On the other hand, some children of less advantaged immigrant groups may actually develop oppositional practices, behaviors or values such as truancy, dropping out of school, a rejection of Mainstream or Standard American English or becoming gang-members. These practices, behaviors and values in themselves constitute a rejection of assimilation and often result in stagnant or downward mobility. Such failure to assimilate becomes even more pronounced when racialization is taken into account, especially as it relates to Black and Latino students. Brown and Bean (2006) cite Portes, Patricia Fernández-Kelly and William Haller (2005) who argue that:

Children of Asian, black, mulatto, and mestizo immigrants cannot escape their ethnicity and race, as defined by the mainstream. Their enduring physical differences from whites and the equally persistent strong effects of discrimination based on those differences … throw a barrier in the path of occupational mobility and social acceptance. Immigrant children's identities, their aspirations, and their academic performance are affected accordingly. (p. 1006)

Brown and Bean (2006) also cite Waters (1996) who write that:

The teens experience racism and discrimination constantly, and develop perceptions of the overwhelming influence of race on their lives and life
chances that differ from their parents’ views. These teens experience being hassed by police and store owners, being turned down for jobs they apply for, and being attacked on the street if they venture into white neighborhoods. (pp. 10-11)

While the authors make these arguments in reference to second-generation immigrants, I contend that they are applicable in important ways to some of the participants in this study because of their immutable racial characteristics as Black students. In other words, their lower income positions means they live in urban neighborhoods that often contribute to the failure to assimilate successfully into American society with the resultant stagnant or downward socioeconomic mobility. Waters’ conclusions with respect to racism also ring true. Buff (2001) has written that:

Both Indians and Caribbean immigrants, because of their racial positions and because of their diverse conceptions of citizenship and affinity, have not assimilated in the much-vaunted tradition of “white ethnics.” Arriving in New York City in unprecedented numbers after 1965, Afro-Caribbean people confront a two-tiered racial hierarchy often concealed by ideologies of ethnic mobility and “model minorities.” Caribbean immigrants enter the United States as foreign nationals subject to the vagaries of immigration and naturalization policy; as the proverbial “new ethnics” who compete for success and mobility in the urban order, often pitted against native-born minorities; and as Black people whose access to economic mobility is delimited by race. (p.12)

Caribbean transmigrants such as CCE-speaking youths are not just limited by race, however; they are also limited by their particular language skills.
Traditional assimilationist theories and frameworks are now viewed as insufficiently capable of capturing the complex lived experiences and realities of migrants, especially in a capitalist, neoliberal and globalized world where migrants are subject to pressures that push them to reside in two or more nation-states (Basch, Glick Schiller & Blanc, 1994; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). This applies to CCE-speaking students and their families who find it easier to maintain ties to family members who still live in the “Anglophone” Caribbean countries. I now return to more fully exploring transnational theory and its implications for the lived experiences and the education of CCE-speaking students in US schools.

Transnationalism and Schooling

While much has been written about transnationalism situated within the context of immigration, economics and globalization, the implications of the links between transnationalism and education remain under-theorized. Some scholars, however, have recently begun to explore the nexus between transnationalism and the schooling of immigrant students and, more specifically, transnationalism, (multi)literacies, identities and language learning (Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009; Mahoney & Matthews, 2013; Sanchez, 2007; Sanchez & Kasun, 2012; Warriner, 2007). Sánchez and Kasun (2012) write of “the importance of transnationalism in the lives of the US immigrant students and their families and how public schools educators and researchers have neither adequately recognized nor situated this lifestyle in their work” (p. 72-73). Understanding the way transnationalism shapes the lives of immigrant students can help to more meaningfully engage such students in ways that are socially, culturally and academically productive. This can be of value to teachers.
of CCE-speaking students for whom, as Nero (2010) claims, “transnationalism is particularly visible...given the proximity of the Caribbean to the US” (p. 216).

More importantly, engaging and exploring themes of social justice, as well as social and economic disparities that are common features of the neoliberal and globalized world and their effects on the lives of transnational immigrants can increase awareness of how economic and political forces have shaped or influenced immigrants’ lives (Sanchez, 2007). The purpose of schooling is not only the creation of economically productive citizens but also of the “democratic or intercultural citizen” who can communicate across boundaries and who can act in solidarity against the various injustices to which people of color especially are subjected. Transnational students bring multiple experiences, resources and funds of knowledge that should be used to help them toward greater success academically and to become more informed and critical citizens.

Other scholars and authors have also begun to explore the connections between transnational processes and literacy. Warriner (2007) writes that “highlighting the lived experiences, human practices, and ‘cultural logics’ of people whose everyday lives are dramatically shaped by large-scale global and transnational processes” (p.202) have material consequences in relationship to literacy. Taking transnational identities into account in high school can open up discussion of issues that are relevant throughout the lives of CCE-speaking youths. Invoking the issues of immigration, language practice, literacy, economics, culture and politics in the educational space serves to deepen students’ understanding of their position in the social, cultural, racial and linguistic hierarchies in their communities, countries, and the wider world. In the next section, I sketch a brief outline of coloniality and its potential
to shed light on the reproduction of the oppressive force of Anglocentric language ideologies in the schooling of CCE-speaking youths.

Theories of Coloniality

The literature on theories of transnationality is relatively new and remains under-theorized. That said, many scholars have acknowledged the analytical power of transnationalism. Transnationalism possesses the capacity to explain the complex lived realities of contemporary immigrants who frequently traverse the borders of two or more nations. However, transnationalism does not sufficiently capture or express the unequal power relations that characterize the lived realities of transmigrants from postcolonial Caribbean nations. In order to theorize unjust power relations, transnational theories need to be supplemented with a theory of coloniality (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000). While the term coloniality calls to mind colonialism, there are fundamental conceptual differences. According to Quijano (2000):

The concept of coloniality is distinct from, but bound up with, colonialism. The latter refers strictly to a structure of domination/exploitation in which the control of political authority, productive resources, and labor of a population is held by someone of a different identity, and whose center of government, moreover, lies in another territorial jurisdiction. Colonialism is obviously older, while coloniality has proven in the last 500 years to be deeper and longer-lasting than colonialism. But coloniality was without a doubt produced within colonialism, and moreover without the latter it would have not been
Deficit language ideologies that advantage Eurocentric cultural and linguistic products but marginalize or destroy those of historically marginalized people emerged more forcefully in the colonial period. As such, language ideologies are simultaneously products of colonialism and producers of coloniality. As Quijano (2000) notes, dismantling the formal structures of colonialism did not end the reproduction and circulation of these ideologies. They owe their continued reproduction and circulation to the matrix of coloniality. The colonialism that lasted from the sixteenth into the twentieth century has ended. However, coloniality—with all its political, ideological, psychological, epistemological and linguistic effects—survives. It continues to sustain the complex and oppressive hegemonic practices that in turn nurture the dominance of unconscious language ideologies that perpetuate unjust and inequitable linguistic hierarchies. As Motha (2014) notes, “coloniality is woven throughout schooling procedures and language teaching” (p. 29).

Using the concept of coloniality, we can uncover and articulate how CCE-speaking youths are linguistically profiled in New York City classrooms. Their linguistic resources, shaped and developed in formerly colonized nations, mark them in ways that subject them to the vicissitudes of an unjust linguistic hierarchy. Theories of coloniality help to illuminate how language ideologies operate to the advantage of the dominant linguistic group while suppressing and marginalizing other language practices. In the same way that colonialism has been replaced by coloniality, the more overt forms of violence produced by colonialism have transmogrified into covert forms of *symbolic* violence against people of African descent. How can teachers become cognizant of the ways in which the language ideologies produced by
colonialism and sustained by coloniality injure and undermine productive teaching and learning in their classrooms? In the next section, I turn to critical pedagogy as a way out. Critical pedagogy suggests ways that teachers can help themselves and their students escape the oppressive and constrictive logic of language ideologies that all too often limit the agency and identities of minority students.

**Critical Pedagogy: Emancipatory Possibilities for CCE-speaking Youth**

I discuss critical pedagogy in this study in an attempt to advance a social justice agenda from the perspective of the education of CCE-speaking students. Critical pedagogy offers an alternative to the current neoliberal assessment-driven educational agenda.

Critical pedagogy, a form of critical educational thought, emerged out of the work of theorists of the Frankfurt School who believed that traditional Marxist analysis was incapable of adequately explaining the rise, spread and resilience of capitalist hegemony along with the failure of the working class to challenge and dismantle the economic and ideological apparatus of capitalism (Giroux, 2009; McLaren, 2003). Darder, Baltodano and Torres (2009) further note that:

these theorists sought to challenge the narrowness of traditional forms of rationality that defined the concept of meaning and knowledge in the Western world, during a very critical moment in the history of the twentieth century. As such, their work was driven by underlying commitment to the notion that theory, as well as practice, must inform the work of those who seek to transform the oppressive conditions that exist in the world. (p. 7)
Critical theory is also a product of the contributions of a multiracial, multicultural and diverse group of thinkers, theorists and academics including Frederick Douglass, W.E.B Du Bois, John Dewey, Leonard Covello, Ira Shor, bell hooks, Peter McLaren and Henry Giroux in North America. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire’s (2000) significant work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* integrated important insights from the Frankfurt School. The Italian Marxist scholar, Gramsci, as well as the French poststructuralist Foucault, are also important critical theorists. Finally, postcolonial theorists such as Nyerere and Fanon enriched and advanced the critical pedagogy project (Ryoo, Crawford, Moreno & McLaren, 2009). Additionally, a number of other Black critical scholars add to what is known as Critical Black Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson, Elijah Muhammad, Ella Baker, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King Jr., Nannie Helen Burroughs and Malcolm X, among others.

In addition to ordinary West Indian immigrants, a number of politically and socially engaged West Indians have participated in the social, cultural, political and economic spheres in the US for many years. This includes persons such as Jamaican Marcus Garvey who founded the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to promote racial and economic liberation among both Caribbean and US-born Blacks. Trinidadian C.L.R. James also contributed to the struggle for racial and economic equality. Finally, Walter Rodney, who wrote *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, was instrumental in the Black Power movement and fought for the liberation of the working poor. Together, these men and women offered searing critiques of Eurocentrism and its continuing effects in the US and the Caribbean. These Black men and women critiqued and challenged the Eurocentric perspectives that still dominate the education of minority and disenfranchised students. The Ebonics saga (more on this in the next chapter) is but one recent controversial example of this continuing story.
Prejudice against languages associated with minorities remains, as evidenced by the continued dominance of Standard English and the resistance to forms of bilingual education despite sound sociolinguistic science.

Critical pedagogy emerges out of a recognition that society is socially, racially, culturally and linguistically stratified in ways that validate the practices of the dominant groups while denigrating, marginalizing and excluding the practices of historically subordinated groups. In light of such injustice, critical pedagogy urges critical educators to become partisans who seek to alter this power imbalance. This means helping students become aware of the ways in which this socially constructed stratification is used to limit their academic success as students, and their social and economic success as adults. A number of critical educational theorists including Codjoe (2001), Giroux (2009), McLaren, (2003) have argued that critical pedagogy can serve a liberatory function by encouraging teachers to confront, to analyze and to help dismantle the social, economic, cultural and racial inequities that marginalize and disempower minority students. More importantly, as Aronowitz and Giroux write (1993), critical pedagogy promotes the creation of “forms of knowledge and classroom social practices that validate the experiences that [minority] students bring to schools [and encourages them to develop] an active voice in institutional settings that traditionally attempt to silence them by ignoring their cultural capital” (p. 151). Critical pedagogy calls for respecting and valuing the cultural capital of minority students such as CCE-speaking students. This means valuing their identities, their histories and their vernacular languages.

Especially relevant to the emergence of critical pedagogy are the contributions of W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson, especially on behalf of oppressed “black folks.”
Both men believed in, and advocated for, a liberatory education to counter the ways in which racism and racial inequalities damaged the lives of African Americans students (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009). Du Bois’ 1903 publication *The Souls of Black Folk*, spoke eloquently of the ways in which racism limited the social and economic aspirations of African Americans, while Woodson’s 1933 volume *The Mis-education of the Negro* was a bold critique of the way that the education system, in being dedicated to culturally indoctrinating Black children, failed to effectively educate them. Darder, Baltodano and Torres (2009) write that:

They tirelessly championed the right of African American students to a process of schooling that would prepare them to critically challenge socially prevailing notions of the time-notions which denied them their humanity and trampled their self-respect.

Most importantly, the historical influence of Dubois and Woodson set the stage for many of the contemporary struggles associated with anti-racism, multiculturalism, and social justice today. (p. 3)

The work of Martinican psychiatrist and revolutionary theorist Frantz Fanon also has relevance for critical educators and critical pedagogy. Trinidadian historian and social theorist C.L.R. James made critical contributions to the field of critical pedagogy.

Ryoo, Crawford, Moreno and McLaren (2009) write that of the numerous principles that characterize critical pedagogy, it is distinguished by its commitment to the following four:
1. Critical pedagogy adopts a passionate commitment to creating emancipatory forms of schooling that values and validates the knowledges, cultures and linguistic resources of minority students.

2. Critical pedagogy takes the position through rigorous analysis that traditional and conservative forms of schooling militate against the interests of vulnerable minoritized students in society by reproducing asymmetrical relations of power instantiated in race and class inequities.

3. Critical pedagogy conceptualizes educational practice as created within particular social and historical contexts. This realization assists students to develop agency by first becoming conscious of the knowledge that they are subjects of history, and then using their own agencies to construct, through education, pathways to creating their own empowering histories and futures.

4. Critical pedagogy rests on an important assumption that a dialectical and interactive relationship exists between the individual and his or her social, cultural, economic and political context. This assumption, through both theory and practice, places human existence at the center of all analytical projects.

Through the integration of these principles into the curriculum, teachers can counteract the linguicism that permeates the teaching of students from minority backgrounds. **Linguicism**, a term coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1989), designates the “ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce unequal division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (p. 455). It occurs when persons are discriminated against on the basis of the language they
speak, their accent, or their vocabulary choices. It is these forms of injustice that critical pedagogy encourages teachers to confront and unmask in classroom discussions. While critical pedagogy may lack a mechanism to alter existing power relations in ways that benefit minority students and groups, it does offer a tool for articulating issues of social, economic and political oppression. It also provides opportunities for reflection on how such oppressions might be confronted. Critical pedagogy demands that schools and teachers teach for social justice, that they value difference and diversity rather than the erasure of multicultural and ethnolinguistic diversity.

The foregoing exploration of critical pedagogy demonstrates the power of the theory to show that teaching and learning are not neutral sites of knowledge production. Critical pedagogy is not, however, without its limitations. Several scholars have advanced productive and insightful critiques of critical pedagogy. Ellsworth (1989) for example, has argued that there is insufficient research on whether critical pedagogy can actually transform existing asymmetrical relations of power in schools or in the broader society. She also argues that many minority groups experiencing hegemonic oppression are not cognizant of educational policy or the ways in which education policy produces classroom practices that constrain teachers’ ability to create change. Additionally, these groups are often unaware of how such policies impede the educational success of minority students. In fact, some teachers may be similarly unaware of the ways in which policy generates counterproductive outcomes. hooks (1994) has written that:

Among educators there has to be an acknowledgement that any effort to transform institutions so that they reflect a multicultural standpoint must take into consideration the fears teachers have when asked to shift their paradigms.
There must be training sites where teachers have the opportunity to express those concerns while also learning to create ways to approach the multicultural classroom and curriculum....We have to work consistently against and through the overwhelming will on the part of folks to deny the politics of racism, sexism, heterosexism and so forth that inform how and what we teach. (pp. 36-37, cited in Wiggans & Walrond, 2013)

**Conclusion**

The theoretical/conceptual framework for this study draws from the work of scholars and academics concerned with diagnosing the modern world and prescribing solutions that can improve the conditions for social justice. I draw on the strength of critical theory to engage with the complex language ideologies and literacy practices of CCE-speaking youths in and out of schools in New York City.

The theoretical framework explored Bourdieu’s theory of economic, cultural and social capital. It also explored the transnational forces that impact and shape the lived experiences and identities of CCE-speaking youths. Theories of capital and transnationalism help us understand ways in which the home languages of minorities of African descent have historically been devalued. The linguistic practices of minorities of African descent have been seen as less valuable, lacking in prestige and nobility, and incapable of expressing the most sublime ideas of civilization. In other words, languages spoken by African Americans, Continental Africans and Caribbean Creole English-speakers are seen as inferior to Standard English because such languages constitute the wrong sort of capital in society at large and, more specifically, in educational institutions. The ideologies that produce the hierarchies that
devalue the languages of immigrant minorities exist not only in developed countries such as the US, Canada and Great Britain; they also exist in the home countries of these immigrants. In the next chapter, I will explore in depth the historical, educational and sociolinguistic dimensions of the varieties of Caribbean Creole English in the lives of those who speak these language varieties.
Chapter Three
Speakers of Caribbean Creole English in Schools

Introduction

In the following I will discuss several important issues in the literature on Caribbean Creole English varieties. First, I discuss the immigration of these students to the US and their educational trajectories in the Caribbean. Next, I discuss the origins of Caribbean Creole English and the attitude toward these language varieties in the Caribbean. Third, I explore the attitude to language difference found in US schools. Fourth, I look at several language ideologies that provide the foundation for the regulation of language practices in schools. I also explore the literature on suggested recommendations for improving how teachers can more effectively educate students to adopt standard language literacy practices without sacrificing their own language and literacy practices.

CCE-Speaking Students: A Definition

I use the term CCE-speaking students to refer to the children of West Indian transnational migrants from the “Anglophone” Caribbean who speak an English-lexified Creole language variety as their home language. CCE-speaking students come from some twenty countries in the Caribbean. However, this study focuses specifically on adolescents in four New York City high schools from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. These countries are multiracial and culturally heterogeneous, shaped over centuries by interactions among people of African, Asian, Dutch, French, and Spanish backgrounds. People of African descent are demographically dominant in most of the officially designated Anglophone Caribbean including Jamaica. According to McNichol (1993), Black people constitute 90 percent of the populations in most of these Caribbean islands. On the other hand, the racial
composition in Guyana and twin island nation of Trinidad and Tobago is rather different. In both Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, East Indians constitute 41 percent of the population; blacks constitute another 41 percent, with Whites, Chinese and mulattoes constituting the remaining 18 percent. Although these countries are fairly diverse, this study focuses only on students of African descent, as this is the racial group that is most dominant in Brooklyn and in the schools from which the student participants are drawn.

**Immigration to the United States**

The students who comprise the participants in this study are those who have immigrated to the US and are attending secondary schools in New York City. There are no hard numbers on how many of these Caribbean Creole English speakers are actually enrolled in New York City schools, but we can infer from the number of migrants from the English-speaking Caribbean that they make up a significant presence within the Black student population overall. The Black population is composed of African Americans, and African and Anglo-Caribbean immigrants.

In this section, I explore some of the figures available in the literature on Caribbean migration. It is undeniable that there has been significant growth of the Anglo-Caribbean population over the past 40 years, predominantly from Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana (Hall & Carter, 2006; Waters, 1999). For example, the *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, released by the US Department of Justice in 2000 reports that, at the time, there were approximately four million immigrants from the Caribbean residing in the US. This number, however, includes immigrants from the Francophone and Hispanophone Caribbean. According to Roopnarine et al. (2006) and Kent (2007), Guyana,
Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago are the countries that send the largest number of migrants to the US. Roopnarine et al. (2006) report that between 1981 and 2002, 387,300 Jamaicans, 187,600 Guyanese and 102,800 Trinidadians migrated to the United States. Immigration from Guyana was especially significant between 1981 and 2002, with about 25 percent of the population migrating to the US. Kent (2007) also notes that in 2005 two-thirds of the 2.8 million foreign-born Blacks were born in the Caribbean.

McKinnon and Bennett (2005) point out that the Anglo-Caribbean presence has significantly increased the total Black population in the US and constitute 60 percent of the more than two million Black immigrants residing in the US. Like many other groups of immigrants, they come in search of social and economic opportunities (Foner, 2001; Waters, 1999). They have settled in many of the major cities of the US, including Atlanta, Boston, Miami, New York City and Philadelphia (Mitchell et al., 2005). They live in highly racially segregated neighborhoods where the residents are largely Black and often poor (Massey & Denton, 1993).

The setting for this study, New York City, has seen a significant shift in the city’s racial composition, from primarily White Europeans to Asians, Blacks and Latinos. This has been due largely to the impact of the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act. According to The Newest New Yorkers, 2000: Immigrant New Yorkers in the New Millennium (2000), immigrants from the “Anglophone” Caribbean constitute a significant percentage of the foreign-born population. Following the Dominican Republic and China, Jamaicans were the third-largest group of immigrants (178,900) followed by Guyana (130,600) while Trinidad and Tobago (88,794) ranked 8th. The report also notes that non-Hispanic, Caribbean-born persons (this group includes Haitians) comprised 20.6 percent of
New York City’s foreign-born population, whereas they only comprised 5.2 percent of the nation’s foreign-born. This figure suggests that a significant number of Caribbean-born youths (including Haitian-Creole-speaking students) are students in New York City schools. In fact, according to the New York City Independent Budget Office report *New York City Public School Indicators: Demographics, Resources, Outcomes* (2013), Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago are among the twenty-five most frequent birthplaces for students in the city’s public schools; Jamaica and Guyana are also in the top ten. CCE-speaking students citing Jamaica as their birthplace numbered 9,225, those citing Guyana numbered 9,309, and those citing Trinidad and Tobago numbered 2,843. According to *The Newest New Yorkers* report, these students are for the most part concentrated in neighborhoods where Creolophone immigrants from the former British colonies usually settle. These neighborhoods include Central Brooklyn communities such as Flatbush, East Flatbush, Crown Heights and Flatlands/Canarsie where the Jamaicans and Trinidadians settle in large numbers; and Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Woodhaven-Ozone Park where the Guyanese nationals tend to settle. Additionally, it must be noted that these numbers do not include US-born students whose parents are from the “Anglophone” Caribbean and are therefore often immersed in social and cultural environments saturated with Caribbean Creole language and literacy resources. In the next section, I explore the educational performance of CCE-speaking students in their home countries and some of the factors that shape their performance. Such exploration can help to contextualize the educational trajectories of these students in US classrooms.
Education Systems in the “Anglophone” Caribbean

The academic performance of CCE-speaking students in US classrooms is in many ways affected by their schooling experiences in their home countries. These schooling experiences are rooted in education systems that were originally designed by the British colonialists (Miller 1996; Nero, 2009). These systems were initially both highly Eurocentric and Anglocentric (Hickling-Hudson, 2006). However, between the 1960s and 1970s, upon gaining independence, the home countries of CCE-speaking students initiated decolonization processes through educational reforms by incorporating elements of local culture and history. Despite these laudable changes, however, the educational systems are still similar in structure to the model the British created in the former colonies.

The educational systems under the British were highly unequal, reflecting the racial and class stratification of the general society (Hickling-Hudson, 2006; Miller, 1996; Nero, 2009). Secondary schooling was reserved mostly for the children of local White masters and a small number of the local upper middle class. Tertiary education was a luxury available to an even smaller number. Assessment systems using high-stakes tests were developed in Standard English (SE). This had the effect of excluding the majority of the children of former slaves, while admitting the children of some of the middle and upper classes into the top professions and positions in the different countries. The result was that an overwhelming number of the Creole-speaking majority was relegated to the margins of the social structure, as they lacked the official linguistic resources needed for acquiring high-quality education (Gordon, 1964).

Additionally, race and skin color were implicated in the process that provided access to education, especially of the high-quality kind. The majority of those denied access to education were of African descent and therefore darker in complexion, while those privileged
few were of largely European descent and lighter in complexion (Miller, 1996). In addition, Miller (1986) has written that the majority of the beneficiaries of pre-independence education systems up to the 1950s were men.

While the Caribbean countries under discussion have instituted many educational reforms that have resulted in improvements to their schools systems, scholars have noted that these improvements are more quantitative than qualitative. Significant transformations to education systems were enacted by local leaders, the majority of whom were Black, beginning in the early 1940s, with the granting of adult suffrage and representative government, and culminating in independence in the 1960s (Miller, 1996). Miller (1996) writes that newly elected representatives of the majority “elected with a mandate to democratize all avenues of upward mobility… pounced on education and schooling as the most obvious means of demonstrating their commitment to that mandate…” (p. 84). According to Miller, there have been, as a result, a number of positive changes. One is that, by the 1990s, over 80 percent of infants were enrolled in preschool compared to fewer than 30 percent 40 years earlier. Second, universal primary education is available to all children. Third, secondary education is available to all students throughout the “Anglophone” Caribbean region. (Less than 10 percent had access to secondary schooling in the 1940s.) Fourth, the curricula throughout the countries have been written to reflect the histories, traditions and cultures of the Caribbean people. Finally, literacy programs for adults and vocational training for those unsuccessful at academically oriented programs have been developed. However, notwithstanding these positive developments, the education systems in which CCE-speaking students begin their educational trajectories are negatively affected by several factors (Miller, 1996; Nero, 2009). I turn in the next section to some of the factors that help to shape the education of CCE-
speaking students as they move through the schooling process in both the Caribbean and the US.

**Education of CCE-speakers in the “Anglophone” Caribbean**

Several factors impact the education of CCE-speaking students in their home countries. One factor that continues to affect the quality of schooling in the Caribbean is *streaming*, which is commonly referred to as “tracking” in the US (Carlson & Quello, 2002; Evans, 2001; Lipps, Lowe, Halliday, Morris-Patterson, Clarke & Wilson, 2010). Lipps et al. (2010) note:

> Many young students in the Caribbean face an educational system that places them into secondary schools based upon their performance in critical competency examinations at the end of elementary school. Students who are assigned to lower tracked secondary schools or classrooms may feel their career paths and future are decided for them at the age of ten to twelve. (p. 1)

Evans (2001) confirmed this continuing practice in her research on Jamaican schools. She defines streaming, a practice supported by parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders, as “a method of organizing teaching whereby students are categorized according to their academic ability and placed in different classes at the same grade level or in different groups within a class” (p. 90). Additionally, students are also streamed according to schools. For example, in Jamaica, at the secondary level, schools are divided into *traditional high schools* that are seen as the prestigious institutions of learning and largely attended by the children of the middle and upper classes, and the upgraded *secondary schools* largely attended by the children of poor and working classes. Strudwick and Foster (1991) write that 74.8 percent of
the students attending prestige schools come from upper or traditional middle class backgrounds, whereas only 3.7 percent come from the lower classes. Additionally, of the total number attending the upgraded secondary schools, only 33 percent come from the middle or upper classes. Carlson and Quello (2002) arrived at a similar conclusion in their study of Jamaican education. They noted that in spite of reform efforts, the educational system was still highly stratified in terms of tracking. They further stated that the practice was destructive and was the principal impediment to improved student performance.

Evans, (2001), Lipps et al. (2010), and Nero (2009) have also noted that streaming or tracking may have adverse impact on the mental health and self-esteem of CCE-speaking students. Nero writes that this practice “has pernicious long-term effects on students’ self image and the image of their schools” (p. 167). Such effects can include increased feelings of hopelessness and depression. Past research has suggested that students who reported high levels of depressive symptoms may be less motivated to achieve academically, have poorer cognitive skills and have lower academic aspirations, all of which may lead students into lower academic streams.

The mental health of CCE-speaking students may also be affected by the migration of one or both parents to a foreign country. Blank (2007) estimates that between ten and twenty percent of Caribbean children have been left behind due to international migration, the dominant form of migration according to the United Nations Secretariat (2002). Several studies have documented the adverse effects of parental migration on mental health and academic achievement of Caribbean students (Adams, 2000; Dillon & Walsh, 2012; Pottinger, 2005; Smith, 2000). Smith (2000) investigated the effects of the migration process on CCE-speaking adolescents who were separated from their parents from one to ten years. His finding
from interviews conducted with five males and six females living in New York revealed that these adolescents reported significant challenges in their attempts to reconnect emotionally and socially with their parents, as well as settling into their new environments. Such challenges affected school performance in largely negative ways. Similarly, Adams (2000) carried out a case study of an eight-year-old male participant who was separated from his parents at 18 months of age. Using in-depth interviews, Adams found that the participants experienced behavioral challenges and academic performance problems. Most of the studies conclude that migration processes in many cases result in children feeling rejected and abandoned despite the financial benefits of migration. One study, however, does point to some children being resilient academically in the face of adjustment challenges (Jones, Sogren, & Sharpe, 2004).

Another factor that negatively impacts the education of students in the countries that were once British colonies is class size. Research shows that class size plays a role in learning. In 1991 to 1992, when I taught French in Jamaica, many of my classes had an average of 40 students. Many students who were streamed into the high-performing classes received high grades in French, but students who had been placed in low-performing classes, who would have benefited from smaller classes, tended to perform poorly. In addition, placing so many of the low-performing students in one class may have contributed to an increase in disruptive behavior and incidents that frustrated some teachers. These teachers often retaliated by calling the students disrespectful names. Such disruptive behaviors and teacher attitudes resulted in academic underperformance for many of these students.

Large class size is a common feature throughout the Caribbean countries under discussion. This feature is primarily the result of budgetary constraints that are common in
poor and developing countries. In comparison to developed countries such as the US, Canada or England that can afford to devote a far larger share of GDP to their educational sectors, these countries often find it difficult to increase their education budgets. Taylor (2002) writes that large class sizes in Jamaica are a detriment to creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning. Taylor documents how a student teacher has to effectively manage a classroom of 58 noisy high school students. She writes that rather than being an aberration, large class sizes are a regular feature of the Jamaican education system.

Similar problems exist in Trinidad and Tobago. De Lisle, Seecharan and Ayodike (2010) note several problems that impact the educational system in several ways. First, there is an ingrained culture of ability grouping, which is practiced at both the primary and secondary levels. A second problem is that students are still streamed in different types of schools based on the reputation of the elementary school. Thirdly, the authors claim that unless the student comes from a middle or upper class family, they are unlikely to be able to access private school education. Finally, while there is a standardized curriculum, the quality of delivery varies and is differentiated by ability group. In practice, these problems perpetuate a situation where the children of urban middle and upper classes achieve at higher rates than those from rural areas. These problems, among others, led De Lisle, Seecharan and Ayodike to conclude that despite heavy investment in its education system, the Trinidad and Tobago education system is structured to produce unequal outcomes based especially on socioeconomic status and rurality.

Due to the inadequacies of the education systems in the Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, many CCE-speaking students were already underachieving in their countries of origin. Negatively impacted by problems such as streaming and unequal access to educational
resources, as well as the migration process, many of these students are underachieving in US schools (Lopez, 2003). This underachievement is further exacerbated when these students migrate and move into schools and communities that make little or no accommodations to incorporate their particular cultural, social and linguistic resources. Kasinitz (1992) and Lopez, (2003) have noted that many parents choose to send their children back to schools in the Caribbean (or let them finish high school there) so as to avoid the less-than-adequate educational options available in many of the communities where they reside. To respond to the poor or ineffective teaching of CCE-speaking students, many have argued that teachers need to be trained to use the rich language practices that CCE-speaking students bring to school. I now turn my attention to a brief description of these practices.

**Caribbean Creole English: Its Origins and Development**

Although the scholarly and theoretical work on Creole is characterized by much debate about its origins, (see Baptista, 2005; Bickerton, 1990; Degraff, 2004, 2005; Mufwene, 2008), CCE varieties such as Jamaican Creole, Trinidadian Creole and Guyanese Creole are composites of West African languages. West African languages provided the grammatical, morphological and syntactical substrate to CCE varieties, while British English provided the superstrate or the lexicon. This has resulted in substantial differences in grammatical structure, syntax and phonology between Standard (Caribbean) English on the one hand and CCE varieties on the other (Pratt-Johnson, 2006).

The term Caribbean Creole English refers specifically to a group of Creole languages spoken by persons from the Anglophone Caribbean, “a linguistic contact zone” (Nero, 2000, p. 486). In the sociolinguistic literature, the term CEC (Caribbean English Creole) has often
been used to refer to these varieties. In my opinion, however, CEC concedes too much power to SE. CCE (Caribbean Creole English) more accurately captures and acknowledges the reality that these language varieties are more dominant linguistically, if not socially and politically. It is important to note that the term “CCE-speaking youths” or “CCE-speaking students” is a scholarly and academic term that is not used by West Indian immigrant students to refer to or identify themselves. The term serves as a useful heuristic or conceptual tool that is employed to meaningfully delineate a unique group of students.

I adopt Degraff’s (2005) definition of Creole for this study. For him the term Creole refers to “the speech varieties that developed in many of the newly created communities—the ‘Creole’ communities—in and around the colonial and slave-based plantations of the New World in the 17th through 19th centuries” (p. 541). There are multiple theories that attempt to explain Creole’s emergence, but for the purposes of this study I focus briefly on two. For some scholars, the term Creole refers to a language variety created when a Pidgin is first used to facilitate communication among adults who speak different languages (Bloomfield, 1933; McWhorter, 2001; Schuchardt, 1914). These scholars claim it was this process that led to the emergence of various Creoles on plantations in the British colonies during the period of slavery (Decamp, 1971; Holm, 1988; Mühlhäuser, 1986; Sato, 1989). Furthermore, this view holds that Creoles, while typically emerging from Pidgins that have a limited lexicon and grammar, often experience an expansion of their vocabulary and syntax. At the same time, however, unlike standard languages, Creoles suffer from having the “world’s simplest grammars” (McWhorter, 2001). This grammatical simplicity, some scholars claim, limits their expressiveness and capacity to communicate sophisticated ideas.
In the case of Caribbean Creole English varieties, the groups in contact were primarily European Whites and African slaves. Interactions over many decades led to the emergence and evolution of the language varieties spoken by many West Indians both in their home countries and the Diaspora. In this view, the emergence of Creoles is seen as an exceptional process that differs from the emergence of European languages such as French, Spanish or English.

Not all scholars subscribe to this hypothesis of the emergence of the various varieties of Caribbean Creole English. For example, scholars such as DeGraff, (2004, 2005) and Mufwene (2008) argue against the emergence of Creoles as exceptional or fundamentally different from that of the major world languages. Mufwene (2008), in criticizing this hypothesis, writes that “despite an increasingly better understanding of the socio-economic histories of the territories where creoles emerged, which suggest that creoles could not possibly have emerged from pidgins, linguists seem to have a nostalgic fondness for this myth” (p. 3). He argues instead that Creole emergence is similar to what occurs in any contemporary contact situation where one group learns the target language over a long period of time.

DeGraff (2005) even more strongly opposes the notion of Creole Exceptionalism, which he defines as “as a set of beliefs, widespread among both linguists and nonlinguists, that Creole languages form an exceptional class on phylogenetic and/or typological grounds” (p. 533). His view is that the emergence of Creole languages such as Haitian Creole (HC) was no different from that of so-called normal languages like French or Spanish, which emerged from Latin, or of English, which emerged from Common Germanic. In fact, DeGraff (2005) argues that the theorizing on Creole has been shaped by racial ideas that have historically
stigmatized not just the formerly colonized populations that speak Creoles but also the scholarship that has attempted to define and explain the emergence of Creoles. For this reason, historically, Creoles and their speakers have been considered both linguistically and cognitively impoverished and inferior, in contrast to speakers of, say, English and French. The power of Mufwene’s (2008) and Degraff’s (2005) ideas certainly have the potential to elevate the status of Creole languages and change attitudes in ways that benefit those students who speak these languages.

**The Creole Continuum**

One of the most powerful concepts to emerge from the study of Creoles is the concept of the Creole continuum (Decamp, 1971). The Creole varieties common to CCE-speaking students, especially those from Jamaica and Guyana, range from the most basic or *basilectal* variety, commonly associated with persons from rural areas, to the middle or *mesolectal* variety varieties closer to the standard, and finally to the *acrolectal* variety normally associated with urban and educated persons in Caribbean societies (Rickford, 1987). The *basilectal* varieties of some CCE-speaking students are often associated with persons of lower socioeconomic background and those with less formal education. In contrast, the *acrolectal* varieties are often spoken by those persons in the middle to upper classes who have higher levels of education (Nero, 2010).

Some linguists have noted that the Creole continuum in Jamaica and Guyana range from the *basilectal* to the *acrolect*, whereas Trinidadian speech tends to be more *mesolectal* (Winford, 1994). It is important to acknowledge the complexity of language use in the Caribbean. Many rural, educated persons can speak a variation of the *acrolect*, whereas many
urban and suburban residents who are not highly educated do speak a variation of the basilect. In other words, many persons can quite easily and fluently navigate from one end of the continuum to the other.

The linguistic resources of CCE-speakers are often ignored and marginalized and many scholars argue that such exclusion is partially to blame for the educational failure of many of these students (García, 2010; Siegel, 2006; Nero, 2000; 2010; Wolfram, 2009; Rickford, 2000). The literature reveals that while some research has been done to address the specific language-related problems that CCE-speaking students face in schools, there has not been much success in translating that research into policy or pedagogy.

There has also been some critique of the idea of (post)-Creole Continuum. While Decamp’s (1971) concept offers a simple yet powerful conceptual model to describe and explain the language situation in the “Anglophone” Caribbean, some scholars have taken issue with its linearity. Decamp (1971) argued that decreolization would occur over time. With the influence of the dominant Standard English variety of the education system and of the erosion of class boundaries as the economy developed, Creole would eventually disappear. Christie (1988) discovered that the opposite occurred in Jamaica in the 1970s and 1980s. Social movements to increase Black power and Black pride led to SJE encountering ideological resistance even among the middle classes. This resistance led to the integration of Creole lexical items into the local standard language. Christie cites the late Jamaican journalist Morris Cargill, who, even though he often derided JC in his columns as “slave talk” or “yahoolish” once wrote that “Barbados is a remarkable country, as everyone knows...it is small but resourceful and tallawah” (cited in Christie, p. 25). Tallawah is a JC word which means small yet powerful; one cannot miss the irony of seeing Cargill, famed for his
persistent defense of SJE and his constant denigration of JC and its speakers, integrate this word into one of his columns. Shields (1989) has also noted that rather than decreolization taking place, SJE instead has been steadily taking on some of the features and structures of JC. In other words, a more dynamic and dialogical process is underway, resulting in Standard English becoming creolized in significant ways. This seems to be the case across the “Anglophone” Caribbean. The local language standards, while still maintaining their hegemony in educational settings, are under constant pressure from the Creole varieties. It appears from the foregoing discussion that Creolophone countries have a more complex and dynamic language situation than can be captured completely by Decamp’s (post)-Creole continuum. All varieties are creolized to some degree. Or rather, it can be argued that there is a high degree of interaction among the different language varieties that are in use in Caribbean nations. That said, however, the concept can function as a convenient and economical model that generates a lexicon to help scholars and researchers conceptualize the complicated sociolinguistic situation that exists in these countries.

In general, the monoglossic and raciolinguistic ideologies that shape the beliefs of both policy makers and practitioners have resulted in the marginalization and exclusion of the diverse linguistic and cultural resources language of minority students. Zambrana, Cotto, Mopsus, De Jesús, Gonzalez-Lopez, Domínguez, Corum, Vergne and Faracles (2012) argue convincingly that:

Many creolists assume the monolingual, monocultural norms that are imposed in capitalist hegemonic societies also applied along the western coast of Africa as well as in all of the Caribbean during the colonial period. In fact, West Africa and the indigenous Caribbean are two of the most culturally and linguistically diverse regions
on the planet, each with hundred of distinct but highly interactive ethnolinguistic communities, with each community practicing pluri-lingualism, pluri-culturalism and pluri-identification in its own creative way. (p. 42)

The attempt for centuries to suppress this linguistic diversity by imposing SE and its associated ideologies has been unsuccessful. While SE is still seen as the language with superior linguistic and cultural capital, Creolophones have held on to the languages of their ancestors. They continue to expand the boundaries of these languages through their own agency and creativity.

The resources that CCE-speaking youths already possess and those that they newly integrate into their linguistic repertoire are often ignored and marginalized in school settings. This has been the reality in both their home countries and the US. Many scholars argue that this marginalization and exclusion is partially to blame for the educational failure of so many of these students (García, 2010; Siegel, 2006; Nero, 2000; 2010; Wolfram, 2009; Rickford, 2000). The literature reveals that while some research has been done to address the specific language-related problems that CCE-speaking students face in schools, there has not been much success in translating that research into policy or pedagogy. In order for teachers to effectively engage and address the linguistic resources that these students possess they would need to develop some understanding of the features of CCE varieties. In the next section, I explore some of those features.
Caribbean Creole English Varieties: Linguistic Features

Extensive research into the linguistic features of CCEs has been conducted over the last five decades and has produced valuable data on the differences among CCE varieties and also between CCE varieties and SE varieties (Alleyne, 1980, 1986; Allsop, 1996; Cassidy, 1961; Decamp, 1971; Le Page, 1960; Nero, 2000; Rickford, 1985; Roberts, 1988; Winer & Jack, 1997). This research has established important grammatical, lexical and syntactic differences between CCEs and SE varieties. More importantly, scholars such as Alleyne have shown the significant impact of West African Languages in terms of their substratum influence on the formation and development of Creole languages. In this section, I briefly describe some of the many linguistic features of CCEs.

One common linguistic feature of CCE varieties is the zero inflection for subject verb agreement. An example is the following mesolectal sentence: *He come to school late everyday.* In a more basilectal version, a speaker might say *Him/Im come a school leit evryday*. On the other hand, in SE, the sentence is rendered *He comes to school late everyday*. An “s” or “es” is added to mark the third person singular. In the Creole examples, not only is there zero inflection for subject-verb agreement; there is also the common practice in JC basilectal varieties of substituting the subject pronouns with object pronouns. Instead of “He” one typically says “Him” or “Im.” Another common practice in JC basilectal varieties is the stigmatized h-dropping as shown with the object pronoun “Im” (Him). It is very common for some Jamaicans, for example, to pronounce “house” as “ouse” and “hope” as “ope.”

Zero inflection for tense is another common feature of Creoles, as seen in the following example: *She come yessideh* (She came yesterday). Typically in Creoles, tense is
construed contextually rather than inflectionally, as is common in SE. Zero marking is also quite commonly used in CCE to show possession, as in the following sentence: *Mi madda cyar* (My mother’s car). This structure is in opposition to the rule in SE, which requires an apostrophe with an “s.” In this instance, possession is arrived at syntactically by placing the possessor next to the possession.

Also prevalent among CCE varieties is the common use of stop sounds such as the voiceless alveolar /t/and the voiced alveolar /d/ instead of the use of voiceless dental fricative /θ/ and voiced dental fricatives /ð/in SE. Examples of this feature include *tink* for think, *tanks* for thanks and *dat* for that, or *den* for then. In CCE varieties there is often an elimination of final consonant clusters from many words such as *stan’* (stand), *ben’* (bend), *frien’* (friend) and *wit* (with). This is often the case whether the variety being spoken is basilectal or mesolectal.

Another feature is the zero copula, such as in the basilectal sentence *Him nah guh wid yuh* (He’s not going with you). In the basilectal example, the “be” form, in this case “is,” is typically absent, although one can often hear it used in more mesolectal versions such as *Him is not goin’ wit yuh*. A final grammatical difference worth mentioning is the use of the plural marker “dem.” Basilectal varieties (in contrast to SE varieties which largely use “s” to show plural form) use the word “dem” (them) to show plurality. An example is *Di bwai dem a play cricket* (The boys are playing cricket). Note that there is no “s” attached to the word “bwai.”

From a semantic perspective, Winer and Jack (1997) also note that there are a number of what they term “false friends,” that occur in both CCE and SE but have different meanings. An example would be the term “miserable” which means “badly-behaved” in CCE but “quite
unhappy” in SE. A second example is the word “foot” which in CCE often includes the thigh whereas in Standard English “foot” refers to that part of the body extending below the ankle. Additionally, common to many varieties of CCE are what is known as semantic inversions. For example, words that commonly have negative connotations such as “bad” and “wicked” have been semantically flipped to take on positive meanings (i.e. good) as demonstrated in the following example: Di movie wicked (The movie was really good). According to Richardson (2006) many of the abovementioned features emerged out of the West African language heritage of African descended slaves. It is interesting to note that Black language in the US, and AAVE in particular, share some of these features, such as zero inflection for subject-verb agreement, zero copula, semantic inversions and the use of stop sounds to name a few. The abovementioned features of CCEs are only a few of the many that lend those varieties their particular Creole identities in contradistinction to SEs.

The term Caribbean Creole English implies a degree of linguistic homogeneity across the Creolophone Caribbean islands where English is the official language. But there are, in fact, some important linguistic variations and differences (Winer & Jack, 1997) among this group of about 20 countries. English-based Creoles in the West Indies emerged with unique features depending on which island a particular Creole emerged (Clachar, 2004; Nero, 2006). This was due to interaction between West African slaves, (and after abolition by indentured servants) and British English colonial masters on sugar plantations during the 17th and 18th centuries. One example is the name for a person who sells goods in the market or at the side of the road. In Guyana the term for that person is a huckster, in Jamaica it is a higgler, and in Trinidad and Tobago a vendor (Winer & Jack, 1997). Whereas common features testify to a common heritage in the history of CCE, there are also many differences that serve to
differentiate one national variety from another. Finally, it is important to note that the Caribbean islands from which the participants have migrated are characterized by an enormous amount of linguistic diversity. Guyana, for example, is reported to have 14 living languages, with people of African and Indian descent who speak both Standard Guyanese English and Creolese, and also the presence of Amerindian descendants who speak a number of languages including Macushi, Akawaio and Wai-Wai, Arawak, Wapishano. Additionally, Chinese and Hindi are spoken by some Guyanese residents. In addition, Portuguese is spoken by many on the border with Brazil Guyanese Creole English at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015). In 2013, the Guyanese government launched a Portuguese curriculum in selected high schools as part of a plan to deepen relations with Brazil.

Like Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago is also known for having a diverse linguistic background and is listed as having eight languages. In Trinidad and Tobago, in addition to Standard Trinidadian and Tobagonian English, and Trinidadian and Tobagonian Creoles, these Creoles have integrated elements from Amerindian, European, African and Asian languages. About five percent of the population speaks Spanish. In fact, some traffic signs in Trinidad are bilingual, in both English and Spanish.

Finally, Jamaica, which can be characterized as having the least amount of contemporary linguistic diversity given the predominance of people of African descent, also has different varieties of English and Creole. In addition to Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English, other language varieties spoken are Dread Talk, a variety spoken mostly by Rastafarians (Pollard, 2000), and Urban Jamaican Creole (Patrick, 1999), a mesolectal variety spoken by many in urban, working-class and poor communities in Kingston. In addition, there
are some speakers of Chinese and Spanish. The above description paints a complex linguistic portrait to which the term Caribbean Creole English barely does justice.

The field of Creolistics (that is, research on Creole languages) has been instrumental in establishing the fact that Creoles are rule-governed, systematic and logical, and are deserving of similar levels of respect and valorization accorded to standard languages (Decamp, 1971; Devonish, 1986; Le Page, 1960; Rickford, 2000, 2006; Winer & Jack; Winer 1997, 2006). The lack of respect accorded to these language varieties is partially rooted in racial politics that sees Afrocentric cultural and linguistic creations as inferior to Eurocentric ones. To counter racial politics, Creolistics research has also been (in)valuable in helping to establish the sociolinguistic principle that language variation is a natural and normal occurrence within and among human beings everywhere regardless of race, class and nationality (Hazen, 2008; Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999). I now turn to the evolving attitudes towards CCE varieties across the Caribbean.

**Attitudes to Varieties of Caribbean Creole English**

Attitudes toward Creoles in the Caribbean and elsewhere are quite complex and in many ways contradictory. As Winer and Jack (1997) observe: “like all nonstandard languages, Creole has had to fight against the twin stigmata of scorn for its ‘bastardization’ and its romanticisation for its ‘colorful charm’” (p. 305). Caribbean governments have at last begun to consider moving (tentatively) toward policies that value Creoles as equal to the standard Caribbean English. However, there is still some contempt, albeit shrinking, among both the
educated and the uneducated segments of the populations especially in reference to the utility of Creoles as media of instruction.

One of the more salient findings from language attitudes research is that members of communities develop attitudes that shape how they view others based on factors such as speech, styles and accent. For example, research has shown that many persons often develop favorable or prejudicial perceptions of a person’s intelligence, race, class and sexual orientation based on the speaker’s manner of speaking and his or her accent (Canagarajah, 2000; Jenkins, 2007; Lambert, 1984; Lippi-Green, 1997; Paredes, 2008). Lambert (1984) has noted that many individuals and groups persist in the belief that language and culture have significant impact on cognitive processes. Such beliefs (see Appel and Muysken, 1987) shape the attitudes of many toward minority languages. The limited research on attitudes to Creoles and Pidgins in the Creolophone Caribbean countries that once belonged to the British Empire (Beckford-Wassink, 1999), has revealed a shift in how Creole speakers view their language in relation to SE.

Some scholars argue that, in the “Anglophone” Caribbean, a diglossic relationship exists between the official language, Standard Caribbean English and the popular varieties of the vernacular (Devonish, 2003; Deuber, 2005; Winford, 1994). In other words, historically, Creoles in the “Anglophone” Caribbean are considered to be the L or low-prestige varieties in relation to Standard English, which is the H or high-prestige variety. Some scholars have argued that this situation is due to the historical asymmetrical power relations between the colonial powers—in this case Great Britain, and her colonial territories in the Caribbean (Degraff, 2005; Migge, 2007). Migge (2007) further notes that “although many of the formerly colonized populations have today gained what is usually called political
independence, the cultural and linguistic decolonization of both European and non-European cultures is hardly complete” (p. 299). Thus, there seems to be a continued stigmatization of Caribbean Creoles.

One study in Jamaica confirms the incompleteness of this process of “linguistic decolonization” regarding attitudes to JC (The Jamaica Language Unit, 2005). Whereas the results were mostly positive, there are still lingering and deeply held negative beliefs about JC. A majority of the respondents, however, did hold a positive view of JC and believed it should be declared an official language. Additionally, a majority was in favor of English and JC being taught in school side by side. Yet, most people believed that someone who spoke Standard English was more intelligent and educated, and likely to have more money than a speaker of JC. Further studies are needed to discover the stimuli for the shift in thinking, and why some negative and stereotypical attitudes remain.

It has been suggested that recent shifts in perception are associated with the emergence of dancehall music as a global phenomenon that has influenced people to view JC in a positive light (Beckford-Wassink, 1999). Dancehall originated in the 1950s and exploded in “halls” across the nation, especially in depressed urban areas of the country (Stanley-Niaah, 2004). Stanley-Niaah (2004) writes that:

dancehall, tells the story of a people’s survival and need for celebration of that survival against forces of imperialism and systems of exclusion through dance music and attitude. Dancehall’s story is ultimately the choreographing of an identity that critiques aspects of Western domination. (p. 103)

While I concur that the story of dancehall (and its linguistic medium of expression) is “the choreographing of an identity,” I would add that it has also influenced and shaped the
identity of many Jamaicans, especially those less socially and economically empowered. Dancehall invoked both a new form of music (combined with the use of JC) to enact counter-narratives that resist the oppressive forces of imperialism and neocolonialism. The use of JC as the medium of storytelling has contributed to elevating the status of dancehall as the music of the broad masses in Jamaica, although throughout the years it has also been derided, devalued and dismissed as a form of low art. This is probably due to its emergence in the ghettos of Kingston and what Cooper (2004) calls its “flamboyant performing of sexuality” (p. 3). I would argue that dancehall creators and practitioners also engage in forms of expression that “flamboyantly” invoke the linguistic, rhetorical and transgressive potential of JC. In so doing, these creators and practitioners, similar to those who work in the genres of hip-hop and rap (Alim & Baugh, 2010; Alim, Ibrahim, & Pennycook, 2009) engage in acts of resistance that subvert the varying ideologies that diminish and marginalize this rich linguistic asset. The hostility of the dominant White classes to Creole and other minority languages exists not only in former colonized spaces, but also in the more advanced countries of the world, including the US. In the next section, I explore such language use and the resistance to students’ home languages in schools in the US.

**Language Use in US Schools**

**Language Varieties for Academic Contexts**

Given the multicultural and ethnolinguistic backgrounds of the US student population, schools are sites where language varieties come into contact with each other on a daily basis. However, one language is allowed to dominate the curricular landscape: Standard English, what is often called “academic English.” In spite of the linguistic diversity in American
classrooms, and in the face of extensive research that proves the benefits that can be derived from taking into account students’ home languages, there continues to be hostility to the languages of minoritized students (Bialystock, 2001; Goldenberg, 2008; Hakuta, 1986; Labov, 1995; Rickford & Rickford, 1995; Rickford, Sweetland & Rickford, 2004; Spaulding, Carolino & Amen, 2004). Research that argues for bidialectical and bilingual approaches has been resisted and in many cases rejected (Baugh, 2005; Rumbaut, 2009; Tejada & Gutierrez, 2005; Rickford, 2000, 2006; Wheeler & Swords, 2004).

Rumbaut (2009) has written that the US is a language graveyard, a nation where languages other than English go to die. He writes that, “given the immense pressure for linguistic conformity on immigrant children from peers, schools and the media, the preservation of fluent bilingualism in the United States beyond the first generation is an exceptional outcome” (p.66). It can be argued that US school systems have erected barriers that constrain the survival of language varieties other than Standard American English. These barriers often contribute to the shift away from the home language that begins to occur with second-generation immigrants. Paradoxically, the political and policy constraints enacted (often in the form of legislation) to exclude minority languages have the effect of making it difficult for students to master not only SE, but more importantly, what Schleppegrell (2004) refers to as the language of schooling, what Harwood & Hadley (2004) refer to as pragmatic English for academic purposes (EAP) or what Elbow (1999) refers to as Standard Written English (SWE). All of these terms refer to the kinds of language varieties used as media of instruction and also the language varieties that students are expected to use in academic institutions. Elbow (1999) aptly observes, “Standard Written English is no one’s mother
tongue” (p. 362). In the next section, I look at some of the extant definitions and descriptions offered up by various scholars of this variety of Standard (academic) English.

Cummins (1979) was one of the first scholars to attempt to define and describe the kind of language emergent bilingual students (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008) need to successfully navigate the academic environment. Cummins defined BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) as much easier to acquire, since these skills are contextual. Additionally, learning BICS often benefited from the presence of paralinguistic cues that reduced the difficulty of communicating in a second language. In contrast, he defined CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) as context-reduced and relatively free of paralinguistic cues. Examples of CALP include engaging in abstract verbal reasoning, constructing metalinguistic evaluations such as whether sentences are grammatical or not, identifying ambiguity, and constructing definitions (Snow, 1983). The notion however, that CALP is decontextualized (Cummins, 1983; Olson, 1977; Snow, 1983) has been broadly critiqued (Schleppergrell, 2004; Street, 1984). While the BICS/CALP construct brought into scholarly focus the kinds of language emergent bilinguals needed to become academically successful, Bailey and Huang (2011) argue that the boundaries between the two are not clear. They question whether BICS are always context-embedded and require less cognitively complex language than academic tasks. Bailey and Huang (2011), for example, argue that, “the cognitive ability required to persuade, deceive or win over others in everyday life is…no less complex that what is needed to comprehend a social studies textbook” (p. 349). Clearly then, the BICS/CALP differentiation cannot completely account for the differences between social and academic varieties of language.
Chamot and O’Malley (1994) attempted to provide definitions of the seemingly elusive construct of English for academic functions. Their work is grounded in studies on cognition and cognitive learning theory. Focusing on language functions, Chamot and O’Malley devised an approach they termed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). They define English for academic functions as “the language that is used by teachers and students for acquiring new knowledge and skills…imparting new information, describing abstract ideas, and developing students’ conceptual understanding” (p. 40). However, this definition, while more expansive and less dichotomous than Cummins’ definition, still lacks specificity as to the kinds of language required for different content areas in academic settings. In addition, the CALLA approach pays little attention to how social and cultural context might impact how students learn language and use their own linguistic resources to make and express meaning in their daily lives, both in and outside of the classroom.

The third scholar who has attempted to define English for academic functions is Schleppegrell (2004). She draws even more heavily on Halliday’s (1978) SFL to theorize about what she calls “the language of schooling” or “literate” language. This theory views grammar as a meaning-making resource grounded in a theory-integrating text and context. For Schleppegrell (2004), academic language is a challenging set of registers that “students needs to use…in particular ways in order to be successful in science, history, and other subjects; to develop interpretations, construct arguments, and critique theories” (p. 5). She challenges and extends Chamot and O’Malley’s work by incorporating, “the social and cultural factors that contribute to students’ ability to use academic language” (p. xi) and simultaneously minimizing the significance of cognitive factors. For example, she argues that a student’s
inability to reason “may be due to their lack of familiarity with the linguistic properties of the language through which reasoning is expected to be presented rather than the inherent difficulty of the cognitive processes involved” (p. 2). She writes that this kind of language is important given that “an individual’s growth and development and ability to participate in society require ever-expanding knowledge and control over meaning-making in new contexts and through new linguistic resources” (p. 5).

Bailey and Heritage (2008) further refine the concept of academic language by differentiating the language used in schools according to three contexts. The first context is the social context outside of school. The other two contexts are academic in nature. One context deals with the use of the language of curriculum or disciplinary content used to convey academic knowledge. The second context deals with the language of the procedures and norms that are used to regulate other contexts in the school such as classroom management. Bailey and Heritage (2008) argue that language distinctions are present at three levels: at the word level, at the sentence level and at the discourse level. Additionally, they argue “that specificity of this kind is necessary so we can readily make distinctions between lexical, grammatical, and discourse features that may differentiate the academic disciplines, grade levels, and proficiency levels” (p. 350). Bailey and Heritage’s (2008) description usefully complicates this construct in ways that can help teachers design activities that are tailored to help students develop the kinds of language proficiencies needed to navigate academic content in successful ways.

To perform successfully on school tasks and on formal assessments, students have to learn these kinds of academic language varieties in classroom settings. However, as some scholars note, some students arrive in the classroom speaking and using varieties of SE that
are close to what is expected in school (Gee, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004). CCE-speaking students are one group of students who predominantly communicate with language that has significant grammatical, phonological and syntactical differences with SE (Allsop, 2010; De Camp, 1971; Devonish & Carpenter, 2007; Nero; 2001, 2010; Pratt-Johnson, 2006; Youssef, 2004). The hegemony of SE in American schools is responsible for the exclusion of the linguistic and literacy practices of speakers of minority language varieties. This exclusion is influenced and shaped by the policies and politics of standards and assessments (Menken, 2008). Minority language varieties such as AAVE, CCE, Haitian Creole and Spanish, spoken by historically subjugated and colonized peoples in the US, are deemed inappropriate media of instruction in academic settings. Language varieties other than Standard English are relegated to informal and unofficial contexts such as the home, the streets, and nonacademic conversations in schools. According to Bourdieu (1991) “in the process which leads to the construction, legitimation and imposition of an official language, the education system plays a decisive role” (p. 48). Degraff (2009) echoes Bourdieu sentiments in stating that: “the most powerful tool of domination, both actual and symbolic, is the school system, which in much of the Caribbean still devalues Creole languages-even in Haiti” (p. 139).

Standard English is the de facto official language of the US. One of the major purposes of school systems is to foster the development of (academic) linguistic competence and linguistic capital in and through that language. The exclusive use of Standard English plays a decisive role in the academic underperformance and failure of many minority students and hence contributes to perpetuation of race and class inequalities (Lanehart, 1998). Research has demonstrated that these inequities can be mitigated by more democratic and plurilingual approaches to language and language learning. Next, I explore the research on bidialectalism
and bilingualism and their potential to contribute to improved outcomes for language minoritized communities in US schools.

**Bidialectical Education for AAVE- and CCE-speaking Students**

It is generally believed that, for the majority of students to experience upward social mobility in American society, proficiency in what is considered Standard English is a necessary prerequisite (Baratz, 1969; Gee, 2004; Gilyard, 1991; Schleppergrell, 2004). Gilyard, for example, writes:

bidialectalists postulate that Black English is equal to Standard English but not quite equal enough. They acknowledge that the language variety is not inferior linguistically or conceptually but, claiming to be pragmatic, they feel that Standard English must be mastered by Black children in the schools so that these children can keep the possibility of upward mobility alive. (p. 74)

It is important to note, however, that other scholars suggest that proficiency in Standard English, in a society where racial and linguistic barriers exist, may be necessary but not sufficient. This is evident in research showing that proficiency with a foreign or dialect accent does not preclude the speaker from encountering discrimination and bias (Baugh, 2003; Lippi-Green, 1997). Baugh (2003) notes that “as with racial profiling, linguistic profiling can have devastating consequences for those US residents who are perceived to speak with an undesirable accent or dialect” (p. 155). Such racial and linguistic realities, however, have not stopped concerned scholars from proposing a number of remedies to seek social justice on behalf of minority students. One such remedy is the bidialectical approach.
Several definitions of the term bidialecticalism have been offered over the last several decades. O’Neil (1961), for example, defines the term as “a movement in education systematically to render lower-class students able to speak their native dialect and standard English” (p. 433). However, many scholars today do not frame bidialecticalism as a tool that seeks to eradicate students’ home languages, but rather one that is additive in that it seeks to expand the linguistic repertoires of students who come from homes where a variety of SE is not spoken. Yiakoumetti (2007) for example, states that,

a bidialectal situation is one in which the standard and non-standard variety of the same language are used alongside each other. The two varieties differ linguistically but are at the same time sufficiently related so as to overlap somewhat in pronunciation, grammar and lexicon. (p. 51)

Yiakoumetti’s description of “a bidialectal situation” suggests that both languages, at least from a purely linguistic perspective, work in complementary rather than conflicting ways.

Scholars who advocate using both the standard and Creole varieties do so for reasons both educational and sociopolitical (Yiakoumetti, 2007). According to Edwards (1983), for example, even those who have high levels of proficiency in SAE encounter difficulties differentiating between formal and informal uses of language. However, students who speak a language variety other than the standard encounter a greater degree of difficulty because of a larger number of differences, resulting in many more opportunities for error (Yiakoumetti, 2007). Valdés (2001) also notes that one difficulty for learners of the standard is that they are often not cognizant of the differences between the standard and the Creole. It is important to explicitly explore these differences to help students gain knowledge of and proficiency in the standard, which confers social and professional advantages and economic mobility (Chiswick,
2008). On the other hand, using the Creole variety (alone or in conjunction with SE or SAE) as a medium of instruction raises its social and political status. For example, Devonish (1986) has argued that the use of Creole in education can be construed as a challenge to the corrosive effects of neo-colonialism.

Previous research (Siegel, 1999; Simmons-McDonald, 2004) has established that students generally underachieve when their language variety is excluded from academic contexts and they are compelled to use only the standard. Conversely, in several cases where bidialectal approaches have been used, students generally experienced improved academic performance. For example, Taylor (1989) reports on research that revealed that explicit instruction on the linguistic differences between AAVE and SAE resulted in a decrease in mixing of the two varieties in the writing activities of university students. Harris-Wright (1999) also reports that students who participated in the Dekalb Bidialectical Communication Program showed an increase in reading and verbal scores. The Dekalb Bidialectal Communication Program employed contrastive strategies that explore the differences between AAVE and SAE. Similar studies done in Europe revealed similar positive results. These studies suggest that employing bidialectical approaches in Language Arts classrooms is likely to lead to increased academic performance for those whose language practices at home differ from SE.

The above examples show that bidialectical approaches can contribute to improving both academic performance and cultural identities (since identity is partly constituted in and through language). However, the exclusion of these approaches in US schools means that students continue to fail to develop proficiency in standard language varieties that they need to learn.
Bilingualism and Education in the US

Historically, bilingual programs for students who speak a language other than English have received far greater support than bidialectical programs. However, in recent years, attempts to educate bilingual students through their home language have produced a political backlash (Tejada & Gutierrez, 2005). This backlash has resulted in the dismantling of productive bilingual education models in some states, namely Arizona, California and Massachusetts. This occurred as a result of what Tejada and Gutierrez (2005) termed “a political and pedagogical backlash against people from non-dominant cultural and linguistic groups” (p.264). The objective of this backlash was to reject the use of students’ home language to educate them in US schools. Some of this opposition was based on flawed scholarly writing. Porter (1999), for example, has argued that bilingual education programs are ineffective as opposed to English immersion programs, although she contradicts herself by supporting dual language immersion programs (Cummins, 2000). She also dismisses the “vernacular advantage theory,” which posits that children learn more successfully through their stronger language. She argues instead for early and intensive exposure to the target language (English) as a more successful approach (see Cummins, 2000). Likewise, Rossell and Baker (1996) also argue that English immersion programs are more effective than bilingual programs. Their arguments, in fact, have been employed to help justify efforts to ban bilingual education in some states in the US (Cummins, 2000).

Other scholars have convincingly argued that the methodologies and assumptions of Porter (1998, 1999) and Rossell and Baker (1996) were flawed. Numerous scholars have argued that research on bilingual education programs points convincingly to their efficacy,
especially those that are not *early-exit or transitional* in nature in contrast to those who seek the development and *maintenance* of the home language (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011; Cummins, 2000; Dolson, 1985; Garcia, 2009; Greene, 1997; Krashen, 1996, 2000, 2002; Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1991). Ramirez, Yuen and Ramey (1991), in a longitudinal study of 2,000 students in English immersion, early exit or transitional bilingual or late-exit/maintenance bilingual programs, found that minority children who received substantial instruction in their home languages did not fail to acquire English. Instead, such instruction was found to aid the acquisition of English, and allowed them to catch up to their English-speaking classmates in areas such as language arts, English reading and math. Conversely, instructing students mostly in English was found to negatively affect their acquisition of English by delaying their ability to catch up to their peers. While the study was conducted with sixth grade students, it also has positive implications for the performance of high school emergent bilinguals (and those students who may be referred to as emergent bidialecticals such as CCE- and AAVE-speaking students). The study suggests that both emergent bilinguals and bidialecticals will benefit from effectively designed programs and instruction that incorporate their language practices. Conversely, their academic progress might be impeded if these practices are ignored.

One ethnographic study conducted by Bartlett and García (2011) at Gregorio Luperón High School confirms the value of using bilingual approaches to educate emergent bilinguals as opposed to using SE as the sole medium of instruction. Bartlett and García (2011) found that the school’s use of a dynamic bilingual model, which “emphasizes the ways in which students adapt their linguistic resources to make meaning in context-specific communicative situations” (p. 3) was helpful to many of its students. In this approach, students instructed in Spanish improved their performance on the standardized Regents exams that are given in
Spanish, and were therefore able to graduate in a timelier manner. This study confirms the difficult position students and teachers are placed in when they are instructed using ESL and subtractive bilingual approaches, since research confirms that those approaches are less effective than additive and dynamic bilingual approaches for minority language students.

Finally, other scholarly work with Haitian Creole (HC) speakers offers similar evidence, although this research has been ignored by politicians, policymakers (and the public at large) in favor of policies that restrict the language rights of minorities (Buxton, 2009; DeGraff, 2010a, 2010b; Youssef, 2002; Zephir, 1997, 2010). DeGraff (2010) writing about the language situation in his home country, Haiti, argues that using Haitian Creole, the dominant mode of communication, as the primary medium of instruction would be good policy both in terms of pedagogy and pragmatism. According to DeGraff (2010a), the majority of Haitian teachers lack fluency in French, but like their students, are quite fluent in HC. Not only would a change from a Franco-centric education policy be pedagogically sound and pragmatic, it would also be the morally justified choice to make, since it would end the stigmatization of the vast majority of Haitian students who are being educated in what he terms a “linguistic apartheid.” To maintain their status as bilinguals, DeGraff (2010a) argues that Haitian students should be taught French as a foreign language while Creole should become the medium of instruction. This would allow for all academic subjects to be more effectively taught. Of course, given the low status that Creole languages has in both the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean (Yousseff, 2002), it remains a difficult task to convince not only policymakers and politicians, but also parents of the sound linguistic and pedagogical value of using Creoles as media of instruction (Buxton, 2009; Youssef, 2010).
It is within political contexts such as this that non-dominant linguistic groups, including CCE-speaking students, are denied the use of their unique linguistic resources in schools. Whereas much of the research in the US has focused on the needs of African American and Latino students, the implications of the research are relevant for CCE-speaking students. They too would benefit from linguistic tolerance, and from having teachers who are appropriately trained to deal with linguistic variation in the classroom.

**Attitudes toward Language Differences in US Schools**

In US schools, there are many students whose home language varieties overlap significantly with SAE. Even though this is the case, however, sociolinguistic research has shown that students who speak varieties that are lexically related to SAE are not automatically proficient users of SAE or the varieties of English used in academic settings (Baugh, 2010; Rickford, 2000, 2010; Schleppegrell, 2004; Smitherman, 1981; Smitherman, 2003). Innovative attempts to use minority students’ home language practices as a bridge to Standard English use have often been misinterpreted as moves to, by stealth, introduce such language practices as media of instruction, and have been greeted with hostility and opposition. Rickford (2000) cites an early example from 1969 in which a Philadelphia school district administrator was reported by the *Philadelphia Daily News* to have given an order approving the use of “Black English” in schools. The alleged order was met with outrage even though it was simply a memo encouraging teachers to read a collection of essays edited by linguists Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy entitled *Teaching Black Children to Read*. The book, written out of a concern for the underachievement of Black children in public schools, argued that Black English, which Labov (1972) defined as “a whole range of language forms used by
Black people in the United States” (p. xiii), was a rule-governed and legitimate language, and that ignoring or dismissing this fact was both linguistically and pedagogically unsound.

Another example concerns the Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children et al. v. Ann Arbor School District Board case (often referred to as the “King case”) in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1979. This lawsuit was an attempt to seek educational justice for 15 African American students who were at risk of “becoming functionally illiterate” because of the alleged failure of the school, the district and the state “to properly educate the children.” The presiding judge, Charles W. Joiner, finding in favor of the students, wrote that the Board had failed to assist its teachers in developing an understanding of Black English “as a home and community language of many black students and to suggest to those same teachers ways and means of using that knowledge…in connection with reading Standard English is not rational in light of existing knowledge of the subject” (cited in Lanehart, 1998). This ruling did not have any far-reaching or transformative impact in changing how African Americans are taught. However, it did provoke the ire of many who believed incorrectly that moving in the direction of using AAVE as a bridge to Standard English would consign generations of Black students to educational failure, an ironic position in light of the fact that these recommendations arose precisely due to the existing academic failure of these students.

The final example that evidences hostility to AAVE is the 1996 Oakland School Board Resolution on Ebonics. This resolution once again sought to use the students’ home language as a bridge to Standard English because many students were underachieving, as evidenced by assessments in the district. The resolution, however, provoked widespread national and international outrage that resulted in its withdrawal, at least in its original form (Baugh, 2000; Perry, 1998; Rickford, 2006).
The examples outlined above indicate that plans to improve the performance of Black students by incorporating all their linguistic resources have been blocked by those who feel threatened by language differences or who remain unconvinced by solid research indicating the benefits of doing so. Until this situation is reversed, numerous students who speak varieties of English other than the standard will continue to suffer needless academic failure.

As noted earlier, there are no programs in New York City schools that seek to leverage the linguistic resources of CCE-speaking students so as to improve their academic achievement, although there have been a few such programs in other states, such as the Caribbean Academic Program (CAP) in Illinois (Nero, 2000). This is partly due to the assumption that CCE-speaking students are proficient in SE because they migrate from nations that have designated English as their official language. These students, however, primarily speak a Creole language variety. Many have only receptive ability in the variety of Standard English used in their country.

For many CCE-speaking students, Standard English is neither a native nor a foreign language, but rather another language variety of which they have only basic understanding (Craig, 1966). Unlike students who speak a home language such as Haitian Creole, Spanish, Russian or Polish, and may be entitled to English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual education services, CCE-speaking students are not legally entitled to any additional language support. This is despite the fact that scholars have long cited the language issue as one of the challenges to their school success (Allsop, 2010; Clachar, 2006; Nero, 2010, 2009, 2010; Pratt-Johnson, 2006; Siegel, 1999a, 2006a). On that basis, one could argue that CCE-speaking students who struggle with academic language are entitled to the provision granted by the Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974. According to the Court “there is no equality of
treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” The challenge for policymakers, then, is to design appropriate pedagogical programs that address the need for all students to develop proficient ways of using Standard English in school. It important to note that the need to help students become proficient in these varieties is not just a pedagogical quest; it is a quest for social justice. School failure correlates with social and economic failure. As García (2009) aptly notes, given the plurilingual character of the US in the 21st century, “monolingual schooling seems utterly inappropriate” (p. 16). In the next section, I explore the various forms of ideologies that have led to the kinds of restrictive language policies that result in monolingual schooling in US schools.

**Language Ideologies in US Schools**

One of the most valuable contributions from the fields of anthropology and sociolinguistics is the concept of *language ideology* and, by extension, standard language ideology (Farr, Seloni, & Song, 2010; Kroskrity, 2000, 2004; Kroskrity, Woolard, & Schieffelin, 1994). Language ideology can be broadly defined as a belief about language practices or communicative resources (Kroskrity, 2004). Language ideologies develop around all language practices in all groups and are rooted in particular social contexts, some of which may be positive and/or negative. For example, in reference to CCE varieties, one often finds that the more acrolectal varieties on the Creole continuum (Decamp, 1971) are accorded more respect than basilectal varieties. Such evaluations show the influence of language ideology at work in shaping speakers’ beliefs and attitudes. It is instructive to note, however, that there is
more at work than just beliefs and attitudes. Cameron (2010), in extending our understanding of the concept, argues that language ideologies are more than “attitudes” and “beliefs.” She asserts, rather, that ideologies are social constructs and “ways of understanding the world that emerge from interaction with particular (public) representations of it” (p. 448). Language ideologies include ways of representing and evaluating linguistic phenomena such that some of these phenomena are considered more valuable and more useful than others. Cameron (2010) remarks that even the respectable and supposedly scientific position that all languages are equal is a species of language ideology that is informed by a liberal and progressive ideology (albeit one that is socially and pedagogically advantageous). Winford (2003) also reinforces this point in stating that “linguists themselves operate with a certain body of assumptions—a ‘paradigm’ which itself constitutes a form of language ideology” (p. 22). This liberal ideology pursues linguistic social justice for the speakers of those varieties that are denied the social and political esteem normally reserved for standard languages.

I turn now to standard language ideology, the most powerful and oppressive of all the language ideologies that shape and govern relations among language varieties in society. Scholars have researched how this particular ideology is reproduced in and through language in society, and how it functions to legitimize some language varieties and delegitimize others (Farr, Seloni, & Song (2010); Friedrich, 1989; Godley and Loretto (2013); Lanehart, 1998; Milroy & Milroy, 1999; Siegel; 2006; Winford, 2003). Godley and Loretto (2013) refer to standard language ideologies as master narratives. They write that “master narratives, including those about the English language gain their power through appearing so commonsensical and factual that they are not open to debate” (p. 317). Sociolinguists, variationists and other students and researchers of language, however, have convincingly
critiqued such master narratives with their own more just and tolerant language ideologies (though the public at large and policymakers continue to labor under mistaken assumptions about languages in general). The persistently negative attitudes that many persons, including some educators, have for Creole languages are motivated by standard language ideologies that characterize Creole languages from grammatical, syntactic and phonological perspectives as “broken English,” and hence in need of fixing, or as “crass, rough, uncouth,” and hence in need of the civilizing influence of Standard English (Decamp, 1971).

There are several ways of conceptualizing how language ideologies are reproduced in language practices in differing social contexts. I outline briefly the ideas of three scholars. However, before doing so, I explore several definitions of standard language ideology. There has been much debate within the literature about the meaning(s) of a standard ideology. While there seems to be general agreement as to the nature and effect of standard language ideology on communication in society, different definitions invoke different emphases. Milroy, for example (1999), defines standard language ideology as:

a particular set of beliefs about language...typically held by populations of economically developed nations where processes of standardization have operated over a considerable time to produce an abstract set of norms-lexical, grammatical and phonological-popularly described as constituting a standard language. (p. 173)

This definition focuses on the role of first-world countries such as Great Britain, the US, Canada and France in developing and disseminating prescriptive beliefs about what constitutes correct usage in terms of speech and writing. On the other hand, Silverstein’s definition of standard language ideology as “self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the
expression of the group” (p. 53) emphasizes a socio-cultural aspect without any hint of the deleterious effects of this ideology on disempowered speech communities in a society. Irvine’s (1989) definition, however, adds a “critical” element by invoking social domination and power relations. She defines language ideology as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (p. 255). Clearly, a range of definitions, from the more neutral to the more critical, characterize the scholarship on language ideology, providing evidence that like many other concepts in the field of sociolinguistics, it remains a contested concept (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994).

For this dissertation, I draw on the more critical definitions of language ideology to frame and analyze the position of CCE-speaking students in relation to Standard American English and academic language. CCE-speaking students’ position in the language hierarchy in the US is similar to that of African American, Native American and Latino students in that their language varieties are devalued and marginalized within formal, academic environments.

The devaluation and marginalization of the language varieties of minority youth populations within our schools continues to occur despite the significant contributions of sociolinguists, both in the US and the Caribbean. All languages are equal, systematic, logical and rule-governed (Bailey, 1965; Cassidy, 1961; Labov, 1970; Le Page, 1960; Wolfram, 1969). From this perspective, language varieties are framed as “different” rather than “deficient” in terms of their internal structural properties and their capacity to allow meaningful discourse between and among interlocutors. Additionally, linguists have convincingly shown that variation is a normative phenomenon within and across communities (Bernstein, 1971; Hazen, 2008; Labov, 1966, 1972, 1991; Wolfram, Adger, & Christian,
1999). As noted above, despite copious amounts of research validating the need to incorporate the linguistic resources of students into classrooms, education systems in the US and the Caribbean continue to educate students using a monolingual framework that claims that meaningful education can only take place in Standard American English (Clachar, 2004; García, 2010; Nero, 2010). Additionally, because SAE is constructed as the superior variety among all the varieties in the US, the effect of language policies is to engage in an eradicationist or subtractive form of education that results in the students’ loss of their home languages (Valenzuela, 1999).

Farr, Seloni and Song (2010) further expand our understanding of how standard language ideologies operate by including standard literacy ideologies, which they define as “widely-shared beliefs about language that organize social relations” (p. 6). Both language and literacy ideologies operate in ways that result in academic underachievement and failure for these students. It is the presence of a dominant language ideology in the US that causes the devaluation of all vernacular varieties of English despite their being “shown to be scientifically to be fully formed, systematic, and adequate, even elegant linguistic systems” (Farr et. al, 2010, p. 6-7). Three ideologies that work against students who speak different language varieties are “the ideology of standardization, the ideology of language purism and the ideology of monolingualism” (Farr et. al, 2010, p. 7). These ideologies violate research about how all speakers actually use language in their own lives and communities.

In speaking about the ideology of standardization, Farr, Seloni and Song (2010) point out that SE is largely an abstraction, one that exists more as a written variety than a spoken one, a point that finds agreement with Elbow (1999) who writes that “Standard written English is no one’s mother tongue” (p. 323). Furthermore, the authors argue that SE is defined
more by the absence of certain socially condemned phonological and syntactic features rather than the presence of any other characteristics. The belief that one variety of English is uniform, superior and socially prestigious in relation to all other varieties is the essence of the ideology of standardization. This ideology influences the design of policy and pedagogy in ways that marginalize all nonstandard varieties of English, and often serves to disempower their speakers socially, culturally and economically.

The second ideology is that of language purism. Language purism is enforced by discriminating against the other varieties of English. Many speakers of different varieties are often discriminated against, on the basis of their language, speaking style or accent (Baugh, 2009; Elbow, 2006; Massey & Lundy, 2001). Farr and her colleagues argue that despite linguistic research showing that all varieties of language are complex, rule-governed communication systems, the belief persists that SE is the one desirable variety that all members of society should strive to speak, at the expense of their own native varieties. Students who speak Creoles or other varieties of English “are treated as though they have linguistic and cognitive deficits, rather than simply language differences” (p. 7). Such treatment has the effect of reducing motivation in school and increasing the likelihood that these students will become hostile to school in general (Ogbu, 2008) and will reject academic language and other school activities. This, in turn, leads to poor academic performance, and possibly dropping out of school altogether, which, more often than not, results in lifelong impoverishment.

Thirdly, Farr et al. (2010) describe the ideology of monolingualism as one that fosters the belief that everyone should know Standard English (only) because it helps to unify the ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse nation that is the US. Farr and her colleagues
argue that, contrary to linguistically sound research, children enter school systems that seek to subtract their home language practices rather than add to their repertoire of language features (Bartlett & García, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). The larger point here is that standard language ideology and literacy interpenetrate each other in ways that motivate a majority of speakers in a society to respond to all nonstandard varieties of English and other languages in a similar negative manner. These concepts lead to the stigmatization and exclusion of these varieties from American (and Caribbean) schools. Subtly, and often unconsciously, standard language ideologies influence teacher attitudes toward different varieties of English. It is important, therefore, for teachers to be trained to draw on the linguistic resources students bring into the classrooms and use such resources to help them develop proficiency in SE and academic language.

**The Education of CCE speakers in US Schools**

*Current Trends in Academic Performance among US CCE speakers*

Two decades ago, Folkes (1993) wrote that although West Indian immigrant students were the fastest growing cohort of immigrant students into New York City public schools, no educational policy had been formulated to address their particular language and literacy needs. This lack of policy formulation has led to their over-representation in special education, remedial reading and speech classes. To combat the miseducation of this group of students, Folkes recommended the development of a curriculum that was additive in principles and practices. Secondly, he suggested that a home language identification survey and language assessment battery, similar to that administered to students for whom English is a second language, be given to West Indian students so as to determine their grammatical, dialectical
and discourse proficiency in SE. In the two decades since Folkes offered these recommendations, no educational and language policy in reference to CCE-speaking students has been advanced in New York State or City. The New York State Education Department did produce a report addressing this particular population, which adopted recommendations similar to those of Folkes. However, the report and its policy suggestions remain dormant. They have not been translated into actual policy that would change the way schools teach and assess CCE-speaking students.

The fact that CCE-speaking students constitute a smaller segment of the larger minority student population in American schools, especially in relation to African Americans (although in some schools they are the majority) may partially explain why their needs are misdiagnosed and neglected. And unlike Latino and Asian populations, whose home language practices are often used in bilingual education programs in public schools (Fishman, 2001), those of CCE-speaking students are disregarded, perhaps because of the stigmatization of their language practices. In addition, it is believed—erroneously I might add—that CCE-speaking youths possess proficiency in SE.

It is common practice for CCE-speaking students to be combined with African American students in the research on Black academic achievement in the US (Thomas et al., 2012). There generally has been no effort to disaggregate the Black student population into its three largest groups: African American, continental African, and Caribbean. Gordon (1979) has noted that while “Black people have been researched extensively, no distinction has been made between natives and immigrants” (p. 5). Despite common racial traits, it is a misperception to view Blacks in the US as ethnically homogenous (Phelps et al., 2001). They are, in fact, ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse. There have been some notable
exceptions in the literature that explore the different experiences and outcomes of African, African American and Caribbean Blacks in North America (Ibrahim, 1999; Kasinitz, 1992, 2008; Ogbu 2003; Ogbu & Simmons, 1998; Waters, 2002). However, educational and language policy as expressed through schools normally does not differentiate CCE-speaking students from African American students.

The lack of racial and cultural differentiation is rooted in a number of incorrect assumptions about the languages spoken by these students. These assumptions are shared by policymakers, practitioners and students (Folkes, 1993; Hope, 2004; Nero, 2001). One assumption is that these students are Anglophones because they come from countries where English is the official language. Hope (2005) notes that “this inaccurate designation as speakers of English leads to either ignorance or non-recognition of the Caribbean ‘Creole’ languages which are the principal medium of communication for many students, despite their country’s official designation as an English-speaking country” (p. 11). I would add that this inaccurate designation harms these students since many administrators and practitioners remain unaware of a number of administrative and pedagogical interventions that have been recommended to assist such students.

A related incorrect assumption is held by students concerning their own English proficiency. Many CCE-speaking students actually believe that they speak an SE variety when in fact they speak a CCE variety. While this variety is similar to SE with regard to a shared lexicon, it differs substantively with regard to grammar, phonology and syntax. Put more positively, it can be said that CCE-speaking students fluidly translanguage (García & Wei, 2014) among the differentlects that comprise the Creole continuum (Decamp, 1971). Nero (2001) noted as much in her study of four college students who were confused at their
placement in ESL classes because their teachers could not understand them when they spoke. They were offended at being placed in the same class with Latinos and other foreign language speakers. They had grown up in countries where SE is the official language and had been socialized into the notion that they are SE-speaking persons, even though the majority of their daily interactions were in CCE.

Many scholars have documented the linguistic challenges that CCE-speaking students face in classroom situations, especially in the domain of writing (Allsop, 2010; Nero, 1997, 2000, 2001; Winer & Jack, 1997; Youssef, 2004). The literature suggests widespread agreement among many scholars that linguistically based reasons play a considerable role in the unsatisfactory academic performance of these students. (Allsop, 2010; Clachar, 2004; Nero, 1997, 2000, 2001; Pratt-Johnson, 1994, 2006; Rickford & Rickford, 2010). Additionally, a substantial amount of research has convincingly established that students who speak Creoles achieve at lower rates due to the (continuing) legacy of slavery, racism and discrimination, as well as linguistic intolerance (Gee, 2004; Mitchell, 2005; Ogbu, 2008; Rickford, 1999, 2006; Sato, 1989; Valencia, 2010).

The language varieties spoken by CCE-speaking students, like other minoritized populations, have often been framed as a problem and a barrier (Sontag, 1992) rather than as rights and resources (Ruiz, 1984). However, sociolinguists and other scholars locate the reasons for failure not with the students, their families, their cultures or their ways of communicating. They explain such failures instead as a result of standard, assimilationist and monolingualist ideologies (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Additionally, as noted earlier, deficit-thinking paradigms, standard language and literacy ideologies saturate the process of schooling as well as the wider society. The consequence of this is that there are a significant

Thomas 2012) and Udeogalanya (1995) have observed that Caribbean Blacks comprise 20 percent of those without a high school diploma in New York City. Many black CCE-speaking students move into communities that are largely African American, with educational institutions that are designated as failing urban schools (Waters, 1999). This increases the probability of high rates of underperformance or school failure in CCE-speaking communities. Udeogalanya (1995) has also noted that Caribbean Blacks were twice as likely (22 percent) as African Americans (12 percent) to not have obtained a high school diploma.

Mitchell (2005) also cites and confirms Udeogalanya’s study (1995), that showed that Caribbean male students in New York City had a dropout rate of 23.53 percent while females had a rate of 19.66 for. While this study largely aligns with the research on Black student academic underperformance, this study did not mention the linguistic background of the Caribbean students who were involved. Therefore, we do not know whether Haitian Creole or Black Latino students were included in the sample. Furthermore, no reasons were offered for the high dropout rates. These findings further consolidate the view that more needs to be done to improve school performance among these linguistic minority students.

Many scholars assert that one of the major causes of the poor school performance of CCE-speaking students (and other linguistic minorities) is the neglect of their linguistic resources in schools (Clachar, 2004; Nero, 2000, 2001; Rickford, 2000, 2006; Winer, 2006). Baugh (1999) referred to this when he wrote, “the vast majority of school districts that serve SENN [Standard English is not native] do not have adequate language policies in place...very little effort is devoted to adequate reform of policies for AAE students as linguistic
minorities” (p. 284). This observation is equally relevant to CCE-speaking students, who are themselves linguistic minorities within many American school districts.

The More Effective Approach: ESL or English as a Second Dialect?

Given that SE is not the home language of most CCE-speaking students, and given that SE is the language of schooling in both their home countries and the US, scholars and practitioners have debated what are the most effective programs for assisting these students to acquire SE proficiency. Acquiring SE proficiency is important because, as Baugh (2010) writes, “speakers who have inherited nonstandard varieties of plantation English continue to face special literacy barriers in schools, where Standard English proficiency correlates closely with academic success (p. 468). Too often CCE-speaking students are placed in mainstream English classes but are not provided with the explicit instructional support needed to help them develop proficiency in SE. This happens primarily because teachers are not prepared to address the particular needs of students who speak a minority language (Allsop, 2010; Pratt-Johnson, 2006). CCE-speaking students are not considered English language learners, but as Cuelho writes, “they are considered as English speakers who are careless with language” (p. 144).

There has been some debate about whether ESL programs are appropriate for these students. However, most scholars find placing students who are speakers of CCE in ESL classes to be counterproductive; they instead promote placing them in ESD (English as a Second Dialect) classes (Allsop, 2010; Clachar, 2004; Nero, 2001; Siegel, 1999). Clachar (2004), for example, studied whether CCE speakers had language acquisition trajectories similar to ESL students in tense and aspect marking in academic writing. Her findings suggest
that CCE-speaking students did not follow an acquisition trajectory similar to that followed by the typical English language learner. Some theorists (Andersen, 1978; Krashen, 1977, Larsen-Freeman, 1975) postulate that emergent bilinguals are more likely to mark progressive aspect most frequently on activity verbs such as “dance,” less frequently on telic verb phrases such as “build a house,” and least frequently on statives such as “hate” and punctuals such as “shoot.” Clachar discovered that while this acquisition order applied to acrolectal CCE-speaking students, it did not describe basilectal and mesolectal CCE-speaking students. Clachar’s findings indicate that the linguistic features integral to the Creole continuum may influence the patterns that appear in their writing. In her view, “their literacy needs cannot be addressed by an ESL curriculum, but rather one that attends to their specific writing challenges” (p.164).

In contrast to the typical emergent bilingual, CCE-speaking students have been constantly exposed to local varieties of SE through the media, schools, government documents and places of worship, both in their home countries and in the US. Understanding SE, especially at a basic level, is not a significant problem for most CCE-speaking students since they possess what is referred to as “receptive competence” (Nero, 2006; Winer, 2006) or “passive competence” (Trudgill, 1982) in SE. That is, they are usually able to understand and read without difficulty, although they might have difficulty producing Standard English either orally or in written form. Hence CCE-speaking students require different pedagogies and instructional strategies than those used to assist typical English language learners who have neither receptive nor productive competence in English.

On the issue of “receptive or passive competence,” however, some studies have shown that it is not prudent to take for granted the notion that the differences between CCE and SE
are so insignificant as to ensure receptive or passive competence. Studies carried out by Trudgill (1982) showed that British speakers of SE did not understand other less-standard-like varieties of English such as Scots English. Likewise, Milroy (1984) found similar results in tests that involved speakers of Hiberno-English and speakers of SE. Finally, Winer (1985), in studying her own process of acquiring Trinidad Creole English (TCE), similarly found communication collapse as a result of incongruity between certain types of questions. For example, she noticed that if she addressed a vendor by saying, “How much are the yams a pound?” comprehension failed. She states that had she instead asked, “What a pong fuh di yam?” she would have been understood. Sato (1989) argues that the rationale for the assumption that differences between nonstandard varieties of English and SE are insignificant even on the part of educators “is that their surface similarity often obscures underlying semantic differences” (p. 265). Often the grammatical differences between both varieties can lead to breakdown in communication, although in some cases interlocutors can depend on linguistic and situational context and extralinguistic cues to ensure comprehension.

Nero’s (2000) study of four college students also suggests that ESL classes are not likely to be the most effective option for CCE-speaking students. She interviewed four CCE-speaking students from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago who had been placed in ESL classes because some teachers had difficulty understanding them when they spoke. She found out that these students often misperceived their ability to negotiate meaning in SE. They believed or felt that they spoke SE because they had grown up in countries where the official language is SE. Their written compositions and other genres of writing, however, revealed that they had much difficulty conforming to the rules and conventions of written English. Moreover, their writing was notable for the mixing of Creole feature and lexicon with SE
features and lexicon. In fact, Nero (2000) claims that the mixing of both Creole and SE features indicated that these students had developed a kind of interlanguage. I would argue, however, based on the work of other scholars, that translanguaging is a more appropriate manner of conceptualizing the language practices of these students (see García, 2012; Garcia, Flores, & Woodley, 2012; García & Li Wei, 2014).

Given their beliefs about their relationship to SE, the participants in Nero’s study resented being placed in ESL classes. Her conclusion was that ESL classes were counterproductive since the resentment such placement generated would most likely undermine the students’ learning SE and lead to academic underachievement or failure. Instead, she argues for English as Second Dialect (ESD) classes, an approach that draws on a contrastive approach where the languages are compared and students develop the facility to shuttle between different features depending on social or cultural contexts (Devereaux & Wheeler, 2012; Rickford & Rickford, 2007; Siegel, 1999; Wheeler & Swords, 2004; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 1997; Wolfram, 2009).

Likewise, Clachar (2006) has argued that placing CCE-speaking students in ESL classes would be academically damaging. This would interfere with their desire to explore and appreciate the differences and contrasts between the standard and the Creole dialect, thereby failing to improve their ability to make and negotiate meaning in academic writing tasks. In all these cases, scholars are making an argument for bidialectalism, which Gilyard (1991) refers to as the ability to “codeswitch” or shuttle between features depending on the context or social situation in which one finds oneself. Another fruitful move would be to develop more dynamic bidialectal approaches akin to Bartlett and Garcia’s (2011) dynamic bilingual approach. In programs using this approach, students would work on developing language
practices that they could deploy in different social and cultural contexts as the need arose. Such an approach would also be additive rather than subtractive. It would acknowledge the multiple sites that require students to deploy different language varieties or practices as needed. Current research seems to suggest that ESD classes are far superior in assisting CCE-speakers become proficient in SE than ESL classes. However, more research needs to be done to determine what would best work with students who are coming from a variety of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

**Teacher Attitudes to Caribbean Creole English Varieties**

Research on teacher attitudes and perception to CCEs has revealed that teachers can often be very critical of CCE-speaking students’ ways of speaking. This is primarily because they do not know the language, but also because prescriptivist notions about how English should be spoken and written, as well as standard language ideologies, govern how people react to language differences and variations (Lippi-Green, 1997). Additionally, there may be a kind of racial or class hierarchy through which attitudes and ideas about language get filtered (Nero, 2006). The literature suggests that, in some cases, CCE-speaking students are more likely to get corrected by teachers (presumably on the basis that they are from English-speaking countries) as opposed to Asian and Latino students who are seen as English learners. Frequent teacher correction often has the effect of silencing CCE-speaking students (McNicol, 1993).

The literature reveals that some scholars are disappointed that both pre- and in-service teachers are not receiving more courses that expose them to language variation and the power of hegemonic discourses that legitimize some language varieties and stigmatizes others (Ball
Many persons who become teachers have not participated in educational experiences in which they get to interrogate (and hopefully dismantle) harmful attitudes to the languages of CCE-speaking students (Ball & Mohammed, 2003). And yet, all available evidence suggests that the size of the immigrant-student population will continue to increase and may even become the majority by 2050 (Kent, 2007).

**Preparing Teachers to Teach CCE Students**

The challenges of preparing teachers to adopt or devise effective instructional strategies for addressing the needs of a diverse student body will only get more severe. Achinstein, Ogawa and Saxton (2010) write that, “an underlying assumption of the demographic imperative is that in a pluralistic society it is problematic that public school students (students of color and White students alike) experience primarily a white teaching population” (p. 71). Expanding the number of minority teachers is important for democratic reasons. Some scholars argue that minority teachers may bring certain cultural assets that can help close the achievement gap that exists between White students and minority students (Haycock, 2001). A literature review by Villegas and Irvine (2010) suggests that minority teachers are often more successful at helping minority students improve their academic performance than White teachers because they are more likely to deploy culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). To help these students achieve academically, teachers often become their advocates and develop nurturing and trusting relationships with students. Because of their shared history, minority teachers are often more likely to initiate conversations in the classroom that explore racism and its impact on students’
daily experiences. Achinstein, Ogawa and Saxton (2010) have stated that, “the demographic
discrepancy between the racial and cultural backgrounds of teachers and students may
contribute to the democratic failure to provide students of color with opportunities to learn”
(p. 72). However, it is important to point out that White teachers can also develop productive
teaching and learning relationships with minority students, and not all minority teachers will
become effective teachers for such students. It is imperative that as a nation we undertake to
prepare all teachers to become culturally responsive teachers who appreciate and understand
ethnolinguistic diversity and language variation.

Research on teacher attitudes towards nonstandard varieties and languages shows that
too many teachers continue to reproduce negative beliefs that assist in undermining minority
students academic performance (Cross, Devaney, and Jones (2001); Godley, Sweetland,
Wheeler, Minicci, & Carpenter, 2006). The research of Cross, Devaney and Jones (2001) has
revealed that a significant number of pre-service teachers have negative and critical attitudes
to minority language practices as opposed to SAE, which they deem the language that is most
proper, desirable and useful for success (see Souto-Manning, 2013). Pre-service teachers were
asked to listen to five different recordings of languages other than SAE and to rate the speaker
based on characteristics such as intelligence, education, friendliness, honesty, trustworthiness,
ambition, and social status. The findings demonstrated that many of the participants had well-formed ideas of the speaker’s characteristics, which from their perspective deviated from their
notion of a “normal” native speaker. Most importantly, the study demonstrated that many pre-
service teachers, consciously or unconsciously, had negative perceptions of students whose
language practices varied from their own—a largely White, monolingual norm. Teachers
unfamiliar with the particular linguistic structures of another language constantly correct
students in ways that undermine linguistic self-confidence (Dooly, 2005; Fogel & Eri, 2006). This area of research and its results has led Souto-Manning (2013) to argue that “students from linguistically and culturally non-normative backgrounds are more likely to be disadvantaged due to (mostly White) teachers’ ethnocentric tendencies, beliefs, and perspectives” (p. 307). This disadvantage occurs even as the nation’s classrooms become more and more diverse (Orfield & Lee, 2007).

Godley et al. (2006) note that while it is challenging and difficult to change teacher beliefs about the less-valued varieties of languages, it is still fruitful to have them reflect on those beliefs. Godley et al. (2006) in their qualitative research investigating pre-service teachers’ attitudes to AAVE—which is relevant to CCE given that it is also spoken by Black students—found evidence of complex and contradictory feelings towards African American students’ use of that language and its place in school. Godley et al. (2006) concluded that pre-service teachers’ use of linguistic features such as “I think” and “should” suggest an openness to new sociolinguistic knowledge that has the potential to shift their beliefs about the dialects and languages spoken by minoritized students.

Research on teachers’ own language use also suggests that it is possible to engage in exercises that can help teachers change their negative beliefs about stigmatized varieties of English. By encouraging teachers to reflect on the differences or variations between and within their own written and spoken language use, or between their own formal and informal registers, ideological and attitude change is possible (Wilson, 2001; Biber, 1991; Schleppergrell, 2004). Godley (2006) engaged high school English teachers on close analysis of their own speech. The teachers noticed that their speech was less formal than they thought or expected. The teachers also noticed that they made repeated uses of certain vocabulary and
coordinating conjunctions such as “and.” In addition, they mixed their verb tenses more often than they thought they did. Through such exercises, teachers can begin to apprehend that they are not always speaking (or even writing) in SE and that their language use also varies and is contextual. Through this realization, they can begin to take small steps in appreciating the linguistic diversity in their classrooms and thus begin to shift their own identities to one where linguistic tolerance rather than “linguistic imperialism” (Canagarajah, 1999, Philipson, 1992) is the norm.

Other researchers have suggested that teaching is a political activity on behalf of racial, class and linguistically disadvantaged groups (Cochran-Smith, 1995). As such, having teachers engage in explicit discussions centered around the topic of standard language ideologies is likely to have beneficial result for speakers of stigmatized varieties (Ball & Mohammed, 2003).

Using an Internet survey of thirteen hundred teacher education programs at colleges in the US, Ball and Mohammed (2003) investigated whether courses on language diversity and variation were being offered to pre-service teachers. The results showed that most teacher education programs did not offer such courses to prospective teachers who are more than likely to enter school environments with students who have different and multiple linguistic backgrounds. The authors noted that some institutions such as California State University-Los Angeles and Eastern Michigan University offered courses that enhanced students’ understanding of language variety and diversity. However, even in such cases, these courses were offered as electives. The authors claim that teacher practitioners who have taken such courses come away more open to dialect differences than those who did not. However, it is not clear how Ball and Mohammed arrived at this conclusion, since they did not mention any
data from which one could make such claim. The authors recommend that all pre-service
teachers should be required to take “at least one course dealing with language variation,
bilingualism, and global linguistic diversity” (p. 81). The authors conceded that their methods
of collecting data were not ideal, as interviews might have yielded a richer set of data.
Moreover, the study is dated, since it was carried out ten years ago. Further studies would be
needed to confirm whether colleges are, at present, offering such courses to prepare their
teacher candidates for dialectical diversity. According to the research literature, Schools of
Education are not adequately preparing their pre-service teachers to productively engage with
the multilingual and ethnolinguistically diverse students in their classrooms. However, the
research on shifting teacher beliefs is promising in that it suggests that teachers who are
exposed to well-designed exercises are more willing to become tolerant of dialect differences
and linguistic variations.

Future research needs to reckon with these significant issues. First, research is needed
that can help to establish more effective programs that attract, prepare and retain teachers
from minority populations. Second, research needs to be carried out to find more effective
ways to assist current educators, whatever their ethnic backgrounds, and to create teaching
and learning environments that incorporate the linguistic, cultural and historical “funds of
knowledge” that students bring to school.

Improving the performance of CCE-speaking students: Possibilities

Research on the academic performance of CCE-speaking students in the United States
has tended to either emphasize their success or their failure, reflecting what Nero (2009) refers
to as “parallel narratives.” Some scholars (West-White, 2003; Sontag, 1992) define these
students as academic failures while others (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Rong & Brown, 2001) define them as academic successes. This seeming contradiction, Nero argues, can be explained by the fact that, unlike in the 1970s and 1980s, today a greater number of students who speak a Creole language have been migrating to the US and entering schools unprepared to navigate the complex literacy activities that academic success requires. Allsop (2010) substantiates this point in comparing a student who speaks SJE to one who speaks Standard British English. She states that:

   This Jamaican or British international student studying in the United States would most likely face minimal challenges in education. This student would need to compensate for some different spellings and a different accent, but would have few other issues in academics. However, Creole basilect speakers will face many more challenges and will need to learn Standard English in order to be successful and economically inside and outside of school. (p.18)

Several pedagogical and instructional models have been suggested that can assist in improving the academic outcomes of CCE-speaking students. In this section, I offer brief outlines of these instructional models. Siegel (1999) has identified three different types of programs that have been developed to address the particular linguistic needs of CCE-speaking students and other Non-Standard Dialect speakers. He names these three programs 1) instrumental, 2) accommodation and 3) awareness. According to Siegel, the instrumental program incorporates the students’ home language or dialectal variety at school as a resource for improving their capacity to engage in various literacy activities in the standard language. This requires the teacher to have fluency in the students’ language in order to help them
develop necessary reading skills. As the student progresses, more and more of the standard language is used in classroom.

The second type of program, the *accommodation* program, does not require the teacher to be fluent in or to utilize the student’s language. However, the teacher is encouraged to accommodate the student’s language practices in the classroom in speaking and writing activities. The teacher’s lessons explicitly focus on developing fluency in the standard language while employing music and literature to reinforce the differences between both language practices. Siegel notes that the emphasis is on “helping students acquire the standard language by focusing on how its structures and use are different from their own varieties” (p. 515) and in so doing able to develop a sense of “linguistic self-respect” (p. 515).

The third and most comprehensive program of the three is the *language awareness* program. The success of this program does not require any proficiency on the part of the teacher. This type of program is said to be ideal for US schools that have CCE-speaking students and other students who speak minority languages. One example of this type of program is the Caribbean Academic Program (CAP) (Allsop, 2010; Menecker, 1999; Nero, 2010). Nero writes that “the CAP aims to raise students’ awareness of the differences between CCE [Caribbean Creole English] and SAE [Standard American English], and both varieties are used in the classroom for speaking, reading and writing” (p. 502). This language awareness program has been credited with reducing the drop out of CCE-speaking and African American English Vernacular at a high school in Illinois. It has also helped to improve their acceptance rates into honors classes and college. A tentative conclusion could be made that any of the three programs would be beneficial to CCE-speaking students, but clearly the language awareness program seems to offer the greatest benefit of the three.
However, further studies would be needed to test the efficacy of various programs with different populations.

The language awareness program may have the greatest potential to successfully improve the academic performance of CCE-speaking students because it relies on a bidialectical approach. The goal of bidialectism is to expand the learner’s linguistic capacity by adding the prestige variety, SE, while maintaining, and in some cases even developing, his or her home variety. Whereas much of the research on bidialectalism has been carried out in African American communities, it is relevant and applicable to CCE-speaking students (Devonish, 1986; Gilyard, 1991; Pearson, Connor & Jackson, 2012; Pearson, B. Z., Velleman, S. L., Bryant, T. J., & Charko, T., 2009).

Sociolinguists have made two significant contributions to these pedagogical understandings (Hazen, 2008; Milroy & Milroy, 1999). One is the belief that for students to develop proficiency in SE requires that the students’ home variety be accorded legitimacy and respect in the classroom. Additionally, CCE needs to be seen as just another variety equal to but different from other varieties. Secondly, the notion that SE is a single, stable monolithic variety has also been successfully challenged and dismantled.

Conclusion

This review of the relevant literature has discussed the immigration contexts from which CCE-speaking students originate and their educational experiences in their home countries. Then, I explored Caribbean Creole English varieties and their characteristics. Third, I looked at language use in US schools. Fourth, I examined how language ideologies and practices in US schools shaped the education of minority students. Next, I outlined some
possible programs that might be effective in helping CCE-speaking students develop proficiency in SE. Finally, I explored the literature that deals with how teachers might best be prepared to educate CCE-speaking students’ and other immigrant students that now occupy so many of the nation’s classrooms.

More research is needed; my own study seeks to investigate the ideologies that teachers hold toward CCE-speaking students and their own language and literacy experiences. Additionally, I seek to understand whether there is any difference between how CCE-speaking students view their own language and their teachers’ view. My hope is that the results of this study will inform teaching practices in ways that benefit CCE-speakers by encouraging teachers to see their linguistic resources as differences, ones that can be leveraged to improve academic performance.

There are huge gaps in data collection. The New York City Department of Education does not disaggregate data collected on the three groups of Black students. Therefore, their specific needs are never identified, researched or addressed. The city is in need of new programs and policies in relation to language that can begin to help CCE-speaking students improve, especially in light of the new Common Core State Standards.

One of the most sobering takeaway from my extensive reading of other scholarship is the role of politics and how racism stifles potentially beneficial research. Despite the extensive sociolinguistic research documenting the need to take into account students’ communicative competence (Canaly & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972), little has been implemented to educate CCE-speaking students. Teachers need to build on students’ existing competencies as they help students build new communicative competencies in the standard variety. However, one has to be realistic about the limited possibilities for a shift toward more
productive and emancipatory ways of responding to the language and literacy challenges that such students face in New York City schools.
Chapter Four
Research Methodology

Introduction

To explore and answer the two research questions, I conducted open phenomenological interviews to collect narratives from eight CCE-speaking students and five teachers from four different high schools in Brooklyn, New York. I wanted to privilege the voices and views of especially these youths and the teachers with the objective of bringing about a more socially just teaching and learning environment for these youths, an environment that honors their cultural and linguistic resources. Scholars have written about the potential of student voice to make visible, inequitable power relations, to produce more democratic and inclusive relations and to produce positive school change (Robinson & Taylor, 2012). I adopt Fletcher’s (2005) definition of student voice which implies “meaningful student involvement continuously acknowledges the diversity of students by validating and authorizing them to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge, and experiences throughout education in order to improve our schools” (p. 5). The same can be said for teacher voice. I do not mean to romanticize the concept of voice or suggest that it is unproblematic. However, I believe that research that elevates or amplifies the voices of teachers and students can bring produce the kinds of social justice pedagogies and instructional practices needed to advance the interests of minority youths.

The interviews were conducted and data collected throughout summer and winter of 2015. I examined the narratives of the participants so as to excavate their language ideologies and to understand how they view their language and literacy practices in and out of school. Furthermore, the interviews allowed me to glean how the students’ and their teachers’
language ideologies influence how they view their own identities as learners in relation to the varieties of standardized English used in classrooms (more on phenomenological interviews below). Finally, I also relied on my own researcher memos to further enhance the interview data. Table 1 below offers additional information about the research design.

This qualitative study sought to answer the following questions as described in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Rationale/Goals</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. What are the language and literacy practices of CCE-speaking students?</td>
<td>To discover and describe the language practices of teachers of CCE-speaking students, and their language ideologies.</td>
<td>Individual face-to-face phenomenological interviews of teachers of CCE-speaking students.</td>
<td>5 teachers of Caribbean students from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. What are the language ideologies that teachers hold about CCE-speaking youths’ language and literacy practices?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. What are the language and literacy practices of Caribbean Creole English-speaking youths both in and out of schools in New York City?</td>
<td>To discover and describe the specific language and literacy practices of CCE-speaking youths in and out of school, and their language ideologies.</td>
<td>Individual face-to-face phenomenological interviews of Caribbean Creole English-speaking students.</td>
<td>8 students: 3 each from Guyana, 3 from Jamaica, and 2 Trinidad &amp; Tobago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. What are the language ideologies that CCE-speaking youths hold about their own varieties and Standard English?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Research Design

As Table 1 shows, my research questions seek to explore the phenomena of the language and literacy practices, and the governing language and literacy ideologies that shape
the learning of CCE-speaking students in New York City high schools classrooms. The first question addresses the language and literacy practices of CCE-speaking students both in and out of schools, and the language ideologies that shape such practices. The second question focuses on the language and literacy practices of teachers of CCE-speaking students, and the ideologies that shape how teachers view the linguistic and literacy resources of these students. Narrative analysis was used to examine the narratives of both teachers and students.

**Epistemological Research Framework and Considerations**

I chose the qualitative paradigm and associated methods for this dissertation study because I want to privilege the words, discourses and experiences of the interviewees and the meaning they make of such words, discourses and experiences (Luttrell, 2010). Qualitative research is designed primarily to inquire into, describe and explain the lived experiences of human beings (Polkinghorne, 2005). This genre of research emerged out of naturalistic kinds of inquiry, which possess certain well-defined characteristics. Lincoln and Guba (1985), outlining several characteristics of qualitative inquiry, note that firstly, when conducting qualitative inquiry, the researcher operates within the natural setting or context of the phenomenon being researched. Secondly, the researcher is the principal instrument for the collection of data. Thirdly, an intuitive process is employed in studying and analyzing the phenomenon being researched. Fourth, this process is appropriate for studying the many situations that emerge from interactions between the participants and their particular geographic, social and cultural contexts. Qualitative research therefore, privileges the subjectivity of the researcher, which heightens his or her accountability to faithfully draw nuanced claims about aspects of the social world under study.
It has been the case, historically, that studies in the social sciences have relied largely on quantitative, empirical and evidenced-based methods to study human behavior, activities and relations. This reliance has been connected to the critique that qualitative research lacks rigor and validity, as researchers generally employ methods that do not, for example, utilize large samples of data so to generate generalizations (Hammersley, 2008). This critique has often led to the demand for qualitative research that can convincingly demonstrate its relevance to formulating concrete policies and practices. Furthermore, this critique has often led to a call for the kinds of qualitative research that is supposedly less prone to researcher bias, which critics say can distort findings and thus render them unpersuasive or invalid. And yet, over the last three decades, qualitative methods of research have gained credibility and popularity.

Despite the ongoing need to counter the positivist assumptions underlying the push to make qualitative research more “scientific,” the qualitative researcher must recognize that he stands on solid ground. As Hammersley (2008) so eloquently puts it: “all methods produce fallible knowledge; and while experimental methodology has distinctive strengths, like other methods it also involves some serious threats to validity” (p. 5). Given the questions that this study seeks to answer, and given that I am interested in the narratives of the participants and what such narratives reveal about their beliefs and attitudes toward the languages of CCE-speaking students, qualitative research is the most appropriate approach.

Creswell (2013) writes, “a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 76). The task of the researcher, then, is to describe and convey the common themes of all the respondents’ experiences. Creswell (2013) further states that such descriptions should convey
both the “what” phenomenon they experienced, and also “how” they experienced that phenomenon. While some scholars (see Kamberelis and Dimitriades, 2005) are critical of accounts of experience that emerge from phenomenologically based inquiry, a qualitative approach using in-depth interviewing was suitable for this study because the objective was to capture and describe, as faithfully as possible, CCE-speaking students’ language ideologies, and their linguistic and literacy identities and practices, and then compare how these differ from or align with those of their teachers. Additionally, this approach allowed me to capture and describe certain teachers’ language ideologies, their experiences teaching CCE-speaking students, and their reactions to the particular language and literacy resources such students bring to school. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the researcher employing qualitative research methods probes particular phenomena in natural settings. Such probings, interrogations and their findings are more likely to capture accurate renditions of what actually transpires in an institutional setting than more experimentally oriented research.

**Design of the Study**

My sample consisted of eight CCE-speaking students from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, as the majority of CCE-speaking immigrants to the United States come from these three countries. I interviewed three immigrant students from Jamaica, three from Guyana and two from Trinidad and Tobago. My sample also consisted of five teachers who are certified to teach English Language Arts and Science to classes which often include CCE-speaking students. Table 2 below provides some relevant data on each of the four schools, (which have been renamed to ensure privacy and confidentiality) from which the participants were drawn.
Table 2: Research sites

Profiles of Research Sites

The schools in the study were chosen because they have relatively large concentrations of CCE-speaking youths. In addition, I know and have worked with some of the principals and some of teachers in the schools. I provide brief socioeconomic descriptions of the schools below.
Marcus Garvey High School

Marcus Garvey High School is a small high school of about 400 students located in the Flatbush community of Brooklyn. On its latest quality review, the school earned a grade of “well-developing.” The school is one of five small high schools in what was previously a large comprehensive public high school. This community has large populations of West Indian and Haitian immigrants who live and work near the school. Based on The New York City Department of Education 2013 data, Black students comprise 83 percent of the school’s population. Hispanics comprise ten percent, and Whites and Asian and Pacific Islander comprise two, two and three percent respectively. While the school is not racially diverse, it is diverse in terms of nationality and language. A significant number of the Black students hail from the Anglophone Caribbean, from countries such as Jamaica, Grenada, Trinidad and Guyana. In addition, Haitian-Creole speaking students make up a large percentage of the student body. The hallways and stairwells are often filled with the accents of Anglo- or Franco-Creole-speaking youths. Seventy-one percent of the students are eligible for free lunch. Boys make up 63 percent of student body, and girls 37 percent (www.greatschools.org, 12/12/14). This extreme gender imbalance is primarily due to the school’s sports programs that include football and basketball. English-language learners make up 10 percent of the student population. Students from the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Haiti and some African countries comprise the majority of those in ESL classes. Twenty percent of students are identified as needing special education services. Overall, 14 percent of the students were deemed college-ready for the 2013-2014 school year.
**High School for Digital Careers**

The second school from which the participants were drawn is the High School Digital Careers, which has a population of about 350 students. This Crown Heights school was established to prepare students for careers in the digital and technology economy. Eighty-five percent of the students are Black, many of whom are from Caribbean countries with English declared as the official language. Latino students constitute 11 percent of the student body while Asian students constitute four percent. The school was recognized as “proficient” on its 2013-2014 Quality Review. Sixty-seven percent of all students at this high school are eligible for free lunch. The number of students identified as college-ready is not yet available, as this is relatively newly established school. Three percent of student body is identified as needing ESL services and 18 percent need special education services.

**Brooklyn Academy for Social Justice**

The third school from which the participants were drawn is the Brooklyn Academy for Social Justice. Of the three schools, this is the largest, with a population of over 600 students. The school was established by a New York City college in partnership with the Department of Education. It is an Early College High School with a strong focus on college preparation. Seventy-eight percent of the student body is Black, 12 percent is Latino, six percent is White and one percent American is Indian/Alaska Native (www.greatschools.org, 12/12/14). Sixty-eight percent of the students are eligible for free lunch. Two-thirds of the students are female. According to the latest DOE statistics, English-language learners constitute sixteen percent of the student population at this school. This is also a school in which CCE-speaking youth can be heard languaging freely throughout the hallways and sometimes in the classroom.


**Academy for Urban Studies**

The fourth school, the Academy for Urban Studies, is another small school located in a building with other schools in the Prospect-Lefferts Garden neighborhood. The student population is predominantly Black with a large proportion from Caribbean countries. Many students hail from Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada, St. Lucia, and Haiti. There are also fewer numbers of Latino students and Muslim students within the student population. Black students comprise 90 percent of the student body; Latino students comprise eight percent with the remaining three percent a combination of Whites and Asian/Pacific Islander students. Eighty-four percent of the students receive free lunch ([www.greatschools.org](http://www.greatschools.org), 12/12/14). Male students are a slight majority comprising 52 percent.

**Impact of Socioeconomic, Racial and Linguistic of Student Backgrounds**

The above descriptions provide some context that allow for drawing conclusions about the socioeconomic, racial and linguistic situation in which these students are educated. It suggests that issues of (in)equity are likely to be found in these schools. For example, the majority of the students (between 67 and 84 percent) at each school receives free lunch. This suggests that most students are from socioeconomically challenged backgrounds. That students come from such backgrounds has implications for their academic performance.

Secondly, the majority of the students in these schools are Black, largely of African American and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds. Combined with their lower-income backgrounds (as suggested by free-lunch eligibility), the high percentage of Black students suggests that these schools fit the definition of “segregated schools.” As the Supreme Court noted in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), segregation constitutes inequality and leads to unequal
academic outcomes. Logan, Minca and Adar (2012), in a quantitative analysis of inequality in and between schools attended by White, Asian, Black, Latino and Native American students, noted that “schools with more minorities do worse” (p. 297).

Finally, the minority populations that comprise the schools—especially given the urban communities in which they are located and the socioeconomic status of these students and their families—are more likely to be excluded and marginalized due to the language varieties they use. From a language perspective, these youths are not being well served, as research has established that the language varieties of minorities often face resistance and are not leveraged for their potential to help students develop the intellectual resources and identities needed to successfully navigate academic contexts. Altogether, the socioeconomic, racial and linguistic factors, and the ways in which they shape the schooling of Black students especially, combine to make academic achievement challenging.

Noguera (2003) reminds us that:

rather than serving as the great equalizer as envisioned by Horace Mann, one of the early architects of American public education, schools in the United States more often have been sites where patterns of privilege and inequality are maintained and reproduced. (p. 42)

These four schools, it can be argued, serve more to entrench and upend the logic of privilege and inequality that functions to betray the dreams of minoritized youths and their parents. The curricula, the pedagogies and instructional practices used in these school often ignore the out-of-school language and literacy resources that these youths bring to school. This is not an attack on the schools that educate linguistic minorities. They themselves are subject to the larger and more powerful language and other types of ideologies and politics of the dominant
classes in the US. That being said, there is reason for hope. Always. Many teachers, researchers, scholars and policy makers continue to seek solutions or ways of implementing existing solutions that will result in educational equity for minoritized youths in US schools. This research project embraces this work on behalf of the participants who I describe in brief sketches below.

Participants

The CCE-speaking students who participated in this study were of various grades, genders, ages, and hailed from the Caribbean nations of Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. They all fluently speak the Creole language variety/ies of their home countries. Some of these youths also speak a variety of standardized Caribbean English, some more fluently than others. The method used to select students from these four schools was purposeful or purposive sampling. According to Oliver (2006), purposive sampling is:

A form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. (p. 245)

Oliver (2006) further notes that qualitative studies often require purposive sampling to select study sites and participants, as it allows the researcher to identify participants who are likely to provide data that are highly descriptive and relevant to the research questions. It is important that the researcher be transparent about the criteria that were used to establish the sampling process. Transparency is required because purposive sampling is subjective and depends upon a decision-making process created by the research. Without transparency, the credibility of research conclusions might be endangered.
In this study students were also selected based on their education level (secondary), nationality (Guyanese, Jamaican, Trinidadian) and the use at home of what they consider to be Caribbean Creole English or some other term such as Patwa, (Jamaica), Trini English or Creolese (Guyana). Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad happen to be the three largest Anglophone Caribbean countries. Thus, the students from these three countries speak varieties of Creole English that range from the more basilectal versions to the more acrolectal ones on the Creole Continuum. These students are referred to as Caribbean Creole English-speaking students or CCE-speaking students. As noted earlier, the term, while common in the sociolinguistic literature, is not one used by students from countries that comprise the region and is referred to as the “Anglophone Caribbean.” The term serves a convenient device to differentiate these students from those of similar racial backgrounds, such as African American, African or Latinos of African descent, by focusing on the English Creole varieties that they speak within American school contexts. The characteristics of the student participants appear in Table 3.

**Student Participants (All names are pseudonyms)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alisha</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Brooklyn Academy for Social Justice</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romaine</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>High School for Digital Careers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>Marcus Garvey High School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakeel</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>High School for Digital Careers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorna-Kay</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Brooklyn Academy for Social Justice</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The method used to select the teachers from the four schools was likewise purposeful sampling. The teachers were of both West Indian and Euro-American backgrounds. Care was taken to ensure the sample was varied in terms of age group, nativity, school and subject taught. Table 4 lays out the characteristics of the teacher participants.

**Teacher Participants (all names are pseudonyms)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Nationality/Background</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Subject Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Martin</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>American-Guyanese</td>
<td>Brooklyn Academy for Social Justice</td>
<td>ELA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Vega</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Latino-American</td>
<td>Academy for Urban Studies</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Valsano</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Euro-American</td>
<td>Marcus Garvey High School</td>
<td>ELA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. James</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Guyanese</td>
<td>Academy for Urban Studies</td>
<td>ELA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jones</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Grenadian</td>
<td>Academy for Urban Studies</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next section, I discuss the phenomenological interview, the procedure by which the data were collected from the participants.
Defining the Interview

There are specific epistemological reasons for my choosing the phenomenological interview as my primary research method. Doing so allows for the demonstration of its value as a research tool that can advance social scientific understanding in ways that benefit underserved minority populations in our schools. This does not mean one fails to acknowledge the limitations of interviewing as a research method. It means one acknowledges that such limitations do not impair interviews as a form of research.

Epistemologically speaking, interviewing can be conceptualized using two metaphors: mining and traveling (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009). Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) posit that when a researcher interviews from the mining metaphor perspective, knowledge is conceived of as “buried metal and the interviewer is a miner who unearths the valuable metal” (p. 48). In other words, uncontaminated knowledge rests in the respondent’s mind waiting for the interviewer to excavate it through carefully crafted interview questions. Using various data-mining tools, the interviewer is able to extract the more profound meanings from the transcripts of the interview. On the other hand, when a researcher interviews from the traveling metaphor perspective, knowledge is produced when “the interviewer is a traveler on a journey to a distant country that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home” (p. 48). From this perspective, the interviewer roams the terrain and engages in research-driven dialogues with participants. Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) further note that “the interviewer-traveler in line with the original meaning of conversation as “wandering together with,” walks along with the local inhabitants, asking questions and encouraging them to tell their own stories of their lived world…” (p. 48). The new knowledge that emerges has the potential, through analysis and reflection, to transform the participants, the “traveler” and maybe even the
institution. Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) point out that these two methods of interview research differ from each other in important ways. For example, a miner style or approach separates data collection from data analysis. In a traveler style or approach, however, data collection and data analysis are joined productively in the knowledge construction process. Secondly, a miner approach views knowledge as phenomena to be discovered, whereas a traveler approach represents a more postmodern conception of knowledge as socially constructed. Both approaches have value. In this study, the epistemological orientation to phenomenological interviewing that I adopted is a combination of the miner and traveler approaches. I made this choice because I believe that, when combined, both approaches have the power to unearth valuable knowledge while simultaneously constructing new knowledge. I employed both the miner and the traveler approaches consciously and judiciously in ways that I hope helped to illuminate data, or clarify any emergent issues or questions that arose over the course of the interviews.

The interview method that was used to collect data emerges out of phenomenological research methods. Groenewald (2004) writes, “a researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people involved, or who were involved, with the issue that is being researched” (p. 44). Additionally, van Manen (1990) asserts that “phenomenology is the study of the lifeworld – the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or reflect on it” (p. 9). In other words, the primary aim of the in-depth phenomenological interview is to explore the social, political and cultural lives of participants in order to illuminate a particular issue of interest. Citing Hammersly (2000), Groenewald also notes, “phenomenologists, in contrast to positivists, believe that the researcher cannot be detached from his/her own presuppositions
and that the researcher should not pretend otherwise” (p. 7). My primary objective then was to explore through phenomenological interviews, the linguistic lifeworlds and realities of CCE-speaking students in four New York City high schools in order to more fully understand and describe the identities of those students. In addition, I explored the linguistic lifeworlds and realities of teachers of CCE-speaking students so as to reveal their language ideologies about those students’ ways of “languaging.” Additionally, I attempted to determine how these teachers’ language ideologies and the students’ identities operate in ways that constrained and/or enhanced both teaching and academic performance.

The research literature on interviews as a method of data collection attests to its power to locate and explain, in substantive fashion, social, cultural and linguistic practices in social settings (Kvale, 1996). Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) note that interview knowledge is linguistic and narrative. As a result, the interview is a particularly apt research instrument for discovering the language and literacy practices of groups of people. Heron (1981) for example, writes that

the use of language itself...contains within it the paradigm of cooperative inquiry; and since language is the primary tool whose use enables human construing and intending to occur, it is not difficult, despite its instability, to see interviewing as a fundamental mode of inquiry for human beings into the human condition.” (p. 26) (cited in Seidman, 2013, p. 8)

Similarly, Brinkmann (2013) notes that “the use of conversations for knowledge-producing purposes is likely as old as human language and communication (p. 6). Of course, qualitative interviewing is somewhat different from a typical conversation in that it is
designed for specific research purposes, among which the most important is to produce knowledge with emancipatory potential for marginalized groups and members in society.

Seidman (2013) claims that, “At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9). More importantly, researchers argue that exploring the experiences of individuals is among the primary ways of investigating educational institutions, as it is only through such experiences that education can be truly understood (Ferrarotti, 1981; Seidman, 2013). It is not surprising then that the interview has become a dominant method by which data in the social sciences are gathered. According to Potter and Hepburn (2012), “where qualitative research is conducted, it is overwhelmingly done using some forms of interviews” (p. 555). They add: “the open-ended interview is the pre-eminent data generation technique in methodological traditions as disparate as ethnography, phenomenology (in its different forms), psychoanalysis, narrative psychology, grounded theory, and (much) discourse analysis” (p. 555). In view of the research questions that drive this study, the interview method was ideal.

The In-Depth Phenomenological Interview

Seidman (2013) writes that in-depth phenomenologically based interviewing is a method that “combines life-history interviewing...and focused, in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology” (p. 14). The researcher, for the most part, uses open-ended questions to explore a particular issue with the participants. Open-ended questions create opportunities for the interviewer to probe more deeply and to uncover richer and thicker descriptions of the interviewee’s life history. Seidman (2013) has identified four themes that
characterize in-depth phenomenologically based interviews. First, such interviews attempt to capture the transitory and temporal nature of being human in the world. Secondly, such interviews allow for the “subjective understanding” of the respondents to emerge. Thirdly, such interviews, are concerned with how participants, upon reflection, make meaning of their lived experiences, and take these experiences as the foundation of phenomena. Seidman (2013) writes that phenomena are the reflected reconstructions of the lived experiences of an individual. Fourthly, in-depth phenomenological interviews focus on meaning, but more importantly, meaning situated in particular social, cultural, political or historical context. Seidman (2013) notes that “these four phenomenological themes [matter because they] provide the rationale and logic for the structure, technique, and approach to analyzing, interpreting, and sharing interview material...because understanding them and how they play out in the interview structure and techniques offers grounding and guidance for the interviewer” (p. 19-20).

The data collection method for this study consisted of several topics for narrative discussion. These questions were constructed based on Seidman’s (2013) phenomenological interview guidelines. Instead of doing three interviews as Seidman recommends, however, I conducted one interview with each participant. According to Seidman (2013) “the first interview establishes the context of the participants’ experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them” (p. 17). I combined the first, second and third interviews, however, since I was already familiar with some of the students and teachers who participated in this study. In order to avoid treading on “thin contextual ice” (Seidman, 2006, p. 17), I tried to make sure each
participant answered in as much detail as possible. The interview allowed the interviewer and
the participant to more fully explore the latter’s life experiences in ways that produced richer
and more complete data for subsequent analysis. Seidman (1998) has noted “interviewing
provides access to the context of people’s behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers
to understand the meaning of that behavior” (p. 4). It must be admitted, however, that on re-
reading the interviews, I had follow-up questions but found it difficult to contact the students
and teachers again as this occurred largely at the end of the school year when teachers busy
preparing students and themselves for the upcoming Regents exams.

Based on the modified guidelines recommended by Seidman, topics were developed, and
each interview took approximately 45 minutes per participant. These questions were centered
on the meaning of certain life experiences that pertain to how CCE-speaking students practice
language and literacy outside of school, as well as in New York City classrooms. For teachers,
the questions were centered on how they view and use language in teaching, and how their
students use language in learning. As Seidman (1998) has written, interviewing is a tool most
compatible with human beings’ capacity to make meaning through language.

Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed from oral to written form
(Polkinghorne, 2005; Seidman, 1998). The transcription allowed for a more focused analysis
of the interview during the data analysis stage. The audio recordings provided an opportunity
to analyze the data in their original form and ensure that renderings and analysis were more
accurate, for the benefit of both the interviewer and the participant. In addition, they allowed
for a more accurate representation of the voice of the all participants. In the next section, I
explore narrative analysis, which focuses on how people construct and employ stories to make
sense of and interpret the worlds in which they live.
Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is the specific type of analytic tool that used to deconstruct the texts for deeper meanings and themes in order to produce the findings for this study. According to Riessman (2002) narrative analysis “takes as its object of investigation the story itself” (p. 218). In characterizing narrative analysis, Riessman (2008) asserts “narrative analysis refers to a family of methods for interpreting texts [e.g., oral, written, and visual] that have in common a storied form” (p. 11). Employing narrative analysis forced me to focus more intently on the narratives that students and teachers told about their language practices in and out of school in order to understand language ideologies. Analyzing narratives contained in the interviews also allowed me to focus on the rationales that students and teachers offered for how they react to varieties of Caribbean Creole English. In other words, analyzing narratives identified the themes that are both common and divergent within and across one or all of the narratives. Riessman (2005) notes “the thematic approach is useful for theorizing across a number of cases – finding common thematic elements across research participants and the events they report” (p. 3). Furthermore, Riessman (2008) recommends that researchers employ an approach in which narrative inquiry is considered “a way of conducting case-centered research” (p. 11). The objective of this method is to explore how participants reconstruct certain events from their life stories. Additionally, in recommending narrative analysis, Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) write that “narrative analysis is appealing because its interpretive tools are designed to examine phenomena, issues and people’s lives holistically” (p. xi). The authors go on to argue “narrative analysis seeks complex patterns and descriptions of identity, knowledge, and social relations from specific cultural points of view” (p. xii). This was a useful approach, as I was trying to identify common themes that reveal CCE-speaking
students’ linguistic practices and ideologies, as well as the teachers’ practices and ideologies about CCE and students who speak CCE. In light of the phenomena studied in this project, narrative analysis provided an excellent approach to analyzing the data collected. Riessman (2002) writes that narrative analysis helps the researcher “to see how respondents impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives” (p. 218).

Following Seidman (1998), I categorized the interview data through coding and thematic analysis. That is, as I identified themes that emerged from my analysis of the data and then coded those themes. According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006) “coding is the process of identifying different segments of the data that describe related phenomena and labeling these parts using broad category names” (p. 305). The authors add: “it is an inductive process of data analysis that involves examining many small pieces of information and abstracting a connection between them” (p. 305).

I personally hand-coded the interviews to further deepen my analysis. Both Creswell (2009), and Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006) posit that (hand)-coding can be a labor- and time-intensive process as it requires continual reading and re-reading to make sure that important themes are not missed or inappropriately labeled. Despite this time-consuming process, however, personal coding increases the credibility of the study by allowing for more accurate analysis and representation of the data and subsequent findings or lesson learned.

The first step in the analysis involved reading the transcripts of the interviews and also the researcher memos (Erickson, 1986). I then engaged in the process of unitizing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or segmenting (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). What occurs at this point is what Seidman (1998) refers to as “marking what is of interest in the text” (p. 100). I tried to identify as many themes as possible until no new themes emerged or until theoretical
saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 1998) was reached. However, for my findings, I selected and discussed four of the major themes that emerged, as this allowed for a more focused study. The voices of the interviewees remained dominant as I wrote up my findings, to further increase the trustworthiness of this study. The final stage of the data analysis adhered to Lincoln and Guba’s recommendation (1985) that the researcher asks, “What were the lessons learned?” Creswell (2009) expands on this recommendation by arguing that identifying the lessons learned allows the researcher to discover whether the findings of the study confirm or disconfirm what is previously known or thought in the literature, and also that the data and analysis might generate new questions for future research.

**Data Analysis**

It is through data analysis that one makes meaning and draws out the major themes from the interviews conducted in a case study. Several theoreticians of qualitative studies have noted that in order for data analysis to be effective and to produce knowledge, the researcher must be intimately involved in exploring the data from multiple angles (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1988). In addition, Merriam (1998) points out that data analysis is not so much a discrete activity that begins after the collection of data, but is simultaneous with it.

For this study, one interview with each participant constituted the majority of the data. I then personally transcribed each interview after it had been completed, as doing so was more likely to produce the most accurate representation of the data collected. Rubin and Rubin (2005) write that “transcribing the interviews yourself forces you to pay attention to what interviewees said and helps you prepare for the next interview” (p. 204).
I also wrote researcher or analytic memos comprised mainly of notes written during the interview, ruminations concerning the interview process, and thoughts and questions that emerged each time I read or listen to the interviews anew. Researcher memos are one way to help the researcher refine and improve interviewing questions and techniques. More importantly, as Groenwald (2008) notes, “memos add to the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research and provide a record of the meanings derived from the data” (p. 505).

Consent

Approval for this study was sought (and received) from both CUNY IRB and the New York City Department of Education IRB. Letters of informed consent were given to all students who participated, and letters requesting parental permission sent to parents. These letters identified the purpose of the study and outlined in detail the benefits, the risks, and the participants’ rights to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason (Seidman, 1998).

I communicated to student-participants, their parents and their teachers that their names and identities would be kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality. To facilitate continued consent throughout the research process, I attempted to construct relationships based on trust and respect as the participants and I collaborated.

Validity and Reliability or, Rather, Trustworthiness

An important issue that remained constant throughout the data collection and data analysis processes of this study was that of validity and its twin concept, reliability. Yet, as this is a qualitative study, how I conceptualized reliability and validity shifted from a traditional positivist and quantitative understanding to a more naturalistic and qualitative one.
As Guba and Lincoln (1981) noted in relation to qualitative research, the concept of “trustworthiness” (a term often used in relation to qualitative research) is more applicable rather than “rigor,” (a term that is often allied with quantitative research). Guba and Lincoln (1981) posit that criteria such as internal validity, external validity, objectivity and reliability determine the rigor of a quantitative study. To ensure “trustworthiness” of a qualitative study, however, they recommended criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With the exception of confirmability, which is not applicable to phenomenologically oriented studies (Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002), I used the remaining three criteria to establish the trustworthiness of this study. It is important to keep in mind that no qualitative study is perfect. These criteria do not completely resolve the limitations of this case study. In the next section I explore those limitations and their potential impact on the study.

**Limitations of this Study**

The limitations of qualitative studies are well documented (Feuer, M., Towne, L., & Shavelson, R., 2002; Hammersley, 2007; Hodkinson, P. 2004). For example, qualitative studies generate an enormous amount of data that can complicate analysis. Although a relatively small number of participants were interviewed (eight students and five teachers), the interviews generated an enormous amount of data. As a result, coding for themes presented some difficulty. Secondly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize from qualitative studies. Of course, generalizability (or transferability) is an important value because one purpose of doing any research is to resolve issues faced by similarly situated populations across different schools, communities or states. However, the relatively small number of
participants and sites constituted a limitation, which required me to be modest and nuanced in
the conclusions I formed. One way to address this limitation was to ensure that my analysis
and interpretation of the data was sufficiently convincing and plausible to readers and fellow
researchers. According to Reissman (2008) this can be accomplished if “the investigator’s
theoretical claims are supported with evidence from informants’ accounts, negative cases are
included, and alternative interpretations considered” (191). It is important that the researcher,
especially in qualitative studies, nuance their claims to increase the reliability and validity of
those studies. If my analysis and interpretation of the data are valid and reliable, or
trustworthy, then my results will contribute to better understanding how educators can more
effectively address the needs of CCE-speaking students in schools—not just in the identified
New York City schools, but schools in New York State and hopefully the US at large. In fact,
Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that new theories generated from qualitative studies can have
validity that is independent of the cases from which such theories were drawn. Another
important point to highlight is that the findings or results of such studies can often survive
scrutiny based on the readers’ experiences of similar contexts or populations.

Ensuring that a qualitative research study evinces trustworthiness is no easy feat. The
criteria for attaining such a high standard have been subject to debate and critique. Morse,
Barret, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2002) for example, note that member checks—a verification
strategy that seeks to increase the accuracy of analysis—can actually threaten the
trustworthiness of a study. This can occur for several reasons. One reason is that the
researcher discusses what is checked with the respondent, which might create bias on the part
of the researcher. Another reason is that the varieties used in academic contexts of research
might impede the participants’ or interviewees’ ability to understand the researcher’s analysis.
or interpretation. And thirdly, the researcher’s interpretations might be at odds with what the
interviewee intended to convey at the time of the interview. Other researchers have
commented on further drawbacks with member checking. Emerson and Pollner (1988) and
Bloor (1997) have noted that participants might not read the report carefully, and in its
entirety, and therefore may come away with incomplete understandings of the researcher’s
analysis. Emerson and Pollner (1988), in addition, have noted that if the researcher and the
participants become close, the participants or even the researcher might be reluctant to raise
delicate or political issues that emerge in the analysis. Closeness never became an issue as I
only interviewed the participants once. However, the important point to bear in mind is that
none of the criteria and their associated techniques are unproblematic or without limitations,
and member checking is no exception. For the reasons outlined above, and also because of the
difficulty of arranging further interviews beyond the initial ones, I chose not to do member
checks for this study. Even though Guba and Lincoln (1985) write that member checking is
often an essential tool that enhances the credibility of the findings of a study, the similarity in
findings across the teachers’ and students’ narratives ensure to some degree a measure of
trustworthiness and credibility in the interpretation of such narratives. In addition, to enhance
the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings of this study, I chose to recognize the roles
that subjectivity and reflexivity can play in enhancing the analysis and interpretation of the
participants’ narratives. In explore these phenomena in more detail below.

**Subjectivity and Reflexivity**

It is especially important in qualitative research to be both mindful of the ways in
which one’s subjectivity can interfere with, or impair, the credibility and trustworthiness of a
study, but also of the ways in which subjectivity can enrich one’s understanding of the lived experiences of the participants in the study. To strengthen both credibility and trustworthiness, it is important that the researcher, the sole or primary person who collects data, engage in reflexivity, “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 278). Citing Alcoff and Potter (1993), Denzin and Lincoln (2008) write “reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with ourselves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting” (p. 278). Hence, I come to this work already aware of my potential biases and assumptions from at least two different angles: One, I am a teacher in the New York City school system; and two, I am also a speaker of Caribbean Creole English with an understanding of how language reproduces or shapes power relations.

As noted earlier in Chapter One, I have been a teacher in New York City schools for the last 15 years. My interactions with language minority students (mostly as an ESL teacher of Latino, Bengali and Haitian students) and also my interactions with CCE-speaking students have given me some understanding of the plight CCE students face in our school system. Secondly, I was born and raised in Jamaica, where I acquired, and became fluent in, Jamaican Creole and standardized Jamaican English. My positionality as a speaker of Creole gives me a unique appreciation for both its richness as a language, but also of the stigma attached to this language. As a young child, my mother was critical of my use of Jamaican Creole at home. I am quite sure my mother stressed the speaking of Standard English because she thought it would allow me to do well academically and access professional opportunities that I would not have been able to access if my only language practices were those associated with Jamaican Creole.
Additionally, some of my assumptions have also played a role in shaping this study. For example, I believe that students’ languages should be seen as fruitful resources (Ruis, 1984) or funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, N. & Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C., 2005) or community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that can be productively engaged to improve the teaching and learning experiences of minoritized students. In other words, students’ languages should be seen as valued linguistic capital to be invited into classrooms rather than contaminants to be ignored or eradicated.

Last, I entered this study with a concern for the academic performance of CCE-speaking students especially, and the ways in which I believe that they are under- or disserved by New York City’s education system. The struggles CCE-speaking students face are rooted in their language differences. It was important for me as I undertook this study to be aware of the potential for aspects of my biography (which granted me some insider status with CCE-speaking students) to threaten or undermine the credibility and trustworthiness, as well as the rigor of this study.

Despite the limitations of this study, attending to concepts of reflexivity and subjectivity (and the issues inherent therein) has helped to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the analysis and interpretations of the narratives. Furthermore, attending to such issues helped to generate important findings that can help to improve the teaching and learning of CCE-speaking youths in New York City schools. In the next three chapters, I explore the findings that emerged from the analysis of the data. The next chapter however is not a finding related to so much to language practices. Instead, the chapter explores an important finding illuminates the ways in which CCE-speaking youths’ racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds are not sufficiently taken into account in teaching and learning in New
York City schools. Instead, CCE-speaking youths are generally subject to a homogenizing ideology that submerges their differences into the larger racial group of black students within New York City’s school system.
Chapter Five

Cultural, Racial and Linguistic Homogenization of CCE-speaking Students

Introduction

One significant theme that emerged out of the narrative analysis of the teachers’ interviews is that schools tend to treat CCE-speaking youths of African descent as racially and culturally homogeneous. While this finding is not a language ideology, it shapes how teachers build upon and/or connect students’ funds of knowledge and their lived experiences within curricular and pedagogical contexts. As such, it is important to explore this theme before entering into the analysis of specific themes of ideologies related to the youths and teachers’ language and literacy practices. I have noted earlier that there are primarily three groups of Black students in the US: African Americans, Continental Africans, and Afro-Caribbean. The analysis of the data showed, however, that too often the teachers in this study came to view CCE-speaking students as no different from the other two Black groups of students. They did not indicate in their interviews that they saw a need for multicultural or relevant instruction that targets the unique group or individual identities of these youths in ways that differed from instruction that target the identities of African American or Continental African youths.

Mwangi (2014) has noted that “due to the homogenizing effect of being Black in America, ethnicity and nationality often subsumed by race; thus, distinctions among people of the same race who vary in ethnicity and nationality are commonly ignored” (p. 1). As a result of this homogenizing process and effect, the cultural plurality and linguistic heterogeneity among the three groups of Black students are often ignored. These students are taught as an undifferentiated, monolithic group. Taught this way, the transnational identities and resources of these students remain invisible in the classroom. The homogenizing process that affects CCE-speaking students in the US is not only present at the high school level; it continues in
college. Mwangi (2014) adds that “research on Black college students often merges native- and foreign-born Blacks as a single demographic or excludes Black immigrant data altogether” (p. 1). In the next section, I discuss in more detail the consequences of the forces of homogenization on CCE-speaking youths in US schools.

**Cultural Homogenization of CCE-speaking Youth**

Despite the rapidly changing demographics in the nation’s classrooms, teachers seem not to have the pedagogical and instructional resources that can be used to more profitably engage with the cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic differences among transmigrant students in the 21st century. Or it could be that they are prevented from deploying those resources by the neoliberal forces dominating schooling and curricula. As a consequence, teachers who are otherwise competent practitioners, are not developing the kinds of cultural, linguistic and racial competencies and identities that can help them avoid subjecting linguistic minority youths to subtractive schooling (Romero-Little, Warhol & Zepeda, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999).

The ideologies of homogenization result in some teachers in this study failing to attend to the national and cultural differences between CCE-speaking and non-CCE-speaking youths and also within the CCE-speaking youths population. Some teachers in the study tend to frame and teach CCE-speaking youths as belonging to the same culture(s) as other groups of Black youths. These teachers ignored the multiple and complex cultural formations that exist (both with groups and among individual students). As a consequence, they failed to validate the various cultures and backgrounds of these youths in ways that positively impact their schooling. One example of this phenomenon is provided by ELA teacher at Marcus Garvey
high school, Ms. Valsano. When she was asked to describe the differences between CCE-speaking youths and other students in her classroom, she answered that:

"Actually, it's very hard for me to determine. I'm not very familiar with which countries everyone is from. I know that a majority of my students are Caribbean. Some of them I assume have been here their whole entire life and were born here, just have a Caribbean background. That's their ethnicity. A lot of them I come to find out after working with them for two years that they weren't born here, that they've come here recently. (Interview, 6/20/2015)"

Ms. Valsano was unable to articulate any salient cultural distinctions among her students who are from different national and linguistic backgrounds, although she was aware that the majority of them are Caribbean. That too is a form of (regional) homogenizing, one that prevents her from knowing her students in meaningful ways that could be used to produce more equitable teaching and learning. Nowhere in her narrative does she describe how the Caribbean background of her students informs her pedagogy and instructional practices. Ms. Valsano admits a general ignorance about the national and cultural backgrounds of these students. She claims that it is hard for her to determine the countries from which CCE-speaking youths migrate. She makes assumptions and judgments about how long they have been living in the United States. Ms. Valsano could easily solve her imprecise knowledge of the students’ background by having them complete a culture and interest inventory. On this instrument they would list both biographical and cultural information about themselves. Ms. Valsano could also gain more in-depth knowledge of the youths’ lived experiences by providing them with assignments that require them to share more deeply about their backgrounds. In so doing, she would be connecting their cultures to the curriculum. As a
result of ignorance, she often finds out that her assumptions and judgments are flawed or based on faulty information as she puts it. Ms. Valsano noted that:

We have mostly Jamaican and Haitian students. I can kind of recognize if they're Haitian or Jamaican, but then I get confused if they're from Antigua, Grenada, Trinidad even. There's a lot of other countries where I don't have enough experience where I can tell which country students are from. I kind of like the ignorance-is-bliss approach. I don't want to start making judgments based on the students' backgrounds. I want to treat everyone equally in general, and then go off each person as a single individual. I don't want to start grouping. There's huge similarities and there's huge differences. (Interview, 6/20/2015)

Ms. Valsano knows that the majority of students in this school are from Haiti and Jamaica. She can tell the difference based on the phonological differences between Haitian and Jamaican Creoles. However, she often does not know the particular nationality of her students. In not proactively seeking to discover the nationality of these students and using this knowledge to inform her pedagogy, she fails to address their particular cultural backgrounds and transnational status as sites for engagement and knowledge construction. Ms. Valsano’s “ignorance is bliss” approach fails to make space in her curriculum for these students and their linguistic resources. Rather than resolve her confusion by actually getting to know her students in deeply meaningful ways, she claims that her confusion and ignorance actually allow her to treat everyone equally in general. This cultural blindness (akin to colorblindness) erases fundamental distinctions, resulting in a denial of educational equity. By aspiring to treat Haitians, Jamaicans, and other minority students equally in this mainly Black school, she engages in a culture blind practice that sustains both her distance from and ignorance of the
students. Rather than engaging with and affirming the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the student populations in her classes, and integrating the resources of this diversity into her teaching and learning activities, Ms. Valsano prefers to avoid this diversity by not wanting to make judgments based on the students’ backgrounds. The objective here is not to blame Ms. Valsano, but rather to suggest that Ms. Valsano (who is privileged by her racial background and status as a White woman) has not been given a set of tools that can help her engage these students from culturally and linguistically relevant vantage points. As a result, her commitment to treating everyone equally, no matter how well intentioned, compromises the drive for equity in education. It is important that teachers like Ms. Valsano who come from different racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds develop the kinds of pedagogical and literacy practices that center the lived experiences within their teaching and learning structures. Otherwise, it can appear as if they are indifferent to these youths’ backgrounds.

**Racial Homogenizing of CCE-speaking Youth**

Some teachers have ideas that suggest they engage in racial homogenizing which is as equally reductive of cultural and linguistic diversity between and among Black youths. Teachers, operating from and through their ideologies are subjecting CCE-speaking students to a process of racialization similar to that endured by other Black youths in US schools. This racialization occurs with negative consequences for their education. Scholars have argued Black Caribbean transmigrants conceptualize race and ethnicity differently that do other groups (Kasinitz, 1992; Waters, 1994). Omi and Winant (2015) have also contended that in contrast to Blacks, “whites are seen as variegated in terms of group identities, but blacks all
look alike” (p. 22). Teachers tended to see these youths as simply Black students and this racial homogenization is not being done so as to invoke and practice anti-racist pedagogies.

Mr. Martin, the ELA teacher of Guyanese background, frames CCE-speaking youths as just Black students and hence teaches from a homogenous perspective. When asked to comment on the differences of CCE-speaking youths, Mr. Martin responds:

*I have never, to be honest, thought of them as a different group. I’ve always thought of Black students as Black students and CCE-speaking students are Black students, no matter how you slice it, so I’ve never thought in my head that I have to go about it or cater my lessons specifically to CCE-speaking students.* (Interview, 5/17/2015)

Earlier in the interview, Mr. Martin does state that he believes one way of helping these students improve their language and literacy performances in school is by using differentiation by educational needs. However, his response in this excerpt contradicts his earlier statement. It shows that he does not recognize any fundamental differences that could result in more culturally relevant pedagogies for these particular students. Mr. Martin claims he has never tried to cater his lessons specifically to CCE-speaking students. Mr. Martin instead homogenizes these students as Black, sees them as a monolithic group and, in so doing, he misses opportunities to build engagement and deeper learning by invoking their specific and particular cultural, national and linguistic backgrounds.

Mr. Jones, a science teacher also shares a similar view. He explains why he thinks there are no fundamental differences among Black students that warrant multicultural or culturally responsive approaches to the instruction of CCE-speaking youths:

*You know, I think there’s less of a gap in terms of differences now with the advance of technology throughout the Caribbean and the images that they see, you get a lot of kids coming to us actually within the school here, right, that are very similar to American kids in terms of experiences, in terms of clothes that they wear, the music that they listen to, you know there’s a lot of integration of culture, so I think in terms of, the differences are less, the similarities are more, you know, they still come from, in terms of hardship, right, social situations are not the best, single mothers, ahhm, you know, people struggling to make ends meet when they do come up here, so I find that*
the list of similarities is increasing, the list of differences is kind of getting smaller. And there’s not a huge cultural difference anymore. (Interview, 5/17/2015)

In some ways, as Mr. Jones points out, CCE-speaking youths are similar to African American students regarding their consumption of popular culture. That is, they often wear similar clothes and listen to similar genres of music like reggae, dancehall, hip-hop, and R&B. He adds that both groups experience social and economic hardships, and that many students come from single-parent backgrounds. It is true that globalization, transnationalism and the development of digital technologies have collapsed distances both cultural and geographic across the borders of nation-states (Appadurai, 1990). However, while such similarities are not unimportant, there are still profound differences concerning language, local history, and culture.

The data from the interviews show that CCE-speaking youths do not share Mr. Jones’ assertion that there’s not a huge cultural difference anymore. The students in this research project hold firmly to their particular West Indian cultural and linguistic characteristics to build their unique identities, to build solidarity with other CCE-speaking youths, and also to participate in the popular cultures of their home countries and the US. Both Mr. Martin’s and Mr. Jones’ analyses gloss over the complexity of the cultural and linguistic diversity both between African American students and CCE-speaking youths and also among the CCE-speaking youths from different West Indian countries. His assertions are at odds with many of the students in this study who feel isolated, silenced, or diffident as a result of language ideologies that stigmatize and devalue their language varieties and accents. Subjecting these youths to the ideology of racial homogenization results in the invisibilization of their cultural, transnational and linguistic characteristics in the classroom and curricular materials.
Linguistic Homogenization of CCE-speaking Youth

The cultural and racial ideologies of homogenization discussed above are in some ways precursors to and adjuncts of linguistic homogenization. The New York City Department of Education and the New York State Department of Education, in fact, engages in linguistic homogenization by adopting a language policy, which recognizes CCE-speaking youths as speakers of SE because they migrate from countries which designate SE as their official language. The Home Language Identification Survey which all entering New York City parents or guardians are required to complete asks whether the language spoken at home and with family members is English or another language. The questions on the form incline CCE-speaking persons to answer English although the incoming student is not proficient in CSE (Caribbean Standard English). The youths themselves and their parents might not take kindly to any policy that recognizes CCE varieties, which still in some ways are stigmatized, as the official language varieties of the majority from the West Indies. One must bear this dilemma in mind. In any event, such recognition will not only have political but fiscal implications and repercussions. Linguistic homogenization is the cheapest option in the minds of policy makers and politicians although in the long run, it might be quite expensive if homogenization contributes to academic failure among the youths.

The three forms of homogenization do not operate discretely but rather conjointly to suppress the diversity within the black student population. Wherever one is found, the others are lurking nearby. It is possible that just as been said that many White persons assume that all Blacks look alike, there is a linguistic correlate that assumes all black language varieties are equally suspect. This imposed similarity is not to be taken to mean that Blacks’ ways of talking are lexically, syntactically or phonologically the same but rather in the sense that their
ways of talking are deemed as inferior by those who subscribe to the dominant racial, cultural and linguistic ideologies. Those subscribing to the ideology of linguistic homogenization recognize the Black ways of languaging as generally deficient and lawless or rule-less. Secondly, subscription to the ideology of linguistic homogenization obscures the diversity and vitality inherent in Black youths’ ways of languaging and their literacy practices. Thirdly, linguistic homogenization results in those with power taking action or creating policies that seek to impose their way of languaging, on the culturally and linguistically diverse student population that comprise classrooms in urban school districts in the US. Of course, in some ways, the term “CCE-speaking” that I use to identify these youths is a form of homogenization itself. However, in this study, I have tried to delineate the different groups and individuals and tried to avoid the pitfall of essentializing the youths labeled under this heuristic and convenient research device.

**Disruptive Responses to the Ideologies of Homogenization**

Some teachers in the study did make pedagogical and curricular moves or expressed notions which amounted to a subversion of the homogenization of CCE-speaking youths. Two teachers, Mr. Jones and Mr. Vega from the Academy for Urban Studies, are examples of teachers who attempted to productively respond to the transnational and linguistic identities of these students in their classrooms. This may be because of all the schools in the study, the Academy for Urban studies has a large population of CCE-speaking youths and also many of the educators including the principal and one assistant principal are of West Indian origin including Mr. Jones. He was born in Grenada and migrated to the US at the age of 17 and as a result he often uses his knowledge of CCE varieties to clarify concepts if necessary (more on
Mr. Jones, when asked about his philosophy of teaching expressed that:

*I do think I have the general idea that all kids can learn. Do all kids learn at the same rate? Ahm no. Do we, Do I think that as a school and as a system, do we take into consideration, kids’ aptitudes? No. I think that’s one of the thing, if I had it my way, ahm I would you know, I would try to find, you know, what the kid really liked because those kind of experiences would actually help them to be better than the other ones because I think, you know ahmm, there’s not a lot of choice in terms of schooling for kids here, we teach them the same subject, same curriculum and I think if we had more choice they would do a lot better, so yeah philosophy is all kids can learn. All kids don’t do well but that’s because of maybe issues that are beyond my control in the classroom.* (Interview, 6/10/2015)

In this excerpt, Mr. Jones vocalizes that if he had a choice, he would try to teach to the individual child using some things that the child likes and his or her aptitudes. He points out the lack of diversity regarding schooling, subject matter, and diversity. He believes that more choice would result in better academic outcomes for these youths. In this excerpt, Mr. Jones is referencing the way that curriculum and language policies constrain teacher authority and creativity to make choices that are appropriate to the needs of a particular student or student population. As will be shown in the next chapter, Mr. Jones does attempt to use the youths’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds although he does it less so for constructing an understanding of subject matter and more for managing classroom behavior.

Mr. Vega also teaches in ways that sometimes disrupts the homogenization of CCE-speaking youths. Mr. Vega has access to a multilingual repertoire as he is fluent in Spanish and SE but also has a working knowledge of French. He was born in Puerto Rico but migrated to the US at a very young age. When asked about how he tries to engage CCE-speaking youth in his science class, Mr. Vega said:

*I do try to consider student’s background knowledge, you know, based on where they're from. How that could actually help them. I do try to consider grouping when I group my students. Sort of heterogeneously. At the same time, I feel like sometimes students feel more comfortable working with people they're familiar with. Then I*
might, if I can, find a stronger West Indian student to pair with a weaker one. That might be a good strategy. (Interview, 4/18/2016)

He attempts to engage the transnational, cultural and linguistic identities and resources by using his knowledge of the West Indies and the broader Caribbean to spark and sustain engagement in the learning of science. Also, Mr. Vega’s pedagogy is fortified by a research project he undertook for his master’s thesis that explored how middle-school English-language learners learn science. He said, “I was particularly interested in that group of non-ELLs. Kids who maybe wouldn’t be classified as an ELL; English was considered their primary language” (Interview, 4/18/2016). He speaks here of CCE-speaking students who are identified as speakers of SE when in fact many do not. His knowledge of sociolinguistics and language variation contributed to his being more open to the ethnolinguistic diversity in his classroom and thinking more deeply about how to engage more productively with language differences.

Conclusion

This section sought to delineate and explore the process and ideologies of homogenization that CCE-speaking youths are subject to, as revealed in the narratives of the teachers in this study. The teachers’ narratives reveal broadly that these students are, for the most part, seen as Black students and are taught in ways that render their specific linguistic, historical and cultural attributes invisible. At least two teachers, however, Mr. Jones and Mr. Vega did try to disrupt the homogenizing process and ideologies by sometimes trying to engage CE-speaking youths in more culturally and linguistically relevant ways. The revelations of these two teachers point to the potential for sociolinguistics to inform the design
of language policies that could positively transform the teaching of CCE-speaking youths in particular, and minority youths in general in US schools.

On the other hand, Ms. Valsano’s, Mr. Martin’s and also Mr. Jones’ narratives point to the challenge that many teachers confront in a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual academic environment. Students are migrating from different parts of the world, and many teachers are having difficulty coping with this level of diversity. Many are unconcerned by the cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences among their students and the potential of these differences to transform teaching and learning in ways that affirm the identities of these youths. These differences are not just between CCE-speaking youths and other groups; differences also exist with the CCE-speaking population itself. Rather than engage substantively with those differences, the New York City school system and teachers find it easier to culturally, racially and linguistically homogenize these students by assuming that the differences among Black students are not especially relevant or salient to their academic advancement. Teachers instead should be trained or encouraged to resist engaging in practices that homogenize these youths. They should attempt to draw on the multiple cultures, the transnational identities, the works of literature, and the literacy and language practices of these students in ways that engage them and make them feel valued, honored and successful in US classrooms.
Chapter Six

Teachers’ Language Ideologies: Yuh Haffi Talk Propa Inna American Skuuls

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the language ideologies that were excavated through a narrative analysis of phenomenological interviews conducted with five teachers whose classes included CCE-speaking youths. Secondly, I weave in that language and literacy practices that teachers perform in their classrooms and the impact such performances have on CCE-speaking youths. Finally, I examine the extent to which these language ideologies help or hinder the potential to teach CCE-speaking students.

It has long been demonstrated that many Black and Latino students are subject to and often taught from deficit (Valencia, 2010) and subtractive perspectives (Valenzuela, 1999). There is a long history of schools presuming the language varieties of subjugated peoples are deficient and defective. As a result, these students are often subjected to correctionist and eradicationist pedagogies. These deficit and subtractive perspectives are often shaped or informed by language ideologies that stigmatize and marginalize the language varieties of minoritized students. It is not surprising then that the linguistic resources and capital of Caribbean Creole English-speaking youths in this study, all of whom are of African descent, are generally viewed, with a few exceptions, by their teachers who were of either Caribbean, Latino or Euro-American backgrounds, as not worthy of explicit validation or invitation into the classroom. Such language varieties are often viewed as handicaps which must be overcome.

The teachers of CCE-youths that I interviewed demonstrate that even though not all of them hold negative views of CCE varieties, all hierarchize varieties of English, with Standard
English as spoken in the US on top, and basilectal varieties of CCE on the bottom. Teachers’ ideologies about the language of CCE-speaking students in school fall under one of two poles:

1. CCE is broken English with no place in school
2. CCE can facilitate student engagement in school

As we will see, the relationship between teachers’ race and ethnicity and positive views of CCE are not directly correlated. Despite some teachers’ deep understandings and experiences with CCE as natives of the Anglophone Caribbean, they hold very negative ideologies about CCE. Perhaps the only factor that seems to make a difference is having studied sociolinguistics, something that most do not do.

Teachers’ Language Ideologies

“Creole is nonstandard English; broken English”

The Anglocentric ideology of standardization shapes and influences how most of the teachers in this study view the language varieties CCE-speaking students in relation to standardized English. Drawing on Milroy and Milroy (2003) and Agha (2003), Farr, Seloni and Song (2010) define the ideology of language standardization as “belief in a superior uniform standard language that [is] accepted by virtually all speakers” (p. 7) There is widespread acceptance of the assumption that there is only one language variety that is correct. As a result, this variety is considered superior and more valuable than others. This perspective even results in devaluation of some varieties spoken by some white Americans such as Southern White Vernacular English, which is found in the more rural parts of some
southern states. This widely held ideology results in the stigmatization and devaluation of the language varieties of minority students; Caribbean Creole English varieties are no exception.

At several points in the interviews, teachers’ responses reveal that, unwittingly, they are often engaged in reproducing and advancing the Anglocentric ideology of standardization which often has the effect of silencing or threatening to silence the natural and authentic voices of CCE-speaking youths. In these interviews, the teachers, for the most part, framed the language of these students as grammatically, syntactically and mechanically problematic or incorrect, rather than as a resource that is to be valued in its own right or as a resource that can be strategically invoked and deployed for either differentiation, student engagement or ultimately improved understanding of standardized and academic varieties of English. In other words, many of the teacher-participants considered it unproductive or counterproductive to the students’ own academic advancement to employ CCE varieties from Guyana, Jamaica or Trinidad & Tobago in the processes of teaching and learning. In general, the teachers viewed these students’ ways of languaging as improper.

One striking example is provided by Mrs. James, an Afro-Guyanese who has taught for over two decades, mostly in Guyana. Mrs. James who teaches ELA at the Academy for Urban Studies claims that,

the caliber of students we get here, many of them do not come from high functioning schools. Their language may not be sophisticated; they make grammatical errors, they have poor grasp of mechanics, they are in the habit of expressing themselves incorrectly. They are below what you would expect although you can’t generalize. If they went to schools like Queen’s, Bishop’s and President’s, their language would be at a higher level (Interview, 6/15/2015).

Mrs. James, in subscribing to the ideology of standardization, frames the students’ language practices as a hindrance to academic performance by invoking the perennial discourse about their poor grasp of the conventions of writing in SE. For example, she refers to the students’
Creole language as not being “sophisticated,” seeing sophistication as a quality that is applicable exclusively to standardized and academic varieties of English. In contrast, minority languages are then framed as coarse, rudimentary, primitive, uncivilized and simple. She laments that these students are below the academic level that one expects and assumes that this level largely results from their lack of sophisticated language use and their poor grasp of correct grammar. As a result, these students are in the habit of expressing themselves not differently but “incorrectly.” Buried in Mrs. James analysis is the deficit ideology that Valencia (1997) so aptly describes when he states that,

Educational deficit thinking is a form of blaming the victim that views the alleged deficiencies of poor and minority group students and their families as predominantly responsible for these students’ school problems and academic failure, while frequently holding structural inequality blameless.

For Mrs. James, CCE-speaking youths’ language varieties and by extension the families from whom they learn these varieties are to blame for their poor academic performance. The teacher does not offer a critical analysis of the inequitable distribution of resources, social stratification in Guyanese society or the pedagogies being used in Guyanese schools as possible explanations for GC-speaking youths, but rather blames the quality of the school, schools that serve poor students.

Being a teacher who is also a CCE-speaking person or has family connections to the countries from which CCE-speaking youths have migrated does not guarantee that he or she will be immune to language ideologies that that frame these students’ linguistic resources from a deficit perspective. Although Mrs. James has close family connections to Guyana, she unwittingly reproduces language hierarchies that marginalize and exclude the cultural and
linguistic resources of CCE-speaking students. For example, when Mrs. James is asked to reflect on some of the differences between CCE-speaking youth and African Americans she says:

_African Americans have more self-confidence than Caribbean students. Culturally, they (CCE-speaking youth) are more reticent. This may be changing. Many are introverted. You have to help them to express, push them to express, to participate. One reason is their accent; they fear being ridiculed by other kids. Group work is not done much. Also students are used to a lot of teacher-led classrooms in the Caribbean. Two famous phrases are “Children must be seen and not heard.” and “Empty barrels make the most noise.” (interview, 6/15/2015)_

Mrs. James vocalizes the view that Africans American students are more confident at languaging that CCE-speaking students. Mrs. Smith attributes this to a culture where children in many West Indian countries are raised to believe that “children must be seen and not heard” and “Empty barrels make the most noise.” Secondly, she believes that CCE-speakers’ linguistic insecurity is based upon “their fear of being ridiculed.” She also attributes what she defines as their introversion to a West Indian school culture which does not allow much group work and in which most lessons are teacher-centered. What Mrs. James refers to as the confidence of African American students might simply have to do with the fact that they are US-born youths who are speaking the dominant language variety of their community. In other words, these American students are speaking their home language. In terms of the linguistic hierarchy in the US, even though African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is considered as having low status, in relation to CCE varieties, it certainly enjoys more relative prestige. Many CCE-speaking persons labor under knowledge that their accents are often perceived negatively by speakers of standardized varieties of English (and also speakers of AAVE) not only when they are in the United States, but also back in their home countries. This is largely because accent is a symbol of social and economic status in many ways.
Certain accents are associated with being a literate, educated person, whereas other accents are taken to suggest a lack of academic development, refinement and elegance. It is often common to hear some Jamaicans chastise other Jamaicans by uttering the following ironic statement. “Yuh chat so bad!” Writing of standard accents, Mugglestone (2003) points out that,

extralinguistic images of ‘elegance’, ‘propriety’, ‘elegance’ and ‘refinement’ are regularly accorded to its use, as well as extended to its users. Images of ‘class’, ‘status’, ‘vulgarity’ or ‘incorrectness’, frequently surround the act of speech.

Evaluation, in contexts such as these, tends to take on the nature of social response, fusing with the prejudices and preconceptions of society, in its own notions of what is ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong.” (p. 50)

Mrs. James subscription to the ideology of standardization is partly due to her being subjected to the same disempowering and stigmatizing language ideologies to which persons growing up in the Caribbean are usually subjected. Mrs. James reveals that “my mother actively discouraged the use of Creole” (interview, June 15, 2015). This is quite common throughout the Caribbean as parents recognize that the valued and powerful form of linguistic capital resides in the standardized varieties of CSE, which are the media of instruction in schools. Some parents (including my own mother), many of whom themselves are Creolophones, historically have pushed or punished their children to speak the “Queen’s English. The purpose is to encourage or compel get them to value and speak the prestige varieties since schooling is carried on in those varieties and is expected to produce upward mobility. This intentionally or unintentionally stigmatizes the Creole varieties. Mrs. James learned and internalized the prejudice and contempt against her own home language variety.
CCE is continually constructed as a variety incapable of serving as a vehicle for teaching and learning, and hence is construed as an obstacle to educational and social mobility. Mrs. James’ linguistic identity is shaped largely by her subscription to unjust language ideologies that validate the supremacy and dominance of SE while invalidating the legitimacy of engaging productively with the home language that CCE-speaking youths bring to school.

Ironically, even though Mrs. James, a woman of African descent, is a defender of standardized English, her language would be considered inferior by those who speak high status, high mobility forms of SE in Canada, Great Britain or the US. Her strong Caribbean accent combined with her racial status as a person of African descent, would attract negative evaluations even though she speaks grammatically and syntactically “correct” English. Her variety of SE would be considered low status, low mobility, even though she is a teacher of English Language Arts. This points to the fact that other factors such as race and class are at play in terms of who is perceived to perform SE varieties in ways that are acceptable to the dominant speakers of SE in the US. Flores and Rosa (2015) have introduced the concept of raciolinguistic ideologies that are grounded in an “appropriateness-based” approach. Racial minorities have historically been framed as inappropriate, and thus, their language also is, regardless of what it sounds like. Racism is complicit in subordinating the linguistic resources of minorities, who even when they deploy standardized ways of languaging, are often still framed as deficient speakers of English. Mrs. James, despite her adherence to SE grammar and syntax, despite her commitment to language ideologies which privilege SE at the expense of GC, is disadvantaged linguistically in part or entirely, as a result of her race. Of course, within her home country, her ability to language in SE is probably framed more positively. Additionally, teaching in a school with many CCE-speaking youths insulates her from the
kind of discrimination she might face in a more racially diverse school with fewer students who speaks the way she does.

Mrs. James further notes that “Creole is nonstandard English; broken English.” She adds, “Indians and Blacks in farming areas use a lot of Creolese. A lot of illiterate Guyanese speak Creolese” (June 15, 2015). Present in Mrs. James definition is the ideology of standardization, one that devalues Creole by referring to it as “broken”. A majority of parents want their children to avoid low status, backbreaking occupations such as farming. They instead want their children to move up the social and economic ladder, thinking that the only way to do so is by becoming proficient in standardized English. As a result, parents, teachers and other members of communities often insist on their children and students using “proper English,” while at the same time devaluing and stigmatizing creolized varieties of Caribbean English.

Mrs. James also reaches back to the home countries of CCE-speaking youths to explain their current “deficient” academic situation. She declares that had these students been to prestigious “high functioning schools” in the Caribbean, such as Queen’s College, Bishops’ High School and President’s College, (three of the top-performing secondary schools in Guyana) then they would more likely be in a position to language in more sophisticated ways and hence they would be performing at a higher level in their current New York City high school. Her analysis implicates the dynamics of class divisions that exist in the Creole-Anglophone Caribbean. As noted earlier, schools are highly stratified by class. The children of the middle and upper classes have access to more effective and well-resourced educational options, while the children of the poor traditionally attend under-resourced schools. In addition, it is typical to praise or blame students’ and their schools for their academic
successes or failures, rather than the inequitable social class structure. It is not surprising then that Mrs. James fails to acknowledge that the CCE-speaking youths of whom she speaks do not speak SE because they might have been disadvantaged by coming from homes where they grew up speaking a variety of CCE.

Another teacher, Mr. Martin, a black ELA teacher of Guyanese background who teaches at the Brooklyn Academy for Social justice and who has been teaching for fifteen years, also considers Creole languages inappropriate for use in the classroom. When asked if he has ever used Creole as a strategy to help CCE-speaking students build content knowledge, given his West Indian background and his familiarity with Guyanese Creole, he responds emphatically that “I conduct my teaching in Standard English.” (Interview, 5/17/2015). When asked why, he asserts that,

-it serves as a model for students who are already having struggles with understanding vocabulary, using words in context, who are having struggles with tense, how to maintain consistency within one sentence and how you can’t mix tenses; you can’t mix present tense with past tense and I think that’s any language. (Interview 5/17/2015)

In this response, Mr. Martin sets himself up as the exemplar of “proper” or “appropriate” language use. This once again invokes the concept of raciolinguistic ideologies which privilege the appropriateness of SE over more dynamic and heteroglossic manifestations of language use in teaching and learning. He establishes himself as a role model that seeks to inculcate correct language use in his students. Mr. Martin’s responses suggest that his linguistic identity, as is the case with Mrs. James, is informed by how he deploys language, and especially standardized English in the classroom. The underlying assumption here is that the students’ language varieties are faulty. Implicit in his response for example is a critique of what he terms a lack of consistency of tense usage in CCE. Verbs in CCE varieties often do
not signal tense with a marker in the same way that SE does. For example, a student might say “Mi go to school yessiday.” (I went to school yesterday.) In this sentence, the past tense is marked by the adverb “yessiday” (yesterday) with the verb remaining in the base form “go”. Rather than seeing CCE varieties as rule-governed languages, Mr. Martin sees them as lacking in structure and standardization. As a result, rather than using the students’ language practices as a strength to be built upon, he sees what he terms as the inconsistency of tense usage as deficient.

It is also clear that Mr. Martin interpretation of tense usage is in some ways influenced by the ideology of language purism. CCE-speaking youths are not framed as being innovative language creators and users, but as youths who are contaminating SE and the varieties used in academic contexts with impure Creole constructions and forms. Hence, Mr. Martin constructs CCE-speaking youths’ language differences and lack of familiarity with standardized and academic varieties of English as “struggles” with understanding vocabulary. Furthermore, he believes that these inconsistencies and errors can be partly remedied by his modeling standardized and academic varieties of English. The language varieties of CCE-speaking youths are seen perpetuating the language “struggles” that students wrestle with in classroom activities. This is not surprising given that standardized English is seen as an instrument of social and economic mobility. Mr. Martin further argues that:

*there’s a large percentage of Caribbean students that are struggling learners, in reference to like, they may have an IEP in which they require extra time to wrap their minds around a piece of literature or nonfiction text. And I think that comes from scaffolding, having a weak foundation from when they were in elementary school or when they were in Guyana or when they were in Trinidad or whenever. (Interview 5/17/2015)*

Mr. Martin holds an ideology of standardization, inherently a deficit perspective. Many CCE-speaking students simply have not been schooled to negotiate complex and dense texts
composed in standard language varieties. This leads to their being labeled as “struggling” or even more significantly, as needing an IEP (Individualized Educational Program). The IEP is an instrument that identifies a student as having mental, cognitive or emotional challenges, thus entitling students to special education services. The linking of language issues with IEPs is telling.

Mr. Martin also attributes the learners’ struggles to not having “a complete, strong foundation in language during elementary school. Schools continue to reject students’ Creole language varieties as having the capacity for knowledge construction. Hence, they fail to take advantage of the strong foundation that they possess in their Creole language varieties outside of school. Students’ language resources are framed negatively as in “they have weak skills in English” rather than positively as in “they have strong skills in CCE”.

At one point in the interview, Mr. Mr. Martin focuses on the fact that some CCE-speaking youths do not know the difference between “their”, “they’re” and “there’s” or “two” and “too” such as in “too much time”, and “two rolls”. When I asked him how he goes about addressing this issue, Mr. Martin responds: “Sadly enough in high school, sadly in high school, through rote practice”. When I further inquired as to why sadly, he states that,

*there are schools in the city that are non-Caribbean, let’s say non-black schools that are — where many of the students know how to do this and are far ahead in reference to those concepts, in reference to being careful, in reference to word usage and omitting words that need to be there, or capitalization issues, you know, people, places and things, parts of speech. (Interview, 5/17/2015)*

This excerpt from Mr. Martin exemplifies the purist language ideologies that shape how CCE-speaking youths are viewed and taught institutionally and by individual teachers. He explicitly references “non-black” schools where students are deemed to
be proficient in standardized varieties of English. In contrast, in “urban” schools where black students predominate, students speak CCE and AAVE that are deemed to signal careless and inappropriate language use. To Mr. Martin this includes the use of inappropriate words, parts of speech and capitalization rules. Rather than framing these ways of using language as differences, Mr. Martin frames them as deficiencies. He goes to say that

we frown upon teaching those things, yet the students need those things the most, but it’s frowned upon teaching them in isolation because they get bored, their attention spans are also very, very limited, so you can’t teach them through rote, parts of speech because that is elementary school, so there is a weird balance that you have to have as an educator, that is to teach without insulting the student population. (5/17/2015)

Mr. Martin reveals in this excerpt his frustration in that teaching the mechanics and conventions of SE in isolation is looked at negatively. He states that this is because it bores students. Because students have short attention spans, teaching them through rote is not effective practice. In addition, mechanics and conventions of SE should have been learned in elementary school. While it is true that students need to be aware of, and be able to proficiently use, these forms, Mr. Martin is right that teaching today’s youths through rote methods is unlikely to be productive.

Earlier in the interview Mr. Martin mentioned that he tries to solve these issues with the rote method. Evidently, he is contradicting himself in this instance since he is acknowledging that this method is unlikely to fail with CCE-speaking youths. His characterization of the students as having “limited attention spans” also is an instance of a discourse of deficit that locates the problem in the students themselves, rather than in the lesson, the pedagogy or how the schools and society frame these students. He ends by saying that teachers have to strike a weird balance in trying to teach these basic concepts because
students could feel insulted. Mr. Martin here is trying to be mindful of how students might feel if teachers are not sensitive to how certain concepts are taught.

Martin’s excerpt reveals that teachers in many ways are inadequately prepared to effectively handle the different forms of language that students bring into the New York City classrooms. The deficit perspectives of teachers are unlikely to result in effective, productive teaching and learning opportunities where CCE-speaking students feel valued and respected and supported. On the other hand, they often feel shamed, silenced and are they are not provided with the instructional supports needed to actually learn SE.

Both Mrs. James, who is a Guyanese immigrant, and Mr. Martin, whose parents are from Guyana, show that they hold the deficit ideologies of language standardization and purism that frame how they define and relate to the language varieties and practices of their CCE-speaking students. This is the case even though they either speak CCE themselves or have family members who do. As a result, regardless of these teachers’ professed philosophies that “all students can learn” and despite their attempts to engage in productive pedagogical and instructional practices, holding to the ideology of standardization and purism hinders the help they give some CCE-speaking students. These ideologies fail to acknowledge and integrate the richness and value of the language varieties (and the literacies produced in such varieties) of CCE-speaking students, in ways that are culturally relevant. This failure can end up undermining not just a student’s success in school, but also the teacher’s.

What is common in both Mrs. James and Mr. Martin’s responses in the interviews is their agreement with the view that there is, or should be, a standard way of writing and speaking in academic environments. When CCE-speaking students’ writing fails to demonstrate proficiency and fluency in the valued varieties, this failure helps to cement their
teachers’ view of their writing as lazy and sloppy, Consequently, Mrs. James and Mr. Martin and teachers with similar views, despite their best intentions, fail to take into account CCE-speaking students’ linguistic practices in ways that could actually be beneficial. In so doing, they miss a valuable opportunity to use more productive pedagogies that can help students become more successful in developing standardized English. In addition, an opportunity to implement a more critical and socially just approach to teaching their content is missed.

As part of this ideology of standardization and purism, teachers also believe that language use must be monolingual and monoglossic and not show any diversity whatsoever. The ideology of monolingualism continues to shape how minority language varieties are perceived socially and politically in the US. The ideology of monolingualism also contributes to the framing, the evaluation and the ranking of minority languages as “broken,” or less sophisticated than the valued varieties of Standard US English. The ideology of monolingualism is usually held initially by social and political elite and eventually (in Gramscian hegemonic fashion) by the less powerful and even by those whose languages and cultures are oppressed. Eventually, many members of minority communities, through their own often unconscious complicity, adopt this ideology as shown in the views in the next chapter of many students in the study. The adoption of this ideology then leads to a situation in which the official and standardized varieties are the ones that are anointed as worthy of being learned or worthy of being assigned as media of instruction.

The ideology of monolingualism refers to the belief that there is only one correct language. Monolingualism evokes the notion that language diversity or multilingualism, largely a byproduct of immigration, is a foreign phenomenon that threatens not only linguistic unity, but also social, political and cultural harmony. It is not surprising then that some
teachers, especially those who are born in the US, are white and monolingual (and who constitute the majority of teachers in the US) might view immigrants such as CCE-speaking youths coming in with a rather strange tongue. Ms. Valsano, a white ELA teacher at Marcus Garvey High School, for example, argues that for her students, speaking in their vernacular has colored their ways of writings. She laments that

> speaking that way has become socially acceptable, but writing that way doesn’t seem to be acceptable in academic writing. In academic writing there are all these expectations for the state exams and then college. What happens is New York City students are probably the most entitled students, the sense of entitlement that’s just unbelievable, in the world. When you talk to them and you say, "You need to focus on the capitalization. You cannot write in all capital letters." "But that's the way I write." "No, you have to change it." "That's my style." They're so set on, "This is my individuality and you can't question it," that they just conform to the laziest, quickest way of writing. What they do is they write either in all capital or all lowercase. They have punctuation [issues] often. Even the structure in their essays ... they just want to free write. (Interview, 6/20/2015)

Ms. Valsano’s comments in this instance reveal an acceptance of the ideology of monolingualism and monoglossia. Her comments also reveal that she frames her students’ language practices from a deficit perspective. Her views do indicate that her teaching is shaped in significant ways by “the expectations of state exam and then college.” Like many teachers, even if Ms. Valsano wanted to take a critical and socially just approach to teaching ELA, she feels constrained by the conservative power and ideologies that saturate accountability and assessment in relation to teaching and learning. All the same, it is surprising and telling that her focus is largely on the conventions and mechanics of writing: how to appropriately capitalize or punctuate, rather than on the substance of writing and topics with which they engage. It isn’t that such mechanics of writing issues are unimportant and do not need to be attended to. More important here is the conflict that often arises between Ms. Valsano’s expectations and those held by students. It is clear here that minority students’
language ideologies and those of the teachers are in tension. Students who “just want to free write” subscribe to a different set of values and language ideologies (much freer apparently) that subvert those held by Ms. Valsano and the individuals and institutions devoted to reproducing and promoting such values and ideologies. This conflict exasperates Ms. Valsano and results in the suppression or denial of the authentic voices of her CCE-speaking students. The failure to integrate that voice into the classroom makes it difficult to help students acquire more standardized language needed to become more socially and economically mobile in the US.

Ms. Valsano further reveals her subscription to the ideology of monolingualism and monoglossia when she states that she “firmly believes that everybody in a community who wants to co-exist...should agree on a set of standards for grammar rules, sentence structure, proper meanings, definitions and so forth” (Interview, 6/20/2015). Her comments not only invokes a monoglossic ideology; they also evoke the ideologies of standardization and purism to a lesser extent, further substantiating the argument that these three ideologies often travel together. I place the focus here on her monolingualist and monoglossic orientation. Her desire for one right way is one that would invalidate vernacular varieties which have different (not deficient or defective) grammar rules, syntax and phonology. Ms. Valsano’s excerpt makes clear that she views the language varieties of CCE-speaking youths as incorrectly departing from the norms and expectations of standardized English. She believes that this departure needs to be remedied by developing one standard language that will allow all New Yorkers to coexist. Ms. Valsano’s desire, however, ignores facts on the ground. New Yorkers already coexist in a plurilingual and multilingual community in ways that are often mutually beneficial or at least in ways that do not result in overt conflicts. From a historical and
linguistic perspective, the US and New York City in particular provide ample evidence to refute Ms. Valsano’s assertion that co-existence is helped by monolingualism and standardization. In fact, New York City has the distinction of being one of the most multilingual cities in the US in which SE has never been the dominant language at all, except possibly in classrooms (Fishman & García, 2002). According to Roberts (2010), “while there is no precise count, some experts believe New York is home to as many as 800 languages — far more than the 176 spoken by students in the city’s public schools” (p. A1). In many ways then, schooling operates separate and apart from the communities in which they are located. While the number of languages are overwhelming and present enormous challenges, current sociolinguistic knowledge suggests that schools would be better served by designing curricula and pedagogical innovations which take advantage of New York City’s ethnolinguistic diversity. The choice to ignore and suppress rather than draw on this exceptional amount of linguistic diversity continues to baffle many sociolinguists and scholars. This choice, driven largely by monoglossic language ideologies, continues to shape and influence how teachers such as Ms. Valsano teaches.

As the interview progresses, Ms. Valsano also argued that she doesn’t think “we should be getting all liberal…” in relation to the grammar of standardized English. Except for governmental and corporate spaces, New Yorkers and Americans in general tend to be pretty liberal in terms of language use, even though many often still believe that some version of monolingualism in the United States would have beneficial effects. In addition, Ms. Valsano’s comments suggest that she holds to a conservative view of language. The language ideologies to which she subscribes can be said to be quite conservative if not illiberal, especially when she is arguing for the imposition of one right way.
In reference to the famous and often controversial double negative “it’s not nothing” in some minority language varieties, Mrs. Valsano says:

_We had a huge debate over why we should say “It’s not anything”. That’s because that could be elitist, white, typical, traditional ways of saying it, and it’s racist to say that a double negative is wrong. What makes the way one person speaks wrong and the other right? We need to agree on one right way._ (Interview, 6/20/2015)

She asserts that “we need to agree on one right way.” In addition to being monolingualist, her argument suggests a rejection of ethnolinguistic diversity. In addition, Ms. Valsano’s disapproval suggests that while she does not have a problem with the language varieties that students use in their daily interactions with each other, she considers such departures from standardized English in writing and literacy activities as wrong. Her perspective promotes Anglonormativity, the belief that all students must develop competence in SE or be framed as deficient and deviant linguistically and in other ways (McKinney, 2016). Once again her argument implicates the ideology of linguistic purism, the belief that one variety of language is purer or is inherently superior or more sophisticated than other varieties. Those other varieties are often seen as linguistic contaminants which have the effect of degrading or devaluing the prestige variety. Ms. Valsano for example, sees the double negative as wrong and not as a legitimate feature of the minority language varieties that is used in writing.

Ms. Valsano tries to be careful in how she frames her opposition to a minority language. As a white woman, she is aware of the politics of her position, of the possibility of being blamed by those who use double negatives and others of racism. She states that being critical could be construed as “elitist, white, typical, traditional ways of saying it, and it’s racist to say that a double negative is wrong.” However, that doesn’t deter her from adopting the monolingualist, standardized and purist perspectives that “we need to agree on one right way.” No doubt that one right way would more likely align closely with how Ms. Valsano and
other Whites in the North and Western regions of the US use language. Her position implicates her own whiteness and its resultant privilege. Alim and Smitherman (2012) cite Barack Obama who once expressed the view that “members of every minority group continue to be measured largely by the degree of [their] assimilation — how closely their speech patterns, dress, or demeanor conform to the dominant white culture” (p. 171). This important point once again highlights the power of raciolinguistic ideologies. They connect race and language in ways that contribute to the reproduction of the ideology of monolingualism and monoglossia. The nexus between race and language is expressed in Ms. Valsano’s belief that there should be one correct way of languaging in the classroom but also across various communities regardless of the ethnolinguistic and racial attributes of New York City’s multicultural schools and society. Ms. Valsano, of course, is not without ambivalence and self-interrogation. She is somewhat aware of the counter arguments against monolingualism and monoglossia. However, in the final analysis, she is in favor of one language and one language form which in effect ends up having an exclusionary effect on minority languages and the language varieties spoken by persons of different races including her CCE-speaking students.

It is this complex of beliefs about both SE and CCE varieties that results in the deficit thinking ideology exemplified by Mrs. James, Mr. Martin and Ms Valsano. CCE-speaking students’ language varieties are framed as a problem to be remedied rather than as a resource that could be explored to create engagement and that could be used to help them develop the more formal, standardized language of schooling. Instead, The CCE-speakers’ language practices are framed as a hindrance to learning, as unsophisticated and therefore unworthy of being employed in teaching and learning. For example, in her beliefs, languaging and
classroom practices, Mrs. James maintains and reproduces in large measure the language ideology of standardization that she learned from her mother and at school. Mr. Martin and Ms. Valsano similarly subscribe to Anglocentric ideologies in ways that undermine their own abilities to successfully help students develop proficiency in the standard and academic varieties of English. As noted by Valencia in the quote above, deficit thinking involves blaming the victim — student and their families — while exculpating the social structure for the inequality. Mrs. James’ comments and the deficit language ideologies embedded in those comments attribute blame to the students and their families for their linguistic failings and deficit, while relieving the larger social systems of responsibility or failing to critique the larger social system for its unequal hierarchical arrangements that limit CCE-speaking youths’ access to social and economic mobility. As a result, these teachers limit their own capacities to engage the transnational resources and identities of these students.

But not all teachers hold on to these values that work against CCE, while upholding standard English. On the other end of the pole, there are those who believe there is some value to using CCE in school.

Come on My Yute: Pay atenshun: CCE for management and engagement

In contrast to the teachers discussed above, Mr. Jones and Mr. Vega, hold views that reveal a more complicated relationship to the ideologies of standardization and purism, monolingualism/monoglossia. Mr. Jones, a science teacher who was born in Grenada and teaches at the Academy for Urban Studies, migrated to the US at age seventeen and still speaks CCE himself. He shows himself to be more comfortable using CCE varieties in the classroom. However, it appears he uses it largely to discipline and control misbehavior in his
classroom. Even so, his usage of youths’ language varieties in the classroom serves to build solidarity between teacher and students and have some positive effect on teaching and learning. For example, Mr Jones states that,

*You know if I have a student who does something that I think is really silly during class, that is really disruptive, I would just, you know, I would say something like “excuse me” or “come on my yute (youth), you know betta than that” or “yuh parents didn’t…” or “did you do that in school in Jamaica?” just to kinda like bring them back to because I know it’s a more disciplined structure, right? to get them to kinda really... like there’s no difference, school is school. So I’ve used it in...and I think if you...and I use it for a reason. I think if I use it, the students’ vernacular, accent in class, they don’t see it as me bein’ very punitive or tryin’ to show them up because then it becomes a contentious “well, why are you showing me up in front of”...I don’t get an argument.* (Interview, 6/10/2015)

In this response, Mr. Jones reveals that he uses the students’ vernacular to connect with them on an emotional or even cultural level in order to manage their behavior. Mr. Jones admits he largely conducts his lessons using a standardized variety of English, which reveals that he too in some ways holds to standard language ideology and to a lesser extent, a more narrowly tailored monolingual/monoglossic ideology. He admits that sometimes when he uses Creole with the students “it’s me just lettin’ you know in an almost nice way using your own language that, that’s not, that is not acceptable. So I, but then, you know when I teach my subject matter I use academic language” (Interview, June 16, 2015). Unlike teachers such as Mrs. James and Mr. Martin, Mr. Jones is more comfortable invoking his knowledge of CCE varieties to manage negative student behavior. He is able to translanguage among language varieties in order to afford more effective teaching and learning in his science classroom. However, even though Mr. Jones uses his knowledge of Creole to build teacher-student solidarity and to manage classroom behavior, he also reproduces a linguistic hierarchy that marginalizes and devalues CCE varieties. CCE varieties are limited to largely large non-academic tasks.
Like all teachers who have used SE to advance professionally, he recognizes the value and power of SE. In addition, as a Grenadian, he himself was brought up in an environment where the regnant Anglocentric language ideologies stigmatized and devalued the Creole variety. His language use reflects that complicated reality. Mr. Jones, like many teachers from the Creole-Anglophone Caribbean possesses linguistic capital in both standardized and creolized varieties of English. In fact, the features of CCE are often quite evident in his speech patterns. As a result of his capacity to negotiate meaning or translanguage, he is in a position to deploy his Creole linguistic capital as needed in the classroom to connect socially and culturally with the identities and subjectivities of students in ways that Mrs. James, Mr. Martin and Ms. Valsano would have difficulty doing. He primarily deploys this capital to manage student disruption or misbehavior and to facilitate learning by invoking cultural connections to the students. Mr. Jones, for example, states that.

*If a student really does not understand something that I’m teachin’ and I know of a word within their, you know, the Patois that will or an example using Patois that will make it a more vivid, you know, kind of like visual for them, I’ll switch and use it so that they get an understanding because you’ll be surprised. You know sometimes you try to teach something and you teach something and you teach sumpn and you lookin’ at them and they lookin’ at you like, I don’t understand that language, but If I switch into, you know, using something that they will recognize, you know then they start thinkin’ a little bit “oh I could see it a little bit better because you’ve used a source of language and you’ve used an example I can identify with and I think that is very, very, very important when you teach African Americans and I think part of the problem in New York City schools. (Interview, 6/10/2015)*

As Mr. Jones states, if a student is having difficulty understanding a particular concept or topic, using an example from Patois to make it “a more vivid...kind like visual for them” is helpful. He claims that he will “switch and use it so that they (the students) can get an understanding...” Mr. Jones here recognizes that sometimes using a student's’ language variety in the classroom can help to catalyze successful learning and teaching for language
minoritized students. In other words, Mr. Jones departs from the expectation that teachers should use standardized language 100% of the time, and uses the often stigmatized language variety of the CCE-speaking student to clarify a concept. As such, Mr. Jones, despite his preference for using only SE in his teaching, does recognize the value of CCE in helping students increase and improve their engagement, comprehension and co-construction of knowledge in his science class. Invoking student language and culture has been shown time and again to more effectively help students better construct their understanding of concepts within a content area. Even though Mr. Jones acknowledgement of the value of CCE in his teaching is to a small degree linguistically and pedagogically sound, prevailing language ideologies serve to constrain his capacity to more fully take advantage of CCE-speaking students’ vernacular language varieties to teach science content in his classroom.

Mr. Jones recognizes the value of deploying CCE varieties both familiar to himself and his students. In employing these varieties, even to the limited extent that he does, he validates both the linguistic and cultural capital and also the identities of his students. In addition, Mr. Jones recognizes the social and political dimensions of language use in New York City classrooms when he states that,

*If I switch into, you know, using something that they will recognize, you know then they start thinkin’ a little bit “oh I could see it a little bit better because you’ve used a source of language and you’ve used an example I can identify with and I think that is very, very, very important.* (Interview, 6/10/2015)

Once again, Mr. Jones references the concept of switching from a SE variety to a CCE one. Mr. Jones possesses the ability to translanguage in order to engage the transnational identities of CCE-speaking youths, connect with them more deeply, and make for more productive knowledge construction in his science classes. He draws on his language repertoires and his
own funds of knowledge in ways that teachers like Mrs. James, does not, even though they both grew up in similar CCE-speaking environments.

It is a teacher like Mr. Jones that Guyanese student Jermaine, tenth grade student at Marcus Garvey High was referring to when asked how he feels when he hears a teacher speaking Creole. In response, he states that “I feel fine cuz you get to talk back to them like that” (Interview, June 10, 2015). The previous year, he had a positive relationship with a CCE-speaking teacher and was able to build more meaningful relationships because of the possibility for linguistic and cultural solidarity.

García and Li Wei (2014) write that a translinguaging pedagogy is important for language-minoritized students, whether they are emergent bilingual or not, because it builds on students’ linguistic strengths. It also reduces the risk of alienation at school by incorporating languaging and cultural references familiar to language-minoritized students. (p. 92)

Using students’ language resources positively both in and out of the classroom, even in small ways, can contribute to building positive relationships within and across minority student groups. In addition, it decenters the hold of the dominant pedagogical, cultural and language ideologies enjoy within the curricula in schools. By implementing translinguaging pedagogies and practices enhance teaching and learning is for both teachers and students. Teachers who largely subscribe to hegemonic Anglocentric language ideologies and ways of languaging in can then become more open to shifting how they view and use language varieties and features. They can begin to reject the more exclusionary pedagogies and practices to more inclusive, less oppressive ones.
Mr. Jones’s conclusion here is that part of the problem remains the school system’s rejection of sound sociolinguistic practice. He can authentically deploy linguistic and cultural capital to authentically and emotionally connect with language minority students. His ability and willingness to connect linguistically and culturally with these students grants him an advantage that some of the teachers in this study do not have. In addition, his commentary also points to the larger problem of the absence of sufficient culturally relevant teaching to engage the specific transnational identities and resources of minority students in general and CCE-speaking students in particular.

Mr. Vega, who also teaches science, Earth Science and Living Environment was born in Puerto Rico and Spanish was his home language. However, his family migrated to the US and at young age and he subsequently lost Spanish as his home language when he started going to school. Standard English became his preferred language variety. Mr. Vega says he would even respond in English to Spanish questions from members of his family.

Mr. Vega’s philosophical, pedagogical, and curricular approach is informed in some ways by his multilingual identity. He says: “I think I speak standard English. I do sometimes speak Spanish to my Spanish-speaking students. French to the Haitian Creole students who maybe spoke French. Again, that's another one where it depends on their level of education (Interview, 4/18/2016). In addition to Spanish and SE, Mr. Vega also possesses some fluency in Standard French which he draws on sometimes to clarify certain concepts for Haitian Creole-speaking students who possess some proficiency in French. Mr. Vega has a multilingual repertoire which allows him incorporate translanguaging practices as needed to help students make meaning of science content.
Teachers such as Mrs. James and Mr. Martin are unwilling in some cases to draw on their own Creole linguistic resources to more effectively engage students and also use those resources to help them more successfully navigate SE. On the other hand, Mr. Vega tries to bridge the linguistic divide that often arises as a result of teachers’ belief that only SE should be the medium of instruction and students whose home languages varieties are CCE, Haitian-Creole or Spanish.

The following statement shows that Mr. Vega does have a more sensitive and respectful approach to language differences and variations. This might be because Mr. Vega has explored some of these issues before. He notes that he took

*a thesis colloquium to a class as my masters. It was my master’s in Earth Science but you just had to do a research project. It was about teaching science to English language learners. I was particularly interested in that group of kids who maybe wouldn’t be classified as ELLs but English was considered their primary language.*

(Interview, 4/18/2016)

In that paper, he discussed the language difficulties that CCE-speaking youths encountered in the science class and possible remedies available to assist them improve their academic performance in that content area. Mr. Vega’s experience shows that sociolinguistically grounded classes can in some cases help practitioners develop more inclusive and tolerant language ideologies and instructional practices that at the very least help students feel that their home language varieties are valued in US classrooms. For example, when asked what the word Creole means to him, he responds:

*You have a colonial language that's mixed with a non-native population that puts their syntax and own words on it. Then you get a third language. You get a third language that is rarely recognized as a language. Or given credence. In general, English dialects, there's a proper way to speak. Then there's the way everybody else speaks. I see a Creole as a dialect of English. If you think about science, languages evolve. Middle English isn't the same as Old English or as English today. I think even in England there's dialects where I couldn't understand people from some towns in England. If you went back fifty years ago before mass media really standardized*
Mr. Vega demonstrates here a degree of fluency in the sociolinguistic discourse. He describes how CCEs were formed in a contact situation with the mixture of the British colonial language and the home languages of the African populations. He mentions also the lack of recognition and respect given to these languages. In addition, he notes the gap between the prescriptive expectations of how to speak “proper” versus the descriptive reality of how people actually language in society. He also notes that languages evolve and change overtime despite efforts to standardize and conserve language structures. More teachers would benefit like Mr. Vega from studying and researching issues around language which could inform their philosophical, pedagogical and curriculum. He goes to say that, 

if you want to succeed in the world, this is the way that you've got to speak and that's the way you have to write. I think there's value to that but I also think we shouldn't devalue people's cultures or tell them they're wrong. (Interview, 4/18/2016)

Although the point is too broadly drawn, since many persons do succeed in the world without successfully developing standard English varieties, in this excerpt, Mr. Vega tries to navigate the space between the social and economic expectations for students to be able to language in the dominant standard language. In effect, he shows himself to be in possession of some degree of racial, cultural and linguistic tolerance which he affirms by saying “I don’t think we should devalue people’s cultures or tell them they’re wrong”. These forms of tolerance for linguistic difference and diversity do inform his philosophical, pedagogical and curriculum approach in positive ways in relation to CCE-speaking students in his science class. He struggles to teach in ways that help these students feel validated and engaged. As a result of his more tolerant ideas, Mr. Vega’s approach is less exclusionary. He admits that he tries
to consider student’s background knowledge, you know, based on where they’re from. How that could actually help them. I do try to consider grouping when I group my students. Sort of heterogeneously. At the same time, I feel like sometimes students feel more comfortable working with people they're familiar with. Then I might, if I can find a stronger West Indian student to pair with a weaker one that might be a good strategy. (Interview, 4/18/2016)

Mr. Vega’s portrayal of himself as a teacher who struggles to help his students by taking into account their background is commendable. Mr. Vega also announces that he has learned some Creole “dialect”. He says that,

The longer I’ve worked sort of and teaching in Brooklyn in the DOE, I’ve had times where my language got peppered with dialect. I do, do things like I say "tree" instead of "three" with my students. I tell them one day someone’s probably going to report me for, you know, they'll think I'm mocking their culture or something. I've just sort of picked up on things. I will pick up a little bit of Caribbean slang. (Interview, 4/18/2016)

Notwithstanding Mr. Vega’s more tolerant approach however, his choice of words suggests that the hegemonic language ideologies have not been critically and systematically confronted. In contrasting his “language” with its prestige with their “dialect” a term that connotes less prestige, he inadvertently constructs a language hierarchy which diminishes the value of CCE-speaking students’ home language varieties. His choice of metaphor, “peppered,” also suggests a less than ideal situation, as if the dialect might have spiced up his language too much. He cites the example of “tree” and “three”. Many Jamaicans who speak the basilectal variety often pronounce the number “three” as “tree”. In fact, Jamaicans often are made fun of for this pronunciation which Mr. Vega alludes when he says, “I tell them one day someone’s probably going to report me for, you know, they’ll think I’m mocking their culture or something” (Interview, 4/18/2016). Mr. Vega’s admission that he might get reported suggests that he knows he might be engaging in what could (although it is unlikely)
be considered discriminatory. In addition to feeling as if he is mocking their culture, he might also be feeling as if he is mocking their race.

Further evidence that the language ideologies of monolingualism, standardization and purism do not exert as powerful hold on Mr. Vega emerges when he asserts that “I don't get hung up on syntax unless sometimes, and I feel like all students do this. Where, if you're trying to explain something but if you flip two words around you can have a wrong answer. That can be a concern.” In other words, as long as meaning is consonant with comprehension of science content, he does not find it useful to attempt to repair how students’ language in relation to SE. He has noticed for example that some CCE-speaking students will say: “Can I have a next pencil?” instead of “Can I have another pencil?” as is usually said in SE. He considers this a difference in language usage rather than evidence of deficit in their language varieties. Mr. Vega’s relationship then to the dominant language ideologies is not as fixed or as inflexible as that of Mrs. James, Mr. Martin and Ms. Valsano. In fact, in some ways, his less rigid subscription to the Anglocentric language ideologies aligns him more so with Mr. Jones. While his dominant language remains SE, he holds less strongly to deficit language ideologies that devalue the linguistic resources of his students. In addition, he possesses some sociolinguistic knowledge and beliefs which help him more effectively and sensitively navigate his often multicultural and ethnolinguistically diverse classrooms, although he admits below that he still faces some instructional and pedagogical challenges with how to effectively teach in those environments. When asked what challenges he faces in teaching CCE-speaking youths he replies,

*it's tough because I sometimes don't know what to do with students who are lost. You can try to explain and re-explain and again, I feel like I'm breaking things down as bare bones as I can get and people are still a little bit lost. It's a challenge. Like I said, I think kids who come in the middle of the year are even double lost because*
everything I'm doing is building upon what we did earlier in the year. I had a girl who came during unit five and if you don't know unit three and four and two, you don't have the basics that I taught in the beginning, if you understand? (Interview, 4/18/2016)

Some of these challenges are related to linguistic differences between Mr. Vega and his CCE-speaking students but some may pertain to other factors. For example, in the excerpt above, he touches on the fact that sometimes, some CCE-speaking youths arrive at a point in the year when he has already taught some of the material needed to understand a topic. As a result of Mr. Vega’s sociolinguistic awareness and his reflexivity around the issues of language in teaching and learning, he is in a position to raise important questions. For example, at one point in our conversation he says

*I'm wondering ... I don't really know that much even about how ESL works. How do you ... I think there might need to be some sort of ... These people aren't technically eligible for ESL right?...You can’t say that standard academic English is their first language, right? Do you give [students] an intervention if they speak English?* (Interview, 4/18/2016)

Mr. Vega’s wonderings and questions is concerned with how to respond to the unique sociolinguistic situation of CCE-speaking youths. They are officially considered and treated as Anglophones (a view they often share of themselves) by the New York City education system. However, these transmigrant CCE-speaking youths are actually proficient Creolophones whose schooling has failed to help many develop the standardized and academic varieties needed to more effectively navigate academic content. What are the appropriate and productive interventions for these students? How do individual teachers develop the pedagogical and instructional resources to address the needs of these teachers? Equally important, how do teachers develop the linguistic and cultural competency that can more effectively help students realize greater academic success? While Mr. Vega has not personally generated answers to the questions, thinking in this manner has helped him to
become more linguistically sensitive and more culturally competent vis-a-vis the CCE-speaking youths in his class.

Mr. Vega, in a similar manner to Mr. Jones, his colleague, is also able to draw on his transnational, translanguaging identity to connect linguistically and culturally to CCE-speaking students although not as deeply and as authentically as the West Indian teacher Mr. Jones can. Mr. Vega shows an acute awareness of language issues and has thought and written about some of these issues. In college, he wrote a paper on teaching science to English language learners, which included CCE-speaking youths. As a result, he understands some of the difficulties that students who do not communicate in SE face in terms of constructing understandings of content in the science classroom. Mr. Vega’s practices and perspectives point to the potential that teachers can shift away from their Anglocentric ideologies to one that embraces and leverages the home language resources that students bring to the classroom in order to produce more effective engagement, to improve academic performance and also to affirm their most salient identities.

Summary

To sum up, teachers in this study hold a variety of language ideologies in relation to CCE-speaking youths’ ways of languaging. Analyses of the narratives of the teachers interviewed for this study show that they hold deficitizing Anglocentric language ideologies, namely the language ideologies of standardization, monolingualism and purism. Mrs James, Mr. Martin and Ms. Valsano pedagogical agendas reflected their acceptance of these ideologies. The ways in which these language ideologies are held and are made manifest in the teaching and learning relationships that these teachers have in relation to CCE-speaking
youths result in reproduction of practices that marginalize the linguistic resources and capitals that constitute the home languages of these students. Such practices, to varying degrees, have the effect of disinviting the Creole varieties and also the cultural backgrounds of this study’s CCE-speaking youths from participation in teaching and learning activities in their classrooms in New York City schools. While two teachers, Mr. Jones and Mr. Vega, hold the dominant Anglocentric language ideologies, their philosophical, pedagogical and curriculum approach incorporate practices that are more affirming of the linguistic resources and capitals of CCE-speaking youths.

ELA teachers, Mrs. James, Mr. Martin and Ms. Valsano reveal that they do not see CCE-speaking youths’ unique ways of languaging as valued phenomena. This is the case even though Mrs. James emerged out of a CCE-speaking environment herself and Mr. Martin’s mother is from Guyana. Their language ideologies show the persistence and power of coloniality even in multilingual societies.

On the other hand, teachers such as Mr. Jones and Mr. Vega demonstrate more flexible attitudes in relation to deficiency-oriented language ideologies. Mr. Vega and Mr. Jones also subscribe to the dominant language ideologies about standardization and monolingualism. However, they do dilute the power of these ideologies by deploying their multilingual and translanguaging resources and transnational identities in order to help students make meaning of the content they teach.

To a great extent, as the interview data reveal, the language ideologies of the teachers do interfere with their ability to realize their stated beliefs, their philosophical, pedagogical and curriculum. The teachers generally express the now cliched view that all students can learn. However, the more appropriate statement might be all teachers can teach, provided they
have access to the appropriate intellectual, pedagogical and material resources. To be fair to the teachers, I want to stress that the purpose here is not blame the teachers. They cannot be held entirely responsible for how the personal and societal politics of language ideologies in classrooms and in the lives of CCE-speaking youths. Teachers are socialized in the same colonial matrix as all members of the society. And this study does not advocate that teachers should not value their language ideologies and the identities that shape and are shaped by these ideologies. However, just as our largely white teacher corps teachers are encouraged to interrogate their own racial, cultural and economic privilege, teachers should also be encouraged to interrogate their own linguistic privilege.
Chapter Seven

The Language Ideologies and Practices of CCE-speaking Youth

Introduction

Throughout their narratives, the transnational CCE-speaking youths in this study expressed a number of complex, contradictory and at times confusing beliefs, feelings, and opinions which opened a window onto the dynamic interactions between the Creolocentric and Anglocentric language ideologies that saturate and shape their communicative practices. CCE-speaking youths subscribe to Creolocentric ideologies that celebrate and valorize their Creole language and literacy repertoires and practices. Simultaneously, they subscribe to Anglocentric language ideologies that valorize SE varieties as necessary for academic and professional advancement while often holding views that implicitly and explicitly devalue CCE varieties. These instances of contradiction and confusion are not surprising given the coloniality-saturated language ecologies within which these black youths are socialized and schooled. It is within these contexts, mediated by coloniality, that they inherit or construct their own language ideologies and linguistic identities.

Any examination of CCE-speaking youths’ relationship to language ideology necessarily invokes the concept of race. According to Veronelli (2015) the "coloniality of language" implicates the centrality of race in the construction and organization of Western linguistic hierarchies. SE and other European varieties have been at the apex of the hierarchy since the sixteenth century. On the other hand, other varieties, most notably those spoken by black and Native American Indian peoples were framed as simplistic and primitive, lacking the capacity to be vehicles for complex, sophisticated thinking and knowledge-making.
Drawing on Quijano's theory of the coloniality of power (1989), Veronelli (2015) postulates that:

To find in colonized peoples the ability to express complex cosmological, social, scientific, erotic, economic meaning is at odds with their reduction to inferior, animal-like beings. Put differently, if the idea of race constructs the perception of the colonizers, then the colonized must have been for them less than human beings, and thus without any complex form of communication, that is without language. (p. 113)

The hegemonic and prestigious status of SE varieties and the racial logic that continues to contribute to their dominance in the “Anglophone” Caribbean and the US, virtually guarantees that CCE-speaking youths in this study, who are all black, will hold beliefs and make assumptions about SE and CCE varieties, especially US and British varieties, that reproduce linguistic inequity, prejudice and symbolic violence.

As has been remarked earlier, the cultural and linguistic formations of people of African descent in the West have historically been framed as inferior, savage and unsophisticated. Black people as a result have often resorted to resistance and rebellion in order to reclaim and forcefully assert their dignity and humanity. Such assertions are never complete or absolute however. Rebellion and resistance can only have meaning within contexts of injustice, loss of equity, liberty and humanity. There is always the shadow of historical injustices, of slavery, colonialism, and racism that darkens, in ways small and significant, the present and future of black humanity and black practices. That CCE-speaking youths have acquired and/or constructed Creolocentric ideologies as forms of resistance to the dominating force of SE is admirable. The emergence of these subversive ideologies suggest that Fanon’s dictum that “the oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves” has
thankfully lost some of its truth and its sting. However, at the same time, the youths believe that to access certain common goods such as a college degree and a profession, necessitate acquiescence to Anglocentric ideologies. In a more ideal world, CCE-speaking youths would be able to acquire such goods, drawing on their own rich cultural and linguistic practices and heritage. In the real/current world however, we must reckon with brutal truths. SE language and literacy practices are needed to succeed in academic contexts and transcend school failure and economic deprivation. At the risk of offending the spirit of black writer, feminist and lesbian, Audre Lorde, I reconfigure here her famous declaration: “We will have to use some of the master’s tools, along with a few of our own, to dismantle the master’s house.”

In this chapter, I begin with an exploration of the Creolocentric ideologies that allow CCE-speaking to contest attempts to reformulate their language practices and identities to fit more Anglocentric norms. These ideologies allow for the maintenance of CCEes as the preferred varieties among the youths in this study. This exploration shows that CCE varieties are the youths’ metaphorical and symbolic home, and also the expression of other cultural literacies such as music. And yet, despite the pride they feel about CCE, and especially its use in popular music, students are reluctant to accept it as an appropriate linguistic and cultural medium in school. In fact, SE remains in some ways an alien variety to these students, to their mouths, a variety associated with linguistic insecurity and symbolic violence that they have experienced especially in schools.

In representing the youth’s voices, with all their complexity, contradiction and confusion, as reflected in their interviews, I employ orthographic conventions that aim to capture as faithfully as possible the basilectal, mesolectal or acrolectal features of either their
CCE or SE variety. As there is no agreed upon orthography for CCE varieties, I took some liberty in how I rendered these features textually.

**Creolocentric Language Ideologies for Home and Family**

CCE-speaking youth’s stories about their lived language experiences as transnational immigrants in their New York City high schools revealed one significant finding: they have developed or acquired transgressive Creolocentric language ideologies. These ideologies are transgressive primarily because they function in ways that counter and contest the coloniality-inspired Anglocentric language ideologies that saturate curricula spaces and also the larger social structure. Many persons including some of their teachers frame the language varieties and practices of these youths from purely deficit perspectives as described in the previous chapter. CCE-speaking youths, however, hold language ideologies that valorize their Creole language varieties as positive in their oral and digital textual dimensions. In their narratives they often frame their particular CCE as constituting cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) or community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Invoking their own agency, they resist the erasure of their Creole tongues, their home language practices. Alim and Smitherman (2012) note that,

> language and culture are not things that people can just “let go” of. Speakers of marginalized language varieties—shoot, of any language variety—learn language from the community of speakers within which they are socialized. Linguistic styles and accents are not genetic; they’re social (p. 58).

The CCE-speaking youths in this study show little clear evidence that they wish to abandon their “marginalized language varieties”. Instead, they demonstrate a strong
commitment to maintaining such. In the next section, I outline and explore specific Creolocentric ideologies held by the CCE-speaking youths in this study — CCE is home and nation, CCE is intimacy, CCE is important for digital connections, CCE connects to Caribbean popular culture and music.

**Mi Langwig is Mi Home; Mi Langwij is Mi Kulcha**

One specific Creolocentric ideology that these transnational CCE-speaking youths strongly subscribe to is the belief that their particular variety of CCE connects them in profound and meaningful ways to their home countries, families and friends. Their narratives show that maintaining their Creole language is fundamental to reproducing and sustaining a resilient home-nation identity. "Home" in this context is both literal and symbolic. It is taken to mean a place where the student lives with family and also their countries of origin. However, beyond the physical space, home indicates that the youths’ CCE variety is a source and a symbol of comfort. Their home language is a refuge and place where they feel sheltered from the politics and violence of Anglocentrism and Anglonormativity (McKinney, 2016) that function to silence the cultural and linguistic resources of CCE-speaking youths in US classrooms. In addition, the youths’ particular variety of CCE also helps to sustain and continually reproduce their transnational relations and identities.

One student who equates language with a safe cultural refuge is JC-speaking student, Romaine. Romaine is a sixteen-year-old sophomore who attends the High School for Digital Careers. He used to attend one of the most prestigious high schools in Jamaica. However, his basilectal ways of talking, his struggles to competently articulate his ideas and feelings in SE would lead one to think that he attended some less socially reputable institution. Romaine
admits that he needs to read more to improve his vocabulary which would in turn improve his
capacity to express himself more easily in SE. He says that sometimes, he does not really
understand what he is learning as he does not know the vocabulary. He does say however that
his writing has improved since he entered school in the US. Romaine’s speech pattern
suggests a repertoire that has more basilectal features which is supported by the fact that he
loves and is is proud of JC. Romaine also loves dancehall and reggae, the discursive practices
of which is largely constructed of JC features.

Romaine, for example, when asked to discuss the significance of JC and why he would
not want to get rid of his language states: "It says as a Jamaican, I'm proud of ma kulcha. I
wouldn't like to replace it wid anything else and basically I love Jamaica. Jamaica is home"
(6/5/2015). Romaine in this excerpt boldly asserts his pride in his language variety,
notwithstanding some stigma attached to that variety by various persons and institutions both
in the US and in Jamaica. His Creole identifies him as Jamaican; it identifies Jamaica as his
homeland. In this sense, languaging in JC constitutes an act of resistance to and rebellion
against the hegemonic hold and status of standardized varieties of English while allowing him
to perform his linguistic, cultural and national identity/ies. Additionally, Jamaica being a
majority black country, JC in some senses is a symbol of one’s racial roots. To preserve his
roots, Romaine refuses to bleach his tongue of the language that instantiates his love of
culture and country. Attempting to get rid of JC and his creole accent would impair his
relationship with his country, his race, his culture and his family as "home." As result, he
resists its eradication. When Romaine says “as a Jamaican” he is invoking the link between
one’s home language and one’s identity. It is with and through language that Romaine
constructs his racial, social and linguistic identity. His Jamaican identity is a central feature of
his existence. It is probable that were Romaine to rid himself of this particular natiolinguistic identity, he might undergo grave psychological and emotional injury to himself, but also to his relation with family and friends who speak JC as well.

A similar sentiment is expressed by Guyanese Creole (GC)-speaking youth Lancey when asked the same question. Lancey is a seventeen-year-old junior at Marcus Garvey High School. Lancey states that if he were to get rid of his GC, he would view himself as committing a high crime against his country. Lancey says he would feel as if "I am a traita or someting to the country. A jus' go to America and turn American an' a don't have time about the country no more or someting" (6/15/2015). In this response, Lancey equates surrendering his capacity to language in GC as a betrayal, as a traitorous and treasonous act against his country. Surrendering this capability means he would “turn” or become an "American." He believes that such transformation would be viewed negatively by members of his family or his community and his friends. They would not appreciate his abandonment of his natiolinguistic identity. Acquiring a new American identity would disconnect and separate Lancey from Guyana and all that Guyanese culture symbolizes for him. In fact, Lancey related in the following excerpt what is likely to happen in some instances when a youth returns to the home country with a new or changed accent. He said that "when I went back home last year, some people want to know why I speaking like dat because I had the American accent" (Interview,6/15/2015). In this instance, “people” questioned Lancey about his changed accent even though to this researcher, he still possessed a noticeable GC accent. However, such questions are usually meant to express disapproval, at least in Lancey’s case. Such disapproval is an attempt to remind the community member who has too soon undergone an accent change of his national and linguistic background. As transnational immigrant youths go
back and forth, given the proximity of their home countries to the US, Lancey returned home and was chided for having an accent that was taken to mean a disconnection in some ways from Guyana and his Guyanese identity. He does not want to become a traitor to Guyana.

Like Romaine and Lancey, Nadine, a Trinidadian transmigrant proudly asserts the cultural significance of Trini-Creole in shaping her identity. Nadine was quite eager to talk about her lived linguistic experiences in school since migrating to the US. She is in the eleventh grade and has been living in the US for about three years. She attended an excellent high school in Trinidad. Her language repertoire reflects mostly mesolectal and acrolectal features. She believes that she can speak SE well. However, Nadine has experienced linguistic discrimination in her high school which she poignantly recalled while being interviewed. She reports that when she first arrived and began attending school, her Trinadian accent was so strong, teachers had a hard time understanding her. As a result, she claims that she was not placed in the ninth-grade honors class but instead with lower performing students in the ninth-grade students because of her strong Trini accent. It the end of the semester, only after demonstrating successful academic performance was she placed in the honors class.

Nadine proudly asserts that to her Trinadian Creole (TC) is valuable because, 

_Dat is your culture, like, at the end of the day, how you grow up speakin' is how you gonna die speaking because dey grow up speakin' standard English and you grow up speakin' Trinadian or Jamaican or Guyanese Creole, you grow up speakin dat way so that's how you gonna feel comfatable within._ (Interview, 6/10/2015)

In this excerpt, Nadine, like Romaine and Lancey, equates speaking TC with enacting and celebrating Trinadian culture. TC is synonymous with her cultural identity, and languaging in that variety makes her feel more comfortable. She extends her explanation of its importance as an act of identity because "how you grow up speakin' is how you gonna die speaking". She is committed to maintain her identity through her Trini ways of languaging. In other words,
she is committing to always holding on to her ways of languaging as it marks her as a Trini because of the power of language to tether one in profound and powerful ways to family, friends and community.

**CCE for intimacy**

CCE is not only for texting, but is also the language of intimacy. One student whose language practices reveals and validates this theme is Jodane, a student from Jamaica. Jodane is a sophomore at the Academy for Urban Studies. Jodane has been living in the US for two and a half years. Similar to Romaine, he speaks a basilectal variety of Creole. Unlike Romaine however, he did not attend a prestigious high school in Jamaica. Jodane’s language repertoire possesses mostly basilectal features of JC. However, he says he would rate himself a 7 out of 10 when asked to talk about how well he can language in SE. He substantiates this claim by saying that since he moved to the US his vocabulary has improved. Jodane says that in addition to JC, he uses words from African American Vernacular English. He reports that mother is a teacher who uses both SE and JC. Jodane says that his fellow students always finds the way he talks humorous. He states that he uses SE to communicate with teachers and other authority figures but he uses Creole to communicate with friends or people from the Caribbean because they understand him when he does.

In the following excerpt, Jodane provides evidence of how he uses CCE to speak to Caribbean girls, and how he struggles to speak “propa” with white girls.

**Jodane:** Well I mean, like, I talk to girls a lot, but if yuh talkin to a girl who is from di Caribbean, you don't have to use SE. Yuh just have to talk like the way di way yuh speak at home, in your own country. But ahm, if yuh talkin to a white person, you ten to use English instead of Creole

**Researcher:** Can you remember a time when you spoke to a white person? What was that like?
**Jodane:** I remember one time I was speakin to a white girl, right? And I was tryin to speak like casually but from her expression, she like didn know what I was sayin so I had to like start over and try to use propa English.

**Researcher:** How easy was that for you?

**Jodane:** I can say it was like...It wasn't that difficult, but it was hard to like try to pronounce di words.

**Researcher:** You were talking or writing?

**Jodane:** No. I was talkin to them. It was hard to write. Yeah cause like, normally I speak pure Creole. I don't really like talk in English or propa English. So sometimes I have to like mind what I'm saying. (Interview, 2/23/2016)

In the excerpt above, Jodane reveals the challenges that arise for him when he tries to communicate using an SE variety or at least a variety close that lect. While it is easy for him to talk with a girl from the Caribbean, talking with a white girl from the US presents some difficulty as for him (and her) it was hard to write or pronounce the words. As a result, the girl didn't understand him and so he had to start over and use what he terms as "propa English", that is, SE. For many CCE-speaking youths, who are officially identified as Anglophones, languaging in SE is a conscious activity that requires them to, like Jodane "mind what they're saying". In other words, CCE-speaking persons who are not fluent in SE have to consciously attend to how they communicate with SE-speakers as they attempt to produce "proper English." While they are familiar with SE, they are not on intimate terms with this variety. In Jodane's experience, given the dominance of SE in the US, and given his dark complexion, the burden was on him to language in ways that made his ways of talking comprehensible to the white girl. His inability to confidently navigate that variety (and her inability to navigate JC) clearly results in frustration and failure to establish new social networks.

Experiences such as Jodane's explains why CCE-youths find it easier to use the language variety in which they possess communicative competence and which for them is
more culturally and linguistically relevant and emotionally satisfying. It is their language of intimacy. Their communicative competence in CCE varieties coupled with their unfamiliarity and emotional and linguistic distance from SE varieties on the other hand also explains why youths like Jodane "don't really like to talk in English or propa English."

Teachers need to work around the Anglonormative and Anglocentric forces that dominate instruction in schools and begin to find ways of incorporating the richness and creativity of these youths' language and literacy practices. They should construct pedagogical identities that produce instructional practices that value the practices of linguistic and transnational minority youths. Becoming "woke", that is becoming aware of how linguicism, racism and classism intersect to generate precarious educational terrain for these youths is most important. Designing innovative culturally relevant practices within a critical pedagogy framework can inform teaching and learning in ways that more effectively help CCE-speaking youths develop the standard language and literacy practices and identities needed to successfully navigate academic texts and contexts. These standard language and literacy practices can and should be done without denigrating their Creolocentric language and literacy practices and identities.

The experiences of Romaine, Lancey, Nadine and Jodane show that losing their CCE varieties would minimize or eliminate their sense of national pride, their cultural and linguistic attachments to their home countries. This loss would also diminish or dissolve the solidarity and intimacy with family and friends that languaging in CCE varieties allows them. Furthermore, a loss of CCEes would weaken their transnational relations and identities as they would be unable to translanguage across the space/borders that exist between the home country and the US. In addition, doing so might produce some shame and guilt as the youths
would feel as if they have turned their backs on their countries, friends and families in back in
the Caribbean. It is evident then that notwithstanding the power and prestige of SE, and the
regressive language ideologies that sustain its power and prestige, many CCE-speaking youths
find some power and prestige in their Creole language variety.

American-Guyanese teacher, Mr. Martin alludes to the positive attitudes and the
underlying affirming ideologies that many CCE-speaking students such as Romaine, Lancey,
and Nadine possess in relation to their Creole language varieties. When asked to describe the
ways in which CCE-speaking youths use language, Mr. Martin responds:

> What I've noticed about their speaking first is that that accent is very, very strong and
> it is almost about a pride in my school because the culture is a very West Indian
> culture in my school which is a good thing, I think. (Interview, 5/17/2015)

According to Mr. Martin, these students celebrate their West Indian background through a
resistance to being silenced or being compelled to change their language practices as
demanded by Anglocentric expectations and ideologies. They revel in knowing that many
other students (and some teachers) are also CCE-speaking persons from the Caribbean who
share the same cultural and linguistic practices and national identities. The students do not
attempt to subtract their Creole language and accent to try and language in the valued
varieties, but find value in languaging in their own Creole varieties. The students find a sense
of belonging and pride in being able to assert and perform these national and cultural
identities discursively through CCE varieties also within the hallways of their school, a place
with policies that exclude their Caribbean Creole ways of languaging. It is clear then that CCE
varieties perform symbolic, emotional and psychological functions for these youths that
standardized varieties of Caribbean and US English cannot. That is, CCEes connect many
CCE-speaking students to their families, backgrounds, cultures and countries in ways that
nourish relationships and identities. The colonial, imperial and hegemonic standardized varieties of English cannot accomplish these acts of identity in the same ways that CCE varieties can. CCE varieties serve the Creolocentric function to connect youths to their family, friends and national origin, both in real life, and as we will see, in the next section, virtually.

Mi Tex in CCE

CCE varieties are also valuable for connecting these youths both to family and friends via digital networks. Although the school context in which only SE is valued is so often valued beyond others, for these youths, social media was an important context of CE use. This is because youths were able to make connections which function to maintain their Creole linguistic identities, while also developing more transnational ones. Communicating using Creole through social media is one way in which these youths out of school literate practices differ from the linguistic expectations and norms of schools. These youths have developed orthography to represent ways of languaging over digital media. Even though there are no officially created or government sanctioned orthographies, the youths, through their own agency, have created and are creating their own semiotic resources which afford communication in ways that validate their language varieties and Creole linguistic identities as shown in the following dialogue between the researcher and Romaine:

**Researcher:** uh huh…. where does the spelling for Patois come from, for the texting language, for the Patois texting language, I mean is that something you make up on the fly, or you approximate the sound, the spelling approximates...so when you say “What a gwaan?”

**Romaine:** You just seh it an' jus try spell it out in yuh min' and jus put it in di tex or some people spell certain words different cause maybe is becaa where dem come from
Students have developed language and literacy practices to enable the projection of these Creolocentric identities across time and space. This type of activity points to, and should be framed as, evidence of the creativity and ingenuity (rather than the deficiency) of CCE-speaking youths as they construct language and literacy practices that incorporate and reproduce cultural and linguistic resources in digital spaces.

The following excerpt from Jamaican student, Jodane provides more evidence of this use of CCE in texting.

**Jodane:** If I'm trying to text like "hey" or "What's up?" Ah always write it like "wats" instead of "what".

**Researcher:** Why do you do that?

**Jodane:** Is much more shorta an much more easia to write.

**Researcher:** So when you're texting do you text in JC or in SE?

**Jodane:** No I don't text in SE cause I tend to like figet about dat. I text in Creole.

(Interview, 2/23/2016)

As Jodane states, he texts in JC because of the concision and ease of doing so, as opposed to attempting to text in SE. In the next section, we will see that students value CCEes as vital for sustaining connections between the youths and the popular cultures and popular literacies of their home countries.

**The Significance of Popular Culture: Reggae and Dancehall Literacies**

The research and writings of New Literacy Studies (NLS) theorists (e.g., Barton and Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2008; Street, 1984, 1993) have posited convincingly that literacies (rather than literacy) are more fruitfully construed as ideological constructions that reflect
their social, cultural and political contexts rather than as neutral, apolitical and autonomous phenomena. As a result of these revolutionary reconceptualizations of literacy, schools and educators have access to frameworks that allow for multiliteracies, which include literacies that students develop not only in school, but outside of schools as well. The work and theorizing that has emerged out NLS have resulted in pedagogies and methods that aim to bridge the gap between the out-of-school language and literacy practices of the youths and the more formal and cultural language and literacy practices of educational institutions.

The present research project joins that tradition by arguing that schools and teachers should create opportunities for CCEs-speaking youths to generate synergies between their Creolocentric ideologies, identities, home language and literacy practices and the formal curricular demands of Anglocentric schooling environments. More specifically, this research argues that there is a vast cultural terrain related to literacies that CCE-speaking youths develop around forms of popular music, most notably reggae and dancehall, that can be used to supplement their curriculum in ways that lead to deeper engagement and more effective teaching and learning.

In addition to advancements and contributions of NLS pioneers, students and scholars of hip-hop culture and music (Alim, 2009; Hill, 2009) have sought to locate ways of using those resources to fashion more culturally relevant pedagogies and instructional practices for black youths in urban schools. These scholars have been at the forefront of the movement to develop Hip-Hop Based Education (HHBE) as one response to the academic underachievement of urban African American students. As Hill (2009) notes:

drawing from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical traditions, researchers and practitioners have effectively demonstrated the variety of ways that educational
contexts are enhanced when hip-hop and other forms of popular culture become a part of the formal school curriculum. In particular, scholars have shown how the elements of hip-hop culture—rap music, turntablism, break dancing, graffiti culture, fashion, and language—can be used within classrooms to improve student motivation, teach critical media literacy, foster critical consciousness, and transmit disciplinary knowledge. (p. 2)

Drawing on the insights of NLS and HHBE studies, this research project suggests that opportunities exist for teachers and schools to engage in productive and tactical appropriations of the language and literacy practices used in popular Caribbean music, such dancehall and reggae. Doing so would mobilize CCE-speaking youths’ heritages and histories and schools' commitments to develop students who are college and career ready. More importantly, appropriations of this sort can help to cultivate citizens who are critical thinkers and who are inspired to become active participants in US democracy.

Some CCE-speaking youths sustain their linguistic practices because it enables them to participate in Caribbean popular music culture. Using CCE varieties to connect to the rich popular music cultures that have been developed and established both in these island nations and the US is another way in which they nurture their national identities and cultural origins. Ignorance or dismissal of this phenomenon is a missed opportunity for schools and teachers who fail to engage the youths’ cultures and their music. Morrell (2008), a former ELA teacher and critical literacy theorist, has written that he was,

appalled by the disconnect that [exist] between...students' out of school literacies and the world of the literacy classroom. For example, the students' literate practices that were part of their everyday participation in home, community and popular cultures
were not reflected in their academic contexts. The same students who read magazines cover to cover, memorized song lyrics, played video games, wrote e-mails and web logs, and text-messaged friends on cell phones were also completely disengaged from the literacies of the school. (p. 91)

While Morrell was referring to African-American youths at a high school where he taught ELA, his perspective is relevant to CCE-speaking youths. There remains a disconnect between the out of school lives and literacies of these youths and the teaching that happens inside the classroom. Their rich, complex and dynamic lived experiences and realities, including their language varieties and literatures from their home countries, are not fully incorporated into curricula.

The popular music culture that originated in the Anglophone Caribbean, and Jamaica, in particular, has enjoyed an enormously popularity across the globe. It can be argued that in some ways, the success of that music on the global stage has helped to fortify the identities of the youths in and from the "Anglophone" Caribbean. For example, various performers who use varieties of CCE as the medium for their art have gained widespread fame and enormous financial success. Famous singers include Jamaican reggae singers and dancehall artistes such as Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Marcia Griffiths, Sean Paul and Shaggy, to name a few. In addition, CCE is being increasingly used by artists. The late Louise Bennett, the most popular Jamaican poet is beloved for her body of work in JC. Famous humorist and writer Trinidadian Paul Keens Douglass, who credits Louise Bennett as a role model, has also used TC as the medium to write and share his stories about Trinidadian life and culture. More contemporary writers include 2015 Mann Booker prize recipient Marlon James and 2014 Forward prize for best poetry, Kei Miller. JC is also often represented in US and UK films.
The popularity of reggae and dancehall, which are largely sung in CCE, makes these genres potent sites for the construction and celebration of Creolocentric identities and solidarity among Caribbean youths. Dancehall is a cultural product forged by ghetto youths and nourished by a powerful vision to escape the constraints imposed by oppressive historical, economic and social relations experiences in post-colonial Jamaica (Stanley-Niaah, 2010). It is the most potent multidimensional form of musical, and cultural production to emerge out of Jamaica (Stolzoff, 2000). According to Stolzoff, (2000),

dancehall is not merely a sphere of passive consumerism. It is a field of active cultural production, a means by which black lower class youth articulate and project a distinct identity in local, national and global contexts; through dancehall, ghetto youth also attempt to deal with endemic problems of racism, poverty and violence. (p. 1)

Dancehall has become a transnational force influencing and shaping the emergence of local hybridized forms dancehall in other nations are far away geographically and culturally as Japan (see Marvin Sterling, 2010). While those under the influence of Anglocentric language ideologies view language varieties through which dancehall and reggae musics are expressed as debased and defective, the CCE-speaking youths, influenced by their Creolocentric language ideologies, value and validate these forms with their support.

For Jamaican student, Romaine, Reggae and Dancehall are his two favorite genres.

When asked who he listens to, he replies:

For Reggae, I listen Chronixx, I listen Proteje because Proteje was a past student (of my school in Jamaica), old boy and I 'ave dis frien' dat is closely related to him. And ah listen him music, he send some good messages in his song so is basically Chronixx and Proteje. Fi Dancehall, I listen a lot of Dancehall artistes, whatever sounds good, ah listen like Vybz Kartel, Popcaan, Alkaline, Devin di Dakta, who is a new artiste. (Interview, 6/5/2015)
The dancehall artistes that he mentions are among the most popular performers on the current musical landscape and sing or rap primarily in a basilectal variety as is the custom in that genre. These songs often capture the lived realities and experience of the urban poor in violence-ridden communities.

The reggae singers Chronixx and Proteje are rastafarians who sing what is known as conscious reggae, that is reggae that explores themes of social justice which aim to raise political awareness. As the student Romaine states, he likes Proteje because he is an alumnus and also because he appreciates the messages in his songs. Deejays (a term synonymous with "rappers") such as Vybz Kartel, Alkaline and Popcaan on the other hand, rap mostly about partying, about their hypermasculine and sexually aggressive identities and also about daily struggles in Jamaican ghettos. In addition to reggae and dancehall music, Romaine also listens to hip-hop. He vocalizes that he likes "to listen Drake, Kendrick Lamar, J Cole and Fetty Wap which is a new artist." The rappers that he mentions are some of the most acclaimed black rappers in the US. His attraction to these hip-hop artistes and their music shows that youth, outside of school, access not only their own home cultures and music, but also that of African Americans. Participation in hip-hop cultural and musical practices has implications for broadening and expanding not only the youths’ linguistic repertoire, since these songs are performed in AAVE, but also can lead to the expansion of their identities or the construction of new ones. Given this reality, there is the potential for CCE-speaking youths to benefit from an education that included reggae, dancehall and hiphop.

Guyanese student Lancey also asserts his appreciation for both reggae and dancehall. They are sung in varieties he understands and appreciates, he says. The students' translanguaging potential becomes even more evident in their consumption of popular culture,
that is, typically consumed by those from the less literate, poorer and working classes. The
following exchange with Lancey demonstrates the importance of this form of culture to CCE-
speaking youths:

**Researcher:** Can you talk about your favorite kinds of music. Who do you enjoy
listening to?

**Lancey:** Ah, mostly enjoy listening to Reggae, Beres Hammond, Vybz Kartel,
Gyptian, Dancehall, Soca like Machel Montana.

**Researcher:** What languages are those songs sung in?

**Lancey:** Mostly same cause Jamaica speak Patois. Trinidad, A don' know what they
speak.

**Researcher:** What about Beres Hammond, what language does he sing in?

**Lancey:** English

**Researcher:** Not the same language as Vybz Kartel

**Lancey:** No

**Researcher:** But you understand them all?

**Lancey:** Yeah (Interview, 6/5/2015)

The singer Beresford Hammond that Lancey mentions is an older Jamaican reggae
singer who sings mostly in SJE and mesolectal JC. He is known for songs such as "Putting up
Resistance", "Tempted to Touch", and "What One Dance Can Do". On the other hand, the
majority of Dancehall performers as noted before, generally tend to use more basilectal
varieties (although of course there are exceptions). Jamaican Dancehall DJ, Vybz Kartel that
Lancey references, deejays in JC, as is common in the dancehall genre. Some of Kartel's most
popular songs include "Badda Dan Dem" (Stronger Than Them) "Look Pon We" (Look at
Us), and "Send Fi Mi Army" (Send for My Army). The titles (and the verses and choruses) of
the above songs are all delivered in basilectal CCE. To continue making meaning of these
songs requires that CCE-speaking youths maintain Creole language practices and literacies and the affirmative language ideologies needed to reproduce such practices and literacies. Fully appreciating these popular culture texts requires taking a multimodal approach that moves beyond lyrics to include watching/critiquing the video performances of these songs in which the deejays/authors visually construct and express sociopolitical concerns that are relevant to their audiences at home and in the diaspora. These performers often enact identities through gestures, vocal delivery, Creolocentric ways of languaging, and ways of dressing that appeal especially to many male CCE-speaking young persons.

That Lancey and other CCE-speaking youths can navigate this varied linguistic and popular culture terrain that takes into account dancehall and reggae points to the benefits of incorporating the rich translanguaging practices of this music in order to more fully develop the educative potential of these youths. Teachers are often unaware of these practices as they often frame the linguistic and cultural resources of these youths from deficit perspectives that implicate monoglossic and Anglocentric language ideologies. Lancey is able to linguistically and culturally make sense of these different genres which employ varieties that span the Creole Continuum. It also points to the porous borders that exist among the various lects that he engages with daily as he participates and consumes of popular music and cultures produced and distributed by Caribbean cultural agents. At the same time, one must acknowledge that the language practices in use in popular culture are often not as linguistically complicated as those in use in academic and literary texts.

The genres of popular music from the Caribbean are for the youths both local and transnational. These popular cultural forms help to develop and sustain their out-of-school language and literacy practices. Many of the youths make clear their affinity for these
(trans)national musical genres of the Caribbean. As such, carefully engaged, these genres and the texts that comprise these genres can become sites of engagement with CCE-speaking youths. Teachers can invite these forms to promote deep learning of content, explore issues of justice and injustice, of power and class struggle, of gender and sexuality and violence in urban and ghetto spaces. They can engage with these music and culture texts in ways that challenge and deepen these students’ understanding of the social, cultural, political and linguistic spaces and positions they occupy and the roles, beliefs, identities, and resistance generated in and by those spaces and positions.

**Between pride and reluctance to use Caribbean language and culture in formal lessons**

Of course not all students (or educators for that matter) view or will consider dancehall and reggae music and cultures as legitimate sites for increasing engagement, improving critical thinking and increasing learning outcomes. Many (if not the majority of) educators in US classrooms do not recognize hip-hop culture and its music as means to help AAVE-speaking youths acquire standard language and literacy practices. Similarly, practitioners might also not be comfortable inviting CCE-speaking youths’ out of school language and literacy practices that center Caribbean popular culture. At the same time, the more transformative and critical educators who welcome out-of-school cultural and linguistic practices into the classroom, have to be mindful that some students might see this transforming of a product created primarily for entertainment and enjoyment into a legitimate object of the classroom in(tro)spection and study, as illegitimate or unserious. They might view the attempt to create a safe space for popular culture as a form of pedagogical appropriation that dilutes and diminishes the impact of what this form of culture means and
how it operates in their worlds. This perspective is demonstrated in the following exchange with Romaine:

**Researcher**: Ahm, what about if your ELA or music teachers included or studied or analyzed forms of West Indian music in your classes? What would your reactions be if one day you walked into music and the teacher said "Today we’re gonna analyze some Jamaican dancehall, like Ghetto Youth by Vybz Kartel? We’re gonna see how and why he wrote Ghetto Youth and identify some of the themes in this song."

**Romaine**: Honestly, if ah walked into class and the teacher seh dat ah would be laughing (Honestly, if I walked into class and the teacher said that, I would be laughing.)

**Researcher**: Because?

**Romaine**: Because like dose are stuff I hardly hear people come up wid and ah know nuff music and stuff, di culture, Ghetto Youth an' everyting but fi a teacha fi seh dat, a would be laughin'. Ah would actually fin' it a bit funny to be like "what fly up in dem head fi a tink dat?" (Because those are things I hardly hear people discuss and I know a lot of music and stuff, the culture, Ghetto Youth and everything but for a teacher to say dat, I would be laughin. I would actually find it a bit funny. I would be like "what possessed to her to come up with this idea?") (Interview, 6/5/2015)

Of all the students' responses to this question, I found Romaine's to be quite surprising. Romaine states that he would find it "funny" if a teacher in the attempt to connect in and out of language and literacy practices, interrogated the lyrical content, literary devices and elements of the song Ghetto Youth by Vybz Kartel. This may be because he is not accustomed to experiencing these forms and issues as objects of intellectual and academic inquiry in the classroom space. In other words, it could be that notwithstanding his affirmation of JC and Jamaican culture, he finds it difficult to view the integration of Caribbean popular cultures into the classroom as a scholarly venture, one that is suitable for academic interrogation. Romaine's position, in this case, contradicts an earlier scenario illustrated in the following example:

**Romaine**: Ah remember one time [in Global Studies class] we are using proverbs an she ask me for a proverb, ah don't remember di one she said but she ask me if A know
one similah and ah seh "yes miss" and she seh "what is it?" and a said "one-one coco
cfull basket". You know dat one right, yeah and dat same proverb is similar to odda
proverb from different culture. The Mexican has one, di Japanese has one, is all di
same; is jus dat we have our own....and dat likkle experience mek mi share wit odda
people what it meant...a little thing like Jamaica, one, one coco full basket. Yeah.

**Researcher:** You heard that when you was growing up?

**Romaine:** A use to hear some proverbs. A don't rememba a lot o dem but dat is the
one dat stan out in ma head.

**Researcher:** Yeah that's one of the more popular ones. to encourage somebody that small
steps make a difference. The Chinese one, a Chinese one that kinda matches that one "A
journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step".

**Romaine:** I think is that one. Yeah that's it.

**Researcher:** "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". It's the same
idea of "one-one coco full basket." (Interview, 6/5/2015)

This Jamaican proverb and its Chinese equivalent mean that *little by little (one by one) great
progress is made or achieved*. It is evident from Romaine's experience that he felt gratified
that his teacher invited him to share an example, which he did in JC. It made him feel equal to
his peers from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds in that moment when he says:

*The Mexican has one, di Japanese has one, is all di same; is jus dat we have our
own....and dat likkle experience mek mi share wit odda people what it meant...a likkle
thing like Jamaica, one, one coco full basket. Yeah.* (Interview, 6/5/2015)

Romaine certainly did not find this experience funny, as he claims he would, if dancehall
music became a site of inquiry. It is critical incidents such as this example that can begin to
shape in positive ways the schooling experiences of linguistic minority students. The teacher's
invitation to Romaine to share from his cultural and linguistic background and then explain
the proverb is commendable, however small an act it seems. However, he seems to draw the
line at the potential of popular culture to enhance his learning experiences and academic
outcome. Teachers should take responses such as Romaine's into account when they are
contemplating implementing these more progressive and critical pedagogies in their
classrooms. In the next section, I outline and discuss the Anglocentric ideologies that CCE-speaking youths hold and that inform their self-perceptions and self-definitions and also they ways they hold such ideologies complicate their views about their language and literacy practices and their identities.

Anglocentric Language ideologies for school and careers

The sections above show that students pride themselves in their use of CCE for national identity, intimacy and family, use in social media, and popular culture, and yet, they are somewhat reluctant to engage with its use in schools. This is because students also simultaneously hold Anglocentric language ideologies, ideologies that they have picked up as they interact with an English-speaking white world. It is in schools where this interaction mostly takes place, especially with their white teachers. Thus, it is not surprising that one of the main ideologies these students hold is that CCE is not appropriate for writing. And in addition, students have learned that CCE is not appropriate for professionals and for career success.

Di Student Dem Cyant Rait

The CCE-speaking youths in this study generally subscribe to the notion that improvement in writing for academic purposes is only possible in SE. This belief is expected, as youths have not had the opportunity to develop writing competence in Creoles. CCEes have no agreed upon orthography and typically Caribbean governments and people do not view these varieties as capable of being media of instruction or being used to construct school knowledge. CCE-speaking youths cannot imagine that writing competence in CCE varieties
could be developed. CCE-speaking youths recognize that the culture of power (Delpit, 1988) and the coloniality of language require students to develop and demonstrate the capacity to use standard and academic varieties of US English to accomplish school assignments and also to have a greater chance of accessing opportunities for professional and economic advancement. This is the case both in the US and their home countries in the Caribbean.

One student who recognizes the power and the constraints of her language choices in both GC and SE is Alisha. Alisha is from Guyana. She is a twelfth-grade student who has been living in the US for three years. One of Alisha’s hobbies is reading. She states that she likes to read werewolf stories, vampire stories, romance novels, mystery novels, and historical novels. Alisha says that she is just focused on trying to pass her classes and get her education, go to college and get a good job. To achieve these goals, she believes it’s important not to become “Americanized” as her mother thinks that doing so could derail those goals. She has struggled to reduce her Guyanese accent because she believes that GC is “broken English”. Furthermore, she states that she experienced feeling of frustration and insecurity when she first arrived in the US because many persons did not understand her. Alisha believes that living in the US has led to improvements of both her academic performance and her writing. As her language choices in her essays have shifted to reflect more standardized features, she states that she has experienced more success in essay/composition writing. Even though she feels that GC is broken English, it is the variety through which she most comfortably expresses her ideas and feelings.

Alisha, for example, when asked if she uses Creole language structures in her writing says that "I try not to do it because in the past when I used to write like that I failed a lot for my writing parts, but now I try to, like, not do it” (Interview, 6/2/2015). Alisha here reveals
that she struggles to remove any evidence of her GC from her writing as the use of that variety is associated with failure. In other words, because that variety from the perspective of US (and Caribbean) educational institutions is deficient, as incapable of carrying knowledge and meaning in a way that SE can, it cannot be used by students to accomplish instructional tasks assigned by their teachers. In addition, some of their teachers, from both the Caribbean and the US are intolerant of departures from SE, departures often characterized as errors rather than linguistic differences. For Alisha to meet the linguistic standard required by SE, she must monitor herself, be on guard to make sure she is conforming to the linguistic expectations of her teachers who subscribe to Anglocentric standard language ideologies. In fact, Alisha claims that since she has been in the US, her writing has improved. She states: "I started using some of the terms or phrases that they say. The way I write improved a lot because I was a horrible writer; I'm there now, not all the way up there like where I'm supposed to be, but it's definitely there." (Interview, 6/2/2015) In this excerpt, we can see that she construes improvement as the ability to write with some proficiency in SE, rather than saying that she has acquired new SE structures in her language repertoire that allows her to navigate that variety more successfully. In other words, improvement in the ability to express oneself in writing is not possible in Creole from the perspective of the school system. One who writes in Creole is construed as "a horrible writer" or even worse as someone who "can't write." Some CCE-speaking youths like Alisha must copy terms and phrases of their American born counterparts in order to improve writing in SE.

Similar to Alisha, Romaine construes improvement in writing as his ability to express himself in the power code. He claims that,

*I believe my writing improve since ah came here cause ah speak mostly English now and less Patois, my vocabulary is going up, ah know more words and ma way of
writing is changed because back home ma English, ah usually got pure like 50s, 60, 70s in English because a hardly use di English language as often. (Interview, 6/5/2015)

Romaine here is referring mostly to school where his teachers speak SE. As a result, he is beginning to integrate more SE structures into his writing assignments. The integration of these structures into his writing is what is characterized as an improvement. He is now using more English and less JC and his vocabulary has expanded. His grades for assignments in Jamaica were between poor and fair, but he is suggesting that now that he is constrained to use the SE variety more often, he asserts that his capacity to write (in English) has improved.

**If Yuh Want a Gud Jab, Yuh Haffi Speak English**

A second Anglocentric ideology that CCE-speaking youths have in common is the belief that SE is primarily for academic and professional advancement. Unfortunately, this belief helps to maintain the asymmetric linguistic hierarchy where SE is employed to accomplish more valued functions in society, while CCEes are viewed as appropriate solely for outside-of-school activities at home, in texting, or in schools outside of the classroom. In other words, Anglocentric ideology function in ways that establish a sort of linguistic apartheid which marginalizes CCEes to a few domains such as personal relationship, texting, and popular culture. In addition, this kind of apartheid functions to establish a diglossia of sorts which bear no relationship to the concept of linguistic repertoire. Humans do not have separate language systems in their heads but have one linguistic repertoire that allows them to select structures needed to realize sociopolitical and cultural actions as needed. Erecting two separate systems, with SE as the high variety (favored) and Creole as the low variety (disfavored) creates a situation in which CCEes can be marginalized so that they pose no
substantial threat to the dominance of SE, the language of education and the professional work world.

Guyanese student, Alisha, for example, believes that SE is important because it helps one to,

get a good education, go to college, get a good job...Like if you’re trying to get a job, especially if you’re from the Caribbean, you have to know how to speak proper English because it can get annoying. When they have to ask you to repeat all the time or the employer might just get frustrated and can’t understand it. (Interview, 6/2/2015)

Alisha argues that to become educated, to get into college and get a job in the US requires competence in SE especially if one is a from the Caribbean. Her argument is influenced by a personal frustrating experience on a summer job.

Another student described SE as being more "professional". Shorna-Kay is an eighteen-year-old senior from Jamaica. She attends Brooklyn Academy for Social Justice.

Shorna-Kay believes that she speaks SE very well. This may be due to her attending a prep school in Jamaica (which are more prestigious and costlier than traditional primary/elementary schools) and also one the top traditional high schools in western Jamaica. Her language repertoire reflects this background as she expressed herself in the interview using fewer basilectal features than Romaine or Jodane did, two fellow Jamaican students in the study or Lancey, a Guyanese participant. In other words, she speaks in ways that would lead some persons to infer that she attended “good” schools or that she is more intelligent than students whose language repertoire possesses mostly basilectal features. That she went to such schools partially accounts for Shorna-Kay’s response when discussing what Creole means to her. She states that "Creole is not very professional" (Interview, 6/3/2015). From this perspective, CCE varieties are not endowed with the capacity or capital needed to navigate the
professional world. It is not suitable for the world of work, for job-hunting and interviewing. Creole is also considered as unsuitable for as a medium for conversation with authority figures in schools such as teaches and principals.

Jamaican student, Jodane, also has a similar view. When asked about the role of CCE in his daily life, responded thus: "when I'm talkin to a teacha or a authority figure ah tend to use normal English. But with my friends or people from di Caribbean, I tend to use Creole cause dey are more likely to relate and undastan betta" (2/23/2015). In other words, in the language hierarchy, SE possesses the kind of cultural and linguistic capital that facilitates communication with those in positions of power, authority, and dominance in the professional environment within which schooling occurs. His JC, however, is reserved for friends and CCE-speaking people. This brings us back to the issue of the translanguaging practices of urban youths. The youths engage in the process of translanguaging depending on the person with whom they are interacting and the identity they wish to foreground or index. However, in the case of CCE-speaking students they are translanguaging between two varieties that, while they share a similar lexicon, do not have equal status in society.

According to Jamaican student, Romaine:

*Learning standard English gives you an idea of how to communicate wit' people once you leave di school, and like it give you a betta chance of people acceptin you fah who you are when you speak on a level of undastanding with that people, cause you don' wanna go to a job interview and speakin' pure Patwa. You have to speak on a professional level so dat dey can look at you an say yes you are di ideal person ah want for dis jab.* (Interview, 6/5/2015)

Romaine too believes in the idea that speaking SE improves a person's chance of getting a job or succeeding on a job on graduating from high school or college. In addition, he believes that speaking SE improves one’s chances of being accepted by others. He continues that it is not to
one’s advantage to go on a job interview and speak “pure Patwa”. Speaking that way might disqualify one from getting that job.

Romaine clearly is aware and finds it necessary to internalize the belief that it is not socially or professionally advantageous to language in Creole when one is interviewing for a job. Romaine further comments on the relationship between SE and a good job by stating that "Cause when ah tink of a good job, I’m thinking about high wage, suit an’ tie everyting, doctor, lawyer, cause you have to can communicate with people professionally" (Interview, 6/5/2015). To Romaine and many others, the images associated with professionalism and success are tied to one’s ability to language in a SE, the prestige variety. Images or notions of “high wage”, “suit and tie”, “doctor” and “lawyer” do not come to mind when one languages in a CCE variety. This is not to suggest that there aren’t persons who make a living language in CCE varieties. Dancehall and Reggae singers, poets and actors do. However, what these artists do is generally not considered as prestigious occupations, in the same ways as the typical middle and upper class ones that Romaine mentions.

In this section, I discussed the Anglocentric ideology that frames the SE variety as the only one suitable for professional pursuits and purposes. CCE-speaking youths share the diglossic notion that their home language, while clearly valued to and by them, is not suitable for accomplishing certain objectives such as obtaining a job. The youths believe in the power of SE, and believe it to be important to their future. As such, they subscribe to the Anglocentric ideology that supports this view. The Anglocentric ideology that speaking SE is one of the most powerful means to social and economic remains firmly entrenched in the minds of CCE-speaking youths. And while there is some validity to this ideology, other scholars have shown that in many cases, one’s ability to speak and write SE proficiently is no
guarantee of mobility. CCE-speaking students should be given the opportunity to critically interrogate the language varieties in which they must negotiate meaning so as to challenge the unbalanced power order that privileges SE at the expense of marginalized varieties. Only this critical interrogation would make it possible for these students to practice Standard English that would make it less alien. CCE-speaking students simultaneously hold Creolocentric having to do with success at home and intimate relationships, and Anglocentric ideologies, having to do with success in school and society and professional relationships. Standard English remains, however, foreign to them, as we will see in the next section.

**Standard English as an Alien Tongue: It Mek Mi Feel Laik I'm Speakin a Farin Langwij**

In some ways, for some CCE-speaking youths, the SE variety is akin to a foreign language. It is a variety to which they have little or no emotional relationship. It is not for them a language variety with which they have established an intimate relationship. It is not the language used for building and sustaining personal relationships. It is not the language used for building and nurturing their identities. As a result, these youths often feel distant from the SE variety. It is not a language they embody, deep in their beings. As their narratives show, even though these youths are identified officially as Anglophones, they are in essence alienated from SE varieties.

Trinidadian student Nadine, expresses it thus:

*SE basically it means like my way through dis education system like my way to get into college and do something with ma life but the way I speak, di way I grew up speakin is like dat is what is more comfortable for me. Like right now di way I'm tryin to speak slow? I got my words tongue-tied and it makes me feel like i'm speakin a foreign language because I'm normally comfortable speakin TC.* (6/10/2015)
Nadine experiences SE as a variety to be used to accomplish educative and economic objectives. Its primary functions are to get her through the school system so that she can do something with her life, that is, to achieve social and economic mobility.

The ideology that SE is the means to academic and economic success among linguistic minorities is powerful throughout the US, the Caribbean, and indeed across the globe. Nadine further reveals that speaking SE requires her to become self-conscious, to monitor how she languages in that variety with others to make sure that she speaks it correctly. She gets her "words tongue-tied" and she begins to feel as if she is "speakin a foreign language". Speaking a foreign language requires attending primarily to its grammatical features. So while SE is the official language in Trinidad and throughout the "Anglophone" Caribbean, it feels foreign to and distant from her. In comparison to the foreign language-like feel of SE, Nadine is far more comfortable languaging in her home language. She states that:

> When I speak Creole, I feel normal, I feel like you know dis is OK, how I speak is not a problem, but den coming up here and having to speak SE it was way harder because I normally, I would not write how I speak but If I have to speak, that's the problem cause I would love to speak in di way I grew up speakin but I can't. It's hard. (6/10/2015)

She claims to feel normal when she speaks TC (as opposed to SE). In her mind, how she speaks is not as much of a problem as the monoglossic language ideologies that she encounters. She is more comfortable, more at home in TC, a positive resource in which she can more competently express her thoughts, feelings and identities. Given the option, she would refrain from speaking in SE and opt for speaking the way she grew up speaking. Of course, as indicated above, she recognizes the dominance of SE and its capacity to help her acquire certain social and economic goods that would be difficult to acquire through a deployment of her TC resources, especially in US society. However, her view calls attention
to the ways in which a hegemonic standard language such as the SE variety dominates, and yet inspires resistance.

Guyanese student, Lancey, expresses a similar perspective in the following excerpt:

**Researcher:** Describe how you feel when you speak Creole?

**Lancey:** It feels better cuz I understand it more.

**Researcher:** And so when you speak Standard English?

**Lancey:** I feel like I would bite my tongue sometimes. (Interview, 6/5/2015)

Similar to Nadine, Lancey's response that he feels like he would bite his tongue when he speaks SE reinforces the notion that for these youths SE is often perceived and used as if it were a foreign language. Lancey's response suggests speaking SE might actually result in harm. He might actually draw his own blood when he attempts to speak the dominant language. In other words, speaking SE is a difficult task that he would rather avoid. Speaking GC, however, is evidently a far more comfortable experience.

Guyanese student, Alisha, also experiences SE as a language with which she lacks the kind of intimate relationship she has with her own GC. In response to a question asking how she feels when she speaks English, she says "it depends on who I'm speakin to, so it's like, especially I don't like to say that much. Sometimes it's kinda hard, especially when I try to phrase a sentence?" (Interview, 6/2/2015). For her too, languaging in the SE variety requires consciously attending to how she phrases her sentences which she finds somewhat difficult. To avoid this difficulty and often embarrassment, like other CCE-speaking youths in this study, she tries not to say too much. Often, some of these youths confess that they become silent or taciturn in order to avoid wrestling with the "alien tongue" that SE is or can often be.
Finally, it must be noted that depending on how flexibly and easily a CCE-speaking youths can navigate or translanguage between their home language and SE, their level of difficulty or embarrassment may vary. Jamaican student, Shorna-Kay for example seems to be able to move with a great degree of competence between JC and SE unlike some youths whose competence, especially productive competence is primarily in CCE. She states that:

*for me, like, I would speak like Creole in my house because we understand it but out here in school like when I’m talking to like an American I have to speak proper English because they won’t understand what I’m saying.* (Interview, 06/02/2015)

Her competence to move with some ease or fluidity between the two varieties or the features of both varieties may be because as reported earlier, Shorna-Kay attended prestigious prep and high schools prior to migrating from Jamaica to the US. Her ability to communicate with less difficulty or embarrassment suggests that the quality or character of schooling can in some cases mitigate the amount of symbolic violence that CCE-speaking youths often endure when they speak and write in US classrooms.

The next section shows how the alienation towards standard English has been conducted through the symbolic violence that these students experience especially in schools. Some of this is the result of interaction with teachers, but other symbolic violence is experienced at the hands of classmates and peers.

**Laughter and Mockery as Symbolic Violence**

**Teacher-Initiated Symbolic Violence**

CCEes are often described as “unserious”, as “cute” and as “funny”. This creates a context in which, through laughter and humor, achieved at the expense of CCE-speaking youths’ ways of talking, the asymmetric linguistic relations is reinforced. CCEes are relegated
to the bottom of the hierarchy and their language varieties invite derision in ways that result in embarrassment, a form of symbolic violence. Sometimes this is initiated by teachers, other times by peers.

TC-speaking student Nadine, for example, recounted her story of being subjected to one of her teacher's efforts to transform her ways of languaging: At one point in time "she (her teacher) ask mi if ah was speakin' English cause it was dat strong and ah seh "Yes!" She seh "could you speak slower". I said "sure" (Interview, 6/10/2015). In this excerpt both Nadine and her teacher have sharply different conceptions of what constitute "English".

Nadine is clearly exasperated by the question and the teacher's seemingly insensitive attitude. As a result, a conflict emerges between Nadine and the teacher, one which she as a student begins to lose. Students from the Anglophone Caribbean are framed officially as Anglophones. However, they are often perceived, and often rightly so, as speakers of some other language. At the same time, Nadine's TC is not so far from English that she cannot be understood. Nadine's teacher, who obviously rejects Nadine's response that the variety she was speaking is English, tries to eradicate her Creole ways of talking by having Nadine replace her accent with one that is more in line with her perception of how a "proper" Anglophone should talk and sound. Nadine says with some sadness and exasperation in her voice: “She wanted me to speak slower and more proper, and she would rather pick on me to read in class and while I'm reading she'd say 'stop, pronounce each word, and slower' and I would have to do that” (Interview, 6/10/2015). For Nadine, this public coercion in front of other students was a painful and humiliating experience. When asked how she felt, she states: "That made me feel like I was a delinquent" (6/10/2015). Driven by her monoglossic ideologies, the teacher apparently thought she was providing appropriate help to Nadine. She
wanted Nadine to become more understandable by refashioning her ways of talking. The teacher however, from Nadine's poignant retelling of this episode, ended up in some ways, wounding her. Her teacher, taking on the role akin to a colonizer, deployed the power to impose the "right" and valued ways of talking and sounding upon Nadine, who is now in the role of the colonized. Her teacher, with the best of intentions, is offering Nadine what she sees as an opportunity to begin acquiring a middle class and white linguistic identity with the "proper" accent. This, of course, sends a message of inferiority to Nadine: "You don't speak appropriately or clearly; something is wrong with how you talk." Even if the teacher never intended to send that message, the result is that Nadine felt hurt. Her teacher viewed her linguistic resources through a deficit and deficiency lens that needed subtractive/corrective action.

In order to eliminate the violence that she felt subjected to, she began to practice and imitate her teacher's prescribed ways of talking, to sound more "American" and less "Trini". Nadine relates with hurt that, "I would come home and I would try to do what she does; I would pronounce each word, speak slower" (Interview, 6/10/2015). In this sense, as has been the case historically, those subjected to symbolic violence are often complicit in the reproduction of that violence, although in many cases they also resist it. In Nadine's case however, resistance to her teacher's attempts to refashion her ways of talking to make her sound "American" emerged at home. Nadine reports that:

*my parents would watch me like "Nadine you're home." They would tell me, "Nadine, you're home"...They understood that I was so out of my...like, it was a different environment for me an' to come home and know that I can speak the way I wanted to, but not only that but to at least have some type of familiarity around me, it was good, so when they heard me trying to be how everybody else wanted me to be and speak how everybody else wanted me to speak, they were like "When you're home, you don't have to do that cause you're home."* (Interview, 06/10/15)
Nadine's parents found her attempts to change her TC ways of language as either out of place, as a kind of violation, or a form of symbolic violence against the self. They acted to arrest those attempts. They did not want her developing an identity that placed her at odds with her own Creole language and culture, at least not at home. Home is a place where Nadine can and should feel free to perform her home language identity. In that space, in that time, she can be free from the politics of American Anglonormativity. As she relates, having her parents respond supportively, "to come home and know that I can speak the way I wanted to, but not only that but to at least have some type of familiarity around me, it was good". Home is a place of refuge where she can forget about the pain and humiliation she experienced as a result of her teacher's Anglocentric language ideologies, her pedagogy of linguistic domination and symbolic violence. Home is where she can be her authentic Trini-sounding self without having to worry about how her teacher or others perceive her.

One reason why this unfortunate interaction occurred is that teachers are not being adequately prepared to engage with linguistically diverse classrooms effectively. As suggested in the previous chapter, teachers who possess some sociolinguistic literacy, tend to be more sensitive to students' language differences. Teacher education should equip teachers with the skills and resources that can help them develop better and more sensitive approaches for dealing students who speak in minoritized ways.

GC-speaking student, Alisha, also experienced symbolic violence, which led her to engage in actions that modified her accent and her ways of talking. In the following excerpt, she recounts how her ways of languaging has changed:

*Alisha:* The way I talk, it's changed a lot because I don't really think I have my accent, the accent, the strong accent that I had when I just came up here, I think it went away, a little bit.
Researcher: Why do you think that might have happened?

Alisha: Because I started speaking the way they did. Pronouncing some of my words the way they do. (Interview, 6/2/2015)

In this excerpt "strong accent," especially that of black student, can be construed as a criticism within the US context, even if one is speaking a SE variety. In other words, a "strong accent" is not only undesirable because it might act as a barrier to communication; it is probably more undesirable because it marks the speaker in ways that suggest "illiterate" or "unintelligent" or "uncivilized" especially within contemporary linguistic environments where SE varieties are dominant or that racializes them (Flores & Rosa, 2015). The youths are aware that in the US linguistic ecology or market, their Creole variety, in her case GC, has a lower value and is subject to prejudice and discrimination. In listening to Alisha, one does not hear a strong Guyanese accent although a CCE-speaking person or any person familiar with CCE varieties will detect her West Indian backgrounds and more specifically traces of her GC. However, she has undoubtedly worked on developing a new more American sounding identity just as Nadine attempted. One reason for modifying the way she used to speak is because she has endured misunderstanding and nervousness as she languaged with speakers of SE and AAVE. As she stated, "it was kinda hard speaking to somebody who doesn't understand how I'm speaking because it's like how do I tell this person something without sounding like nervous and scared" (Interview, 06/10/15). It is always the case that the minority person who speaks a variety different from the dominant and valued variety, in a conversation with a more powerful (white) other, must struggle to make him or herself understood. He or she must take steps to be understood by making themselves clear to those in the dominant groups. This experience in essence reveals how symbolic power operates and how it results in symbolic
violence. In this asymmetric linguistic power dynamic, the less powerful of the conversants must make concessions to the more powerful one.

Like many other CCE-speaking youths, Alisha experienced linguistic insecurity, and a sense of linguistic inadequacy. In schools, and in their interactions with speakers of SE, she and other CCE-speaking are framed as incapable of languaging proficiently and hence are often framed as less intelligent. As a result, in order to escape her insecurity, her sense of being inadequate and the stigma attached to non-dominant ways of languaging, she felt compelled to adjust her ways of talking to improve communication with others and also to improve how she is viewed by others. This is clearly the result of the symbolic violence which she experienced both in and out of school.

Jamaican student Romaine also gave an example that reveals his experience of symbolic violence. Of his struggles to be heard and understood, Romaine vocalizes that,

*Even sometimes, I be tryin’ to speak di English and people seh dem still hear my ahm, dem still hear my accent and I have to like try to go overboard wid i’. Sometimes have a little mixture, sometimes me try to get a little mixture of English, England, British cuz I have this frien’ from Englan’. He went from Jamaica to England but he came down so I kinda undastan a litte so to me dats like the bes way for some of dem to undastan it propaly (Interview, 6/5/15).*

According to Romaine, because others have viewed his accent as an impediment to successful communication, he often resorts to creating a mixture of JC with British English. Romaine believes that using British English with Received Pronunciation to the degree he can, could bring clarity to his ways of talking. As he says "dats like di bes way for them to understand it propaly." Given that RP is associated with high status, wealth, culture, refinement, sophistication and education, it is understandable why Romaine would resort to this strategy. Historically, JC has often been socially constructed to mean low status, poverty, low culture,
coarseness and illiteracy. While attitudes to CCE varieties have become more positive over time, the negative connotations attached to these varieties have not been completely erased. The experiences of Nadine, Alisha, Romaine and Shakeel show that CCE-speaking youth face prejudice and discrimination

**Student-Initiated Symbolic Violence**

Symbolic violence also emerges when other minority students react negatively to the ways in which CCE-speaking youths language. Students were asked to describe how their classmates reacted when they would speak in class. In some of these cases students were complicit in either initiating or furthering the mockery of their own language variety. A few of them revealed that many of their classmates found their ways of talking "funny" and would also mock their ways of talking as demonstrated in the following excerpt from Lancey’s interview:

**Lancey:** Dey might laugh cuz di way I'm soundin' is funny to dem. I have a Jamaican fren, both me an him, when we speak out in science class, di way would say a certain word like 'intestine' soun funny to dem.

**Researcher:** How do you say it?

**Lancey:** We say "intestine" (long i sound in last syllable). Dat's how we (in Guyana) say it. (Interview, 6/5/2015)

CCE-speaking youths’ different ways of pronouncing certain words can often attract negative attention such as mockery or ridicule (which are forms of symbolic violence) in ways that a RP-speaking person from Britain never would. In general, RP is not an object of mockery; it is a variety that is offered enormous respect and is socially constructed as one of the most sophisticated and serious varieties of SE in the world. Lancey's pronunciation of intestine with a long /i/ sound at the end is unfamiliar to many non-Guyanese (and probably many other
CCE-speaking persons also) and as a result invites critique as laughter. This form of symbolic violence is what compels many youths to try to change their accents and ways of talking, not just to fit in but to reduce the linguistic insecurity, linguicism and violence that they endure in an environment that does not accept linguistic differences.

Shakeel, another Guyanese student who attends the High School for Digital Studies, has also experienced symbolic violence as result of Creole language practices and features. He reports that he cannot recall any experience where he encountered symbolic violence in his home country but he has in New York City as revealed in the following excerpt:

**Researcher:** Can you recall any experience where someone in your home country said “speak English.” or “yuh chat bad.”

**Shakeel:** Not really back in ma home country but up here, people, like, say, like, “speak English” an stuff like dat becau dey don’t undastan di way dat ah talk because I talk pretty fas so dey don’t undastan what ahm tryin to say

**Researcher:** Yuh think is just the speed or is it more than the speed?

**Shakeel:** No is just ma accent, is ma accent too yeah. All o dat play a part.

**Researcher:** Is that from teachers or students?

**Shakeel:** Basically students?

As Shakeel’s excerpt reveals, he has been a victim symbolic violence as those fellow students who do not understand him or make the effort to understand him attempt to force him to submit to the language ideologies of monolingualism and standardization. Ironically, the fellow students in his school who tell him to speak also usually endure symbolic violence as their varieties are also target of discrimination and ridicule. For him, as he recalls, the demand to “speak English” is a new experience as he never encountered the demand to speak SE in Guyana. It is common to see signs and hear voices in the US that call for immigrants to “speak English”.
Trinidadian transmigrant, Javaun, a seventeen-year-old student who attends the Academy of Urban Studies also relates that he, like Nadine and Shakeel has suffered symbolic violence. However, unlike Nadine, Javaun’s accent remains far more Creolized than that of Nadine whose ways of languaging is more toward acrolectal features. It is evident that Javaun, unlike some students, has not succumbed to the pressure to alter his accent in ways that would result in his sounding less “trini” in the following excerpt:

**Javaun:** It has times that I feel bad... When I just came here most of the kids didn’t understand what I was sayin. I had was to like talk like dem so dey could undastan what I was saying, you know...at first it make me feel bad because you know you didn fit in.

**Researcher:** Did you ever feel reluctant to talk and express yourself?

**Javaun:** Yeah. A lot. In class. Dat’s why in English class, I had di same grades from nine grade til now (eleventh) because I don’t really talk dat because, you know, some o dem make fun of yuh accent especially in nine grade but now everybody mature and stuff, so everybody is used to tings. Miss Blank (pseudonym for another teacher) teach us, don’t make fun o each odder accent.

In Javaun’s excerpt, he articulates clearly that other students made him feel “bad” by making fun of his Trinidadian accent. It is clear that the language features of Trinidadian Creole and its accent are devalued and are considered to lack prestige within the context of his school. The reactions of the other students to his language differences left him feeling excluded, unable to fit in by sounding like a US-born youth or some other valued variety. The symbolic violence he suffered silenced him for a time as he was reluctant to participate verbally in class. He claims that this reluctance to participate in the ELA class contributed to his lower grades from ninth to eleventh grades. Eventually there was somewhat of a positive change he says. As his classmates became more mature and also accustomed to his ways of speaking they stopped making him feel “bad” and excluded. And he speaks of one teacher who taught the students about the harm that is done when some students make fun of other students’
accents. It is evident from Javaun’s experience that within the minority youth population, students engage in symbolic violence against each other. This occurs even though within schools such as Javaun’s, generally all the varieties spoken, both Caribbean and African American are considered as dialects and hence inferior to SE.

These reactions and tensions within the minority community around language practices is the result of the coloniality of language and power which continues to reproduce an asymmetrical language hierarchy with hegemonic SE at the apex, prejudices and language ideologies which diminish the value of and capital in the languages of people of African descent.

JC-speaking youth, Jodane, also related a similar story when he responded to the same question. He said:

*Let's say i'm in class and ma teacha ask me a question, everybody is keeping silent just waiting for me to say something, so ah feel like as a Jumiekan now, ah use ma accent, they decide to laugh at me cause the way i'm answering di question is kinda funny.* (Interview, 2/23/2016)

In this excerpt, laughter, once again, seemingly innocuous, is a form of symbolic violence. Based on Jodane’s response, his classmates' reaction to his way of talking and his Jamaican accent suggest that they view JC seen as lacking seriousness or substance. Lacking the seriousness of standardized varieties, CCE varieties are hence constructed as ones that are easy to parody and mock. When this occurs, youths such as Lancey, Javaun and Jodane experience symbolic violence with is often camouflaged under the guise of laughter and harmless fun.

As if often the case with symbolic violence, the targets of the same often participate in its production rather than openly resisting. This is revealed in a story revealed by Jamaican
student, Romaine. In the example related below, he is complicit in the production of symbolic violence. He stated that:

_Whenever I speak Patois wid dem in class is eeda fah like a likkle joke or supp’n like dat, try to get a likkle laugh outta dem but I try my best to keep in on a professional level so I speak English so because of dat ah feel mo’ comfortale speakin’ Patois so I hardly talk wheneva you see me aroun’ di school cause to me Patois is mo’ comfortale wit me or even when I’m not speakin’ Patois mi nuh really feel as comfortale so ah talk less. (Interview, 6/5/2015)_

In this instance, he deliberately uses JC as a form of comedy to get a laugh out of his fellow students. Unfortunately, in so doing, he contributes to the reproducing and reinforcing of a linguistic hierarchy that positions JC as inferior to other varieties. In that sense, he and other CCE-speaking often use Creole to create humor. It is possible that the youths are using symbolic violence to paradoxically build community and solidarity within their different speech communities. In this way, symbolic violence functions to accentuate the differences within the different groups of black students and sometimes Latino ones by valuing those varieties closer to SE as more acceptable. Rather than uniting these minority youths to confront the Anglocentric language ideologies that invalidate and oppress their own language resources and literacies in US schools, symbolic violence divides and perpetuates linguistic discrimination.

**Summary**

The narratives of the CCE-speaking youths show that their Creole language practices and literacies are sustained by the development of Creolocentric language ideologies. Students believe that Creole is important for identity and connection to family, friends, and cultural practices, especially music, both in real and virtual communities. These language ideologies validate their particular Creole home language variety as it connects them in positive ways
across borders and helps them construct and maintain transnational identities. Youths have developed out-of-school literacies centered around reggae and dancehall which are the most popular genres across Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad. They have also developed their own digital and social media textual literacies using their particular CCE. However, schools have not engaged with these literacies. As a result, there is a significant disconnect between the youths’ home lives and their school curricula and classroom activities.

Although CCE-speaking youths have developed Creolocentric ideologies that celebrate and valorize their language varieties and literacies, they also subscribe to Anglocentric ideologies. Youths’ subscription to Anglocentric ideologies is grounded primarily in the belief that SE is the legitimate language variety in which writing should happen and which is important for academic and professional success. CCE-speaking youths then have internalized to some degree deficit perspectives about Creole and the idea that Standard English is foreign to them.

One way in which this has occurred has been through the symbolic violence that CCE-speaking students have been subjected in some New York City classrooms, sometimes from the teacher, and other times from peers and classmates. CCEs-speaking youths are positioned in ways that frustrate their desires to hold on to their Creole, while they appropriate Standard English. There is a relationship between the ways that students feel about Caribbean Creole English, their desires for standard English, and the role of teachers and their school peers in this process. In other words, schools are partly to blame for shaping the students’ language ideologies in a way that upholds Standard English and stigmatizes their use of Caribbean Creole English.
Chapter Eight

Implications and Recommendations

Introduction

In chapter one, I described the language socialization process that I underwent in my community in Jamaica and the roles played by my grandmother, mother, and the various schools I attended. I was subject largely to the operations of the coloniality of power and language. As a result, I developed Anglocentric ideologies that stigmatized JC for decades, even though it was indispensable for communication with those in my community who either did not speak or did not wish to speak SE. Fortunately, in my later years, I encountered scholarship and research carried out in disciplines that explored how power, prejudice and ideologies shape the views of and attitudes towards language and literacy practices. I began to evolve new and critical ways of viewing language, which resulted in a reexamination of the Anglocentric ideologies that I held. This evolution produced two important changes in my philosophical, curriculum and pedagogical approach to language and literacy practices. First, I began to develop Creolocentric ideologies that affirmed JC and other CCE varieties as rule-governed linguistic phenomena that are rich in cultural value and cultural capital. Secondly, I decided to engage in scholarly work that pushes for the adoption and production of more liberatory and democratic forms of pedagogies in the education of CCE-speaking students and linguistic minority youths in general.

On reflection, one significant lesson that emerges for me from my narrative is the potential to develop views and ideologies that affirm all the features in one’s linguistic repertoire. While there may be tensions among the ideologies that support the various resources from the different varieties that comprise one’s linguistic repertoire, it is not
inevitable that these ideologies be arranged in a hierarchical manner. It is not inevitable that Anglocentric ideologies be deployed in ways that stigmatize and marginalize CCE varieties. The notion of a linguistic repertoire suggests that language varieties are not stable, discrete, and monolithic entities but rather entities with unstable, fluid and permeable borders. If we accept this dynamic and dialogical conceptualization of language varieties, then the construct of a language hierarchy collapses. The stigmatization of Creole varieties collapses, which allows for the emergence of a more socially just linguistic market, a market that accepts and affirms the youths’ capacity to enact authentic identities through translanguaging.

In some of the narratives of both students and teachers, I recognized myself. As I listened to the voices and analyzed the narratives of both groups of participants, I found it easy to empathize with the views they held, knowing that I once held similar views and to a certain extent I still do (although in contrast to the youths in this study, I never held ideologies which valorized Creole). I am especially proud of the youths for developing positive Creolocentric ideologies that validate the worth of CCE varieties. In the sections following, I outline summaries of the research findings and their implications for how to advance a more socially just environment in schools where CCE-speaking youths are in attendance.

**Summary of Findings**

This research project set out to excavate and describe the language and literacy practices and the language ideologies of eight CCE-speaking youths and five teachers who teach these students. I sought to understand whether the interactions between teacher and student practices, literacies, and ideologies either enhanced or hindered the effective schooling
of these youths. I outline the specific questions and brief summaries of the findings below. My first line of inquiry focused on practitioners who work with CCE-speaking youths.

**Question 1a**
- What are the language and literacy practices of teachers of CCE-speaking students?

**Findings**

The teachers’ investment in SE largely shaped their language and literacy practices. Their linguistic, professional and pedagogical identities are to a significant extent, grounded in their ability to language in SE. The teachers in the study, for the most part, tended to teach their subject areas employing SE. Some teachers, because they view students’ language varieties from a deficit perspective tried to impose standardized ways of speaking on students by having them practice how to pronounce words and speak in more Anglocentric and less Creolocentric ways. However, a teacher who speaks CCE however is more likely use CCE but largely to manage classroom behavior and on occasion to clarify a concept in ways that make it more comprehensible to a CCE-speaking student.

**Question 1b**
- What are the language ideologies that teachers hold about CCE-speaking students’ language and literacy practices?

**Findings**

Teachers held language ideologies that fell into two categories:

1. CCE is broken English with no place in school.
2. CCE can facilitate student engagement in school.
All teachers subscribe to ideologies of standardization and monoglossia which fall under the first category. Teachers in general view CCE-speaking youths through monolingual lens, that is, as speakers of CCE or broken English. The youths are not viewed as having a rich linguistic repertoire composed of features from both Creole and Standard English varieties. Instead, they are more likely to be viewed as speaking, not just incorrect forms based on the rules and conventions of SE but from some teachers’ perspectives, morally debased forms of language. Teachers with low levels of sociolinguistic literacy are more likely to engage in this type of linguistic prejudice. Importantly, teachers’ subscription to the coloniality-inspired ideologies of standardization, monolingualism and language purism varies. These variations that are not predictable by racial or national background. For example, teachers such as Mr. Martin and Mrs. James who are African descent and Guyanese background held firmly to coloniality-inspired ideologies of standardization, monolingualism and purism. White teacher, Ms. Valsano also subscribed to these ideologies but more strongly to that of monolingualism to which she believes that minority youths should submit if they wish to succeed academically and economically. In contrast, Mr. Jones and Mr. Vega were less firmly attached to these ideologies although they still taught primarily in SE and saw that variety is necessary to students’ social and economic advancement. Their fidelity to the same ideologies came across as weaker than that of their fellow practitioners. The weakness of their fidelity to these ideologies allowed them to exploit the pedagogical opportunities afforded by the capital in CCE varieties to manage classroom behavior and more importantly, to engage the students in learning in ways that Mr. Martin and Mrs. James cannot.

Although students perceived themselves as Anglophones or as persons who understood SE well, their teachers, especially teachers not from similar backgrounds, have
difficulty understanding them when they speak. As a result, teachers tended to frame CCE varieties and the students who speak those varieties from deficit perspectives. Often in their attempts to help these students language in ways the school system deems appropriate, teachers often subject them to symbolic violence.

The second line of inquiry focused on the lived linguistic and literacy experiences of the CCE-speaking youths.

Question 2a.
• What are the language and literacy practices of Caribbean Creole English-speaking students in New York City high schools, both in and out of school?

Findings

Students, for the most part, spoke mesolectal and basilectal varieties of Caribbean Creole English. They did this both at home with family, at schools with CCE-speaking friends. Students have developed orthographies in CCE to facilitate texting online with family and friends. CCE-speaking youths do attempt to use SE in the class but often the distinct phonological features of their variety led to incomprehension or confusion on the part of their teachers. Some of the youths then choose to remain silent in school and classrooms.

Question 2b.
• What are the language ideologies that CCE-speaking students hold about their own varieties and Standard English?

Findings

CCE-speaking students hold Creolocentric language ideologies. That is, they hold ideologies that validate and sustain their particular variety of CCE. These youths' attachment to their specific CCE suggest that they believe it constitutes valuable and indispensable
cultural capital that is vital for connecting them to their families, friends, cultures and their home countries. Also, CCE is vital for enabling youths' participation in the popular cultures of their home countries, especially in relation to their consumption of popular music such as dancehall and reggae. Although CCE-speaking youths do subscribe to valued Creolocentric language ideologies, they also subscribe to Anglocentric language ideologies that frame SE as the language variety that is important in two ways. First, SE is the variety in which writing for academic contexts is accomplished. Secondly, SE is the variety that is most suitable for interviews when seeking professional employment or communicating with others in professional work environments.

**Implications of this Study**

What then are the implications of these findings? How does understanding the language ideologies of teachers shape the schooling of CCE-speaking youths? How can teachers, administrators and policy makers use sociolinguistic knowledge about language ideologies, language practices, and literacies to inform how these and other language minority youths are educated and minoritized? This dissertation answers these questions to some degree and in so doing establishes a tentative framework for implementing a more socially just education system that respects and embraces the multilingual and translanguaging, transnational capacities and identities of CCE-speaking youths that promotes improved teaching and learning in school. Furthermore, I pose these questions with the hope of creating an ideological space where teachers and students can dialogue empathically about how they view and frame their own and each other’s language practices, and the beliefs they have around such practices. Even more importantly, honest and open dialogues can lead to
designing teaching and learning in ways that spark the cultivation of critical thinkers who will become more civically engaged in our democratic institutions. These dialogues offer opportunities for teachers and other policy makers to redesign and expand education in ways that allow CCE-speaking youths to navigate more freely the spaces that exist between the monoglossic, Anglocentric ideologies that structure their schooling experiences and the complex but to them more liberating heteroglossic Creolocentric landscape. In the section immediately below I discuss some of the more salient implication for teacher education and school districts, teachers and policy makers.

**Implications for Teacher Education and School Districts**

Results from this study suggest that schools of education and school districts are still failing to help teachers discover and mobilize the potential of sociolinguistic research to improve the teaching and learning of CCE-speaking youths in high schools. Most teachers in this study, except for Mr. Vega, the science teacher, have not had the opportunity to interact in meaningful ways with this body of research. As a result, teachers’ sociolinguistic knowledge or literacy remains inadequate to the needs of CCE-speaking youths. Mr. Vega’s experiences with sociolinguistic research and knowledge (and also my own) stand as testimony to possibility of positive identity and ideological transformations that can occur in the lives of teachers. Introduction to this field can provide teachers with methods and intellectual resources that can facilitate the integration of the language resources and literacies of minoritized youths into teaching and learning. One option for addressing the inadequacy (without significantly increasing the cost of teacher education for pre-service teachers and colleges) is to infuse this knowledge and literacy across existing foundation courses.
Additionally, this infusion should be extended into courses that focus on language and literacy in the various content areas such as English Language Arts, Social Studies and Science. All subject areas should include exposure to what pedagogies might best help students acquire the language and literacy practices needed to successfully navigate the academic texts and contexts of those subject areas. This exposure could result in teachers examining their own language ideologies and practices and their effects on students so that transformation can begin. If this happens, teachers would be more likely to make informed pedagogical decisions and choices that positively affect the youths they teach and with whom they learn. A potential obstacle could be that teacher-educators themselves may lack the background needed to effectively co-construct sociolinguistic literacy with aspiring teachers. Exposure to sociolinguistic research can help teachers refrain from engaging in subtractive teaching even if the curriculum with which they are provided is saturated with subtractive ideologies.

School districts should also help teachers develop the capacity, concepts and vocabulary needed to effectively address the ethnolinguistic and cultural diversity common in many of our school. Providing professional development workshops and seminars to help teachers develop the kinds of knowledge needed to teach CCE-speaking youths could help to reduce the gap between their out-of-school linguistic, social and cultural practices and the more formal in-school practices and also reduce the symbolic violence to which they are often subjected.

Implications for Practitioners

As this study demonstrates, teachers in many respects are unaware of their own language ideologies and therefore remain unaware of the restrictive effects of those ideologies
on CCE-speaking students’ language and literacy practices, and ultimately, their level of achievement in school. In other words, as the experiences of the science teacher, Mr. Vega suggests, teachers whose pedagogies are informed by sociolinguistic knowledge, are more open to allowing translanguaging practices in the classroom and are more likely to become more empathic language policy makers. Teachers could be encouraged to create professional development groups where they engage in in-depth analysis of the language and literacy practices of CCE-speaking youths and they ways in which knowledge of those practices can be used to improve teaching and learning. Menken and García (2009) argue that that language education policy, whether explicit or covert is a dynamic process which implicates teachers as agentive beings “who are the final arbiters of language policy implementation” (p.1). Teachers cannot escape from or avoid this process. In this study, we see some teachers who unconsciously “implement” language education policies that deny the legitimacy of the language practices of CCE-speaking youths. These policies, shaped by Anglocentric language ideologies, are the products of the coloniality of power and reflect the needs of the dominant classes in society. To address this issue, García and Menken (2009) offer ten principles that can guide teacher policy making in ways that create equitable environments and practices for language minority students. I selected the six principles most relevant to educators of CCE-speaking students:

- Understand your own sociolinguistic profile and language practices.
- Know the sociolinguistic profile and practices of the students in your classroom, school community, students’ families, and the community surrounding the school.
- Understand your beliefs, attitudes, ideologies and motivations.
- Understand the beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations of others.
• Understand how the curriculum and pedagogy are interrelated with language education policies, and the ways you act as a policy maker in your school.

• Remain critical and aware of language education policies (pp. 262-267)

Teachers who adopt these principles place themselves in a position to interrogate and investigate the intersections of race, identity and language in their own lives and those of their students. They place themselves in a better position to devise linguistic and curricular responses that have the potential to create a climate that allows for the emergence of teaching for social justice. Menken and Garcia’s recommendations would transform the teaching of CCE-speaking youths by reducing the linguistic prejudice and symbolic violence to which they are often subject both from teachers and students.

Teaching for Social Justice Pedagogies

Teaching linguistic minority youths so that they enjoy academic success and develop valued literate identities in addition to all their other identities is a goal that all teachers should share. To realize this goal will require a radical shift in their philosophical, pedagogical and curricular approaches. I recommend three promising pedagogical approaches to effective and empathic education for CCE-speaking youths: multiculturalism, translanguaging and transnationalism in education. These approaches can serve as decolonial options that challenge the coloniality of power and Anglocentric language varieties that continue to (mis)shape the education of linguistic minority youths. Below, I outline the ways in which these recommended approaches can temper or disrupt the oppressive effects of coloniality on the schooling of these youths.
Reconceptualizing Multiculturalism for CCE-speaking Youth

Multiculturalism emerged to challenge the monocultural orientation of education that promoted Western and Eurocentric knowledges, language varieties and literatures to the exclusion of those of minority peoples. However, while traditional education has been expanded and transformed by the inclusion of multicultural voices, views, and histories of minority people, some groups have been left out as a result of homogenizing forces. I speak specifically here, for example, of the tendency to treat black students as a monolith. There is an urgent need to redefine multiculturalism to create more space for inclusion of the ethnolinguistic and cultural diversity among black students.

This research shows that CCE-speaking youths’ histories, stories, and languages are not represented in New York City school curricula. While the language varieties of African American students face similar exclusion from curricula spaces, students study many texts and stories that focus on the struggles and achievement of African Americans throughout US history. Black students learn, as they should, about the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow and the Civil Rights Movement. Black students read, as they should, texts written by African American authors such Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*), Alice Walker (*The Color Purple*), August Wilson (*Fences*) and Lorraine Hansberry (*A Raisin in the Sun*), to name a few. School curricula should be extended, however, through an invitation to the voices, views, and histories of the people of “Anglophone” Caribbean. Through the teaching of aspects of West Indian history and social studies, the contrasts and comparisons within the culturally heterogeneous black student population could be highlighted. School curricula, for example, should embrace the story of Marcus Garvey and the fight against colonial and racial oppression through the music of singers such as Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. Schools should
also embrace the illustrious and influential literature of the "Anglophone" Caribbean. While many of these works are written largely in Standard Caribbean English, they do include the use of CCE. Literature has historically served as a safe space for the vernacular voices of West Indian folks. CCE-speaking youths would see themselves and their cultures reflected in texts by Trinidadian authors including Michael Anthony (*A Year in San Fernando*) and Nobel Prize winner, V.S. Naipaul (*Miguel Street*), Jamaican writers such as Roger Mais (*The Hills Were Joyful Together*) and Claude McKay (*Banana Bottom*) and the poetry of John Agard from Guyana to name a few.

It is reasonable to anticipate that Caribbean literature with vernacular voices might create anxiety and challenge for teachers unfamiliar with those varieties. When positioned in this situation, Cooper (1993) has noted that “the reader who is already literate in English is forced to temporarily surrender the privileges of literacy. This loss of status does level new and old illiterates, narrowing the social distance between ‘privileged’ and ‘non-privileged’ groups” (p. 13). This type of culturally relevant pedagogy not only promises greater engagement and possibly enhanced academic performance, it also threatens to dismantle the hierarchy the prevents the emergence of more socially just and empathic teaching. Teachers would do well to attempt to learn about how CCE-speaking youths language, learn some features of their language to reduce misunderstandings to communicate more effectively with these students. Teachers and schools should make spaces in the curricula so that students can engage in the process of analyzing language varieties and also analyzing the structures of CCE varieties and the features of those varieties. In so doing, the youths can begin to see their language as a part of the curriculum. In addition, the youths, deploying their expertise as speakers of CCEes become empowered as they will often have to educate their teachers about
CCE varieties. This has the advantage of creating a situation where these youths are not subject to symbolic violence but feel included and valued as competent languagers in their own variety. This situation has the advantage of creating pedagogical symbiosis where teachers and CCEs-speaking youths can mutually educate each other and thus allow for transformational contexts and learnings to emerge. Selecting texts from the Caribbean Canon offers an opportunity for CCE-speaking youths to display their expertise and knowledge as they would be able to help teachers and classmates of other backgrounds make meaning of the vernacular voices that flourish in those texts. Inviting these texts into the classroom will broaden multiculturalism so that the full heterogeneity of the black student population is acknowledged and addressed. A critical multiculturalism cannot emerge in an environment saturated with monoglossic ideologies. This study then calls for a more critical and expansive multiculturalism that will join other transgressive pedagogies to meet the needs and identities of CCE-speaking youths.

**Translanguaging as Socially-Just Teaching in the Lives of CCE-speaking Youth**

CCE-speaking youths do not fit the traditional profile of the bi- or multilingual emergent students (commonly referred to as English language learners in public schools). To varying degrees, they possess some receptive competence in SE. At the same time, as has been noted earlier, these students are framed en masse as primarily SE speakers when in fact the majority of them language using CCE varieties. This misconception arises because the lexicon of CCEes is significantly derived from SE, especially British SE. These youth’s language practices then reveal that as transmigrant youths they can indeed be characterized as bilingual or multilingual language users. Their bi/multilingualism increases as they migrate
into New York City’s multilingual environment and begin to interact with speakers of other languages in their schools. Some scholars have advanced translanguaging pedagogy as an approach that can effectively engage with this multilingual, transnational environment. CCE-speaking youths would benefit from translanguaging pedagogies and practices that seek to leverage and expand their already rich and complex language repertoire.

Even before CCE-speaking youths arrive in New York City, a multilingual and ethnolinguistic environment, they already have access to a rich repertoire of linguistic structures and lexicon, even if not consciously acknowledged. The government of Jamaica, for example, has declared (on paper) that Jamaica is a bilingual nation, a move that recognizes the strong productive Creole competence and the varying levels of receptive SE ability that much of the population possesses. Much of the repertoire of CCE-speaking youths then is composed of structures and lexicon drawn from both Caribbean Creole Englishes and Standardized Englishes. These transmigrant youths’ linguistic repertoires become even more expanded and richer once they begin living in multilingual New York City, as they start to interact with students who possess different and multiple linguistic identities. When they deploy their various language varieties to make meanings and instantiate particular identities, they call upon their own, (unacknowledged) translanguaging and multilingual competence.

The meanings they make and identities they enact using their Creole varieties, SE and varieties for academic purposes and contexts (however ungrammatical according to the rules of SE), are responsive to various demands and situations in which they participate in and out of school. The capacity of CCE-speaking students to deftly deploy translanguaging practices however, given the contexts within which they develop their linguistic repertoires, are often based on the socio-economic status of their family, prior schooling in their home country and
maybe even the communities in which they reside in the US. The level of competence that CCE-speaking youths possess in these different language varieties varies from high in their own basilectal or mesolectal varieties to emergent or advanced in the acrolectal SE and academic varieties. In other words, some youths arrive as monolinguals in JC, GC or TC. As they began to navigate their new communities in New York and become exposed to African American youths and to Hip Hop and Rap music and cultures in ways that they did not experience in their home countries, they often add structures and features from AAVE to their language repertoires. In addition, they also add features from SE as attested to by more than one student in this study.

Romaine’s and the other student-participants’ use of language in this study suggest that contrary to popular assumptions and ideologies, they are in possession of varying degrees of translanguaging and multilingual competencies in a variety of codes. Put another way, these youths possess plurilingual competence (Kalliokoski, 2011), defined as an individual’s varying or partial competence in multiple codes or languages. This competence is too often unrecognized and ignored in New York City classrooms or viewed as a deficit to and as a defect to be eradicated. Students' ability to invoke their competence in their home languages and other languages suffer because of monoglossic, standard and purist ideologies.

How could teachers embed translanguaging practices into the education of CCE-speaking youths in ways that value their linguistic repertoire and also support their learning? One strategy that teachers could implement that promotes positive translanguaging practice, within a culturally relevant framework, for example, is a language portfolio (Celic & Seltzer, 2011). This strategy asks students to demonstrate the different and multiple language practices that they acquire as they move through school and society. The language portfolio is
comprised of three sections: a *language biography* in which students outline and share their developing language experiences, a *language passport* which contains rubrics and charts to note their proficiencies in using different languages. The final section is a *language dossier* which is a space for students to archive examples of their work in varying languages and to highlight their linguistic accomplishments. The language portfolio would encourage CCE-speaking students to focus explicitly and intentionally on their language practices within a safe context, in ways that help them to expand their repertoires. Additionally, within a safe context, the portfolio helps to reduce the pressures and insecurities that Anglocentric language ideologies generate and impose on these youths, especially around writing and speaking tasks. Finally, the language portfolio would help CCE-speaking students to see and appreciate the linguistic and cultural diversity in classrooms and the communities in which they live and learn.

Another strategy that promotes translanguaging within a culturally relevant framework is a *community study*. Celic and Seltzer (2011) describe a community study a study that surveys the linguistic landscape and notes the different language varieties that residents use to participate in the various activities of the community. For example, students can look at how a community uses language varieties to promote democratic participation through voting. What signs about voting are in languages other than English? In the case of CCE-speaking students, a community study could be expanded to encompass activities such as taking notes of the kinds of music played in their communities and exploring the meanings of such noticings. They could listen to and capture the language varieties they hear on the streets, in the corner stores, in school and classroom. They could also try to note the specific accents they hear and match those accents to the speakers’ home countries. The youths could then investigate the
links between such data and the local economy, social and cultural practices and the varied identities that reside in those spaces.

Well-designed community studies can empower students to become youth-researchers who discover or produce and describe important information about their communities which they then present to their teachers and classmates. As the youths do this, they are developing literacy skills and language practices that enhance their capacity to become informed participants in US democracy. They are also honoring their home languages and linguistic and national identities while dismantling the harmful effects of Anglocentric language ideologies. The language portfolio and the community study are only two of many activities that teachers can employ that allow translanguaging practices (see Celi & Seltzer, 2011) to develop and flourish. CCE-speaking students could for example create products using both their specific CCE and SE or they could translate texts written in SE English into their home language variety. The essential point however is that translanguaging pedagogies and practices benefit all students, including CCE-speaking ones, in ways that validate their linguistic repertoires and in so doing support effective teaching and learning.

**Transnationalism in the Education of CCE-speaking Youth**

Finally, pedagogies that take CCE-speaking students’ status as transnational immigrants into account can function as antidotes to the exclusionary effects of the colonizing, homogenizing, racializing effects that they experience as a result of their subjection to Anglocentric ideologies in US schools. CCE-speaking students have their feet planted firmly in both their home countries and the US. They connect physically via visits back to the islands (assuming they are not undocumented immigrants) and digitally through
electronic and social media. They are continuously reproducing their language and cultural practices because of these connections. Sánchez (2007) has written that

Transnationalism embodies various systems or relationships that span two or more nations, including sustained and meaningful flows of people, money, labor, goods, information, advice, care, and love; in addition, systems of power (i.e. patriarchy, Westernism) can be created or reinforced in this process. (p. 493)

Like other minority youths, CCE-speaking youths possess complex, complicated, multicultural, transnational identities that emerge out of their experiences of living within and across borders in their home countries and the US. They participate in global flows, as both immigrants and consumers of language practices, literacies, and cultures, crossing borders back and forth. Given this reality, teachers and schools should look for ways of including the “funds of knowledge” that CCE-speaking transnational youths bring into the classroom. Teachers could for example, develop lessons around migrant flows between the US and these Caribbean nations. They could look at the history of those flows across history, examine what has changed and what remains. They could examine the economic, social and political reasons why Caribbean nationals leave their home countries and the impact such migration has on both US and Caribbean nation’s economies. Furthermore, they could examine the impact of migration on the youths. How do issues of race, class and language differ across borders and how do such difference shape the identities and academic trajectories of these youths?

Skerret (2015) has suggested a number of approaches for helping teachers becoming literate about their transnational students while helping these same students to develop their transnational literacies. For example, she suggests self-portraiture as one useful instrument for exploring the lived experiences of these youths so as to create opportunities for teachers
and students to engage in conversations around “cultures, languages and everyday activities” (p. 29). Skerrett also suggests that teachers engage students in critical inquiries such as a self-study that investigates a student’s language practices. Additionally, all the students in a teacher’s class could explore their multiple language varieties and literacy practices that they invoke as navigate the spaces in and among school, their physical and digital communities and across the borders of their home and host countries.

These students and their (transnational) funds of knowledge constitute resources that can serve to educate the school community about the processes involved in both immigration and globalization, and the myriad effects of these processes in shaping their lives and identities. Many of the youths are already emerging out of economically precarious condition from one of the underdeveloped (Guyana) or developing (Jamaica and Trinidad) countries in the Caribbean. They migrate into communities and schools that are segregated and under-resourced, and where immigrants have lower median incomes. Bringing this economic dimension of their lives into school enhances the emergences of curricula around social justice issues in ways that spark critical thinking, activism, and civic engagement and participation.

Implications for Policy Makers

A New Language Program for Teaching CCE-speaking Youth

Policy makers, as they design policies to improve the education of CCE-speaking youths, need to be guided by sociolinguistically-informed understandings of how another language variety that is communicatively and symbolically different from the home language is acquired. Many individuals, including policy makers and teachers have developed ideas about language that are shaped by seemingly common sense notions that are in fact not
supported by sociolinguistic research. For example, in chapter six, Mr. Martin contends that he uses SE the primary media of instruction in order to model appropriate ways of languaging for CCE-speaking youths in his classroom. However, neither data nor theory exists to support Mr. Martin’s contention that modeling appropriate SE usage will result in students’ automatic acquisition of that variety. There are however potentially effective ideas that can address the needs of CCE-speaking youths. A program developed to teach CCE-speaking youths how to proficiently navigate the dominant language and literacies must answer the following questions that were first raised in chapter two:

1. Are there forms of Caribbean cultural capital that need to be identified and productively engaged in the education of CCE-speaking youths?

2. How might this be done in ways that produce the kinds of cultural capital that lead to academic success?

In order for students to begin developing the ways of languaging that will help them negotiate meaning in standard and academic varieties of English, a new language program needs to be designed and implemented to meet their unique language situation. This new program should be open to all students to guard against it becoming stigmatized. However, it would be geared primarily to CCE-speaking youths. These students should have access to a culturally responsive curriculum largely be guided by a social reconstruction curriculum ideology (Schiro, 2013) that confronts and seeks to solve the social, political and economic problems and the injustices that limit the aspirations and potential of minorities in the US. The class for CCE-speaking youths would be taught preferably by a teacher fluent in or familiar with CCEes.
Students should engage in activities that make language practices and ideologies explicit, that deconstruct the language hierarchy that delegitimizes CCEes, and that allow youths to compare and contrast the grammars and the ways of languaging in both Creole and standard and academic discourses. In this class, teachers should help students develop their metalinguistic awareness while helping them to expand their linguistic repertoires with the features and structures of the varieties needed for reading, writing, speaking and enacting identities in academic and professional contexts. This must be done without demeaning and devaluing their Creolocentric language features, varieties, ideologies and identities.

This program should incorporate and combine the strengths and resources of the multicultural, translanguaging and transnational approaches described in the prior section. Furthermore, these classes could be based on the instructional models identified by Siegel (1999) as appropriate for speakers of vernacular varieties. Of notable value would be the language awareness programs discussed in Chapter Three. In this model, teachers of these youths would develop lessons that would help to create safe spaces for the students’ language and literacy practices in speaking and writing tasks. Teachers would guide students into raising their own metalinguistic awareness of the differences between SE and the CCE varieties. Focusing on the differences between varieties and focusing on their commonalities is likely to produce new epistemological orientations that contests the hegemony of Anglocentric ideologies and practices in ways would help to improve the youths’ capacity to navigate the terrain of SE.

Furthermore, this new program should focus on and explore the histories of the different ethnic and racial groups in the Caribbean, especially minority groups and on the histories of their enslavement and exploitation on plantations. It would incorporate
information on immigration and globalization and on how these different ethnic and racial groups have contested, resisted and benefited from the impacts of these forces. Students could develop written materials such as plays, music, songs and poetry in CCEes which would legitimize these varieties as positive cultural capital that help youths develop their critical thinking skills and capacities. A program or class developed around these ideas and ideologies would help CCE-speaking youths not only improve their academic performance in US schools but also help them to develop the critical thinking skills and capacities that are needed to effectively and civically participate in US democracy.

**Generalizing from the Findings**

Like many qualitative research projects, the findings from this study may not be generalizable across all New York City or US schools. Other CCE-speaking youths and their teachers may share different experiences from the ones recounted in this study. However, a study like this one lends itself to the potential for qualified or nuanced generalizations that implicate fittingness, comparability or translatability. Readers of this study may be able to compare their own experiences or situations with those of the teacher- or student-participants who provided the data for this study. In the way, the results of this become translatable to some degree across the classrooms where teachers and CCE-speaking youths interact with each other.

I contend that the experiences of CCE-speaking youths who are in classrooms where teaching and learning is shaped or influenced by neoliberal policies and politics, and who are taught by teachers who largely subscribe to Anglocentric and monoglossic language ideologies, are common across this city and this country. My mission, like scholars whose
work is to transform education in ways that improve minority lives, is to use the results of this study to promote reflection and transformation of the ways in which language ideologies limit the potential of teaching and learning to be truly liberatory. Reflecting on language ideologies is one way that safer ideological or implementation spaces can open up. Transformation of ideologies can result in more socially just ways of teaching for these youths so that they can grow and hopefully flourish academically.

As noted in chapter three, academics believe that CCE-speaking students face struggles in school rooted in society’s perception and responses to their language resources. Many argue that these struggles are partly rooted in the failure of education systems, both in their home countries and in New York City, to take into account the linguistic resources of these students (Allsop, 2010; Nero, 2010; Rickford, 2000). In my years as a teacher, I have noticed that while many of these students are ambitious and hardworking, neither the city nor the state has made any accommodation, as is done with students from non-Anglophone countries, to help them improve their capacity to negotiate meaning in varieties required in academic contexts. These observations have led me to recognize a need for a more equitable treatment for these youths. My objectives are driven by concerns rooted in social justice traditions for these marginalized and minoritized students primarily from Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and other West Indian nations.

As Black students, and as transnational immigrants, they too become subject to the operations of the asymmetric power relations and educational inequities that often position them for academic underachievement and even failure. Given this reality, more needs to be done to help these youths acquire the language and literacy practices that can position them more fully participate in the politics and economics of our democracy. Morrell writes that
"there is little argument that members of our most disadvantaged populations need to acquire dominant literacies in order to participate fully in economic and civic life in the new world order" (p. 3). CCE-speaking youths see and understand, as expressed in their own voices, the need to develop SE (if only for reasons grounded in academic and economic instrumentalism).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study imply the need for further research on the state of CCE-speaking youths in US schools. Primarily, this study is limited by its methodology. This study relied solely on phenomenological interviews as the data collection method. The interviews did offer a rich set of data for narrative analysis. While the researcher drew valuable lessons and results from the narratives offered up by the youths and teachers who participated in this study, the inclusion of other methods such as classroom observations and ethnographic research would have offered an even richer set of data. In addition, interviews were held with eight students and five teachers. Future research should be carried with a larger group of participants and should explore their educational life histories and that amplify their voices in ways that strengthen or challenge the findings that emerged out of this analysis.

Additionally, research that validates teacher and student voice is not immune from criticism. Atkinson and Rosiek (2009) have noted that “there are limitations to the reliance on using narrative as a way to privilege teacher voice and represent teacher knowledge in resistance to the hegemony of overly scientistic approaches to educational scholarship” (p. 177). Teacher voice does not emerge from this process unchanged. My interpretations have in some ways been influenced by my biases, grounded in my nationality as Jamaican and a CCE-speaking person and the empathy I have for CCE-speaking youths. I tried to address this
pitfall by trying to capture the drama, tensions and contradictions that a few teachers and students revealed in their narratives. That said, I tried to be as faithful in interpreting and evaluating the narratives and to the voices of the participants.

Future Research Directions

CCE-speaking youths remain an understudied cohort of the black student population despite the difficulties they face as transnational immigrants in US schools (Nero, 2010). There has been some research on their language differences and the impact of such on their academic performance. However, there is a need for more research that takes into account the ways that teacher language and literacy practices ideologies shape the schooling of these youths. There has also been little research on how these youths’ cultural and linguistic identities influence their navigation through US schools. Or the ways in which these students, through the unleashing of their agentive powers, subvert the racial and colonizing logics of the dominant educational cultures in US schools. The lack of research on/with these students may be partly attributable to the homogenization or African-Americanizing of CCE-speaking youth as solely black students in the US. The racial and colonizing logic that is so entrenched in US society often swamps the complex cultural and linguistic variation that exists among African American, Continental African, and Afro-Caribbean youths. As a result, the specific needs of CCE-speaking youths remain unaddressed

Secondly, more research is urgently needed on how to create more effective kinds of professional development that can help teachers develop more productive instructional methods. These methods are needed to better engage CCE-speaking youths in the challenging classroom environments that have emerged as cultural and linguistic diversity have increased
in US schools. Investigations should focus on how CCE-speaking students negotiate their multiple identities in language and literacy classrooms. More research needs to investigate how students develop and use their Creole literacies outside of school. This knowledge could then be used with these youths to develop more successfully in-school language and literacy practices.

Finally, this study has also highlighted gaps in data collection by the New York City Department of Education. The department needs to begin disaggregating data collected on the three groups of Black students (Continental African, American, Afro-Caribbean) so that their particular linguistic and cultural needs can be identified, researched and addressed. The city needs new language programs and policies that can help these students develop the standard language varieties and literacies that are essential to social and economic advancement in the US. Even as scholars, academics and politicians deplore the ways in which the doctrines and dogmas of neoliberalism have negatively affected the schooling of minority youths, it remains for the foreseeable future beyond our capacity to dismantle. We have to help our students gain mastery over Standard language and literacy practices albeit using more critical and transgressive pedagogies. The capacity to deploy standard language practices and to navigate standard literacies has become even more important in light of the demands imposed by the Common Core State Standards. However, the capacity to proficiently navigate SE must not be attained at the expense of the value and validity of students’ home language practices. In reality, students’ home language practices can be a powerful ally for teachers as they help students develop SE resources.
Concluding Remarks

This research is driven by a desire to create equitable classroom environments where teachers employ social justice pedagogies to teach to and learn from CCE-speaking youths. In these environments, CCE-speaking youths will have opportunities to more successfully integrate their transnational linguistic repertoires while acquiring the varieties that allow them to develop the dominant literacies in ways that complement rather than oppress their Creole language varieties and literacies. Just as I have evolved into a person whose language varieties and literacies are no longer at war with each other (although tensions do pop up from time to time) and a person who has used SE to advance himself professionally and personally, I hope that many CCE-speaking youths will achieve similar outcomes. I hope that the results of this study will inform teaching practices in ways that benefit CCE-speakers by encouraging teachers to see their linguistic resources as differences, ones that can be leveraged to improve academic performance rather than as deficits. Teachers need help developing the resources that empower them to assist students to expand their existing competencies by adding new communicative skills through additive pedagogies.

As I conclude, I hope the results of this study have illuminated and exposed how the Anglocentric language ideologies that teachers hold constrain the possibility for more equitable and emancipatory pedagogies. There is room for optimism as this study revealed that some teachers are engaging in incipient varieties translanguaging pedagogies and other democratic pedagogies that contest Anglocentric language policies. They are making attempts to open up spaces for students to language more freely. They infuse their pedagogies with approaches that value the Creole languages, literacies, and cultures that CCE-speaking youths
bring into the classroom. I end with the empowering voice/lamentations of Trinidadian student Nadine who pleads for and demands recognition and respect:

*Teachers should be more understandin and patient. Not everybody has a speakin disability. Like- not because we have an accent and it’s strong doesn’t mean we don't know how to speak. We know how to speak. What I would have loved from my teachers in Freshman year is to be a little bit more patient and understandin to know that I am new up here. We don’t automatically get and speak di way you guys speak. It’s gonna take time. Just because we speak dis way doesn’t mean we aren’t capable of learnin di same amount o work dat other students would learn...because we are capable. So don’t just check us off because we speak different.* (Interview, 6/10/2015)
Appendix A

Individual Teacher Interview Protocol

Demographic Questions

1. How long have you been teaching at ________________?
2. What content/subject are you licensed to teach?
3. How long have you been a teacher of English/Social Studies/Math/Science?
4. What is your ethnic background?
5. In which state/country were you born?
6. What’s your primary language?
7. How many languages do you speak?
8. Do you consider yourself a speaker of CCE?

In-Depth Questions

1. What is your philosophy, curriculum and pedagogical approach to teaching?

2. Who are CCE-speaking students? How are they similar or different to say African American students?
   (What are some differences you notice among these students in terms of their language use and literacy levels? Do such differences shape how you teach them and how?)

3. Tell me what you know about the cultures, histories and heritages of Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago.

4. Describe the language use of CCE-speaking students in your class- orally and in writing.
   (How do you address language differences orally or in writing?)

5. How does your philosophy, curriculum and pedagogical approach change, if at all for CCE-speaking students? If it does, why?
   (How do you differentiate, if at all, for CCE-speaking students?)

6. Describe your language use. How is it different or the same as that of CCE-speaking students?

7. How does teaching CCE-speaking students shape your view of yourself as a teacher?
8. How would schools and teachers have to change, if at all, to more effectively engage CCE-speaking students in learning?

9. What would CCE-speaking students need to do to become college and career ready?

10. What is the meaning of Creole for you? What words, images or songs does it evoke for you?

11. Can you recall taking any socio/linguistics courses in college or having any professional development dealing with the language practices or issues of minority students? What do you remember about such courses or professional development?
Appendix B

Individual Student Interview Protocol

Focused Life History

1. Tell me a little bit about your use of the language you use when you’re speaking to your friends from the Caribbean or from the US? When you’re speaking to your siblings or cousins? When you’re speaking to your parents?

2. Please describe your earliest experience, as far as you remember, of when a teacher reacted to the way in which you talked or wrote.

3. Please talk about the way that any of your current teachers react to the way you talk or write. What are some things they say?

4. Please describe your fellow students’ attitudes or reactions when you speak in class? What are some things they say if anything at all? (the African American students, the Latino students, others?)

5. Please describe how well you understand or think you can use Standard English. How well do you use or understand Creole?

6. When do you use Standard English and when do you use Creole? Please describe those times. Why do you use either one?

7. Have you ever felt ashamed or embarrassed when you spoke your Jamaican, Trinidadian/Guyanese language. Tell me what happened. Why did you feel this way?

8. Please describe how the way you talk or write has changed since you started living and going to school in the United States, if at all?

Details of Experiences

9. Please try to remember some of your experiences with both Standard English and your Creole language in your home country. What were those moments like? How is this different from your experiences with both Standard English and Creole in New York City?

10. Can you talk about your favorite kinds of music? What or who do you enjoy listening to? What languages are they sung/rapped/DJ’d in?

11. Please describe some writing you do outside of school? What do you read outside of school? What’s the difference between what you read and write outside of school?
12. What are some things CCE-speaking students would have to do to improve their performance in schools?

13. What would teachers and schools have to do, if anything, to help CCE-speaking students become more engaged in learning?

**Reflection on Meaning**

1. Do you think that learning and using Standard English/School English is important? In what ways? What does Standard English mean to you?

2. Do you think that using or speaking Creole is important? Why? What does Creole mean to you? Is it something you’re proud of?

3. Please describe what you reactions might be if your teachers included your Jamaican/Trinidadian/Guyanese language in lessons or read books from the Caribbean that used your local language. Why might you feel this way?

4. Please describe what your reactions might be if your ELA or music teachers included or studied or analyzed forms of Caribbean music in class.

5. Can you describe the relationship between how you talk and your identity or who you are as a person? How does how you talk help to make or reflect who you are? If you woke up tomorrow and discovered that you could only speak in Standard English, how would that make you feel?
References


Alleyne, M. C. (1994). The problems of standardization of creole languages. In M. H. Morgan & M. C. Alleyne (Eds.), *Language & the social construction of identity in Creole*
situations (pp. 7-18). Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles.


Bailey, B. L. (1968). Jamaican Creole: Can dialect boundaries be defined? In D. Hymes (Ed.), Pidginization and creolization of languages: Proceedings of a conference held at the


doi:10.1558/sols.v2i2.27


doi:10.1007/s12115-008-9149-6


Seloni, & J. Song (Eds.), *Ethnolinguistic diversity and education: Language, literacy, and culture* (pp. 241-Xx). New York: Routledge.


doi:10.1080/01434639908666387


Wright, E. N. (1971). *Programme Placement Related to Selected Countries of Birth and Selected Languages*. Toronto: The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, Research Department.

Www.greatschools.org


