

**Writing for the Future: Language Equalities and Social Movements in University English
Classrooms**

by

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In the United States, individuals are likely to reflect and reproduce societal assumptions about a speaker's ability to operate in certain spaces based on the languages they are assumed to use. These assumptions are often disproportionately applied to members of historically excluded groups—and are so tied to them that an individual may not even use a language to be judged for it (Flores and Rosa 2015)—so scholars argue for anti-racist practices, under the name “linguistic justice,” that respond directly to the confluences of language forms with value judgments and assumptions about speakers (Baker-Bell 2020; Greenfield 2011; Young 2011). Language inequalities are often reinforced via exclusionary practices in professional and educational spaces, such as requirements for the language one uses when writing. In response, university English educators, who deal directly with students' language in a space designed to lead to the professional world, may consider linguistic justice considerations key to their practice. Through observations of and interviews with English instructors within one university, I sought to understand how instructors approach linguistic justice in their theory and practice. Considering these instructors' discussions and classroom work, I explore how they negotiate linguistic justice scholarship, educational models, and university influences that prescribe roles for instructors. Moving into the university classroom as a unique and familiar space, I focus on how instructors move from linguistic justice theory to practice as they emphasize dialogue, comfort, and agency-producing thought and activities in classrooms. Finally turning attention to scholarship on learning in social

movements, I draw on notions of radical education and propose that, for those I worked with, a pedagogy's connection to linguistic justice comes less from its content than from methods of critical reflection and education instructors employ and prompt students to learn and engage on their own. Their work to create a linguistically just education, then, primarily consisted of encouraging students to take up critical engagement methods. In the end, these instructors act under others' theories to continually orient their practices to the students in front of them and work toward future-oriented, societal-level goals of shifting the impact of long-running language inequalities.

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Preface

One of my own instructors at the University of Pittsburgh introduced me to linguistic justice when I was in training to become an English writing tutor. The training course required us students to read scholarship on, discuss, and try to reach a workable conclusion about how we might occupy the tutor role and help students convey their messages how they wanted, which we tried to do by thinking with established and contemporary scholarship on English education, including April Baker-Bell's (2020) *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*. The book offers a view of the way languages are privileged in academic—and professional and public—settings as well as some pedagogical moves instructors could make to address this privileging and uphold (especially marginalized) languages and their apparent users. In the class, we discussed our reactions to the work, asking each other how familiar the topics explored in it were. We debated what it asks of writing educators, how we might contend with the current state of treatments of languages and language users it presents. And in this current state of inequalities, we wondered whether writing educators were complacent reproducers of (systems of) inequality if they don't favor linguistic justice pedagogies. Or, if they did take up these pedagogies, would their efforts create change at the individual or societal level? Especially in relation to individuals, how did an educator's own choice of what to do with the knowledge given in *Linguistic Justice* impact the students they worked with? At the end of the course, staring our first tutoring sessions in the face, we were left with the most important and difficult question: how do you want to occupy our role as an English writing educator in light of reading the book?

Indeed, I've tutored many students over the past two years, and throughout the experience I've had sessions where I told students their writing was not “bad” despite their worst anxieties;

I've quietly but persistently denied students' claims that their writing had to be more "professional" or "scientific" to be read (favorably or at all); and, in few but more than I'd like, I've asked students whether they think they should use different language to align more with the potential expectations of their academic, scientific audience only to spend hours concerned that the suggestion might make them question their language or ability to write "well." In short, each session, each project, and each student brought their own challenges, highlights, and normalities, and I ended so many of them with no concrete answers to the questions such as those my prior class had discussed in relation to linguistic justice—how to teach, how to weight different theories, how to relate theories to practice.

I hadn't realized until too far into this research project that the questions we discussed in my tutor training and that followed me through my tutoring sessions were the same questions I based this work around. Without my own answers, I turned to English instructors, who taught with years of experience and at a scale much greater than anything I had encountered in tutoring at the Writing Center, to see how they might answer the questions. As all the hours I spent talking with instructors for this project show, the questions remain relevant and debated for English instructors as they discuss the purpose, format, and content of their work. I've tried to convey and explore the complexity of their answers—indeed the many questions they raised, the other actors they discussed, etc.—in this work.

In completing this project, I was and am always grateful for the open, generous engagement of those I worked with through this project, including my advisors and mentors, my professors and the tutors I worked alongside, and the instructors who feature in this work. To thank each group for their support is a big order, but I'll start with an easy one; the University of Pittsburgh David C. Frederick Honors College (FHC) both allowed me to present earlier pieces of this project at

their 2023 and 2024 FHC Research Symposiums and provided key funding through the spring 2023 FHC Research Fellowship and the Brackenridge Fellowship, which I received while completing the data gathering and initial analysis phases of this research. In the FHC, I have to thank Brett Say especially, who taught me much of what I know about the qualitative coding methods I used to create this thesis.

In learning to code I bounced between Dr. Say's office and the Writing Center, where I spent months learning jargon and testing methods with my fellow tutor Celena Todora, without whom the data analysis stage of this project would have been remarkably duller. Indeed, my time in the Writing Center before and beyond this work was unexpectedly influential, and that is almost wholly due to the people I worked with there. Geeta Kothari, the Center's director, showed continued confidence in me, and I'm grateful for the opportunities she offered me during my time in the Center. Dana Nowlin-Russell was my mentor on my first research project and a continued source of support once I started exploring other projects, such as this one. I'm also grateful to have worked with Angela Farkas in the classroom and in the Writing Center, where she helped me explore my place in academia and allowed me to begin understanding how my own professors carefully construct classes. Among my fellow peer tutors, Elise Romero has sat alongside me since our tutor training class, and more recently, John Hollihan, Lydia Blazey, Jacqueline Collo, and Anna Kirwin have made my last few months at the Center as fun and lively as I'd hoped they'd be. To the rest of the Writing Center staff: thank you for the camaraderie and conversation and for creating an environment where I could grow—I'll always try to work my way toward a space similar to that.

Through completing this project, each member of my committee provided integral support that shaped the work in unique ways. Dr. Gabby Yearwood's help considering race and language

touched this project and others and sustained my exploration of such topics in anthropology. Dr. Moodjalin Sudcharoen deftly fielded so many questions about linguistic anthropology in education in our very first meeting, and her continued availability reassured me of this work's potential relevance outside my Pitt bubble. Dr. Zachary Sheldon's immediate enthusiasm and willingness to advise me on this work is unquestionably a key reason I pursued and produced this thesis. Finally, Dr. Tomas Matza showed a level of confidence in me I'm still astonished by, and his support for this work and through the end of my bachelor's career will never go unnoticed.

More flowers than I could ever give belong to my family and friends, who continue to support for my every endeavor and who endured countless stories and stresses as I fumbled through learning how to do this research. My mom, Karen Campbell, is so overwhelmingly persevering, strong, and reflective, and her influence keeps me moving forward and striving for growth. From my earliest years, my dad, Jim Friel, and I negotiated language via pronunciation, five-dollar words, and proofreading diner placemat ads, and such talks undoubtedly led me to where I am now. My eldest brother, Dylan Friel, has been a constant, reassuring, and familiar presence, and he has helped me keep my head on straight as I've learned how to be a person. Sarah Do, my best friend, is the most dedicated, intelligent, caring person I could hope to know, and I hope I make her as proud as she makes me (though it doesn't look like I'll be a lit professor like we predicted). Again, to all the family I couldn't note: thank you, and please know you built me into the person I am now, I see you in my every reflection, and I hear you in my own words. I can only hope I've been half the presence in your lives that you've been in mine.

Finally, my utmost thanks will always belong to the instructors whose voices structure, color, and imbue this work with more than I ever could have alone. Often to begin interviews I asked them to define linguistic justice, and their openness and unsurety and desire to explore the

very question for the next 20 or 60 or 90 minutes continually amazed and inspired me. Their passion for the topic truly kept me going when I worried my unfamiliarity with interviewing or analyzing or writing such a work could make this accomplishment insurmountable. I'm sure their insights about linguistic justice—as well as, more generally, teaching and writing and sharing a classroom and university space—will play into my own thinking about the same for years to come.

1.0 Introduction: What Do You See as Linguistic Justice?

In a large research university, in an English department whose faculty and staff count reached the triple digits, I was told many times that ideas, such as practice-grounding pedagogical theories, weren't often widely disseminated. But by my fifth interview with an English instructor, I had fallen into a rhythm of opening our conversation by asking how they defined a term I found the English department's faculty body talked about often: "What do you see as linguistic justice?" In response, some instructors made a comment before embarking on their answer—"that's quite an opening question," "maybe I'm not the right person to interview." Others forged ahead, seemingly unimpeded—linguistic justice "is an orientation," "a form of empowerment" that helps instructors "[think] about enacting the use of language in such a way that issues of power, position, identity are acknowledged [and] understood," address how "language is connected to broader structures of equality or inequality," and "make a space in which my students can converse, express themselves." One instructor got to my opening question before I did, asking how I was framing "linguistic justice" for my project after I requested an interview on the subject. In response to the quick definition I had developed—something along the lines of, "it's an understanding that languages are treated differently in different spaces and a response to the way these treatments are reflected onto speakers"—he agreed that he carried the same idea. In these conversations, I found that linguistic justice was, for many of these instructors, most associated with April Baker-Bell's 2020 work of the same name but signaled an older, continuing conversation in composition studies. Its presence in the English department opened doors to the classrooms I observed, provided passwords to the Zoom rooms I conducted interviews in, and helped me get a response from instructors who agreed to talk with me. Instructors' familiarity with the term—at least enough to

talk about it if they didn't fully make efforts to enact its corresponding pedagogy—and the theories and practices they embodied revealed for me a department whose instructors found a similar understanding of linguistic justice, whether they explicitly identified those similarities or not.

Linguistic justice, for many of these instructors and within our interviews, served as a signal of an individual's personally held ideologies about the way languages and speakers should be treated. Since linguistic justice may be defined as a framework that acknowledges, if not tries to dismantle, societal inequalities presented and reinforced through language treatments I may have signaled this framework with my use of the term, potentially putting any interactions with instructors within it. By nature of using linguistic justice as my main research topic and my opening question, I showed my familiarity, at the very least, with the linguistic justice frame.

Indeed, framing was and is essential throughout this work, and linguistic justice provided only one frame instructors worked within and/or discussed. Instructors' many roles in the educational institution—in departments, with colleagues, and in classrooms—display different relationships they navigate in their work, which each carry their own connotations and responsibilities. As instructors navigated these multiple frames, they identified the way many of them overlap, creating situations where multiple frames—such as one aligning their work with the department and one aligning it with linguistic justice, for example—both colored the classroom and instructors' interactions with students. Instructors identified these multiple frames, signaled and informed by other actors in and theories about the educational institution, when they discussed their theories and pedagogies. When one instructor's theories and pedagogies each aligned with contradictory frames, any contradictions between the characteristics of two frames both, ironically, confused what frame they fell into and helped them define their work; as they described their theories and practices, for example, they often aligned their work with one frame, ignoring or

rejecting another (overlapping and often contradictory) frame, at least for the time being. This became an integral part of their efforts to establish their own characters, especially when they discussed the moral weight they connected to their work and to the linguistic justice movement. When instructors tried to identify their own theories on linguistic justice in particular, and especially when they used their practices to do so, they effectively were mapping their own place in a long debate about whether linguistic justice has a place in the university—a notion solidified in Chapter 3's discussion of mapping and 4's discussion of self-reflection as a method the instructors I talked with often engaged.

Instructors found these frames, informed by other actors and mainstream theories about things like the purpose of education, continually present in their work. Oftentimes, their practices of identifying the frames and mapping out their own positions in relation to them surfaced alongside considerations of power in the institution. Indeed, linguistic justice calls into focus power relations as it asks people to consider how voices and languages are privileged. Instructors acknowledge these connections between linguistic justice and power in their theories and, often, pedagogies. As I saw instructors negotiating their own mapping and frames via power relations, and as I framed my questions about English pedagogy and language under this understanding of power relations and language, I established a key question that I've maintained through this work: how do instructors recognize and interact with (such as by denying or moving away from) power in the classroom? As they worked to manipulate their power in the classroom, they were necessarily working to respond to assumptions about the power they held. Much like the way many of our discussions of linguistic justice pedagogies touched, if not centered, on their concern about the reactions students' use of languages (especially non-Standard English ones, as will be discussed later) might get upon graduating, instructors continually drew focus to the way

languages and speakers are treated outside the university. And even when they wished to ignore or work against outside influences, such as by offering students more options than they might expect or describing pedagogical goals—which they aligned with linguistic justice—by their value beyond the English classroom, they still acknowledged the ways outside influences show up in their teaching. Succinctly, throughout these chapters, the instructors I talked with continually identified the ways outside influences showed up in their work in the university, and they tried to disentangle the two. They saw how language requirements in professional settings might establish their lesson plans but sought to remove their work from societal notions and pressures aligning education with professionalization. They discussed the ways people might hold notions about what the purposes of education are but implemented linguistic justice pedagogies within classrooms that, at times, didn't align with these societally held purposes. In this latter example, and throughout this work, instructors craft or take up pedagogies that respond to outside influences. Ultimately, the linguistic justice framework many of them work within marks pedagogies they implement and wish would not only define the classroom but ripple out from the educational institution by establishing in students—"the next generation of leaders, teachers," as one instructor framed them—a certain way of recognizing and responding to assumptions about languages and users.

For many of these instructors, the shared definition of linguistic justice they held and their shared focus on power relations in classrooms both also marked parallel practices and goals to attend to the experiences students had before reaching the university classroom, the ones they had while writing in the classrooms, and those they would or might have in the future. Drawing context from composition studies' prior conversations about language inequalities as well as from historical treatments of languages and their speakers in the United States, instructors continually

grounded their current thinking about linguistic justice in previous and continuing discussions. Such background, in turn, led instructors to consider the societal influences on language users that created a need for linguistic justice. As they observed—and as linguistic justice scholars continually signal to demonstrate their theories and the significance of their work—a person’s treatment of different languages often reflects societal assumptions about languages. These, in turn, are not only reinforced but placed onto language users, marking hierarchies of supposed language users that may run along racial or other social identity barriers, especially in regard to the languages most often associated with linguistic justice (Baker-Bell 2020; Young 2011; González 2001). Within educational settings like the classroom and the department, instructors sought to address these associations between languages, language users, and social hierarchies by marking their present conversations and practices with linguistic justice. The first step in doing so, at times, was to invoke linguistic justice and its related discussions of language user privileging to convey to themselves, students, and colleagues the instructor’s familiarity with the linguistic justice and inequality conversation. Such marking allowed instructors to establish their linguistic justice work as contributing to an ethic about the way they “should” teach, especially since the linguistic justice frame also signaled instructors’ moral commitment to linguistic justice and/or pedagogical alignment with the movement’s theories on societal language treatment. To gauge their work and demonstrate the reasoning behind their goals for teaching, however, instructors also continually pointed to the future, whether that meant working to think about the (often professional) roles students might occupy in their futures, and therefore what the students may have wanted their relationships to languages to be, or working to establish linguistic justice-aligned attitudes in spaces like the educational institution to put an end to the continuing historical discussions that define the movement’s significance.

While instructors often centered students in their discussions of linguistic justice and especially the practices it led them to enact in classrooms, I maintained focus on instructors throughout this project and in my data gathering efforts. By working only with this population, I sought to explore how they discussed the many facets of their work—such as other actors and conflicting ideologies of language and education—and how they described these influencing their theories regarding and actions in the classroom. As instructors occupied different roles within the university, the department, and the classroom, each setting offered certain assumptions and other actors who influenced their theories and practices in regard to their teaching and to linguistic justice. By working only with instructors, I was able to get a fuller understanding of the way they continually navigated and renegotiated these different influences in their work and how such influences weighed on their theories and practices as well as how they negotiated each influence in their work in the classroom and as workers in the educational institution.

The English department in which I conducted research contains roughly 200 full- and part-time faculty and staff members and has four programs (barring any multi-department, joint programs): literature, creative writing, composition and rhetoric, and film. To get the most encompassing image of the way instructors variously built and implemented their theories and practices, I observed classes and tutoring sessions and interviewed faculty and staff members. More specifically, in this project I sought to understand the way discussions of linguistic inequalities surface in English instructors' practices in their classroom work and especially in their discussions on and teaching of English writing. For this reason—and because, as I explore further in Chapter 2, linguistic justice conversations among instructors often centered around the composition program more than the others—I excluded film instructors from my data gathering. Further, because of who was available to talk, I wound up conducting interviews with more

composition faculty than those in the literature or writing programs, though some instructors taught classes in more than one program. In total, I interviewed 18 individuals (15 composition, 3 writing, and 3 literature instructors as well as 1 department staff member) across a period of six months. In these interviews, I sought to understand the ways instructors theorized about their work, whether and how they saw linguistic justice fitting into it, what other actors or entities instructors found most influential to their thinking or classroom practices, and how instructors connected their theories to their classroom methods. Only one of the instructors I interviewed was tenure-stream, six held other (directorial, provost, etc.) positions alongside their teaching, and seven were tutors in the university's writing center at the time of our interview (either alongside a classroom teaching position or not)—divisions which provided a more diverse view of the department's faculty body and, at times, helped contextualize instructors' efforts. For class observations, I sent requests to most non-film English instructors in the department and sat in on six teaching sessions. One of these was a one-on-one tutoring session, while two were first-year composition classes, two were general composition classes, and one was a literature class (all class observations had 20 or fewer students and one faculty instructor). Only two of these observations were with instructors who I also interviewed, but all six provided integral information on how instructors occupy classrooms, organize lessons, and implement classroom methods, which I was then able to connect to theories and descriptions of the same gleaned from interviews.

While many of the instructors I talked with were eager to detail their own pedagogical theories and practices, some were more hesitant to explain how they saw such theories—often related to linguistic justice—reflected in the department, because of concerns such as their own (precarious) position or the way such talk would have required them to speak on behalf of their colleagues or departmental leadership. In hopes of easing these concerns, I've made efforts to

obscure the university in which my research was conducted—only giving vague details when they provide necessary context for an instructor’s words—and anonymized all who participated in my research by using pseudonyms and limiting identifying class, gender presentation, race, or position information. Further, many experiences and methods these instructors discussed matched others’, and most frequently (unless otherwise indicated) multiple instructors are quoted alongside each other. Rather than trying to homogenize instructors’ experiences, this helped me develop an understanding of the salient points and contestations instructors brought up in relation to the many settings they occupied, classroom spaces they sought to create, and voices they considered in their theories and practices. By identifying common points of view, I was also able to contrast those views with differing opinions to ensure instructors’ individual sentiments were not lost because of the way I grouped them. Finally, these common themes also helped me explore in scholarship the theories and attitudes these instructors found most important when they encountered conversations about linguistic justice and pedagogical methods.

Thanks to a general understanding of the department’s demographics (of full- and part-time faculty members, excluding emeritus instructors) and overall attitudes, I was able to get a sense of what the department I explored was like at the time of my work before and beyond working directly with instructors. In terms of the faculty body, the department is largely white—reflecting similar demographics in the university’s student body. In regard to position, most of the department’s faculty were appointment stream, with around 20% being tenure stream. And while male-presenting faculty represented roughly 40% of the whole faculty body, that number increased to around 51% of tenure-stream faculty presenting as male and decreased to roughly 37% of appointment-stream faculty presenting as male—though the sample sizes of these groups vary and, as I will discuss in the conclusion, gender was not a primary aspect of this work. In terms of the

attitudes of the department and the university, the instructors I worked with displayed a general familiarity with and openness to talking about linguistic justice, as evidenced by their discussions of Baker-Bell's (2020) work and, throughout this thesis, in their deep interrogations of how linguistic justice showed up in their thinking and classroom work. Certainly, however, my own opening focus on the topic could have informed this. Indeed, I described my research as directly engaging with linguistic justice when I sought interviews and observations, and when I got responses from instructors (I was able to interview or observe roughly 25% of instructors I reached out to), they knew I was working alongside linguistic justice. Nonetheless, the instructors I talked with conveyed a general sense that the department (especially in regard to linguistic justice) and, at times, the university more generally maintained a relative openness to social justice issues and movements. Finally, the public university where these instructors worked, while generally well-regarded especially as a research institution, has been trending toward higher prestige and costs of tuition—evidenced by increasing standardized test scores and decreasing enrollment of (working-class) individuals from in and around the university's urban campus, respectively. While I don't discuss the concept of prestige in this work, it may align with both concepts I do work with, such as the idea of professionalization, as well as notions about the accessibility of education.

Within this university context, the instructors I talked with and observed offered a great deal of information about their experiences with language and with teaching as well as their opinions on their work, different actors they come across, and linguistic justice. To analyze such vast and rich information, I reviewed each transcript at least twice. On first reading, I noted important concepts and examples instructors used to convey their thinking and/or demonstrate their points. From these, I grouped concepts into general themes around language, classroom work, and institutional considerations, each of which I further divided into codes to account for the

variation of instructors' foci and experiences. On second reading, I applied codes to transcripts and to the notes I had generated earlier, which allowed me to group similar sentiments and examples. In a circular way, the themes and codes I developed wound up helping me group instructors' insights into the chapters herein. In writing this work, I also continually referred back to transcripts and notes to ensure participants' meanings and the context of their discussions were not lost outside the quoted pieces I employ. As I employed scholarship, I considered both how such sources might add context to instructors' words and the way instructors' own concepts and terms relate to those in the literature.

In their thinking about linguistic justice, language standardization, and its related notions of subordination and othering, was important context for many of the instructors I talked with. In the U.S. educational context they worked within, many of the instructors I talked with discussed Standard English as the language they believe is most often aligned with their work. Indeed, the form is often discussed in linguistic justice conversations, being tied up with notions of who speaks what and the spaces certain languages, and their speakers, should be in. As such reviews from instructors, and supplemental scholarship I explore in detail later, establish, Standard English aligns with certain speakers assumed to use it, who, in practice, are often white, American, and native-English speakers, possibly in professionally powerful positions. While Standard English may call up general definitions about a lack of passive voice, conjunctions, or "slang," the form is, especially in practice, continually defined as what other forms are not (MacSwan 2020). This contrarian definition especially holds because the form is tied up with an ideology—upheld by those supposed, powerful speakers and the language requirements and judgments they may pass along—painting the Standard and its supposed speakers as better, smarter, and more fit for professional (and often public) participation (Eckert 2000; Hill 1998). Various, scholars seek to

address these ideologies by pointing to the way Standard English continually responds to other languages and their supposed speakers and therefore isn't as unchanging as its ideology purports (MacSwan 2020; Flores and Rosa 2015); arguing for the moniker "standardized Englishes" to make more popular this understanding (Greenfield 2011); and describing code switching, a common technique especially discussed along with Standard English, as not moving between sharp distinctions of languages but interweaving forms within utterances (Young 2011). Several of these scholars and more ground their work on treatments of languages in an understanding of the way such treatments are not only reflected onto speakers but align with deliberate subordination techniques that serve to maintain wider ideologies of who belongs in what spaces based on the language(s) they use (Baker-Bell 2020; Hill 1998).

In response to these connections between Standard English and language and speaker privileging, linguistic justice provides another ideology that instructors found more morally acceptable. Under linguistic justice theory, non-Standard language forms are recognized as rule-bound, logical, and historically grounded and language users are meant to use any form they'd like to get their message across—especially since, because language forms are tied to social relations, messages may carry different meanings in different forms. In classroom practice, linguistic justice pedagogies involve methods such as educating people on different language forms and removing requirements—both implicit and explicit—toward specific forms. Because linguistic justice is often tied to Black Language—although scholars, at times, mention other English forms in their works (Greenfield 2011)—it also comes with an understanding of the way historically marginalized groups¹ are especially and directly targeted for their language use.² Such connections

¹ Phrasing inspired by André K. Isaacs, associate professor of chemistry, College of the Holy Cross.

² There is some debate on what moniker to use when referring to Black Language. Most popularly, the form is deemed "African American Vernacular English" and was historically, for one example, named "Ebonics," as in California's

are rooted in the unique experiences Black speakers may have in the U.S. context, where they have seemingly always needed to perform the “right” English for “survival” (Smitherman 1977). Indeed, indicating the connection between whiteness and powerful contexts, Spears (2021) describes how individuals may use “whiteners” to aid their entry into and/or time in those contexts. As scholars discuss language treatments, their assessments may engage notions of racialization and whiteness as they describe how assumptions about languages and users are established, enforced, and forwarded (Hill 1998; Flores and Rosa 2015).

As English forms come to be aligned with certain, powerful speakers, they may also be defined by their connections to certain spaces. In Standard English’s case, such connections are established, in the U.S., with professional, educational, and often public, settings (Hill 1998; MacSwan 2020). However, an alignment between professional and educational settings runs deeper than a requirement toward the same language form. Education’s current alignment with professionalization (Spring 2016; Eckert 2000), further, has reinforced its connection to Standard English and its status as a place where Standard English is seen to be forwarded. For instructors, their attention to professionalization and education shows up in their most frequently cited and deeply held concern about fully embracing linguistic justice in the classroom, what I term “the preparation argument.” The preparation argument consists of an instructor’s appeal to the way Standard English is aligned with professional settings and roles and to how their work as an educator would then dictate their teaching of, if not requirement toward, Standard English.

1996 Ebonics debate (Hill 1998: 680). Throughout this work, I refer to the language as “Black Language” unless using a cited author’s moniker. Using Black Language, a term Baker-Bell employs intentionally (2020: 2-3), allows me to both acknowledge the language’s diasporic range—as the moniker “Black English” also does—and to separate the language from appearing as “just” an offshoot of English—an argument which might be used to justify a devaluing of the language and its (assumed) speakers. Chapter 2 has some further discussion on naming and how the naming of Black Language connects to linguistic justice theory.

Importantly, though, as Geneva Smitherman pointed out in 1972, the “correctionist” teaching that characterizes the preparation argument is rooted in “the misguided notion that [instructors] are readying Black students for the world (read: white America)” (59; also discussed in Smitherman 1977: 2). With this, Smitherman (1972) argues that language inequalities in the U.S. uniquely target Black speakers—a point she develops through her work—and notes how the pedagogies rooted in the preparation argument’s logic are “misguided.” Flores and Rosa (2015) expand on the same problem, arguing that, because individuals link Standard English so much with whiteness, a non-white person is apt to be deemed unable to use the form despite the actual language they use (see also Hill 1998). In light of this, pedagogies rooted in preparation wouldn’t necessarily—if at all—aid Black or otherwise historically marginalized individuals from being targeted linguistically. Nonetheless, preparation still holds sway. While many of the instructors I worked with held personal beliefs in favor of linguistic justice, for some the preparation argument was so persuasive that their practices favored requirements that prioritized requirements toward Standard English over linguistic justice-aligned pedagogies.

While I worked with instructors across the English department, I also sought to pay special attention to the ways instructors interact with language inequalities and linguistic justice in practice, that is through their teaching of English writing. Standard English is often centered in forms of writing needed to gain access to professional settings: resumes, cover letters, application materials. On these written documents, applicants are placed under unique pressure to perform the right language, such as Standard English. Because Standard English ideologies are often associated with being more able to occupy professional and/or academic roles (Eckert 2000), an individual’s performance of language forms may correspond with their ability to access certain spaces. Further, while university application reviewers may pay less attention to written form or alignment with

Standard English conventions than they once did (Clinedinst 2019), students, once admitted to the university, are often continually evaluated on their abilities to produce a certain written form or style. These requirements, displayed on materials from school and job applications to things like government forms, are the ones the instructors I talked with often pointed to as they discussed the preparation argument. In their linguistic justice practice, some of these instructors emphasized the exclusionary nature of language requirements and sought to address such exclusion with their discussions of removing “conventions” sections on their rubrics and changing their grading policies to be less punitive. Requirements toward Standard English, in short, marked their discussions of classroom practices and linguistic justice pedagogies and created a unique connection between language users and language inequalities that informed instructors’ thinking and practices in regard to teaching English writing.

For my own part, I’ll also start this work by reflecting on some of its major themes—things like professionalization, power (in professional and academic contexts), and linguistic justice—in relation to my own experiences, thereby establishing how I approached them and engaged them through this project. In terms of professionalization, I was quick to accept the ideas of education and use of Standard English as professionalization because of my own history with work; I got my first taxable job within a few months of turning 15 (after a few years of odd, under-the-table jobs) and have not gone a year without working since. In my schooling I was asked to start thinking about resumes and careers at least at 13, and at home I saw my older brothers get pressured to start working before I turned 10. In the context of this thesis, all of this means the idea that a person might get professionalized early and often and from multiple sides is completely familiar to me. Likely because I had accepted and long thought of my self and skills in the context of labor, I tend to draw the same labor-based thinking to my conception of at least my own student role. Beyond

the way I value myself based on work ethic, productivity, etc., this also shows up in the way I interact with those with more power than I have. Especially combining this with my familial lack of knowledge about higher education, this means I continually default on mystification about the way individuals act and relate in academia. Therefore, as a student I frequently occupy the stance that students don't have power in the classroom context, which could have surfaced verbally or nonverbally when talking with instructors, for example, about how they build classes and try to incorporate dialogue, as constitutes a major theme of Chapter 3. To try to address this stance in the discussion of dialogue as in others I at times explicitly offer my side of the interview via quotes or lines of thinking. Finally, justice: when approaching the concept of linguistic justice and considering it now, I don't feel that my language is one that would be targeted by Standard English ideologies. I have been trained to use a language at least close enough to the Standard for as long as I have been speaking, most of those around me used similar language and would be teased if they didn't, and I am white (I'll directly explore the unsure definition of Standard English and its connections to whiteness in Chapters 2 and 4). However, the appreciation for "proper" English that was drilled into me from an early age has embedded in me a parallel appreciation for language and English forms. Therefore, when learning about linguistic justice I took no time accepting and agreeing with the need to appreciate any language form. Especially in relation to this work, I came from the question not of *why* but of *how* to enact linguistic justice. Indeed, linguistic justice's focus on practice remains an integral piece of the puzzle for me and created the base motivation through this entire project. So while I sought to approach these themes with new eyes—undeniably helped by the new perspectives the cited theorists offer—my own experiences and understandings persist outside and after this work. I hope this lone paragraph, at least, offers some footing.

With an exploration of linguistic justice and the historical and social circumstances that ground its theory, I begin Chapter 2 by exploring how instructors understand the concept of linguistic justice and their practices in relation to it. I show how a linguistic justice pedagogical schema informs not only instructors' own theories on their work but their interactions with societal notions about the purpose of education. In establishing the way instructors consider theories about their roles in society, in the university, and in classrooms, I demonstrate how instructors are influenced by societal theories about language and other actors holding other, potentially contradictory theories. However, instructors are influential themselves, and I also explore the ways their different institutional roles, such as in classroom, correspond with different levels of influence they have over the way students think about languages and inequalities. As they consider these multiple spaces, they work both to understand others' influences on their work by exploring their own positionality and to create fixed images of groups of students which they may employ as they seek to turn linguistic justice theory into classroom practices.

Working from these educational models and linguistic justice pedagogies, in Chapter 3 I turn to the way instructors occupy classrooms and turn theories into student-facing practices. Building on these background theories, I explore how instructors also operate under assumptions about the purposes of education and the construction of and roles within classrooms. Under the assumptions instructors aim to respond to, teaching is seen as necessarily evaluative, and the teaching of English writing in particular is thought to align with efforts to professionalize students. By emphasizing a certain type of dialogue in the classroom and by constructing the classroom as a space meant to produce experiences both comfortable and agency-inducing, instructors point to the pieces of a classroom experience they find most important in producing a linguistic justice pedagogy. In continually describing the methods they most often employ—in classrooms and in

interactions with students—the instructors discussed in this chapter show how they enact linguistic justice pedagogies within the frame of the instructor–student interaction.

In Chapter 4, I expand my exploration beyond the classroom and the university to consider how instructors’ linguistic justice theories and practices align with notions of learning in social movements—such as, in the work that provides a central framework to the chapter, a movement in Austria in 2009 where kindergarten teachers resisted societal and structural trends reframing education as aimed toward the market and toward producing students-as-professionals (Steinklammer 2012). Starting with instructors’ experiences with institutional and societal factors, I explore where these may show up in instructors’ work with students and consider how the presence of these influences in instructors’ training and, at times, pedagogical theories, leads them to forward the same hegemony. After identifying the way hegemonic thinking surfaces in their own theories and practices, instructors turn to concepts based on learning in social movements. From these theories, they employ methods to critically examine and reflect upon their own experiences and to offer such methods to students, thereby allowing instructors to reframe linguistic justice pedagogies from a focus on describing the societal connotations of language forms and individuals’ uses of them to teaching students to critically examine such connotations for themselves. These methods, reflective of educational methods in other social movements, move instructors’ linguistic justice-themed pedagogies into the radical by turning attention from the content they relay to students to the methods they use and offer students to use in the future.

2.0 “Everyone’s Adjusting to a New Place”: Spaces and Themes in Linguistic Justice

Pedagogy

In March 2023, the start of my data collection meant I was taking every chance I could to talk with instructors and get into classrooms. So when one Monday email push to instructors prompted Louise’s quick response and offer to observe her teaching a class session starting in 20 minutes, I ran out the door, I hoped the rain wouldn’t splatter my jeans, and I rehearsed the speech I’d use to ask 18 students if I could learn alongside them for the next 75 minutes.

I had walked into a first-year composition course—what some instructors regarded as the biggest output of the English department’s composition program. A passing grade in the course is needed for graduation and for other required writing-intensive classes, meaning almost every undergraduate in the university takes it at some point. Because of the sheer number of students who enroll, the course is almost as familiar to English instructors as it is to students, with many of the instructors I talked with—including everyone who received graduate training at this university—having experience teaching one version of it or another. Its ubiquity also meant it was somewhat more standardized than other English classes, and the department’s goals for the course were outlined not only in the course catalog but also on the English department’s website; students are meant to learn writing as a way to develop ideas that respond to other works and revising as a key part of the writing process. Students should gain an “awareness of formal conventions” but while also exploring “when and how to challenge conventions as well as follow them.”³

³ Department website accessed Feb. 7, 2024.

The day I visited, the class was embarking on such an exploration. Throughout the class session, Louise lectured on Black Language, written forms, and linguistic justice. The students had just read June Jordan's 1988 essay "Nobody Mean More to Me than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan," and in reviewing the material, Louise pointed to one of Jordan's "qualities of Black English," which stems, in her view, from Black peoples' "constantly needing to insist that we exist, that we are present": "*there is no passive voice construction possible in Black English*" (367).

"She puts that in italics," Louise punctuated. "Everyone take note of that. This is important 'cause you know what kind of language loves passive voice ..." She beckoned students' responses and chalked them on the board: "Standard English" above "Academic English" with two offshoots from the latter for "legal" and "scientific" writing. Turning from her diagram, she prompted us to "think about [mainstream retellings of] history. 'Mistakes were made. Indigenous land was taken'—by who?" In this case, scholarship meant to orient students to linguistic justice allowed the instructor to directly connect written forms, rhetorical strategies, and power. Indeed, Jordan's "qualities" relate heavily to the context she creates in the course her work is based on—where, in response to the recent murder of a Black man by police, the students in the course work together to craft statements acknowledging the event they hope news outlets will release. As they draft and send the letters to various outlets, the students negotiate what language they should use: Black Language, which reflects how they speak, or Standard English, the use of which might mean their writing has a better chance of reaching publication. In teaching this activist work, Louise, beyond emphasizing the actual rules of Black Language, was using Jordan's work to explain to students how language and power interact with each other (as Smitherman (1972) also seeks to do with Black Language). The students in the class that day might not have experienced the same disconnect between the language they most frequently use and that which can most often be found

in professional and academic settings, according to these instructors' perceptions and discussed further later in this chapter. As she went on to discuss Standard English, Louise carried the thread of use of language "qualities" to emphasize, primarily, a language's connections to power before its actual rules. Indeed, as she pointed to passive voice, she sought to call forth not what "rules" students have been taught about using Standard English but how students may be familiar with use of passive voice associated with the Standard to shift blame. Indeed, students' answers of "Standard English" and "academic English," etc., that Louise added to the chalkboard show their awareness of the point she was trying to make: rhetorical strategies, associated with specific languages, may at least at times show the social positions and power relations language users find themselves in. Notably, throughout this lesson, Louise drew on the forms, and their conventions, the students in the class were already familiar with and often actively engage in the academic setting, which helped her orient students to continuing conversations about language inequalities as well as prompt their responses, draw on examples familiar to them, and use both in her practice.

As I completed more interviews and observations, I found other instructors engaging in similar methods. That is, like Louise they also sought to draw from students' experiences and explained their attention to individual students' goals. And while they connected both of these practices to linguistic justice, they also drew on notions of therapeutic education, especially when students' experiences had been shaped by societal stresses and repressions, as experiences with language and conventions are wont to do under a linguistic justice framework. However, instructors' practices could shift from a therapeutic model to a consumer one when they framed individuals' experiences and goals in regard to language and writing under the lens of market preparedness, such as by viewing the student as customer buying an education that must attend to their future professional endeavors. As instructors navigated their methods, employing linguistic

justice pedagogical techniques and pointing to theories of (higher) education, they often also sought to determine their own and students' potential identities in relation to the university, linguistic justice, and their teaching.

Drawing from scholarship discussing previous iterations of linguistic justice, this chapter starts with an exploration of the way the movement is persistently debated, particularly in composition studies and sociolinguistics. In light of the continuing nature of the discussion, part of what contributed to these instructors' methods and theories was the way the movement toward linguistic justice existed within the particular spaces they occupied. In this initial survey of linguistic justice and of the settings instructors work within, informed by those I talked with, I'll situate this work in a certain time—discussing the historical groundings and iterations of linguistic justice—and place—or, more accurately, the many places in which discussions of linguistic justice occur. I'll then overview therapeutic and consumer models of education, especially in the United States, which combine with pedagogies aligned with linguistic justice to ground instructors' ideas about their roles. Finally, I'll consider the ways instructors construct not only themselves and their own work but also the students they encounter in the midst of linguistic justice and therapeutic and consumer discourses and practices. By presenting the scholarship and accounts herein, I aim to show how instructors think and act in relation to initial linguistic justice considerations, such as linguistic justice theories, general models that could help them orient the broad purposes of education, and who they and the students are as individual actors, which will help inform the subsequent chapters' focuses on how students and instructors interact with one another.

2.1 Defining Linguistic Justice and Its Pedagogies

In the class session I observed above, Louise demonstrated both how instructors may work within the department's outlined goals to incorporate linguistic justice discussions into classrooms as well as what materials instructors often used to think through linguistic justice in classrooms and on their own. For many, June Jordan's "Nobody Mean More to Me than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan" (1988) provided an integral starting point for discussing linguistic justice because of her discussion of Black Language itself and its social relations—both embedded in its rules and as a result of biases against Black Language and Black speakers. However, April Baker-Bell's *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy* (2020) was typically the first reference that came up in our conversations.

Baker-Bell, an education researcher, bases her 2020 work on a survey of a Detroit preparatory high school where she conducted ethnographic research. From this research, she develops a pedagogical schema that aims to respond to the students' apparent ingrained linguistic racism, and the book consists of her explaining the schema and the further ethnographic work she did as she implemented it with the same population she originally surveyed. She defines the pieces of her schema—which include worksheets, such as those asking students to consider their assumptions about the appearance of Black Language and Standard English users, and discussions about the structures and histories of Black Language and perceived connections between language and setting—and offers students' responses to each step. She outlines, both for readers and for the students she works with, Black Language's historical background, for which she describes both the impact of practices of enslavement on its development as well as the reasoning behind its syntax, echoing work from Geneva Smitherman (1977). In describing the way treatments of different languages are reflected onto language users, she turns focus from a general survey of

societal hierarchization of language forms to the way such categorizations and their respective (de)privileging are reflected onto speakers and their views of themselves, recalling works by James Baldwin (1979) and Flores and Rosa (2015). She embeds these understandings in the pedagogical practices she develops with the goal of heightening students' awareness of the linguistic landscape, offering a more encompassing picture of Englishes in the U.S. while empowering students to critically examine Standard English. In her "teacher-scholar-activist" praxis, she aims to inspire students to resist the societal (dis)regard of different languages rather than seek success by trying their luck in spite of these differential treatments. The instructors I worked with paid similar attention to the way languages are treated on a societal level and how this may impact classrooms.

Instructors also noted how current linguistic justice conversations respond to and are continuations of past, critical discussions of privileged languages, and in regard to Black Language in particular, scholars have long discussed its extensive, socially wrought history in the United States. Smitherman (1977) traces the language's development as a result of anti-revolution practices in slavery in which individuals were grouped based on linguistic differences so they were unable, initially, to communicate. bell hooks notes enslaved peoples' traumatic experience, among many, of having their languages ripped away from them and replaced with English (1994: 168), and Smitherman furthers this by discussing how, even when Black people began speaking English (including "White English" and creoles), "there was a social pattern in early Black America where status—and even survival as a freeman—depended to a great extent on competence in White English" (1977: 13). This need to perform (a version of) Standard English under threat of, minimally, linguistic exclusion is very much alive and well on both the public and personal levels, as Flores and Rosa (2015), Jordan (1988), and Hill (1998) show and I expand on later. Many of the instructors I talked with also discussed both this historical understanding of Black Language

and the relatedness of linguistic inequalities to social issues today. They noted how they've had conversations similar to those prompted by linguistic justice since their graduate school discussions of "the Ebonics debate, as it was called in the '90s," and how linguistic justice is marked by an attention to "more traditional power structures that have historically valued ... certain dialects and patterns that were already possessed by people in power." As they reflected on their past conversations about linguistic justice themes, they often called on discussions of languages, speakers, and power.

Baker-Bell's effort to center Black individuals' experiences is also a response to the ways whiteness strongly orients public language treatment and often marks what is seen as "good language" and normative (2020; Hill 1998; Flores and Rosa 2015). In the U.S., this normativity may be reproduced structurally: white, American-in-heritage speakers (often of English natively) exist in powerful positions and not only define the language of those powerful spaces but may create systems of exclusion wherein their language, or something close enough to it and used by the right people, continues to define those spaces. As these processes are set in place, especially for professional settings but often for public settings in general, Standard English comes to be defined and treated as the "norm" (Baker-Bell 2020: 3; Hill 1998; Flores and Rosa 2015). Importantly, a concrete definition of "Standard English" does not exist—and need not as "the characteristics of 'better speech' are taken to be precisely those characteristics which socially less prestigious groups lack" (MacSwan 2020: 30). Thus, white speakers may use whatever form they wish as long as those systems of exclusion are in place and their language (or racial presentation) falls within the systems' bounds (Flores and Rosa 2015). That mutability notwithstanding, speakers tend to uphold Standard English as the language of professional, public participation through structures of in- and exclusion and devalue other languages, such as by using "mock"

versions of them (Hill 1998; González 2001). Baker-Bell's moniker "Black Language" acknowledges a similar devaluation. She uses the name—as opposed to, for example, Ebonics, African American (Vernacular) English, or Black English—to decentralize an American view and establish the language in its own right, as opposed to viewing it as an offshoot to or subordinate of English (2020: 2-3).

But even within the U.S. context, the instructors I worked with continually turned their attention to increasingly specific contexts as they theorized on language privileging. In schooling in general, students may view the teacher's language as ideal, as I will discuss later (Eckert 2000). Higher education not only contains these student–instructor power relations but is especially unique because it seems to privilege money-making endeavors, at least at times, over student-centric ones; one instructor pointed to this relationship between higher education and economic gain by noting how "academia as an industry is so horribly entrenched in capitalism." However, as this instructor went on to qualify, academia is still "a lot less [entrenched] than other industries," and at least they saw that themes like linguistic justice may be more common in certain "academic circles"—such as the English ones they've occupied. At the state level, another instructor discussed how the public funding the university they work in receives has a certain political bent that could shape what university programs receive support, especially in regard to university or professorial initiatives that are seen to make a statement in regard to social issues, such as stem cell research and critical, anti-racist discussions of languages. In the classroom I observed at the start of this chapter, Louise marked language within academia as unique from Standard English in her efforts to identify types of English students might be familiar with. And in this school in particular, instructors discuss "the caliber of this university," signaling students' apparent understanding of the language that might be required of them as well as a place where the "status

quo” is apt to be reproduced, as it may be especially in “primarily white institutions that are 200-plus years old” like this school. When instructors discussed spaces all the way down to the student–instructor interactional level, they found, as one described, that their notion of linguistic justice centers “the long history of colonialism, and so I am certainly informed of that context when I’m working with students one-on-one.”

Instructors negotiated how more and more particular spaces—from academia to this university to the student–instructor interaction—each carried their own frames instructors worked within and found contained unique influences and attitudes about how instructors should perform their work. More specifically, these increasingly particular frames served to mark instructors’ theories and practices in regard to both language and anti-racist pedagogies. For the instructor who pointed to the university’s funding structures, they may feel the need to embody different practices toward social justice movements in the classroom than they would on their own because they view the state as unwilling to give them (or the university) direct support in forwarding more explicitly anti-racist discussions. In this case, the state established a primary frame covering the actions of university leadership and the interactions instructors have with students. When, alternatively, the final instructor above discussed their one-on-one methods, they could have pointed to the way discussions of existing, colonial structures show up in interactions. They center their work under an anti-colonial frame, that they label linguistic justice, more, in this case, than they established something like the state as the primary informant. By doing so, they resist any frame they believe would call on them to ignore or forward the “long history of colonialism” they identify. This allowed them to align their teaching, at least at some level, more closely to Baker-Bell’s anti-racist work than they might have if they had chosen to highlight another frame.

Baker-Bell (2020) aims to dismantle an existing system of language privileging in U.S. education and build anti-racist practice in its place. She starts her work by offering an analytical schema readers can use to critically assess pedagogies and their anti-racist effectiveness. In the first listed type of pedagogy that is critiqued, labeled Eradicationist, Black Language is derided as not a language and inferior. Such claims are, in turn, “interpreted as a defect of the child rather than a defect of the educational system’s response to [Black Language]” (Baker-Bell 2020: 28). Indeed, while some have also pointed to the way judgments of Black Language are reflected onto Black speakers (Baldwin 1979), the language remains disregarded and grouped among “vernacular” forms, which are treated as riddled with continual change (Eckert 2000: 18). The instructors I spoke with often aligned with Baker-Bell by directly opposing such a negative-value-laden view, discussing language variation from a linguistics standpoint of acceptance and acknowledgement of language change as opposed to one characterized by a staunch adherence to mainstream language forms and their structures (Greenfield 2011: 39). They noted how language is “always changing ... [so] you can’t say it’s incorrect.” They referenced “the traditional rules of grammar, which were not written in stone 500 years ago, by the way,” and they described “the fluidity of language, the variability of language, how it has changed over time.” This attitude could, at least partly, have shielded them, or at least their language, from reflecting an Eradicationist viewpoint, as they seemed to accept language change and variation rather than reject it.

Beyond the Eradicationist, Baker-Bell (2020) deems the next category Respectability Language Pedagogies to describe those that respect Black Language use in the classroom but only as a way to teach Standard English. This more delimited form of respect is reflective of the preparation argument, where instructors who seek to acknowledge that Standard English is aligned

with professional spaces argue that it must, therefore, be taught in schools.⁴ The key here is a continual and final centering of Standard English in the educational space. For one instructor, a preparation-argument, “Respectability” attitude showed up as they considered students’ goals and how students might “aim for academic English if the hope is using that [writing] to get to graduate school.” Respectability Pedagogies may also be present in the works of scholars who argue against use of Black Language, at least in certain spaces, or discuss the value of teaching (Standard) English in their effort to reduce the harm individuals face as a result of language inequalities (Delpit 2002; Rodriguez 1981). Scholars and instructors who hold this stance may favor code switching—in their view a method where students use different languages for different contexts—which might help students retain any language(s) they were already using even as they learn Standard English to participate in professional and academic settings.⁵ However, language inequalities are reflected onto speakers across public settings, as opposed to only professional ones, which instructors who align with Respectability Pedagogies also signal. By nature of asking students to use any other language only in service of learning Standard English, these Pedagogies may also reinforce the privileging of the form in all (at least public, though potentially also private (Hill 1998)) settings. For some instructors I talked with—and especially those who favored the preparation argument, at least in practice—code switching was “not a solution.” In this, they hinted at the same critique Baker-Bell levels at code switching’s inability to “challenge Anti-Black Linguistic Racism” (2020: 28). However, for others, even while code switching wasn’t the best option, it was still an option. As one instructor put it, “[it’s] baby steps. ... Ideally, we wouldn’t

⁴ Schools as spaces of professionalization discussed further in Chapters 2 and 3.

⁵ Young (2011) offers a critique and complication of this view of code switching, exploring how individuals might engage more in what he calls “code meshing,” where language users fluidly shift language forms between and within utterances.

have to worry about code switching ... but it's a step in the process, I guess." For this instructor, Baker-Bell's schema existed along a continuum, and Respectability Pedagogies that are in place because of Standard English's current (connection to) power might help establish a wider, national context where students would not need to use Standard English to be accepted.

The incrementalism the above instructor references would logically end with Baker-Bell's final approach, Antiracist Black Language Pedagogies, which represent efforts to center Black Language, especially as a way to interrogate the existing system of "white linguistic hegemony" (2020: 28). Signaling concepts from the scholarship cited above, many of the instructors I talked with described connections between whiteness, power structures, and language (especially discussed in Hill 1998; Flores and Rosa 2015; Spears 2021; Smitherman 1972). They described Standard English as "shaped by white American speech and writing conventions and education [and] probably more upper-class education that ignores diversity." Its rules have been "admittedly, white for centuries, [creating] a white linguistic foundation" and its conventions "are very based on white standards of English." With these acknowledgements, these instructors could have signaled the way they hoped the anti-racism at the center of Baker-Bell's work resonated in their own theories, which they then used to build practices.

With Baker-Bell (2020) as a starting point that they built on with past conversations and further scholarship, instructors often sought to embody a certain attitude about language treatments and practices of addressing them in educational settings. With their discussions of historical understandings and of societal language treatments, both of which Baker-Bell's (2020) work is based on, they signal her work as well as that of others as a strong influence on their considerations of linguistic justice. These discussions of the theories behind linguistic justice pedagogies are

central as the instructors I worked with consider their own contexts—such as in the university, department, and classroom—and desires when moving from theory to practice.

2.1.1 The Morality and Value of Pedagogy

Oftentimes, the settings in which instructors worked was a major factor influencing their practices and discussions of linguistic justice. Within these settings—especially one-on-one tutoring sessions, English classes, and composition classes, in the cases discussed herein—instructors defined structural factors and related ways of teaching that influenced their ability to enact linguistic justice in their teaching. Beyond their pedagogies, however, the way instructors structured their thoughts on each setting, especially in relation to other contexts, revealed how they defined the reasons behind their (linguistic justice) pedagogies. Such pedagogies allow them to not only convey a certain attitude and help students reach a certain point of critical engagement with social issues but also help instructors to define their work as unique and important—sparking an emphasis on the internal reflections and motivations instructors further draw on in Chapter 4.

On the instructor–student interaction level, some instructors who had experience both teaching classes and tutoring in the university’s writing center found that each role framed unique ways of thinking about and discussing linguistic justice with students. In one instance, an instructor found the time constraints of a 30-minute tutoring session influenced the amount they’d bring up a discussion of language inequalities because the conversation is “a really big door to open with someone that you’re just meeting.” This instructor compared this concern with classes, where they were able to “assign reading, have reading responses, [and] do this whole scaffolded thing to introduce students to a new topic.” Another tutor built on this to describe how, when they teach a course, they’re able to “get to know [students] over 15 weeks.” The instructor’s tutoring work, on

the other hand, was marked by a continuing string of students they meet for the first time in a session and may see only once, meaning that in sessions, “we’re starting from ground zero. ... I don’t really know them.” For this tutor, such concerns meant they weren’t familiar with students’ previous relationships with language, which might have been helpful when determining how they might respond to conversations about linguistic justice, as I will discuss further in Chapter 3. In regard to linguistic justice, these structural factors inhibit a tutor’s felt ability to enact a linguistic justice pedagogy they might use in classes.

Beyond the structural, writing tutorials most frequently involve three actors, whose interactions reflect hierarchies within the educational institution and require tutors to shift their own stance in relation to them. In most tutoring sessions, a student brings an assignment from one of their classes to the tutor with the goal of getting help with their writing, whether that comes in the form of being able to clarify their ideas, ensure smooth flow throughout their paper, etc. If they are writing for a class assignment, students may bring an assignment description to discuss with the tutor. Tutors, for their part, both work with the student to help them produce the writing they want *and* serve as a sort of teammate to the instructor in the instructor’s and tutor’s shared goal of helping the student develop their writing abilities. However, even as the student, tutor, and instructor work alongside each other in the one interaction of a tutoring session, their roles are not horizontal. One tutor identified their place alongside the student and instructor by explaining, “I’m not the teacher, so I have to kind of work with the student [to figure out the assignment].” As this tutor notes, tutors may often be in the position of helping the student adhere to the instructor’s assignment. The instructor, in these instances, might not realize the student even sought extra help at the writing center. Between students and tutors, students look to tutors for help on their writing. But if students wish to produce something that aligns with an instructor’s assignment, as most

students do under the threat of a poor grade, tutors must continually center the instructor as the ultimate authority. Even when tutors were also instructors—as were many of those I talked with—they explicitly separated their tutoring and instructing roles in order to most help the student work toward an assignment they did not assign and might not agree with—especially if it contains language requirements, for example, they feel go against their own linguistic justice pedagogies.

This distinction between an individual’s tutor and instructor roles also surfaced in regard to linguistic justice in particular, where tutors sometimes hampered their desire to discuss linguistic justice with students because they weren’t sure what the assigning instructor’s intentions were. As one tutor, Alanna, put it: “I want to be respectful, encourage individuality [and] authentic speech ... but I also don’t want to get students in trouble with their professors.” Alanna discussed their position between the student and instructor as they balanced their wishes for the student with the instructor’s wishes as the assigner and grader in the student’s class. They placed themselves outside the student–instructor relationship but still had to navigate an instructing role when they tutored the student. In practice, Alanna decided to work toward what the student’s instructor outlined—via assignment pages, previous feedback, or the student’s sense of their attitude—but did so with an internal conflict: “It’s like, what do you do? And what’s considered an error [that the instructor would want changed]? ... So that part’s tough.” As these tutors demonstrated, tutors’ work requires them to consider other actors and their intentions as well as their own desires in relation to both. Even when tutors don’t come into direct contact with these other actors—as is often the case with tutors and assigning instructors—tutors still consider if and how instructors might occupy their roles in relation to them. In some cases like Alanna’s, these questions are not easily answered and may, as for the other tutors above, cause instructors to reconsider their own wishes—including those

for a more direct and informed response to language inequalities that would align with Baker-Bell's (2020) Antiracist Pedagogies.

The intricacies of the relationships and hierarchies tutors navigate in the writing center offer only one example of the influences instructors face in their jobs, the hierarchies that characterize their work, and the way they respond to both in their teaching in general and in their linguistic justice pedagogies in particular. The setting of the writing center, wherein tutors' individual experiences reside, also reveals hierarchies present across the entire university. Stephen North's seminal work "The Idea of a Writing Center" (1984) provides an understanding of how writing centers are poorly regarded, if regarded at all, in universities because of their assumed "fix-it shop" model and relevance only for remedial writers. Indeed, the attitude against writing centers hasn't faded with time (Smith 2023). It seems as though, in some works, writing education calls forth a "how hard can it be" attitude, sometimes tied up in gendered discussions of care-heavy educational spaces that prioritize, or acknowledge, interpersonal connection.

Importantly, this attitude may stem from a connection between English classrooms and workshop-style classes which, like seminars, prioritize discussion and rely on students' contributions (Leahy 2005). Indeed, for instructors who work largely in seminar contexts—which make up the majority of the English department's classes and maintain an average class size of 15 to 20 students—lectures were large and impersonal. For one instructor, lecture halls were spaces where instructors engaged in "directive statement making" and "proclamations" and where students aren't "engaging in their own ways." For another, one-on-one conferencing with students, a technique they used alongside the more personal seminar classroom, "is everything in terms of making a course work for students and making learning happen." By turning seminars—a department-set English class type—into a way to define their teaching as more pedagogically

effective, English instructors who may feel their work is disregarded gained a sense of pride in that their work, which was more personal and catered to the individual, was more conducive to learning. This was sometimes reinforced by students, who “will report that they don’t get the same kinds of feedback in those other departments as they do in English.”

Extending this comparison between English and other fields, instructors also described how instructors in the English department seemed to discuss and practice linguistic justice more than their non-English colleagues in the university. Even when many of the instructors I worked with also wanted more explicit linguistic justice discussions in the English department, they continually reinforced that while “we don’t have a ton of conversations about [linguistic justice], it’s more than I hear other departments speaking.” This sense often surfaced in their goals of getting linguistic justice conversations to happen in “other departments across the university.” As one department administrator said of other English instructors’ efforts to work with non-English faculty developing writing courses: “I’m not involved in that, but I know the people involved in it, and I can only assume that they’re having conversations about linguistic justice in some ways with those teachers.” When other departments seem so removed from linguistic justice conversations and English so connected to them, the relationships between English and non-English instructors were marked by the disconnect. In an effort to define such differences, one instructor characterized the English department as one of “the really politically active departments,” a moniker which sometimes, for this instructor, marked departments where social justice causes were taken up by instructors more than students might look for them.

A similar comparison happened within the English department as well; the department is composed of four programs—literature, creative writing, composition and rhetoric, and film—but instructors continually reinforced the composition program’s greater interest in and connection to

linguistic justice conversations. For some, this was because the interests of individual composition instructors happened to align with linguistic justice. For others, the field of composition itself has more research focused on writing pedagogy and first-year composition programs, which lend themselves to linguistic justice conversations because of how they involve discussions of working with student writers, and especially those who may be new to a university writing context. Whatever the reason, instructors continually saw a connection between composition and linguistic justice—which composition instructors then used to reinforce their program’s value and practice. As one composition instructor put it, “I feel like we’re doing a lot of good work in composition. We’re not perfect, but we’re getting it.”

All of these comparisons between and within departments allow instructors to point to the importance of their own work because of their methods and the amount they talked about linguistic justice. The above instructor who discussed politically active departments displays such movement from pedagogical methods to moral-value-based evaluations. They discuss how the methods that seem to characterize English classes, such as the fostering of interpersonal relationships, were open to be spoken about under the terms of anti-racism—thereby allowing instructors to use the contradictions they create or define to place their work closer to Baker-Bell’s (2020) *Antiracist Pedagogies*. However, many of the relationships instructors were a part of—which informed their linguistic justice work in the university—were one-sided; more often than not, tutors didn’t converse with the instructors who assigned work that prompted students’ visits to the writing center, and part of the reason writing centers are poorly regarded could be because they’re often not on instructors’ radars across the university. While a few English instructors work with instructors in other fields who are building field-specific writing courses, many don’t formally interact with instructors in other departments. And even within the English department, its size—

employing roughly 200 full- and part-time faculty and, in one instructor's estimate, earning the title of "the largest department in the university"—meant the four programs were "pretty siloed," creating a situation where instructors could only speak vaguely of other programs' initiatives or overall thoughts on linguistic justice. But while these relationships were one-sided, they were still available as bounds within which instructors may define their own practice.

Instructors' efforts to define their practice, then, centered around ideas of their work both in conjunction with others—as the tutors who had to find their own place between instructors and students did—and in opposition to others—as composition and English instructors did at the department and school levels, respectively. Further, it was in relation to others that instructors defined not only their pedagogies but their moral intentions and commitments to linguistic justice. Even when instructors described how they might do more, and more directly, to forward linguistic justice, at least they were doing more than others. These comparisons and moral evaluations, then, provided a key way for instructors to define their ideas of linguistic justice using their practices and their ideas about the value of their work.

2.2 Student Roles and Instructor Responsibilities

Beyond the way they compare their work in the university, instructors used existing assumptions about the roles of English instructors and/or seminar leaders in higher education to determine their roles' relations to linguistic justice. With this focus, instructors entered interactions with students by considering not only how they see the student—though instructors did build some conception of the student, as I will discuss later—but how the student is seen relative to popular educational models. These models, meant to define the purpose and functions of higher education,

often pertain to persisting arguments about whether university education is built on a therapeutic model, in which the student is seen as a client in need of a helping hand, or a neoliberal one, which sees the student as consumer. When instructors established their theories and signaled their connections to each model, they created a ground from which they could establish classroom practices.

Describing one side of what they treat as a two-sided argument, Kleinman and Osley-Thomas (2016) write of an economic view of the university, wherein the university sells a service and “students are consumers, whose individual interest is narrowly in workforce preparation and whose demands educators should satisfy” (198). One instructor I talked with called upon this view in their assertion that “students are here to get educated, and I’m here to give them what they’ll need.” Using transactional language, this instructor explicitly positioned themselves as provider of a service that students purchased. Under our conversation’s theme of linguistic justice, this instructor signaled the way the preparation argument, discussed briefly above, related to the neoliberal university by building almost solely on the “workforce preparation” that is so central to the consumer model; as students are being prepped to enter the workforce, they must be prepped with the (Standard English) language that is seen to align with and be necessary in the professional fields they expect to enter. In looking for and helping students accomplish their individual goals, which the instructors I worked with talked about as not only a key aspect of their work but a differentiating factor between their work and that in other fields, instructors may be working to fulfill those student “demands” that also seem to characterize the consumer model. In this “customer-is-always-right” system, linguistic justice may only show up for students who ask for it as instructors worry about imbuing students’ education with something either party might see as not directly valuable in the market (discussed further in Chapter 4). Further, while Kleinman and

Osley-Thomas (2016) find that attention to the idea of student as consumer has increased—as has the idea’s opposition—they also note how those in favor of the view offer the connection without clarifying that by consumers they mean students. In this, they demonstrate how scholars assume the idea of student as consumer is “familiar to both authors and readers” and “naturalized” at this point, no matter an individual’s personal feelings about whether the connection is appropriate (Kleinman and Osley-Thomas 2016: 215; 214). For these instructors, such naturalization meant that whether or not instructors themselves favor a consumer model, they’re aware of it, as are the exclusionary representatives of professional spaces they imagine—the mere idea of whom justified instructors’ alignment with the preparation argument.

However, instructors’ missions of working toward individual students’ goals could also fit within a therapeutic model, which Kleinman and Osley-Thomas (2016) signal with the term they position opposite “student as consumer”: “student as citizen.” Importantly, such a classification turns focus to how students occupy a role in society—and therefore how a main goal of instructors should be helping the student fully realize their duties as members of a society. Taking the “student as citizen” idea a step further, Rice discusses how the therapeutic model relies on students as not only citizens but as citizens repressed by societal problems (2002: 20). Under this view, students would need an education attendant to their weakened state and that would “gradually cultivate innate talents and potentials heretofore lost in the process of socialization” (Rice 2002: 22). This idea of “innate talents and potentials” rings in discussions of how languages interact with users’ identities and the way a devaluation of language is a personal attack which inhibits users’ abilities to interact as wholly with the world (González 2001; theme of Rodriguez 1981). Further, for the instructors I talked with, Rice’s description of “socialization” aligned with attention to the ways languages are treated throughout a student’s education. Such focus, in the therapeutic model, on

the way students may be “socialized,” however, led me to ask instructors how they saw their positions as university professors teaching students who have already completed a majority of their education. In response, one instructor agreed that as they consider ideas about the students they teach, they often come back to the way students “have gone through K through 12 learning to code switch [and] speak in different ways in school ... than they might at home.” Perhaps recognizing how schooling may influence students’ interactions with languages, Baker-Bell (2020) roots her ethnography in a preparatory school for 9th and 10th graders and discusses the “ingrained” attitudes they have reflecting language inequalities. Such “socialization,” when it comes to mean, in this case, loss of the ability to use certain languages in certain settings, then must be overwritten—moving the work of instructors who take up this role into the therapeutic. For the instructors I talked with who sought to both think through the way “K through 12” education influences students and connect this to Antiracist linguistic justice pedagogies, they may be signaling the way they approach their teaching with a therapeutic view of education.

But a therapeutic model also requires a “redefinition of education, teaching, and the teacher’s role” (Rice 2002: 22), especially because it seeks to overwrite past experiences as well as respond to the traumas of socialization while oftentimes working within the same system in which students were socialized (Williamson 2023: 130). Such redefinition may show up in instructors’ efforts to upset their status as authority figures or relax grading standards. For the former, instructors discussed instances where they wanted to avoid the role of “expert” in class discussions, as I will explore in Chapter 3. Many instructors I talked with also offered students the option of calling them by their first name, which could have worked alongside their efforts in class discussions to avoid any notion that only their voice mattered or carried weight in the classroom—in their words, it’s one method by which they tried to “offset the hierarchy that’s implicit” in the

classroom. In terms of grading standards, instructors discussed interest in and efforts to shift their grading practices to be more effort-based as opposed to value-based. One instructor described a “labor-based grading [system], which moves away completely from judging student work on any kind of linguistic adequacy basis.” For others, grading was a dialogic effort, labelled, for one instructor, “consultative” since it was marked by a midterm conversation with each student to discuss what each party thought the student’s grade ought to be. Another instructor also combined their grading practices with attention to individual writers, describing their efforts of “trying to emphasize collaboration over correction.”

But within this discussion of classroom practices, the English classroom again creates a unique setting that could color instructors’ considerations of which educational model they align their work with. In their experiences building writing classes and programs, Leahy (2005) and Williamson (2023) both discuss the ways the workshop classroom creates a unique space lending itself to a therapeutic view. In this type of classroom, students are called upon to read and discuss each others’ work, and so while most of the classes the instructors I worked with teach are classified as seminars, as opposed to workshops, the same connection to the therapeutic model could apply because of instructors’ reliance on students’ input and their openness and willingness to participate in discussions. For Williamson, such classrooms could call on a certain “vulnerability” from students and so require a therapeutic model that is attentive to students’ potential experiences of the classroom (2023: 120). Instructors similarly pay much attention to the experiences students have already had in educational spaces and therefore how they could experience current spaces. In both Williamson’s case and that of these instructors, one method they employed was assigning students writing tasks whose product would never be seen by the instructor. For one instructor who used this method, such a task allowed students “to get around

some of the fears of people sharing something with an instructor.” This instructor recognized that student–instructor interactions are heavy with stereotypical power structures that could inhibit their ability to build a more personal, jointly structured and informed relationship. In response, then, they tried not only to attend to students’ past experiences but to, in their own words, “decenter” themselves; they try to move out of the way so students might feel the interaction is not so weighted and that they might carry as much influence on it as the instructor. Further, Leahy asserts that “grades are taken personally within the highly interpersonal class,” both reinforcing instructors’ use of potentially unexpected grading structures marking the therapeutic classroom and drawing a connection between this therapeutic effort and the English seminar/workshop classroom in particular (2005: 18-19).

2.2.1 How Models Inform Practice

With this survey of the therapeutic and neoliberal models of education, I move again from the theoretical to the practical and seek to establish the way such theoretical models of what higher education should be connect to the way these theories inform instructors’ actions in the classroom. Importantly, both consumer and therapeutic models call for practices that attend highly to individual students—embodied by the therapeutic model’s emphasis on an instructor’s effort to identify individual students’ goals and interests (Rice 2002) and by the consumer model’s focus on student “desires.” This double use also reflects a widely held ambivalence about whether a therapeutic or neoliberal model is more appropriate in practice, which some instructors matched in their discussions of having to juggle their personal affinity for linguistic justice with a fear that, without wider societal change to accept non-Standard Englishes, linguistic justice could fall into an idealistic theory that wouldn’t hold up against preparation’s practical use. In this case, the

difference between the two models becomes how instructors choose which framework to place their pedagogies under. Instructors' choices, then, are informed by the connections they draw between linguistic justice, educational models, and how to work with students' goals—such as, for example, whether students wish individually to work against ingrained linguistic structures or to work toward professional contexts in particular.

Since this work focuses on linguistic justice, Baker-Bell's three-pronged schema of linguistic justice pedagogies provides the basis for determining how instructors' methods align with either the therapeutic or educational model. The Eradicationist Pedagogies, which instructors did not emphasize, aligns most with the consumer model's favoring of Standard English, and may show up in practice, for example, as an instructor's blind rewriting of non-Standard language in their quest to prepare students for the market. A Respectability stance, on the other hand, could align with either therapeutical or neoliberal classrooms. Since Respectability Pedagogies are characterized by instructors acknowledging the validity of all languages, such as by seeking out students' individual experiences with language in society, both educational models may align. However, therapeutic pedagogies not only address students' experiences but do so in order to attend to a societal harm. Therefore, since the ultimate goal of instructors employing Respectability Pedagogies is to teach Standard English, thereby enforcing the form's use and dominance in professional and educational spaces, a Respectability stance may be only therapeutic on the individual level, as opposed to also on the societal level. Indeed, Respectability Pedagogies might help students address their personal experiences with societal harms but do not seek to rewrite the society in which those harms occur and are reproduced. This disconnect between individual and societal is the basis for Baker-Bell's Antiracist category. Pedagogies within this final category similarly attend to students' experiences and seek to address those experiences as well as establish

a societal-level understanding of the histories and validity of all languages in any space. Antiracist Pedagogies are based in response to societal treatments of non-Standard Englishes, which label use of non-Standard forms as “a symbol of intellectual and moral inferiority” and reflect these unfavorable assumptions onto speakers (Baker-Bell 2020: 54).

As instructors negotiated their work and their pride in certain pedagogical moves, however, they also indicated how they incorporate morality into their work, which could inform the educational model they use to frame the classroom and their pedagogical methods. Connecting the therapeutic classroom to the English one is the way the therapeutic model moves into the position of “an *ethic* ... which [provides] guidelines for moral conduct” (Rice 2002: 20; emphasis in original). If instructors see therapeutic methods as aligned with linguistic justice’s goals, they could see the movement as providing those “guidelines” and informing how they talk about language in the classroom. Importantly, putting linguistic justice under this “ethic” framework could also reveal the way Baker-Bell’s (2020) linguistic justice pedagogies relate to the therapeutic and neoliberal educational models. Because of linguistic justice’s continual focus on the way language treatments are reflected onto users, the therapeutic model’s alignment with morality could uniquely connect it to Antiracist Pedagogies. Instructors using therapeutic practices in the classroom could be basing their practice in morally grounded, linguistic justice-based theories of anti-racism and language de-privileging. Therefore, any uncertainty about how to classify instructors’ practices is eased by the way Baker-Bell’s linguistic justice theories mark practices that would be either therapeutic or neoliberal as therapeutic, deciding for instructors who wish to follow linguistic justice which model their practices fall into.

When instructors approached this connection between Baker-Bell’s Antiracist Pedagogies and the therapeutic model, they then had to find where linguistic justice fit in their practice—a

necessary piece of Baker-Bell’s work, which is “situated at the intersection of theory and practice” (2020: 34). Such a strong connection between theory and practice marked linguistic justice for many of the instructors I talked with and created for more an unsure, uncomfortable disconnect. As one instructor described two sides of a linguistic justice debate—trying to “change the world by making my students revolutionaries,” signaling Baker-Bell’s (2020) aim to create societal change or “[preparing] the student for the harsh judgment out there”—they aligned themselves with the latter, noting, “I’m a work in progress with linguistic justice.” This instructor favored linguistic justice theory, with its moral groundings and attention to wider societal issues, but felt their practice needed to embody a preparation, and therefore student-as-consumer, bent. Further, their reframing of their discomfort onto their self cemented the way linguistic justice requires a strong connection between theory and practice; when they felt the linguistic justice theory didn’t align with their practices with students, *they* were “still working” on reconciling the two. As this instructor demonstrated, instructors see the connection between linguistic justice theory and therapeutic practice, even if they don’t (yet) feel able to navigate both. And they realize how their practices may be defined for them based on the connections others draw between theory and practice—whether those be based on linguistic justice or assessments about English or liberal arts educations, etc.

For students, instructors’ negotiations of theory and practice place roles onto them. Central to the debate between the therapeutic and neoliberal models is an unsureness in how to classify students: as consumers or as repressed by society and in need of therapeutic classroom spaces. But both of these classifications manipulate students’ relationships to classroom agency. In the neoliberal classroom, instructors must fulfill the demands of students in their efforts to grow as professionals. However, rather than creating a space where students may decide what skills and

knowledge is needed for their professional goals, the preparation argument dictates that Standard English is needed in professional contexts, thereby placing instructors who aligned with the argument in the position of deciding for students what they will need to know. For therapeutic classrooms, students come into their higher education as already repressed by societal structures and already in need of a certain type of classroom that helps them respond to such conditioning, which instructors decide how to build.

Within this similar ungrounding of a student's agency and because both theories rely on instructors' abilities to provide attention to students as individuals (albeit with different primary needs), the difference between these theories can become flattened in instructors' practices. So if the educational theories instructors signal aren't their sole practical guide, the question becomes: what else informs instructors' practices? Further, instructors are never on their own in building classrooms or in working in classrooms. In the same way these theories informed their practice, other theories and other actors in the various spaces instructors occupied did as well.

2.3 Constructing Selves

Instructors' perceptions of themselves as workers provided a central factor to their practices, such as, in relation to the therapeutical and neoliberal models, their emphasis on individual students' goals. Oftentimes, their teaching methods involved meeting with students one-on-one and giving individualized, written feedback. However, while the latter especially drew comments about it being "a worthwhile investment" because students seem to directly benefit from it, some instructors also discussed the practice as "time intensive" and "exhausting" and potentially making them "feel beat up by the end of it"—to the point where, as one instructor joked, "I just

try to sleep a lot in the summer.” The emphasis on labor also had ironic effects on whether a practice could be deemed “linguistic justice” or not. For example, while effort-based grading practices could have aligned with linguistic justice and a de-privileging of the instructor’s influence, such practices also just meant that instructors could spend less time on grading. As one described, even when “I still write [students] pretty extensive feedback ... I’m not spending so much time considering, ‘Oh, does this deserve an A minus or a B plus?’” With these discussions, instructors brought focus not only to the educational models their practices fit into but to the way they negotiate their labor and their presence as workers, and how that, in turn, impacted their pursuit of linguistic justice.

Instructors’ discussions of their labor is just one example of how they incorporate other pieces of their work into their linguistic justice theories. This section starts with a foray into instructors’ experiences as workers to establish both one important aspect of how they construct their work as well as how multiple aspects of their work might fit under a particular framework, such as linguistic justice. When instructors identified other influences in the university, they often focused on actors—the department, their colleagues, students—whose presences informed things like their experiences as workers and any further classification of their practices into certain educational theories. As they considered how these other actors inform their thinking and practices, instructors often sought out or built ideas of them that they could then respond to and use to describe their own actions or commitment to linguistic justice.

2.3.1 Finding the Instructor

Instructors’ interactions with others often established their ideas of how to navigate their workplace—mostly characterized by the department and the classroom—which they then used to

inform our discussions about linguistic justice. However, such interactions were not always explicitly offered or about the topic. Within the department, conversations about linguistic justice surfaced in unofficial channels as leadership preferred to join the sizeable department under a certain “vibe” rather than explicitly discuss issues in settings like faculty meetings. This vibe, as one administrator in the composition program described it, meant the main learning goal for (composition’s writing-focused) classes was “writing for critical inquiry, exploration, [and] productive uncertainty” rather than for “argumentation” because “we’re always wanting to engage with critical uses of language and generous uses of language and reading.” Other instructors discussed what they saw as widely held ideas, such as the notion that “if you’re a good teacher, you should always be learning” and the practice of offering students the option to call them by their first name, which could have helped create a more casual classroom space. In our conversations, instructors pointed to these attitudes in order to describe their own practices, solidifying the link—present at least part of the time—between the department vibe and instructors’ personal theories and practices. To understand this vibe, then, instructors turned to other conversations, experiences, and relationships, which also gave them insight into how the vibe would inform their responses to social justice movements.

Many instructors discussed faculty workshops, continuing education opportunities, and talks the department hosts as events that showed what is important to the department from an aerial view. For instructors who were trained in the department, a population that constituted roughly half of those I talked with, the teaching training they received, while emphasizing instructors’ independence in planning and carrying out classes, pointed to a culture that remains apparent through the department—one that often mimicked the language on the department’s website, featured at the start of this chapter. As one instructor saw it, “Our job is not to correct [students’]

work, it's to help them develop voice, to help them understand convention, but also think about what they want to do in their particular context with their particular audience." For many more instructors, such openness to students' individual aims also marked the department "vibe." When such attention to individuals was supplemented by teaching them an "awareness of formal conventions," instructors' understandings of the department, while at times rooted in accepting visions of languages, also could have opened the door toward reproducing the preparation argument.

However, before instructors were able to understand how the department vibe might influence their practices, they first had to find the vibe. And because they found that more official conversations were not as common in the department due in part to its size, they largely relied on their personal networks to understand the department's vibe and the attitude they wished to embody—including in regard to linguistic justice. To find the vibe, some instructors turned to other faculty with questions about how to deal with a student problem or for information about the department and its many programs. But with the size of the department and the way linguistic justice conversations centered on composition, instructors were left with relations to only a fraction of the department's faculty as well as associations between linguistic justice and certain faculty or programs that could have dissuaded them from discussing the subject if they deemed it only tangential to their work. While the department seems to maintain a "vibe" that instructors were able to identify with linguistic justice, instructors' lack of connection could translate into a precariousness about whether the vibe is disseminated—and therefore how ubiquitous one widely held attitude about linguistic justice may be in the department.

Wherever the department's vibe comes from, it continued to orient instructors' understandings of their work, characterizing the departmental frame they operated under. Marked

in the earlier instructor's discussion of their responsibilities to help students "develop voice" for "their particular context [and] with their particular audience," the vibe emphasizes and promises instructors' attention to students' individual written voices and circumstances—creating a responsibility for instructors to employ such individualized practice. When instructors' felt responsibility to work with individuals' experiences and to their goals is combined with linguistic justice, which instructors felt was discussed enough to be an aspect of the vibe, this responsibility is framed as therapeutic on behalf of instructors.

Within the instructor–student interaction, in contrast, instructors' power over the setting and their influence on students may allow them to define their own role better than they could in the department. Surely their ability to build a specific type of setting alone indicates instructors' power over it, as this luxury is not often bestowed upon students unless the instructor facilitates it. Further, as instructors continually present information to students—such as class readings or other materials—they effectively guide students' interpretation of such material (Goodwin 1994). In terms of language specifically, instructors' presentation of language in the form of essays or sample papers, for example, might indicate to students a language the instructor wants students to embody. Because notions of "good writing" are often vague (Elton 2010) and definitions of "Standard English," as a language students might already associate with education, are difficult (if not impossible) to pin down (Flores and Rosa 2015; Greenfield 2011), students may rely more heavily on the class materials instructors offer to get a sense of what that individual instructor might be looking for on an assignment. In this sense, instructors have an inherent power over students, which is displayed in their assigning of readings and avoiding (knowingly or not) defining the language they want to see on assignments. Further, instructors—by virtue of their experience, their position, their role—embody a connection between the language they use and

power (Eckert 2000). All this means that when it comes to language, instructors are perhaps less individuals and more conduits through which language is conveyed and a certain language is reinforced as more fit for powerful positions. As linguistic justice seeks to address, this certain language is often the Standard. Especially apparent in writing requirements for professional and academic settings, these settings continue to privilege the form. Importantly, such continuing requirements are oftentimes present through an individual's training to enter these settings, and instructors, as professionals in an academic setting, are no exception.

Indeed, internal and external influences—such as, for the latter, the department and wider educational models—provided ways for instructors to navigate others' ideas of the instructor role and how instructors could act in response to such ideas. Alongside their own theories on language inequalities gained from their past training and readings, instructors in this chapter turned to the department to understand how their colleagues navigated the linguistic justice theories they thought were widely present in the department. Returning to this section's opening discussion, an instructor's sense of their labor could work alongside linguistic justice theories to create confusion in their attitude toward linguistic justice. Indeed, instructors who wished to embody a therapeutic attitude faced the model's connection to paying attention to individual students—what could be taxing for instructors—and yet was connected to the model via linguistic justice because both contained a goal of rewriting societal issues. Such confused maps of how instructors determine their theories and practices and how these relate to instructors' ideas of themselves, however, provide the context for only one actor. Indeed, the student occupies an integral presence without whom the classroom space, where instructors' practices most notably were centered, would not exist.

2.3.2 Building the Student

In order to best understand how to occupy their role in the instructor–student interaction, instructors sometimes worked to build some understanding of the student, especially while they contended with elements of linguistic justice, educational models, and department “vibes” discussed above. While I directly asked instructors to explain how they think of students, their descriptions of their work also showed how they conceptualized students on their own, producing an idea of The Student by drawing from past interactions where students have expressed their experiences, attitudes, and goals. In lieu of these past interactions, instructors may assume what students want, such as for their futures or from instructors. Within their ideas of students, instructors might move from demographic information to create specific types of students they have more experience working with or that they expect to teach to. From the conceptualized student, instructors may then develop some idea of how they may act toward or think about linguistic justice in the classroom, which also provides further insight into instructors’ concept of whether their work in the university classroom might be better defined as therapeutic or neoliberal.

Instructors use both their past interactions with students and their knowledge about the university to develop their unique idea of the students they’re teaching to. For two instructors who work closely with students who speak English as a Second Language (ESL),⁶ their past experiences with these students led them to labeling those in the group as “well-adjusted,” “self-assured,” and “pragmatic.” These instructors then used these adjectives to describe their work with other students who fit in the group; one instructor felt confident they won’t encounter many ESL students who

⁶ There’s much debate on what language should be used to describe English users with this background. I use ESL here to reflect the most popular moniker the instructors I talked with used, which was also used on university materials and webpages (as of March 2024).

are unsure of how their current education would influence their established language(s). Another felt as though students within this group have an understanding about the connection between Standard English and educational spaces that makes linguistic justice something the instructor doesn't need to talk about explicitly.

Further, one instructor offered their own process of creating an idea of The Student by taking their understandings of the ESL student population they've had more personal experience teaching and, as they characterized, "extrapolating" to other student groups, such as Black students. To do this, the instructor would first cement a connection between the populations; in the case where ESL and Black students are the two populations, the connection lies in members of both groups potentially needing to employ a language in the educational space that might be unlike or farther from the language(s) they use in other spaces. However, in our conversation, the instructor described how ESL students "really have to give up their language and then adopt this other language." With this explanation, the instructor not only established the connection they were using to compare their work with ESL students and their work with Black students but also pointed to the next step in the process of constructing The Student: identifying one population as "more" something. This instructor's use of "really" points to how they might see Black students, while still having to adopt a language for the university that is perhaps different from the one(s) they use in other settings, as not having to "give up their language" *as much as* ESL students. This instructor works from an understanding that the education ESL students receive happens in an entirely new language (English instead of Mandarin, Arabic, German, Korean, Spanish) rather than a different form of the same language (Standard English instead of Black Language, Hawaiian Creole English, Appalachian English). By drawing a connection between two student populations, as this instructor shows, instructors are able to employ thinking and strategies for both student

populations. But by making a distinction between the two groups, they may then establish students in each group as within a different “type,” giving instructors a shorthand for not only working with students but for working with students who identify with different groups.

When instructors tried to describe the students they most commonly teach, they often recalled how the university’s student body is predominately white. In characterizing students in this group, instructors emphasized the way students’ apparent (lack of) experience with cultural diversity and their supposed relationships to language posed important conundrums related to linguistic justice instructors then had to work out in classes. One instructor, in their quest to define their experiences of the students they work with, observed students’ “life experiences and the exposures on campus and the conversations ... [in] the campus environment” to determine how students might react to readings by diverse authors and representing multiple languages. In analyzing their observations, this instructor also drew from their own experiences as a non-white person in the U.S. and from their experiences teaching at another university with a more diverse student population to note that the students at this school “haven’t been exposed to the history and the social movements and the literature and other cultural products of ... a heterogenous community in the United States.”⁷ For the instructor, such situations meant that instead of simply putting diverse readings onto the syllabus, they had to “take on the difficult role of teaching literature that also includes history that also includes political science that also includes sociology and anthropology to contextualize” those readings.

⁷ I call this instructor “non-white” not to put forward an idea that whiteness is the predominant racial category but to maintain their anonymity. Indeed, along with the student body, the faculty body at this university is predominately white, and I interviewed only a few instructors who identified as something other than white. I have chosen to exclude this instructor’s self-identification because of how few instructors shared it—both among those I interviewed and in the department—and because, since I am using their insights to show how instructors construct The White Student, as opposed to another group more aligned with this instructor’s identity, I hope it is not as immediately relevant.

Further, instructors' ideas of students involved not just the way students might react to a reading but the relationships students have with language. To understand these, especially with the white student group, instructors first noted the alignment of Standard English, whiteness, and publicly acceptable language—which Baker-Bell (2020) signals with her use of “White Mainstream English” in place of “Standard English.” Further, in Baker-Bell’s work as in others, scholars represent a connection between Black Language and linguistic justice often discussed if not central to a scholar’s work (2020; Greenfield 2011; Young 2011). As instructors recognized these connections between race and the (Standard English) language more likely to be accepted in the university, they noted how, as one described, “in many cases, [white students may experience] more of a continuity ... between the languages they speak in their lives and the language they expect to speak in the classroom.” Because of this “continuity,” instructors who wished to emphasize linguistic justice had to pay special attention to “exposing” students to communities they may be unfamiliar with via pedagogical techniques associated with linguistic justice, such as incorporating readings that showcased multiple experiences and/or languages. Overall, instructors’ assessments of students via racial demographic categories allowed them to maintain an idea of students’ cultural experiences and therefore what linguistic justice theories they may be familiar with or appreciate learning. As they sought to build linguistically just classrooms, then, instructors’ categories allowed them to more quickly, upon entering a classroom or even preparing a course, determine what pedagogies to implement and emphasize in order to ensure all students were able to reach the same understandings about (unjust) treatments of languages and language users.

Importantly, when instructors reflected on different student groups, they also engaged with neoliberal and therapeutic educational models. For some, and especially those who discussed working with multiple “types” of students, students didn’t always see conforming to academic

writing as a negative. This reinforces the preparation argument and cuts against the understandings of both Baker-Bell (2020) and a therapeutic model of “repressed” students. Because of this fact, instructors sometimes cushioned their idea of The Student with an admission that “I could be wrong” about their assumptions and with an understanding that students may have a variety of reactions to learning English writing in the university. When students seemed uninterested in linguistic justice, for example, instructors adapted to that by providing supplementary, as opposed to required, readings or by simply not talking about it. But while this shows attention to individuals’ desires, it leans toward a neoliberal understanding—showcasing some instructors’ preference of working toward a student’s spoken goals rather than digging into their experiences with a critical look at the way a student’s language(s) were treated in the past. Indeed, even the unique groups instructors build may lead their teaching to falling within a certain model, as happened when the instructors who defined ESL students as “pragmatic” then decided to work toward providing the student with the language education they apparently wanted—perhaps based on viewing language as a tool—rather than incorporating linguistic justice pedagogies to tease out students’ prior experiences with language(s). While such techniques would have made the instructor’s work more therapeutic, the instructor chose not to pursue them, at least in part because they might have misaligned with students’ current ways of thinking about language.

Overall, however, instructors’ considerations of students’ apparent needs placed their work closer to the therapeutic model than the neoliberal. Instructors following a neoliberal model, basing their classroom practices and theories in the preparation argument, would teach Standard English to any student because of their potential future endeavors once they graduate college. When instructors drew focus to the way students of certain groups experienced societal repressions, alternatively, their work fit more squarely into the therapeutic model. Indeed, when instructors

created ideas of The Student, they often sought to understand the ways groups of students might experience educational spaces and/or language requirements. For some instructors, then, the misalignment between the white, mostly middle-class students they frequently worked with and the students discussed in linguistic justice texts meant the instructor didn't have to bring linguistic justice forward as much. In these cases, and as instructors identified the way "people in power" controlled the "white linguistic foundation," instructors continually paid attention to the way power, race, and language interact with each other to inform educational and professional contexts. As instructors compared this understanding with students' apparent unique relationships to language based on their demographics, instructors were able to decide how much to bring linguistic justice theories into many of the classes they taught. In the end, instructors' work to create conglomerated groups of The Student in order to use notions about these groups to negotiate the ideas of society, language ideologies, and education as repressive and decide how much to address linguistic justice in practice.

To further complicate instructors' alignment with the therapeutic and neoliberal models, instructors also warped the boundaries of the therapeutic model when they constructed ideas of student groups that they might respond to in classes. Indeed, the therapeutic model relies on attention to the way students' experiences relate to societal stressors. Instructors who seek to build ideas of students in order to address these societal stressors therefore align their work more with the therapeutic model. However, instructors' entire method of creating ideas of student groups doesn't as perfectly align with the therapeutic model's focus on individuals' experiences. In their quest to negotiate their own labor by reducing the amount of work they do with each student—in classes with up to 20 students and usually as one of three classes instructors teach a semester—instructors muddied the connection between the therapeutic model and linguistic justice. In effect,

instructors' efforts to understand general ideas about the students they work with displays how the methods they pursued in their linguistic justice thinking and practices involved thinking about their own labor, theoretical educational models, and linguistic justice themes surrounding language and society.

2.4 Conclusion: Pedagogies, Models, and Themes in Classrooms and Movements

Months after watching Louise draw her diagram of Englishes on the board, I sat several stories above that chalkboard with another instructor and talked about their experiences teaching first-year composition courses—the same type Louise had taught during my visit. This instructor told me the students in first-year courses are unique because “everyone’s adjusting to a new place. I mean, whether it’s a home in [the city] or high school, everyone’s kind of in transition.”

As I sought to identify how instructors theorized and practiced linguistic justice through this project, “place” became a throughline. In the same way instructors described first-year students as adjusting to a new college space, instructors entering linguistic justice conversations were entering a new place—or coming upon a horizon of many places they must choose how to inhabit. They encountered Baker-Bell’s linguistic justice theories and schema, thereby locating their own work with American history and societal ideologies and allowing them to establish their own and others’ pedagogical work against linguistic justice. Extending their focus on inhabiting the American classroom, instructors’ work then became locatable in educational models that not only inform the way they see their own and students’ roles but move with notions about English classrooms and linguistic justice to dictate the type of labor they may engage in. As they negotiated these pedagogies and models, they then tested their theories or found their theories in real instances

using their understandings of themselves and of the students they stood in front of. In the end, instructors' practices became most clearly aligned with the therapeutic model when considering linguistic justice, educational models, and their initial practices to understand others in their work.

Importantly, however, instructors' engagements with these pedagogies and models may less indicate the way they are encountering a new concept and more showcase the way they consider building a new type of educational setting using linguistic justice—such as by transforming a more stereotypical university education into one (more closely) aligned with linguistic justice—by weighing influences from their own labor and theories and the others who exist in educational contexts, either in person or via theories. As they discuss the way they accomplish their work in the classroom and engage with theories aligning their work with social movement education, they more explicitly align the way they theoretically approach the themes of this chapter with their practices explored in the specific places of the classroom (Chapter 3) and in the country and university in times of social movements (Chapter 4).

3.0 Defining Goals on University Chalkboards: Framed Interactions and the Possibilities Therein

As the spring semester unfolded, the winter's long lack of sun, the mid-year break's disappointingly short stretch, and the student-facing social unrest meant campus felt jittery and perpetually close to boiling over. The last of these layered immediate stresses stemming from swatting calls and active shooter false alarms with longer-term concerns centered around a series of right-wing speakers a student group had hired. In response to the anti-trans rhetoric that came to characterize these talks, Canva flyers flitted around Instagram announcing protests, students chattered about the latest talk and protest response before class, and the university emailed a neutrality statement.

On the evening of one right-wing talk and opposing protest, everyone in the 6 p.m. class I observed had passed through one security checkpoint guarded by two campus police officers to get into the building. The professor, Evan, had to ask about the fuss at the beginning of class, and he breathed a resigned sigh when a student informed him of the latest event. In effect, we had been oriented to the evening—bottlenecked into the busiest building on campus and primed with weeks of (speech about) hate speech and muted responses to student outrage. But we all had our responsibilities to uphold the setting, as outlined by our roles as teacher and students.

Evan had already planned to discuss the ways brands write about social unrest, and through the class he displayed websites and Instagram pages, pausing to point out and ask students' opinions of their rhetorical devices and stylistic choices. He searched for the 2020 Black Lives Matter statement issued by Ben & Jerry's and projected its descriptions of George Floyd's murder, historic racial inequalities in the U.S., and "state-sponsored violence and racism," which preceded

its calls for political action—all of which sat bookended by drawn landscapes of blue skies, green grass, and cows with megaphones (“Silence Is Not an Option” 2020). Taking in the image before us, scanning its text, Evan asked the class to analyze the “style” and rhetorical power of the post. The students generated a list of what made the writing “shine”; it was concise, specific, urgent, and had a call to action (or several). As a piece of writing, Evan summarized the students’ reading of the post as “activism that is poignant but not aggressive ... not preachy.” For his part, once he had called on each student who had raised their hand, Evan described how “the language is pretty obviously well done,” but paused. “Does anyone else feel weird about it being [from] a company?” One student raised a tentative hand and then a few more answered, softly agreeing but noting that the company did seem to back their words by being involved in activism before this statement. Without gaining much traction, Evan moved on, asking about the post’s font, coloring, and other stylistic choices.

In this instance, Evan used students’ interests, evidenced by their willingness to engage in class discussion, to guide his practice, offering an example of instructors’ emphasis on classroom dialogue in both their pedagogical theories and practices in the classroom. But while Evan emphasized dialogue in the classroom by asking for student responses and using them to structure the class’s understanding of the writing, a classroom needn’t be defined as especially dialogic to be informed by cultural frameworks—especially those that seek to address how talk is constructed between two interaction participants. Instead, across classrooms, familiar ideas about how interactions are structured within the U.S. classroom dictates what students and instructors often expect when they enter the space. In short, the U.S. classroom constitutes a unique dialogic space where interactions happen under specific a frame, which either students or instructors may then signal or manipulate to their own ends within interactions.

To analyze such a space, I draw on Erving Goffman's (1981) notions of dialogic interaction frameworks, especially as they relate to the initiator and recipient roles of a dialogic interaction, which I align with the groups of instructor and student(s), respectively. By identifying participation frameworks, Goffman sought to identify how individuals occupy different roles in a given interaction event and how these roles informed their and others' sense of what constitutes "appropriate conduct" for that event (Goffman 1981: 3). Students' and instructors' responsibilities to uphold their sides of a dialogic interaction combines with the social implications of their roles to add nuance to instructors' efforts toward linguistic justice, especially when those efforts take the form of creating dialogic classrooms. Importantly, while in the case outlined above Evan emphasized students' responses, he also hesitated on and prompted students to think about the source of the material they were reviewing. In effect, he not only offered his own wariness of wealthy corporations using unbacked activism to gain more money but also signaled to students the importance of considering both the information conveyed through language and the language's source and context. Following this wider consideration using Goffman (1981) of how interactions are constructed, I incorporate Judith Irvine's (1996) work to understand the way linguistic interactions occur at the speech- and utterance-levels and how speakers negotiate the two levels in their communications. In this case, instructors consider their work at both levels when they discuss how dialogue may show up in the classroom. These linguistics theories, overall, help explain how and why instructors make dialogic classrooms—heavily informed and guided by students' voices—a central part of their linguistic justice pedagogies.

Outside influences, and especially stereotypical views of what a classroom is supposed to be, continued to be a presence in the individual interactions instructors have in their work. In the class discussed above, Evan stood at the lectern next to his projected notes in front of rows of

students. In such a setup, instructors reproduce cultural stereotypes about the U.S. classroom's space and activities, where an instructor faces students from the front of a classroom and students sit and listen and offer responses when prompted (Park and Choi 2014). Because this image is so ubiquitous across a person's education, students may begin to not only easily accept classrooms in this format but expect it from classrooms and instructors—who, under these stereotypes, control the classroom. In the university context, where students are no longer children but young adults, these notions begin to lose traction; university students don't often need permission to visit the bathroom and don't have their parents sign report cards. Indeed, as education becomes a space of professionalization (Eckert 2000: 13; Spring 2016: 158) and as university students are closer to the professional landscape than they've potentially ever been, the lines between education and professionalization become further blurred within the university context. But while university students might occupy a different social role than they did as children, certain aspects of the institutional framework remain the same. University students still complete work assigned to them and are continually evaluated on their performance—both on deliverables such as written assignments and on the quality of their presence in the classroom through participation grades. They are still knowledge recipients, even if certain classroom types or instructors seek to establish a mutually constructed classroom.

Importantly, these interactional frameworks and culturally established ideas about education not only passively shape interactions within the classroom but may be directly brought into the classroom space by students and instructors. In Chapter 2, I discussed how instructors' views and practices of linguistic justice are shaped by scholarship, educational models, their department, and students. But while the influences I discuss now may feel more implicit because of the ubiquitous and embedded nature of mainstream ideas about what education should be,

instructors may still find that their work is impacted, if not constricted, by pre-established notions of U.S. education and linguistic interactional frameworks. Especially as they encounter language and linguistic justice, instructors may find they have a unique responsibility to discuss language because they're in a university. As one instructor put it, the university as an institution has “a structured relationship to the written and the spoken word ... that's a cultural structure with which we're engaging.” As this instructor demonstrates and other instructors build on through this chapter, some instructors constructed ideas of the classroom—in both preparation for and reflection on their work—by pointing to established notions about what a classroom should be or currently is. These ideas, in turn, constitute a major part of instructors' ideas about how to work with students and what methods to use in classrooms.

But beyond simply indexing social, educational, linguistic, and even interactional frameworks as they construct a certain classroom space, instructors also discussed wanting to break from them. They bemoaned students' seemingly habitual use of rigidly structured essay forms, which are so ingrained that these instructors, who often saw little place for such forms especially in college, had to pay special attention to guiding students away from them. They discussed wanting to avoid ideas of instructors as conveyors of knowledge when they described their goals of grounding much of their classroom work in asset-based, mutually shaped dialogue. With this strong emphasis on dialogues where both parties not only contribute but have the power to shape where the interaction goes, instructors largely sought to oppose notions of who is supposed to do the talking in a classroom and whose knowledge is privileged. Indeed, instructors described the classroom in terms of an ideal space they'd like to create—continually emphasizing dialogue and comfort and agency—during our conversations about linguistic justice. As Evan did at the start of this chapter, many instructors sought to implement such idealized dialogues in

classrooms. For some, they felt they accomplished this dialogue by having students either “write something up [about their experiences, goals, etc.] in the beginning of the semester” or “write an author’s note to me every time they write something” in order to maintain a continual dialogue about the students’ goals, progress, etc. Another instructor described class discussions by explaining how, when they seek to make spaces for “open” dialogue, that means “I don’t really know where this conversation is going to go.” Whether imagined or implemented in practice, however, instructors defined their efforts to create classroom spaces as tangible evidence of linguistic justice. In doing so, they not only described but demonstrated the classroom as a key space for linguistic justice in the university setting—using linguistic justice’s questioning of what and whose language is seen as mainstream to then question “what’s expert” and who may speak in a classroom.

By focusing on instructors’ views of dialogue, especially as a classroom method, I aim to draw out how instructors respond to preconceived notions about the university classroom and how they view what they may accomplish in the space even with their own and students’ assumptions about the university classroom. Moving from an analysis of dialogue in the classroom, both in general and as a goal instructors define, I will then examine other ways instructors want students to experience classes and how instructors’ efforts also relate to the frameworks previously discussed; how comfortable are instructors able to make a classroom? What do instructors’ efforts to encourage agency look like and how does the notion of an agentive person interact with the university context? Through instructors’ efforts to achieve these various goals, how do they work within the ubiquitous frame established by the university classroom space to layer other interaction types—such as more informal ones—and therefore manipulate how students view them or experience the classroom? Overall, what of instructors’ personal goals for the classroom are

colored by notions about educational spaces and linguistic frameworks and how do instructors negotiate times when these frameworks constrict their goals—for a certain classroom “vibe”; for a certain response, verbally or to students’ writing; for a more socially just classroom experience? Ultimately, through this analysis, I aim to highlight the ways in which those I talked with sought to associate their classroom methods with linguistic justice and how their efforts provide a basis for exploring how social justice efforts may exist in or be incorporated into educational spaces.

3.1 Dialogic Classrooms in Predefined Interactions and Hierarchies

In Chapter 2, I discussed how some instructors seek to attend to individual students’ goals and experiences no matter the educational theory they most align with. Many accomplished this by conducting midterm conferences with each student in a class. Such conferences, for one literature instructor, helped them not only identify students’ experiences in general but also reinforce the importance of their own goal for “interesting and respectful dialogue” in classrooms, which “is all you can ask for, really.” However, the goal of building a dialogic classroom was often mitigated by a stereotypical instructor role, where instructors have more control over the shape a class takes and, potentially, risk more if the class goes in a way they did not intend. Because of associations like this, culturally familiar models of a university classroom continued to hold sway even as instructors negotiated their and students’ interactional roles in the space.

The stereotypical ideas about university classrooms instructors work within provide an initial frame under which their work and language are continually positioned. Within this frame, instructors occupy a certain role in relation to Goffman’s (1981) dialogic interactions. Goffman describes a dialogue as filled with utterance pairs wherein a speaker initiates the pair in a way that

gets enough intended meaning across for the recipient to understand and know how to respond. The recipient then must respond in a way that aligns with the initiator's intention (1981: 13). These roles of initiator and recipient may belong to either students or instructors in any given interaction. However, because of the way the classroom is stereotypically set up, students may often occupy the role of recipient and instructors initiator. For the former, in Goffman's dialogic pair model the initial utterance "co-opts the slot that follows," opening only a certain set of adequate responses, and so the recipient's role is to convey that they understand what the initiator meant to get across (1981: 13). In this case, any second part of an interaction pair might be evaluated based upon its adequacy as a response—perhaps smoothing the connection between the recipient role and the student role because students are often continually tested and graded on their abilities and understanding of class materials. For instructors, the initiator role also aligns with their stereotyped classroom work. Even when instructors seek to question, if not deny, an all-knowing, in-charge role, they still facilitate classroom proceedings with readings and have goals for individual classes and entire courses—all of which could put them in the position of starting conversations, asking questions, being initiators. Indeed, English instructors beyond those interviewed here described leading discussions with the same "authority" in the classroom because of their instructor position (Murphy, Muckerheide, and Roen 2005; hooks 1994: 8).

Those I talked with also showed this awareness of power relations in the teaching setting. As one instructor explained of their tutoring work, "there's definitely a power [difference]. No question. But sometimes [I] feel a little bit more comfortable as a tutor if I feel like we're jointly in conversation than a one-sided 'here's what you need to do' kind of thing." As this instructor and others highlighted, they're well aware of their position in relation to students and how that position could influence the interaction. However, even under the frame of the stereotypical

classroom and its corresponding power relations, instructors often still sought to do *something* to feel they were offsetting the power differential—in this case, the tutor wished to avoid directly telling the student what to do, preferring to reach conclusions together. This tutor, further, acknowledged how a dialogic space—when defined as one that is completely equally informed by each participant—is perhaps not possible, at least right now, because of the power hierarchies students and instructors exist within. With this, the tutor displays how instructors may, even in the face of ideas about interaction roles, teaching, and authority, continually find purpose in emphasizing dialogue; even when they feel a fully dialogic classroom is not currently fully attainable, they still implemented techniques to work toward it, thereby still working to implement linguistic justice even when structures stand in its way.

Indeed, instructors' efforts to define the stances they take even when their instructor position corresponded with a prescribed interactional role call to the fore the context-based, participant-guided interactional frameworks Judith Irvine (1996) argues for. Where Goffman sought to build a universal system to classify types of interaction participants and their roles, Irvine notes how an utterance's "implicit links to many dialogues" (1996: 140) mean it interacts with "shadow conversations," or other—past or future, real or imagined—interactions. In relation to Goffman (1981), Irvine's (1996) conception of frameworks is heavily contextual, requiring a continually updated understanding of how individuals are interacting with each other to be able to know what past and future conversations they might be working in relation to and therefore to best understand what they're doing with their language. In this case, an instructor's classroom work involved the rapport they may seek to build with students throughout the semester, the ways their words may be heard by students and understood in potential future conversations—as one instructor later signals in their discussion of "cancel culture"—the cultural stereotypes tied to their

role and students', and more. Recalling the frames instructors must work within—such as those of the U.S. classroom, the English department, the linguistically just classroom, English education, etc.—instructors must consider these alongside the many actual and hypothetical conversations Irvine highlights. As instructors work out how they will consider and construct their work alongside these frames and temporal considerations, they confront what Irvine terms the “mapping problem” of how participants construct their ideas about how to interact based on the settings, participants, timing, etc., of their interactions (Irvine 1996: 136). In this thesis thus far, instructors have already embarked on thinking through the mapping problem as they've negotiated how to implement linguistic justice pedagogies. Indeed, they've considered the setting of the English department within the university context, which has allowed them to emphasize the importance of the work they do. They've been in conversation with historic iterations of linguistic justice as well as students' histories and experiences in educational contexts, which have allowed them to understand linguistic inequalities as a problem and how they should talk with students about them in classes. They've turned attention to future conversations students might have and settings they might go on to enter, which have made them consider following the preparation argument's emphasis on requiring Standard English to prepare students to enter U.S. contexts that are, generally speaking, currently unaccepting of languages other than Standard English. Therefore, instructors' attention to the various frameworks and conversations they signal and the way they negotiate their roles in relation to those frameworks are important to understanding how they construct their work as linguistically just and what their conceptions of the frameworks mean for students. For instance, does an instructor's tendency to emphasize the preparation argument over a linguistic justice view mean they find educational structures too strong to accept the latter? Does their use of linguistic justice pedagogies mean students might be able to create new experiences in

classrooms that might be different than previous ones? In relation to dialogic classrooms, instructors' efforts to create such spaces often began with efforts to solve their own mapping problem by considering the wider context of U.S. education and university classrooms.

An important way instructors negotiate the mapping problem is by considering their own overarching goals for classrooms, describing the way they occupy a class, and establishing students' roles in relation to these. As one instructor, Ryan, and I spoke from our own roles—me as student and he as instructor—we found a point of disconnect; while I admitted to tuning in and out of class discussions at times, Ryan emphasized how he could never lose focus and worked to plan “the whole shape of a class,” even while leaving that “shape” open to different amounts of class discussion and different directions students could take it. As he considered his role in a classroom, he categorized thinking about the shape and structure and goals of a class under what “being a teacher means.” He went on to describe feeling like a class discussion didn't go well as akin to feeling like the class session “failed.” Through this discussion, Ryan established how leading class discussions a certain way, including by continually thinking about how discussions were progressing, as part of the work of being a good instructor. Faced with the task of how to lead discussions, he introduced the concept of a class “shape,” within which he could occupy his discussion-leading, instructor role—and succeed or fail—but which always fell under the way he aimed to be an instructor overall and the way he thought educators should occupy their roles.

Instructors' perceptions of a successful classroom shape also extend to students' roles. One instructor shifted focus to students by describing a dissatisfying class discussion: “A class session that doesn't go well is when I just don't have students engaging for some reason. ... Sure there's general things I want to hit on and want us to get there and when it can happen collectively all the better, and hopefully we go to things I didn't expect to get to.” As this instructor noted, the goal

of open dialogue may have to exist alongside that of reaching the instructors' own points so that the class can reach an ideal level of participation. For this instructor, their concerns over dialogue may stem from their position; already stereotyped as the one who does the talking in a classroom, perhaps both by themselves and by students, the instructor felt a sense of responsibility to produce some level of class participation. And if instructors aim to have an open, only loosely structured discussion in a class session—the planning of which being another responsibility instructors take on—and the students don't participate, they may indeed feel like the plan itself “failed.” Another instructor described the same notion of responsibility they feel in their work, though this time placing it alongside the idea of expertise. As they said: “it's scary as a teacher to not be an expert in the topic that you're teaching. Super, super scary.” While several of the instructors I talked with actively wanted to embody a less stereotypical role as a teacher and rejected the role of “expert,” as I discuss further later, their felt responsibility to be the initiator—and the corresponding pressure to do so “correctly”—could reflect the prevalence of an initiator/instructor connection. Without other students' voices, I can't say whether or not students also feel this responsibility to uphold a class discussion. However, for instructors, it seems as though their existence within the classroom frame that corresponds to the initiator/instructor connection may oftentimes place them close to feelings of failure or stress.

The intentioned blurring of the initiator/instructor and recipient/student roles, especially in light of critiques of evaluation-based interactions, demonstrates why instructors might choose dialogue as a method for making the classroom more linguistically just. Testing and evaluation biases run rampant through a U.S. student's education; have deep, policy-supported ties to previously discussed themes of professionalization; and are otherwise rooted in and continually aligned with systems rife with racial biases (Spring 2016; Flores and Rosa 2015: 158;

demonstrated in Baker-Bell 2020: 59). Because of this latter connection, alternative grading and other asset-based evaluation methods, discussed in Chapter 2, may be tied to linguistic justice efforts. As instructors seek more dialogue and frequently try to understand students' goals, they may be also trying to upset the recipient/student and initiator/instructor connections that mark students as receivers of knowledge and ensure systems where students are evaluated. Further, especially as initiators lay out not just the adequate responses but the "topic and tone" of interactions that recipients then also might feel pressure to take up (Goffman 1981: 18), students, as recipients, may be evaluated not only on the quality of their responses but on the (Standard English or not) format students use to give those responses.

Many of the instructors I talked with were uncomfortable fully embracing an evaluator role at the top of a hierarchy, especially when they sought to emphasize linguistic justice pedagogies. But their instructor role could be grouped with an expectation that they should be evaluators. Additionally, when they do give information—or ask questions or prompt assignments—they must convey information that is often much more familiar to them than it is to students in a way that's tangible and accessible. All of this could put instructors in a position where they're grouped with the initiating role on an interactional level. To continue in this role, they may feel self-imposed pressure to perform as a question-asking, discussion-prompting teacher or they may feel outside pressure because of their role as a worker whose performance is evaluated, at least in part, by their teaching methods and classroom presence. On the other hand, if students expect instructors to initiate, students' own non-initiation could push instructors into the initiator role. In this case, while instructors discuss their goals for linguistically just classrooms as grounded in students contributing equally, the educational setting creates situations where instructors are more in

control. When these instructors turn attention to practices within classrooms, the same setting and its related stereotypes inform the way they communicate with students and in classrooms.

3.1.1 Education's Stereotypes and Roles

Some instructors explicitly defined roles they did *not* want to occupy by drawing on ideas of instructors “handing down knowledge” and “defining what’s expert.” When it came to hierarchies in the classroom, some described wanting to move away from such strictly defined, hierarchical roles as student and instructor not just by building classrooms where students are encouraged to shape the space but also by changing grading policies. Other instructors addressed the hierarchy itself as ingrained in many social relationships and institutions and used this to explain their acceptance of the student–instructor hierarchy in the classes they teach. Even beyond the “expert” role’s hierarchical position, some instructors considered how the way they occupy the classroom might correspond with the way students perceive them currently and in any potential future conversations about their work. As one instructor explained their favoring of class discussions where students are exposed to perhaps new voices and experiences via class readings, they also noted their attention to “cancel culture” considerations of “what sensitivities might be out there are what folks might be thinking or who might feel offended and what that’s about.” This instructor, along with those considering and trying to manipulate their “expert” role, continually drew attention to stereotypes about their position in the classroom as they considered their own work. These stereotypes provided the shadow conversations instructors reacted to, responded to, and worked alongside.

Instructors’ simple position as teachers places their work and language into a specific role in Charles Goodwin’s (1994) notion of “professional vision.” Professional vision describes

specific ways of understanding media and information that are socially identifiable, connected to certain professions or groups, and oftentimes regarded as (more) grounded and established. Indeed, the roles people occupy that are associated with a professional vision must have some claim to an idea of a “profession,” such as by requiring a certain level of training (Goodwin 1994: 625). Necessary in the training and to a “vision” is attention to field- or role-specific language and materials, which Goodwin showcases with a student-instructor interaction where the latter’s language shifts between field-specific terminology to more commonly accessible words while the student tried to grasp the instructor’s meaning (1994: 613). And since U.S. educational contexts may be seen as sites of professionalization (Eckert 2000: 13; Spring 2016: 158), instructors are not only professionals themselves but teachers of how to exist in a professional space. Encompassing any more specific fields, the teacher role itself places instructors in an apt position to become teachers of a certain “vision.”

When it comes to the classroom, this focus on teaching a general professional vision surfaced when instructors consider their wider goals for their work—as Ryan did above—alongside the assignments they gave, the subject matter they discussed, and the structure of class discussions. As they assigned writing projects, they worked with an eye to students’ future classes, as was the case for one instructor who explained how they ensure all beginner creative writing classes set students up for future intermediate-level courses. Other instructors discussed crafting writing assignments meant to teach students skills that would be helpful after they graduate, such as those that emphasize revision, which both align with the department’s goals discussed in Chapter 2 and, as one instructor noted, made the work they asked students to complete more “representative of real writing.” By embedding skill-focused goals—such as to help students learn to revise—into assignments, instructors were able to encourage students to develop such skills

alongside the work that is expected of them in mainstream understandings of classes (that ask for written assignments, etc.). In the end, though, these goals are still embedded, still present and sought after as instructors defined the value of their work, in part by what students may noticeably gain from taking a class.

Because of instructors' abilities to ask students to complete work and help them develop skills the instructor associates with general professionalization, instructors are able to avoid directly telling students what to do. Instead of instructors wishing to deceive students—indeed some noted how they always tell students why they're assigning specific work by explaining what skills they hope students will learn and how those will serve students in the future—such work allowed instructors to negate the “expert” role and its connection to telling students what to do and expecting them to blindly comply. Beyond skill development, instructors also described how they might manipulate a class's subject matter to ensure what students are learning is “functional in real life.” One instructor, for instance, noted how they felt their work was defined by “some responsibility to [discuss] whatever is happening in the world.” In this case, instructors' goals of creating dialogic spaces also allowed them to avoid the role of “expert” because, while the instructor dictated the readings and content the class would largely focus on, they asked students to discuss their opinions of whatever world events the instructor brought in.

Instructors also work with an eye to the future conversations students will have in the classroom space before they graduate or even pass a specific class. Again, however, instructors do this by focusing on skills students might gain for any future endeavors. In terms of dialogue specifically, one instructor outlined their method of conveying to students how to have a group discussion. In the beginning of the course, the instructor worked with students to create a sort of contract outlining how the class wanted discussions to look. Through the semester, the instructor

led discussions and tried to encourage students to respond in ways that aligned with the “contract,” which combined students’ insights and desires with the instructor’s own notions of a “good” class discussion. Then, on the last day of class, the instructor offered students the opportunity to read their work aloud and receive comments from their classmates while the instructor refrained from speaking, allowing the students to create their own discussion without the instructor’s direct influence. While these idealized discussions centered on writing and took place in an English classroom, this instructor’s work shows attention to teaching students ways of talking to others—such as by offering feedback and prompting discussions—that may be useful outside of a university English classroom. In the same way instructors built writing assignments and picked subject matter with attention to students’ future work, this instructor’s focus on the way students interact within and influence discussions offers an example of how instructors may create learning outcomes for students that could align more with general goals of professionalization than with specific goals catered to the English classroom. Further, as this instructor sought to convey transferable skills to students, they also connected the notion of general professionalization to the shadow conversations instructors signal with their attention to the future interactions students may have. Such shadow conversations serve, for some, as the reason instructors’ work aligns with general professionalization.

In instructors’ work outside the classroom, the expectation of higher education as a space of professionalization could create unique pressure for English instructors, potentially reinforcing their efforts to teach a general professionalism. In our conversation, one English instructor described their “service department,” wherein composition instructors teach a skill that is a graduation requirement for all students. As they put it, the composition program, and therefore the instructors that teach in it, could feel the “responsibility to deliver on that expectation across the

university.” In comparison to those in other disciplines, this means that English instructors may feel the responsibility to professionalize students more than others. Other English instructors explored this same notion in relation to specific student populations, which, as established in Chapter 2, instructors sometimes imbued or described with unique characteristics. When teaching engineering students, for instance, instructors emphasized how their research papers have an audience of scientific journals, and “if those journals are continuing to uphold that standard [English], then we as teachers kind of have to [do the same] if we’re going to prepare students for that work.” Additionally, when building a first-year composition program, “we’re talking a lot about academic preparation and what it means to transfer skill from a first-year writing class into other parts of their academic work.” So whether instructors are “preparing” students with an eye to their future careers or their future classes, the notion of general professionalization—beyond or before a field-specific professionalization—continually surfaces.

Instructors’ integration of learning outcomes aligned with general professionalization are especially marked in conversations about linguistic justice. As the above instructors did with their discussions of preparation, many instructors I talked with turned attention to students by bringing up concerns about whether allowing them to use any English form on a written assignment would be unfair to the student. Because of Standard English’s connection to public spaces (Hill 1998), instructors recalled the preparation argument discussed in Chapter 2 as they worried about whether students would be “prepared” for the professional world if they were not continually or adequately trained to use the form. This preparation argument is both common for proponents of continued Standard English requirements in education and disputed by several authors who argue for linguistic justice, with sources on both sides discussing wider U.S. social inequalities that inform their positions; scholars arguing for Standard English requirements cite the way people of

historically excluded groups might use Standard English as a “whitener” to achieve goals or positions they might be rejected from based on other aspects of their social identity and existing racial hierarchies (Spears 2021: 169; reasoning used by Delpit 2002 and Rodriguez 1981). Scholars against requirements argue that, in the U.S., Standard English is so aligned with certain (assumed white, American, native English) speakers that members of historically excluded groups may be deemed unable to use the form no matter the language they do use (Flores and Rosa 2015: 150; Hill 1998: 682). The instructors I talked with nodded to these arguments—explaining how “the status quo is not one that actively promotes linguistic justice”—and sometimes pointed to similar kinds of arguments, such as one toward student preparation for professional settings, as a main reason they felt unsure about linguistic justice in practice, even if not in theory. As one instructor described, despite their personal feelings about language and wish for linguistic justice, they at times didn’t incorporate linguistic justice pedagogies into interactions with students, deciding instead to “go for the preparation with a heavy heart and feeling that I’m part of the dominant hegemony of asking people to put on a façade that probably doesn’t fit. ... because I’m afraid for them, and they want to succeed and I want them to succeed, whatever success means to them.” This instructor demonstrates the way linguistic justice theories and practices may not, to these instructors, go hand-in-hand. In practice, such social attitudes lead instructors to align the preparation argument with teaching a general professionalization, even if that means prioritizing professionalization over their own feelings about language and social inequalities. However, this instructor also shows the continual focus instructors have on students’ futures and the way Irvine’s potential past and future conversations—especially those aligned with Standard English requirements—show up and inform instructors’ practices.

Importantly, instructors may find ways to work within dominant social stereotypes and roles to forward their own ideas about class discussions. For example, to some, the role of teaching students how to exist in a professional space could reinforce hierarchies in the classroom and paint the instructor as “expert”—a title some instructors rejected because it seemed to align so much with an unsatisfying classroom experience. To them, an “expert” was one who dominated class discussion and did not allow students’ voices to come through. The result of such a leader was a class discussion that was unable to provide the same amount or type of insight as one guided by an entire class—a discussion opposite the type of dialogue these instructors aligned with linguistic justice’s emphasis on the knowledge and experiences students bring to the classroom space. To avoid the role of “expert” altogether, instructors used methods such as working from students’ interests in class discussions—as Evan did at the start of this chapter—and offering students the option of call the instructor by their first name. In these instances, as instructors work to avoid the role of expert, they may see themselves as aligning with linguistic justice further—especially since, as explored in Chapter 2, a non-expert role could align more closely to a therapeutic model of education than a neoliberal one.

Within a social scene, with its many ingrained cultural stereotypes and roles, instructors are subject to notions not only about education as a space of professionalization but also about what language aligns with an idea of “professional.” The instructors I talked with continually signaled their attention to such cultural assumptions, which often showed up as future conversations students may have and roles they may be in. In response, instructors shaped not only their classroom practice in general but also their specific efforts to create writing, dialoguing individuals—even when instructors are placed into a professionalizing role by their teaching position, by any expectations placed onto their “service department,” and by their own goals to

support students. Behind many of these pieces are understandings of an educator's role, whether those understandings surround societal notions about education, ideas within the university about different types of knowledge, or instructors' own aims "to serve students."

As instructors work within the classroom, mainstream ideas about education color much of their work, combining with interactional frameworks to create spaces with prescribed roles and responsibilities. When instructors consider their own goals for the classroom space, these ideas and roles and hierarchies play a large part in how they and students may act and therefore how instructors must react to forward their own goals. This section's discussion of dialogue establishes instructors' understandings of the educational and interactional frameworks embedded in the classroom setting. Indeed, in response, instructors established dialogue as a dominant, common goal articulated for their (linguistic justice) classroom work because they saw it upsetting their role of "expert," helping to even hierarchies in the classroom, and therefore address some—though not all—aspects of the social relationships that have led to language inequalities and the need for linguistic justice. However, instructors defined many goals for their classroom that also aligned greatly with their ideas about what a linguistically just space would look like. The frameworks discussed thus far, and especially the way they influence instructors' actions and goals, remain important touchstones, and in some cases obstacles, when instructors try to create not only dialogic classrooms but ones that facilitate certain experiences of the classroom space.

3.2 Experiences as Goals for Classrooms

When defining the goals they had for the classroom beyond dialogue, instructors again centered students by working to create experiences of the space. Perhaps necessarily, their

considerations of a linguistically just classroom involved not just reshaping direct interactions with students' language or writing—through grading and feedback, for example—but rethinking the experiences students were able to have in the classroom. But while they strove for a linguistically just classroom, often defining it in part as one that is comfortable and emphasizes agency, instructors still worked within existing contexts and frameworks, which ultimately influenced their ability to create the experiences they aimed for.

Instructors' goals for creating a comfortable space and emphasizing agency—as will be explored in this section—may be reframed as goals aimed at facilitating a type of experience in the classroom. They could be defined and analyzed as sorts of qualia, or sensory experiences that combine a person's subjective, inner experience of a sensory input with a socially constituted understanding of the same input (Harkness 2021: 1). Harkness points to the way a quale may be used for semiotically studying how interpersonal meaning is made for social groups (2021: 3). In this case, the types of classrooms instructors seek to create—comfortable and agency-producing ones—could be semiotically analyzed and jointly defined. Indeed, instructors' classroom methods and the attitudes they try to embody may index each classroom type. Further, instructors' stories of collaboration, as discussed Chapter 2 and below, and shared notions about what it means to create each type of classroom could indicate a mutually constructed idea of a comfortable or an agency-producing space. Finally, important to Harkness' interpretation is a distinction between qualia and qualities, which, quoting Silverstein, he refers to as “mere abstract potentialities” (2021: 4). Qualia are, instead, personal experiences that are socially constructed. The types of classrooms instructors describe here are supposed to produce certain experiences for students, marked by certain qualities they use to define them, but are also influenced by cultural notions of education

and interaction and created—using classroom methods and instructor–instructor collaboration—to produce an experience meant to align with a wider goal of linguistic justice.

3.2.1 Comfortable Spaces and Interpersonal Connections

By presenting goals related to comfort and agency in this section, I seek to use the insights gained from the previous analysis of dialogic classrooms as a linguistic justice pedagogy to discuss other types of classrooms instructors often aimed to implement. However, dialogue remains an integral part of instructors' work and is used to create and define a comfortable classroom—another type of classroom instructors tried to make, often to identify their work with linguistic justice pedagogies. In the comfortable classroom, instructors tried to create situations where students may feel comfortable enough to engage in open dialogue with the entire class or, at least, with the instructor or to write without fear of judgment. For instructors, the comfortable classroom would be one where students were able to feel as though they belonged in the classroom and that their writing would be accepted in the educational context. By opening every student to being able to feel comfortable (with writing) in the classroom, instructors sought to create spaces where no student felt as though they or their language did not belong in the educational space—thereby enacting linguistic justice's anti-racist goals of acknowledging and appreciating any and all languages students bring to their education. Because the comfortable classroom, like much of instructors' other work in regard to linguistic justice, heavily relied on addressing ubiquitous ideas about which students traditionally may find the classroom more comfortable, instructors often drew on or simply acknowledged students' potential past experiences in the classroom, with instructors, and with writing.

In their relationships with students, both one-on-one and in a classroom/group setting, instructors' comfort goal materialized in methods of creating casual interactions. More than in casual language marked by text-speak abbreviations and curses, in two instances I sat alongside students in a classroom and watched the instructor perform moves that, if only temporarily, served to set aside their instructor role. In one such class, Paul stood next to the projected course website and tried to spark a work-related conversation to begin the class, checking in with students about assignments and asking if they were able to view newly uploaded documents. After gaining little traction with these routine requests, Paul dropped into a chair facing the rows of students, stretched, and started lamenting his exhaustion. He referenced the time: 10 a.m. on the Monday after a three-day weekend. Worse, it was two-thirds of the way through the semester—what other instructors noted as a notorious time for students and instructors alike, who were trudging through until the end of the term.

Paul's work in this instance offers insight into both the way instructors occupy their position as interaction participants in a class as well as the way they may use comfort to align their work with linguistic justice. Linguistically, Paul's methods of using casual language, discussing his personal life, and even occupying his physical space differently by sitting and stretching offer examples of changes in the interaction's frame. To encompass moves like those Paul makes here, Irvine divides an interaction into utterance- and speech-level events, defining the latter as those "with some internal structure, performance conventions, and an overarching structure of participation" (1996: 140). Individual utterances fall within these speech events and may see participants occupying a different role than they did, do, or will in the speech event. In Paul's case, as he manipulates the frame he works within, he creates an utterance-level event within the wider speech event, which signaled his manipulation of his participant role. When he returned to the

more professional stance he started class with, he showed how he continued working within his instructor role and the university classroom frame even while he momentarily shifted the way he was interacting with the students in the class.

In this instance, Paul manipulated his role in the interaction in order to produce student engagement—a primary step in helping students feel comfortable interacting in the class. When the original frame of the classroom interaction, marked by the instructor discussing class assignments and resources, did not yield an expected result of students more enthusiastically engaging, Paul briefly changed the frame of the interaction to be more personal and less professional in hopes of engaging students in that way. As the students nodded their shared tiredness and chuckled at the instructor’s small jokes, they were showing a higher level of engagement compared to their earlier blank stares or shifted eyes. Once he had achieved this engagement, Paul returned his focus to his laptop, and the class’s focus to their assignments, thereby returning the interaction to its original frame of stereotypical classroom topics and professional conduct. In this case, Paul’s brief deviation from his lecturing stance and focus on assignments allowed him to ease students back into classwork after a long weekend and make them feel more comfortable by acknowledging shared difficulties. As hooks discusses her theories on student-focused classrooms, discussed further in Chapter 4, engagement, like that which Paul tried to encourage, is critical to her thinking. Such engagement in an educational space marks, for her, a “feeling of safety” (hooks 1994: 39) in which students may participate as they please and know their contributions will be valued. For instructors aiming to embed linguistic justice pedagogies into classrooms, individuals’ prior and current experiences of the space are important points on which their theories and practices rest. In this instance with Paul, he displayed how

instructors' efforts to manipulate their linguistic position, in this case to produce student engagement, may align with their continuing goals to produce certain types of classrooms.

Importantly, many instructors aligned the comfortable classroom with linguistic justice because it led to openness in dialogue and hopefully—by way of instructors being open to students' writing in any form—helped convey instructors' openness to languages and language forms. As Paul defined in an interview, he saw linguistic justice as primarily relating to “making a space in which my students can converse, express themselves in terms that not only clearly expresses the things that are on their minds but that gives them a chance to continue to be themselves in that moment.” Building on the principle of open dialogue, Paul wished for students to feel comfortable enough to not lose an idea of themselves in the educational context. In this case, Paul's shifting of his posture and his language served to demonstrate for students how one could remain themselves in the educational context even if their attention must return to assignments and webpages and course content to get through the class session. To him, such moves aided his final goal of imbuing classrooms with dialogue to help students feel comfortable to “be themselves” to, ultimately, ensure the classrooms he teaches in are linguistically just.

While this interaction does not demonstrate how Paul responds to student work or brings in readings from diverse sources, for example, it *does* demonstrate the way instructors try to produce students' experience of linguistic justice using other methods and qualia. Indeed, an instructor's ability to connect with students, to make themselves available and open to talking if students need it, came up in other conversations about linguistic justice. As one literature instructor, Linda, put it, “I think I just try to make students and writers just feel comfortable. At least around me, right?” By bringing in writers, Linda draws a connection between comfort, students, and writing, exemplifying how comfort, even at the interpersonal, student–instructor

level, might connect with the act of writing, the experience of an English classroom, and linguistic justice. She went on to describe her method, which she uses both one-on-one and in the classroom, of sharing and connecting with students by discussing her experiences moving through life with a certain social identity. By talking with an accent that signals her hometown and using languages other than English, she hopes to “model” for students that “I value the way that folks express themselves and ... [want to make] sure that students understand that this classroom is not a place for judgment.” With attention to language, writing, and speech, comfort—defined by students’ abilities to write or speak in the way they want—becomes a means through which a classroom or an instructor’s practice may be defined as linguistically just.

Further, Linda’s addendum that students might feel comfortable with her even if not in the classroom aligns with other instructors’ acknowledgements that “each person brings their own ... levels of comfort” with writing. Especially when instructors considered the way existing social and racial hierarchies show up in power relations in the university, professional world, and elsewhere in relation to “acceptable” forms of communication, as discussed in Chapter 2, they described how “there’s a certain barrier sometimes to being comfortable in a classroom.” In these cases, instructors sought to understand the influence of students’ past experiences in a classroom space on students’ ability to experience the current classroom as comfortable. To accommodate the variation of students’ experiences, instructors may not only try to listen for individual students’ experiences but work to shift their techniques based on individual students. While, in classroom settings, instructors might sit down, stretch, and change their interactional frame, an instructor might approach a one-on-one interaction by talking about their own experiences. Through these individual and group moves, instructors try to achieve the same goal—a comfortable classroom

experience—within a wider goal of linguistic justice, where students may feel they, and their language, are welcome in the classroom.

3.2.2 Agency: Spaces for Collaboration and Linguistic Justice

Alongside comfort, many instructors discussed an agency-producing classroom as key to one defined as linguistically just. In their definitions, agency in the English classroom often meant students having freedom to complete assignments how they want and to experiment with languages and forms and rhetorical techniques. To accommodate this, instructors' methods to encourage agency involved removing requirements for Standard English, assigning writing prompts without defining subject matter, and offering readings featuring various forms of English. When instructors were able to encourage students to try out new ways of writing they hadn't been trained toward earlier in their education, they felt they were accomplishing a goal "to give [the writers in my classes] more agency to decide what they feel is appropriate ... [and] that to me feels like the [linguistic] justice, to the extent that it's possible."

Each of these methods to encourage students to be agentic involved the removal of a previous requirement or expectation or the creation of a new method or resource. In these methods, instructors discussed emerging grading practices that pay no attention to grammar and favor comprehension over all else. In curating reading lists for classes, they highlighted how works currently treated as foundational may only represent one social type of person whose written voice is treated as most appropriate for a place like the university classroom. To incorporate diverse voices, instructors had to pay more attention to their reading lists than they would if they simply assigned an anthology, for example. Indeed, instructors emphasized how such attention to including, as one described, "a diverse body of authors" felt "like good pedagogy." As they

discussed these more traditional or expected grading practices and readings, instructors indexed ingrained attitudes and stereotypes they thought they should address if they wanted their work to be aligned with linguistic justice. The stereotypes they responded to in these cases paralleled the educational and interactional frameworks discussed with dialogue. Instead of instructors signaling general expectations about what should happen or how interactions should be structured in an educational context, they turned attention more specifically to felt expectations about the way they should respond to students' work and about the type and content of readings they asked students to engage with. Both for specific dialogic spaces and for those aimed at producing agency, instructors responded to these frameworks, stereotypes, influences in the same way: by identifying an area of their pedagogy they could cater to each with classroom methods.

Importantly, the above instructor's discussion of "giving" agency to students and the concept of adapting the classroom context to make room for agency signals a certain understanding of the concept. For the idea of agency I chose to engage in this analysis—drawing from that which instructors signaled above—"agency" started with an understanding of the educational context and a negotiation of what instructors could do to create a space where students felt they could be agentive—even when it was also characterized primarily and concludingly by students' decisions on how to write. While this worked for instructors' understandings of how they could incorporate linguistic justice into their practices, it does not necessarily align with "agency" in relation to works on freedom. In Paulo Freire's (2014) work—as in hooks' (1994), who takes great guidance from Freire—an education that seeks to address oppression and through which students might come out from under that oppression must be characterized by students developing and employing their own concepts of agency. As he writes, "Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift" (Freire 2014: 47). In this, Freire signals his greater idea that freedom—or the agency that students may draw on

to achieve it—cannot come from the oppressor(s). In this context, where instructors represent Standard English and its associations, the idea of agency they discuss in relation to students’ writing assignments does not align with Freire’s conception of agency or of a radical education in which students gain freedom.

Further, while instructors were working with this amended definition of agency, they similarly identified how the concept of agency they wanted to forward is apparently not as easily found in the typical university setting—a disconnect between agency and place the instructor above indicated with their “to the extent that it’s possible.” But, perhaps because their goal is not as easily aligned with stereotypical assumptions about the university context, the agency-building classroom may be a way to signal a linguistically just classroom, especially among English instructors. In an agency-producing space, after all, students are able to write in more forms than would stereotypically be allowed in a university classroom that forwards Standard English. Oftentimes, further, the way to produce agentic classrooms was to encourage students to understand and engage with others’ perspectives and, if they so chose, to produce writing of different styles and with different English forms—both of which instructors sought to do, at least in part, by facilitating students’ interactions with diverse readings. Indeed, as one defined, “linguistic justice, to me, means reading all kinds of writers with all kinds of Englishes.” And so while the agentic classroom can be difficult—if not fully idealistic—to create within current stereotypes and structures defining the U.S. classroom, the linguistic justice instructors aim for comes in the *option* students have of whether to produce Standard English-aligning work or not, more than in their actual use of an English form.

As instructors seek out a goal that responds to the education culture they find themselves in, they may choose agency as a key quale to mark the linguistically just classroom, and they may

then wish for the agency-building classroom's effects, which they see as pedagogy that may be defined as linguistically just. And some instructors may be able to produce this goal in an individual classroom, department, or even school. However, other instructors return to considerations from wider society—like the preparation argument—that inhibit their full enactment of methods to build agency-promoting classrooms, which would include grading policies that have no Standard English requirements, for example. These latter instructors' considerations signaled what they believe is a culture unable to support a classroom that is fully agency-building—revealing why their conception of agency does not align with Freire's (2014). If these instructors don't believe a fully non-oppressive (at least in relation to language) education may happen currently, they edit the concept of agency into one they think is possible to forward. In this instance, since a *quale* needs to be socially agreed upon, instructors whose attention—on their own and as informed by their social/professional circle—focused on wider society may not enforce linguistic justice as strongly as instructors who sought or had a community of instructors with the same agency-focused goals in the department.

In some cases, however, these instructors did find that they shared their goals of building classrooms that encourage agency with colleagues in the department. When talking about linguistic justice in the department, some signaled how the “conversations that we are having and practices that we're leaning into” involve questions like “what does it mean for students to have agency in their work or in their writing and their papers?” Further, individual instructors, at times, worked with each other to help navigate their shared goals of imbuing their students with agency, especially when they were trying to work out how to respond to students using writing and language forms that were less common in the stereotypical university setting. In one such instance,

Cheryl described struggling to understand one student's class writing and working with other instructors to figure out what to do:

Part of [the student's] writing in all three essays [that I assigned] was, like, incomprehensible grammar and sentence structure. [It] was like she threw up all the words and they came down in whatever order they came down in. ... I let [another tutor] read it one day, and he was like, "What is this student trying to say?" And I was like, "I don't know." So I talked to her about that towards the end of the semester ... But it turns out that it was a conscious decision on her part to make it kind of incomprehensible, which I thought was really interesting. And I didn't press her on it. ... I was like, it's your choice, right?

Through this story, Cheryl detailed how an agency-instilling classroom may be collaboratively constructed. Initially, instructors purposefully express openness to forms of language and writing that might not be stereotypically accepted in the space—like, according to other instructors, by offering diverse readings and carefully talking about language forms. If instructors then receive student work that shows how the student is developing their own or an unexpected way of writing, the instructor can consider whether the work shows agency and/or if the student is struggling to grasp any writing concepts from the course. When the instructor turns to others for help, all involved may then develop and agree on an idea of what agentive writing could look like and perhaps how to assess their own development of an agency-building classroom. Finally turning back to the student, the instructor can offer their understanding of the work and ask the student their intentions, thereby allowing the instructor to solidify their own assessment of agentive writing and the agency-building classroom. At the end of her story, Cheryl also cements the understanding of agency she developed with the other instructor earlier in the sequence by signaling to the student that their writing is a show of agency.

In the end, Cheryl weighed this student's other writing in the course, which she hadn't had trouble understanding, and her own felt lack of authority in telling the student how to write alongside her talks with the student and with the other instructor and decided that the student's

writing in this case was an agentive effort. Further, at this point in our conversation, we had also begun talking about grading, and Cheryl's final remark here demonstrated how, while students might be encouraged to be agentive in certain classrooms, their choice to write in a form other than Standard English, for example, would still often be evaluated by the instructor and therefore must be made intentionally for any chance of being accepted. While Cheryl couldn't recall an instance of grading a student poorly because of their use of non-Standard English, she also confirmed that "it's not outside the realm of possibility" that she might grade down, which she expressed to students she was teaching by telling them that "sometimes this [writing] means so much to you that you're going to do it no matter the consequences. ... It's your choice, right?" This lingering threat of poor grades for unexpected language exemplifies how instructors negotiate their goals of encouraging agency with other types of learning goals, such as those which would dictate a stronger hand in the form of stricter or more punitive grading structures. While instructors' moves to encourage agency sometimes involved removing stereotypical language requirements or adding new resources, the stopping points remain. A key difficulty, in this case, is grading structures, which instructors may only be able to change—as opposed to remove—to be more asset-based or less based on Standard English or grammatical conventions. In terms of grading, in the same way Paul manipulated his utterance within the frame of the speech event, instructors who change grading practices still must assign students a grade at the end of the semester.

Indeed, as these potential other learning outcomes demonstrate, the preparation argument remains a presence. In terms of grading, instructors could align grading structures with the preparation argument, as the argument easily inspires strict adherence to convention via grading policies that guide students away from use of a non-Standard English by punishing them for use of conventions not associated with the Standard. But even when, as one instructor noted, "I'm not

interested in punitively interacting with my students because they don't adhere to convention," they still "[wanted] them to be able to name that convention." Other instructors similarly emphasized students' knowledge of Standard English as a goal—and indeed the concept is present on the department website's goal of students' "awareness of formal conventions," discussed in Chapter 2. As this instructor importantly notes, however, instructors may separate the presence of such conventions from punitive grading structures. By doing so, they are able to balance the knowledge that they're trying to encourage students to be agentive in their writing, such as by loosening grading reigns and allowing them to experiment, with an acknowledgement of current language expectations students may face once they graduate.

As the lingering preparation argument shows, instructors' goals of creating change, as through linguistic justice pedagogies, continue to be rooted in an understanding of and response to their limitations. And while their colleagues helped them navigate issues with students and understand the department vibe, for example, instructors also reference how "some faculty are pretty set in their ways already" in regard to linguistic justice, signaled by a "[concern] with sentence-level things" like attention to "Standard English" grammar. In response, some instructors turned their attention to students as "the next generation of leaders, teachers" since change to a more equitable understanding of language forms "is going to take a generational shift ... it needs to make it to the masses. It has to trickle its way down to those who are educating the next generation." Indeed, these instructors may wish for both greater, wider-reaching knowledge of the logical and historical groundings of non-Standard English forms as well as acceptance of the way students experiment with language. But they may also find such goals are restricted by established assumptions about language use and university classrooms. Therefore, instructors may seek to make classes more agency-inducing in order to not only encourage agency in students but to show

students how the education system need not rely on the same structures and hierarchies that those currently in the classroom expect—even if current instructors are both working with an amended idea of agency and still unsure about encouraging full agency because of the preparation argument or grade expectations. In the end, the changes instructors wish to implement to further a wider linguistic justice goal may be aimed at building upon each other. Even if they take a little while to accomplish, as one instructor notes, “hopefully [it won’t take] too many generations.”

3.3 Conclusion: Moving from Frameworks to Activism

On the evening of the observation that started this chapter, after one of the students in the class told Evan why everyone was bottlenecked through a security checkpoint to reach the classroom, he started class by checking in with us as people, he noted, rather than as students. He asked us to do a free-writing journal activity titled “Exhale”—what he described as a “brain drain” which was meant to let everyone rest for a few minutes before embarking on the night’s work. Standing at his lectern, he embodied, to me, assumptions about the instructor’s role, and yet he worked within this structure and within the social events of the semester to accomplish his goal of encouraging everyone in the room to put aside their setting-dictated role.

Like him, many instructors in this chapter turned focus to their classroom practices by trying to tune out, while endlessly working within, culturally established stereotypes about what classroom dialogue looks like and how each participant inhabits their role. In doing so, they sought to imbue classrooms with methods they aligned with linguistic justice, such as creating open and mutually shaped dialogues; manipulating their participant roles, if only for short times; and accepting students’ language and apparent shows of agency in writing. And in their continual

attention to linguistic justice through these goals and methods, they sought to create situations where they may begin to disentangle their university classroom practices from assumptions about the space and the roles it bestows upon those in it.

Such disentangling produced multiple effects, allowing instructors space to explore classroom methods aligned with linguistic justice pedagogies, with the therapeutic and neoliberal educational models discussed in Chapter 2, and with wider concerns about not only education as it stands but the possibilities of education. By removing requirements toward Standard English—thereby lessening the influence of societal expectations of language use in the classroom— instructors were able to center linguistic justice, its acceptance of non-Standard Englishes, and its acknowledgement of the way Standard English aligns with a privileging of the language and its supposed speakers. Though their thinking about and practices toward linguistic justice variously signaled both the therapeutic and neoliberal models of education, instructors’ work to create certain experiences in classroom blurred any division between these two models. Within the neoliberal and therapeutic models, instructors may, respectively, work with students to attend to, and perhaps remedy or overwrite, students’ previous experiences of educational spaces and approach their work with students by thinking of those students as future professionals—and therefore give them skills to use in their future endeavors, for example. Indeed, as instructors in this section sought to create experiences for students, they worked to help students create (perhaps new) comforting, agency-inducing experiences that students may then use to characterize their education. But alongside these internal aims, instructors also defined the significance of this work in terms of how it might help students in the future, such as when they saw an agency-producing classroom as helping students experiment with language and become more comfortable, confident writers. In practice, instructors’ efforts to respond to outside influences—to enact linguistic justice

pedagogies—placed their work as both therapeutic and neoliberal. Finally, much like instructors’ manipulation of classroom methods allowed them to produce what they saw as linguistic justice, their theories also sparked interest in classroom methods that aligned not only with linguistic justice pedagogies but also with wider, societal conversations about social movements and education, a topic to which I turn in the next chapter.

4.0 Takin' It to the Streets?: Critical, Radical, Social Education

Once the summer came, the early heat often persuaded me to work in campus buildings, where the air conditioning fought for a temperature I couldn't draw from my apartment's window unit. And so one morning in May saw me in a small, frequently sparsely populated building that felt out-of-the-way despite its centrality to campus. At that time, Cheryl, quoted above, was still an instructor I had grown familiar with in campus corridors but who I had yet to talk with in depth. We found each other in our shared search for a quiet space and provided mirrored company, chipping away at her work while I reviewed previous interviews. During a chat break, she promptly agreed to my interview request, looking for a respite from her iPad's annotated books and painstakingly organized notes. The transcripts I put aside largely reflected instructors who actively sought ways to incorporate linguistic justice into classes, but Cheryl quickly informed me that she was more unsure about her role. While she supported linguistic justice, she didn't incorporate discussions of the topic into classes where it didn't seem to fit because she was wary of "pushing" an attitude onto students—and especially one she felt less informed on because of her own whiteness and lack of personal experience with the topic. She had an attitude, when working with students, of "who am I to tell them?"

Three summers before I sat with Cheryl, the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests had, on my internet feed, begun a steady, continuing drip of discussions on allyship and active antiracism as opposed to bystanding complicity, and I recalled these same notions during our conversation. I, also a white woman, asked Cheryl how she managed her wariness to "push" something onto students without leaving it up to Black students to have to advocate for themselves if they felt like they were in a linguistically unjust space. In response, she noted how efforts from isolated

instructors or institutional bodies are not enough: “If we ... see [different ways of speaking] as fine, then we’ve got to do some activism and ... advocate on their behalf. Because otherwise we’re setting [students] up for failure, and that ain’t right. But then it has to go beyond that into the working world. And if we’re not willing to do that, then are we really doing them justice by letting something slide?”

With this, Cheryl questioned the effectiveness of both the theories instructors worked with and signaled in Chapter 2 and the practices they employed to work within the educational setting’s stereotypes in Chapter 3. The lack of linguistic justice efforts she saw represented in this university reflected the “enforced blindness” she saw academia as operating under and resulted in a lack of enough activism in the university. She further drew a (desired) connection between activism and the university with her “that ain’t right”—a phrase she may have used to both signal a connection to Black Language, as the word “ain’t” is used in the form (Baker-Bell 2020), and blur boundaries between academia and society. By signaling these connections, Cheryl worked to embed linguistic justice conversations she wishes would happen in the university with the same action she thinks characterizes other activist projects. Notably, however, the phrase may also exemplify the appropriation of non-Standard Englishes—which I discuss further in this chapter—that, for some, make conversations about linguistic justice so imperative. With the phrase’s central colloquialism and with its broader connections, Cheryl may also be trying to mark her words as familiar both outside and within academia, thereby making her sentiment more important compared to the overly heady discussions that, to her, academia relies on. Within the context of our conversation, Cheryl could have used this phrase to align herself with the activist work she describes by signaling to me her desire to align her work with activism—perhaps more than she thinks others might. Her move to signal social action is similar to her final question on justice, where she takes the concept from

the linguistic to the student. Because of her characterization of academia as maintaining a “cerebral” focus on the theoretical and an unwillingness to act, she turns attention from the linguistic justice movement to the students who are meant to be on the receiving end of it—recalling the preparation argument again. Overall, Cheryl plays with notions of where and to whom movements belong and how to consider linguistic justice pedagogy through the lens of an unaccepting societal “working world.”

With these connections between our conversation about linguistic justice in the university and the language or attitude of social movements, Cheryl raises important considerations for instructors who wish to embody linguistic justice pedagogies: what constitutes action in the university, and how do instructors define themselves and their work as activist? Baker-Bell’s activist linguistic justice schema relies on a commitment to the “complete and total overthrow of racist, colonial practice” that’s required for an antiracist pedagogy to exist and thrive (2020: 33). If instructors in general operate under some notion of “enforcement,” how do those who wish to incorporate linguistic justice into their work aim to “overthrow” while navigating an institutionally prescribed role? Succinctly: how does the social show up in these instructors’ linguistic justice work?

Indeed, Cheryl discusses linguistic justice as requiring a broader focus on how education, within a classroom and within a university, relates to a societal world—as represented by her moving attention from the classroom to the university to the “working world.” But other instructors drew together the linguistic justice movement and society differently. Before bringing education to the societal, they seek to bring a societal context into contact with the existing frame(s) of the classroom discussed in Chapter 3. Their goal was to create the social movement within the classroom, and they aimed for it to then ripple out. To do this, they addressed their position in the

institution by manipulating both their speaker position and the way the classroom interacts with the university. They reconsidered their own thinking and asked students to do the same, and they tried to shift how voices show up in the classroom in hopes of shifting how populations are privileged through language. Further, attention to hegemony was an important part of all instructors' understanding of linguistic justice. Other instructors I talked with also noted Cheryl's concern about academia, often discussing how current generations of students have been more open to having social justice conversations than previous ones. They also noted how faculty, as opposed to students, sometimes seemed more resistant to change in regard to linguistic justice. It was in these discussions of hegemony that instructors grounded their theory and to these discussions that they addressed their practice.

To map the way instructors both negotiate their roles and respond to the questions of how to think through education and linguistic justice, I'll move from Goffman's (1981) participation framework to his production formats to first explore instructors' efforts to position themselves as speakers in the classroom. Scholarship on the ways learning occurs in social movements helps characterize instructors', and in turn students', (re)thinking about language and society, as instructors may feel they are called upon to do if they wish to incorporate linguistic justice into their teaching. Following this, theories on radical education provide the groundwork for analyzing how instructors consider the university as related to the classroom as well as help identify why and how instructors bring in social and historical influences to discuss current language treatments and linguistic justice theories and pedagogies. Throughout this chapter, the way language is stereotyped and how this relates to hegemony and power continually provide the motivation behind instructors' efforts toward activism, radicality, and change. In the end, hegemony is critical not

just in the way it shows up in language treatments but in the way instructors push against its educational presence in their linguistic justice pedagogies.

4.1 Speakers in a Social Context

In Chapter 3, Goffman's (1981) participation framework offered a way to understand the dialogic interaction on a speaker–hearer level. In addition to this framework, however, Goffman (1981) presents the different production formats a speaker's utterance involves, bringing into consideration how a speaker might be personally related, or relating, to their words. Most simply, Goffman outlines three formats: animator, who voices the utterance; author, who composes the utterance; and principal, who supplies meaning or intention of the utterance (1981: 145). Because the instructors I talked with continually brought into focus the ways power and authority are created and wielded, the animator and principal positions may be most notable; instructors are often at least guided by policies and conversations at the department and university levels, balancing these with their own intentions for the classroom. But as they shift between being their own principal and embodying a university principal, how do their efforts to negotiate the role signal their position in the university and their opinions on it—especially as their role always exists within the university classroom, speech-level frame and its corresponding instructor role discussed in Chapter 3? In this chapter, where I was unable to hear what instructors said in classes, I turn to cases where their explanations of their work offered reasonings behind or examples of spaces where they might shift their role from being a three-pronged speaker into, for example, an animator and author of an utterance principled by the university.

Instructors often embedded their teaching theories with considerations of the university as an institutional body and education as a broader concept. In Chapter 2, these informed instructors' understanding of their roles in relation to scholarship and to the department, while in Chapter 3 they floated under the surface of some instructors' felt responsibilities in leading classroom discussions. But even when defining a class, such as on a syllabus, or maintaining a certain class focus throughout the semester, instructors must adhere to "goals that were given by the composition program or our department in terms of ... outcomes [students] want to work on." When instructors considered department-outlined goals, as they did in Chapter 2, they not only framed their work with "that's my job," but they offered examples of where they animate utterances with a department or a university principal. Even if instructors share a desire with the department, such as to help students learn revising techniques, the requirement to do so by the department often comes before the instructor's own desire, making the coincidence of the two a happy accident. Additionally, one instructor who mentioned these departmental "goals" described their efforts to align with the goals as part of their responsibility "as a teacher"—an addendum other instructors matched in their definitions of not teaching conventions as "irresponsible as a teacher" or supporting students who are struggling as necessary "if I'm really holding myself accountable as a teacher." In pointing to their role societally, instructors signaled a responsibility to teaching as a profession and/or to other teachers and a principal created therein. Simply by aligning either their work with their profession or the class they teach with the department, instructors may be wont to enter an interaction as an animator of utterances principled by another.

Further, when an instructor occupies the role of animator, they display the power the principle of their utterance has over the educational setting. If they animate societal assumptions, such as those about what languages and speakers are best fit for public participation, they may fall

toward the preparation argument. If they animate sentiments they align with academia, such as those Cheryl sees as too theoretical and unrelated to practice, they may ponder “existential” questions about the purpose of their work and the power of their voice in reinforcing hegemonic structures. Especially in regard to linguistic justice—because of its deep connections to historical and societal assumptions—their animating work necessarily recalls certain assumptions about language that they may or may not align with themselves.

4.1.1 Language, Society, and the Educational Landscape

For some instructors, the animator position seemed unavoidable because of assumptions about what happens in (higher) educational spaces. For university students and instructors, such assumptions are often informed by years of previous experiences in educational institutions that are embedded with them. Recognizing the way many students have been guided toward Standard English throughout their previous, often 12 years, of schooling, I wondered, during one interview, whether students have already been “given the Kool-Aid of Standard English” and how such experiences may inform the way they currently view language. I offered the metaphor because of the continued connection I saw—in the scholarship I engages with and in my interviews—between Standard English and the way leading bodies, such as powerful institutions or actors, seemingly unavoidably enforce hegemonic, racialized assumptions (Baker-Bell 2020; Hill 1998; Flores and Rosa 2015). In response to my question, the instructor I was talking with noted that no matter an instructor’s inclination to forward Standard English or linguistic justice, “we’re all giving [students] Kool-Aid, you’re never not giving Kool-Aid. It’s just different flavors.” This instructor reinforced my proposed connection between Standard English and hegemonic enforcement and pointed to academia as a main enforcer of a variety of social norms and as a space wherein

instructors seemingly had no way of avoiding “giving Kool-Aid”—aligning with the earlier discussion of the way instructors’ utterances and practices always move within assumptions about the university classroom space. Further, other instructors and linguistic justice scholars also pointed to academia’s role in reinforcing linguistic hegemony via its apparent connection to and forwarding of such mainstream assumptions about who has knowledge and what knowledge looks like. Indeed, these questions about the current state of affairs, as displayed throughout this thesis, served as a major starting point in discussing the linguistic justice movement.

As I touched on in Chapter 2, scholars have continually pointed to the ways Standard English, through its connections to whiteness, comes to be defined as the “norm” and aligned with public spaces (Hill 1998; González 2001; Baker-Bell 2020; Flores and Rosa 2015). Jane Hill (1998) discusses the ways in which languages are further aligned with public spaces and how such prevalence in public spaces is also used to define a language’s use in private (also explored in González 2001). Importantly, educational spaces may be seen as a public themselves, especially where language may be judged and given impactful evaluations and therefore language inequalities may be reinforced through the same process as Hill notes—with mockery. Standard English, on the other hand, is seen variously as reflective of speakers’ “clear, logical, and hence responsible thought” (Eckert 2000: 20) and as “the language of schooling” (MacSwan 2020: 31; Baker-Bell 2020: 4). Further, educational spaces also carry a specific connection to professionalization, as discussed throughout this work. Because of this connection, students may expect to be professionalized and therefore prepared to enter the market upon graduation (Spring 2016; Enos et al. 2005)—further reinforcing a connection between the (market) public and the Standard English commonly associated with educational spaces. Within this tangle of Standard English and educational, public, and professional contexts, educational spaces themselves may be

embedded with the assumption that Standard English should be prioritized and the ideologies connected to it reproduced. In turn, the expectations to establish and reinforce Standard English requirements may then fall onto instructors, turning into instructors' felt responsibilities to use and teach Standard English and, perhaps, animate the same ideologies the form is aligned with.

While Standard English is aligned with these educational, public, and professional spaces, other languages are pushed farther away from them. On the level of language by itself, as discussed in Chapter 2, Standard English is often defined in opposition to languages (assumed to be) used by people in historically excluded groups, and these definitions often take shape in practice, such as through (sometimes implicit) language requirements on things like job or university application materials, for example (MacSwan 2020). Combining such definitions with MacSwan's (2020: 31) and Baker-Bell's (2020: 4) "language of school(ing)" moniker draws attention to not only the ways language and education relate but how such connections are reflected onto speakers, who may then be deemed fit or unfit for educational spaces and contexts. While these associations may dictate for students who should be in educational spaces before students reach them—as on application materials—students and their language(s), once admitted, are then placed under further scrutiny via techniques used to devalue non-Standard Englishes and their assumed users. For one such method, scholars identify the ways languages, such as Spanish and Black Language, are mocked via appropriation, which serves not only to denigrate the language but to uphold Standard English as more fit for (public) use (González 2001; Hill 1998). To some of the instructors I talked with, such mockery of the way people use language is evidence that "linguistic racism and linguistic bias is one of the last safe, accepted biases." In response to this "deeply, deeply ingrained" linguistic racism, these instructors highlighted linguistic justice as a way not only to make a more

accepting linguistic landscape both within educational spaces and in U.S. society but to raise awareness of how “we exist in an unjust space and that lack of justice is reflected in our language.”

While many instructors identified the way justness and language created specific power dynamics, as explored in Chapter 2, others located such power specifically in their own experiences applying for and attending graduate school, where “power structures come down really heavily when you’re trying to get through the door ... [which] also continues to push against this concept of linguistic justice.” This instructor marked entrance to a graduate program—a necessary aspect of training to become an instructor and a face of the academy—as a boundary of academia. For them, academia’s walls were notably erected around the instructor training facility. In drawing a connection between their own experience and linguistic justice, the door this instructor points to marks a bottleneck where those in power and defining the rules of acceptance are able to wield that power in the form of, for one, Standard English requirements. As this instructor demonstrates, where instructors may feel pressure to forward Standard English because of its prevalence in public or professional settings and their desire to help students prepare to enter those settings, it was when they located the impact of these ideologies on people—either themselves or language users excluded because of language requirements—that they found their motivation for embedding the classroom with linguistic justice. In turn, their own training toward Standard English could then make it easier for instructors to imbue classrooms with the same requirements and treatments. Indeed, instructors at times described how enforcing Standard English via writing requirements was part of their job; it would be “irresponsible for me as a teacher to not teach students convention.” While many instructors responded to such pressure with descriptive methods of telling students what Standard English conventions were and making sure they felt comfortable with them, instructors’ practices could easily turn more punitive as they

sought to teach students Standard English conventions in what may be the most familiar way: using grades. In short, instructors' training imbues them with some responsibility to talk about Standard English requirements, which they then may take into the classroom and into interactions with students. When instructors wish to resist these influences in the classroom—often aligning such a goal with linguistic justice—they must rethink both their experiences and their teaching methods.

4.2 Learning in and from Social Movements

While maintaining any attitude or stance no matter its dominance requires work, requirements toward Standard English may be more easily defined as culturally hegemonic because they are continually enforced by dominant actors to the point where they feel or seem ingrained or natural (Steinklammer 2012). Indeed, for some instructors, such an ingrained sense characterized not only Standard English but the educational setting itself. In the classroom context, they sometimes found it easier to work with student–instructor hierarchies as opposed to against them, for example, because hierarchical teaching settings and relationships are so familiar that, as one instructor described, they “[do] not need to be explained.” Extending their discussion of hegemony to the classroom setting, Steinklammer notes that for a classroom engaged in “critical education,” hegemony is most notable for not just its dominant leaders but also its acceptance by “a large part of the population” (2012: 25). In linguistic justice terms, Standard English has dominant leaders—encompassing those (powerful, professional, white American) assumed to use

it—and acceptance—demonstrated in, as an instructor above noted, the prevalence of mockery toward those assumed to speak “improperly.”⁸

Such a focus on and attendance to hegemony, in turn, opens the door for considering how actors within social movements work against hegemonic notions and practices and where linguistic justice-minded instructors specifically may be doing the same. And as instructors seek to imbue the classroom—and often the university—with linguistic justice, they not only address the presence of a linguistic hegemony in their teaching and the educational space, as they did above, but use practices mirroring learning in social movements that Steinklammer (2012) identifies in their “critical education” theory, which I discuss below. In the end, instructors combine a critique of hegemony and practices aligned with social movements in their efforts to create linguistically just, radical educational spaces and experiences.

4.2.1 Critical Self-Reflection and Conveyance

Elisabeth Steinklammer, observing learning in social movements, defined critical education as a way individuals may turn their attention to “reflection and consciousness-raising” as well as education to resist “internalized,” habitual hegemonic practices (2012: 30). Building on their previous discussions of the way issues related to linguistic justice are historically and socially relevant, instructors often approached their work by considering each of these aspects of critical education. Working on their own theories and connecting such reflection, consciousness, and

⁸ Baker-Bell avoids using “dominant” to describe Standard English (“White Mainstream English” in her work) because of the way it could imply the form is hierarchically better, preferring to use “mainstream” to describe the form (2020: 3). However, because my discussion here is so based on notions of power, I use “dominance” because of its relation to subjugation, which I discuss briefly later.

attention to counter-hegemonic education to their classroom work, instructors indicated where these may help build radical pedagogies and linguistically just classrooms.

The first of Steinklammer's schema, "critical reflection," encompasses one's efforts to examine their own experiences along with their "historical and social entirety" (2012: 37). Drawing from their previous training—as the instructor did above in regard to their graduate education—experiences with language, and teaching, the instructors I talked with often engaged in such critical reflection as they reasoned out their theories on language inequalities. They described having faced language inequalities and educational spaces where they weren't able to explore their own voice and how they didn't want students "to feel like I felt in the past." Or they located an aspect of their social identity in the classroom by considering power in a current U.S. context: "I'm a white guy in a white space reading publications that are still heavily driven by white people for rich readers." More explicitly, one instructor identified their goal "to be aware, a little self-reflexive, about the ways in which I'm certainly bringing expectations or my own kind of bias or ear for what makes good writing." In these cases, reflection allowed instructors to place themselves in a context and a mindset that they felt they needed to embody in order to imbue the classroom with linguistic justice. Relating to Chapter 3's discussion of the frame of a university classroom, instructors established their reflective practice as a key element of how they contended with their stereotyped role in the classroom. As they moved within such a role, their efforts to incorporate their previous experiences helped them address any ingrained assumptions about language and incorporate practices of building the type of dialogic relationships with students they aligned with linguistic justice efforts.

Beyond reflecting on their own experiences, instructors sometimes tried to encourage students to explore linguistic justice by asking them to reflect, which instructors sought to spark

by incorporating discussions on the historical and social factors behind the readings any given class engages with. bell hooks offers a similar method by noting how “diverse” works—which the instructors I talked with sought to include as part of their linguistic justice efforts—need to be taught along with an “interrogation of the biases conventional canons (if not all canons) establish” (1994: 39). For the “white guy” instructor, such interrogative work happened alongside general discussions of societal language treatment when he engaged with individual pieces of writing. In one notable class experience, he taught a magazine piece about Ahmaud Arbery’s murder. The piece contained “language that is not typical for a magazine, not typical for a classroom, and it created a few moments actually in the class where we were able to discuss; ‘Why is he doing this? What’s going on here? Like, in certain settings, editors will probably strike this and say, “That’s too informal, it’s grammatically incorrect.”’” In this recalled class discussion, the instructor pointed to language he believes students may find unexpected and he explained why they might have such an experience by highlighting its presence in the professional and educational contexts of a magazine and classroom. By emphasizing these connections students could react to, the instructor hinted at the social importance of such language in those contexts. After this, the instructor offered sample discussion questions he used to prompt students to begin considering and discussing how the language is connected to the social, and perhaps historical, discussions of languages the class had engaged with in the past. Finally, he animated dominant claims about (often non-Standard) language, which he aligns with a publishing setting. In three moves, this instructor worked to incorporate hooks’ (1994) “interrogations” into the classroom.

Other instructors displayed the value of such moves by turning focus to how a linguistically just classroom could be marked by students “recogniz[ing] that not all students have had the same experiences” and how students might, in turn, become more “aware of people [they] may encounter

in the workplace once [they] leave campus.” With such future-oriented goals and by encouraging students to engage in reflections that specifically bring language and society to the fore, instructors tried to offer students the moves to engage in the same type of reflection with their own experiences. In these cases, instructors demonstrated how they try, both in their own theorizing and their classroom practice, to shift their focus onto the ways language ideologies interact with one’s social experience. Notably, as Smitherman argued in 1972, instructors in the U.S. engaging in and conveying critical education, especially in relation to language, must critically engage not only with writing inequalities in general but with those faced by and/or involving Black individuals and Black Language—indeed because of the history of Black Language and Blackness in the U.S. scholars like Baker-Bell (2020) start with. In thinking about the ways individuals interact with societal assumptions about language, the instructors I worked with, then, may not only (continue to) shape their own thinking about linguistic justice but also encourage students to take up reflective thinking habits. Reflection, further, allows instructors to respond to individual students’ experiences—whose presence is key to linguistic justice classroom practices—in a way that encourages students to think more deeply about their own experiences and the way these interact with societal notions of language inequalities and hegemony enforced via and present in language requirements. Therefore, instructors’ efforts to encourage students to engage in critical reflection about their linguistic experiences could help prime everyone in a classroom to think further about linguistic justice and its related topics.

Having established reflective thinking in their own theorizing and in their classroom practice, some instructors I talked with found that such reflectivity directly prompted consciousness to social struggles. For others, such consciousness was embedded in their past training and discussions about language inequalities in graduate (often composition) programs.

Some further described their continued efforts to build and maintain consciousness, citing their recent and continued engagement with Baker-Bell's *Linguistic Justice* (2020). Along with Cheryl's earlier concerns about the action that must correspond with theorization, one instructor described their goal to "radicalize" students as embedded with an idea of how the university "should be engaged with what's happening in the real world." To this instructor, a connection between actions in the university and "real world" concerns, especially related to certain (social justice) topics, was not implicit but had to be forged. Indeed, to forge such connections instructors had to manipulate the frames of their interaction—in this case, centering both a frame for educational contexts and a socially aware frame through which students might think about social issues. When it came to linguistic justice consciousness, instructors therefore continually reconsidered and cycled the readings they assigned to ensure they pass on not only a historically grounded social consciousness but one that is as socially up-to-date as possible. As these instructors demonstrate, radical pedagogy needs a tangible, citable potential impact, like on students' "real world," which moves their work from merely gaining consciousness themselves to continually passing it on so students may take the linguistic justice thinking and/or topics they use in the classroom to any future endeavors.

Instructors similarly take the "education" piece of Steinklammer's (2012) theory and turn it into a way to radicalize the classroom. Steinklammer describes learning in a social movement as a "practice of resistance" because it must be rooted in experiences that don't conform to a cultural hegemony (2012: 34). In this case, for example, instructors may draw on or ask students to consider their past experiences in classrooms, and especially related to language, and reflect on them—experiences which often might involve something, like Standard English requirements, that aligns with the cultural hegemony enforcing the dominance of Standard English and its supposed

speakers. As instructors sought to build certain classroom experiences as part of their linguistic justice efforts, such as those discussed in Chapter 3, they engaged educational practices relating to the linguistic justice social movement to build experiences for students that don't align with students' potential earlier experiences of language requirements in classroom spaces. By providing these counter-hegemonic experiences to students, especially within their linguistic justice practices, instructors engage in "practices of resistance" against the dominant, cultural hegemony.

However, if actors don't have a non-conforming experience they would need to reflect on for an education to be more fully resistant, any movement against the hegemony potentially afforded by the social movement would be difficult to enact (Steinklammer 2012: 34). In one case, an instructor identified experiences with hegemony students bring to the university classroom as they discussed how students held ingrained ideas about essay structures commonly used in high schools that they then had to "unlearn." In response to such needs, the instructor described students' experiences as "unfortunate because ... unlearning is the most difficult thing that anyone has to ever do." But when students do learn new essay structures, they may find it easier to branch out further, taking in the various written forms instructors show through class readings and experimenting with their own written work. And beyond students' writing, instructors' efforts to create new experiences for students in the classroom reflect attention to the way students' access to experiences shape how they learn in a social movement context. Instructors in Chapter 3 explained wanting students to experience classrooms as comfortable and agency-inducing, while some below similarly discussed the classroom as a potentially empowering space. With such moves, instructors tried to create experiences for students where the classroom is potentially different from their assumptions or previous experiences. Once students have these experiences,

they may then draw on them as they reflect on linguistic justice in the future and build or employ a critical consciousness.

While instructors may offer content about linguistic justice, much of their thinking about the movement involved efforts to learn on their own—including learning methods connected to a social movement context such as reflection, consciousness, and education—and to create spaces where students can also learn habits for looking at language use and treatments with more context and care. In these cases, instructors demonstrate how they “plant little tiny seeds” of counter-hegemonic practice, perhaps with classroom methods like offering more and varied voices in class readings and discussions or with critical educational practices—and the methods students can draw from them—discussed in this section. These “seeds” help instructors avoid any concern about “pushing” an attitude onto students, which Cheryl expressed at the start of this chapter, by encouraging students to reach conclusions on their own. In short, even if instructors believe linguistic inequalities are present and should be addressed, their practices often primarily involve offering context and new experiences that students may then take up and develop on their own. So while linguistic justice pedagogies themselves may be built to resist hegemony, and may constitute radical education because of that, their radicality is also rooted in the way they call into question—and ask those involved to question—ingrained educational structures that inform whose voice is heard in the classroom, whose intention is behind it, and whose knowledge counts.

4.2.2 Education and Society, Thinkers and the Powerful

bell hooks (1994) writes for an “[acknowledgement] that the education most of us had received and were giving was not and is never politically neutral” (30). In discussing racism and sexism in the classroom and in pedagogical theories, hooks draws focus to the ways education (as

in institutions) may be aligned with advancing political aims—a difficult thing to reconcile with education’s (as in learning, gaining knowledge at the personal level) apparent connections to liberation (1994). Indeed, a continued theme throughout this thesis is the way education acts as a space of professionalization, which could align the work of the instructors herein with hooks’ conception of education with an institutional focus. Chapter 2’s discussion of neoliberal models further helps to contextualize these instructors’ work by showing how their efforts to interact with students continually center around the focus of ensuring students’ experiences in the classroom serve the goal of preparing them for the market. However, especially for instructors who wished to emphasize linguistic justice, such goals and attention to supporting individuals’ learning might go against mainstream, institutional ideals about how power is embedded in classroom interactions and how students should use language in educational and professional settings. The question becomes, then, how to solve the conundrum hooks presents: how do instructors balance the context of an institutional education with their goals of supporting individuals’ learning?

Aligning with hooks’ attention to the political, linguistic justice aims to acknowledge the historical, social, and political implications of language treatment, asking why certain (Standard) English and its apparent speakers are privileged and assumed better and how such assumptions are formed and interact with a racialized historical context. And so when instructors combine their thinking about linguistic justice, especially as an anti-colonial movement, with classroom practice, they often respond to such an accepted connection between education and politicality, thereby creating a space that is necessarily counter-hegemonic. Further, such counter-hegemonic practice allows instructors to employ critical education methods and address the space created when their animation brings an institutional voice to their classroom practice. When they signaled these connections, instructors may find, perhaps hope, their work aligns with notions of radical

education—even as they continually worked within the educational institution and its associated, hegemony-aligned and -forwarding frame.

For these instructors, language use tied back to the way individuals relate to each other under an adaptable, time-specific “cultural and political context.” As one instructor described, “the privilege of the text has led to violence against the most vulnerable populations,” and such “privileged” texts display socially marked treatments of languages and speakers in the classroom. Further building on the idea of language treatment in the classroom, one instructor, Jane, discussed evaluations on students’ language and the language requirements behind them as related to a “figurative violence.” She described how “the long history of colonial projects and the linkages in colonial political projects associated with public schooling, for example, [is] a mode for coercive movement into subjugating populations.” As Jane connected coloniality and current public schooling practices, she noted the same actors and coercive force central to Steinklammer’s (2012) use of “hegemony” in critical education. In the case of schooling, she highlighted Standard English requirements as a hegemonic move. And in her practice, she found it necessary to ensure students at least knew Standard English because of the power connected to the form.

But Jane also described how such historical relevance guides her classroom practice. Where she perhaps animates an attitude preferring requirements toward Standard English because of her felt responsibilities as an educator, she also negotiates her role within the university by being aware of the coloniality embedded in mainstream classroom practices so that she may create a space for individual students that responds to it. She both aligns with and resists connections between the individual classroom and the entire educational institution, and she exemplifies how some instructors may find difficulty operating in a classroom space—one Daphne Desser describes as “a site that is often an unwilling and unconscious participant in the role of education as

ideological state apparatus” (2005: 88). Further, where Jane may at times be “unwilling” to align a classroom with this notion of education, other instructors acknowledge a continuity between education and state aims, demonstrating the “unconscious” aspect of Desser’s description. The instructor in Chapter 2, for example, who explained how the university’s funding source influences the institution’s attitudes toward social justice exemplified such an attitude. This instructor believed university leadership could share their own social justice goals and so understood the limitations of reaching such goals as well as the institution’s apparent lack of action. Where other instructors, and this instructor later in our conversation, also expressed a distaste for the way university leadership at this school has handled social justice topics, certain limitations, such as financial ones, are understandable enough and allow an instructor to see the reasoning behind a policy or institutional action they might in other circumstances feel goes against their principles. But as these instructors at times come to understand and, in effect, accept institutional actions even when those actions go against their (linguistic justice) ideals, the line between the classroom—as represented by instructors—and the institution becomes blurred. In the end, an instructor’s acknowledgements of the institution’s and institutional leadership’s circumstances may blur the distinction between classroom-level work and university-level work enough to mean actors in both the classroom and education in general constitute forwarders of hegemony.

However, perhaps because education may be so aligned with hegemony, instructors also may try to address this directly in their classroom teaching. When they work to create spaces that are empowering, in ways similar to the comfortable and agency-producing classrooms in Chapter 3, they especially negotiate students’ positions in relation to hegemonic structures. For many of the instructors I talked with, opportunities for empowerment showed up across different aspects of the classroom, whether in teaching grammar, exposing first-year students to different written and

language forms, or offering students suggestions for revisions as opposed to dictations so students may grow more comfortable with their own choices as writers. Whatever the specific aim to empower students, instructors overall wished their efforts would help students develop their relationships with language. With greater self-confidence gained in the linguistically just, empowering classroom, students would potentially be better able to “decide the terms of how they want to navigate [their] relationship to the written word.” And so by trying to make students more empowered, instructors often work to present ideas about language ideologies and social hierarchies they think are relatively unknown or overlooked for many people; they may want to create citizens who both interrogate how racism and social hierarchies are embedded and perpetuated in language and wish to work against such perpetuation—as reflected in their emphasis on having information about linguistic justice spread beyond the English department and “trickle down” to earlier education.

When they asked students to consider context and reflect, instructors turned attention to skills they thought would be valuable and relevant for students in the future. In the same way, as they sought to make spaces where students may feel empowered, they sought to create or support an attitude that might serve students as they continue writing and speaking and sharing their voices. Indeed, such future-oriented moves may serve as a potentially powerful response to the preparation argument by directly paralleling and counteracting the argument’s focus on students’ expected futures. For these instructors, then, linguistic justice may show up in preparing students less so with Standard English than with a certain attitude—a social awareness, an open, critical engagement with historical and current societal structures.

4.3 Conclusion: Radical and ...

As I argued in the introduction to this chapter, part of the reason Cheryl chose to voice her assertion as “that ain’t right” could have to do with her efforts to draw a connection between conversations within the university, such as about language requirements or the theories behind linguistic justice, and actions aligned with social movements beyond the university. In titling this chapter—about the ways instructors’ efforts to enact linguistic justice relate to social movement educational practices—I sought to also make this connection. Indeed, linguistic justice calls on those interested in it to interrogate the mainstream, dominant, hegemonic structures that oftentimes seem to tower over the individuals who wish to forward the movement. In this case specifically, while the educational institution is a great influence, instructors are able to negotiate its presence through animation, marking how the institution and education itself interacts with societal language ideologies. In turn, instructors who emphasized linguistic justice sought to address such ideologies with new ways to consider their own experiences, especially related to language, and by creating new experiences they asked students to consider.

As they sought to radicalize spaces, instructors interrogated the readings they brought to classes and emphasized a specific type of classroom dialogue, as discussed in Chapter 3. In doing this, they addressed the “pedagogic bent” leaning toward—and thereby potentially swaying those in the space toward reproducing—ideas about unequal knowledge and privileged voices in the classroom (Harley 2012: 18). But from a social movements viewpoint, Harley argues that such a privileging of voices happens and is reinforced “because it is the political requirement of hegemony to *prevent* (counter-hegemonic) thinking” (2012: 18; emphasis in original). In response to this notion, counter-hegemonic efforts must then necessarily involve attention to more voices—

which Steinklammer also describes in their note about how successful learning in social movement environments must be rooted in “the viewpoint of the learners” (2012: 37).

However, hooks (1994) discusses how a classroom completely equally constructed by students and instructors may be difficult for instructors to envision because of a difference in the amount of specialized knowledge they have compared with students. This could raise a problem similar to the one Cheryl had about “pushing” an attitude onto students; if linguistic justice pedagogies, at least to these instructors, incorporates students’ voices and viewpoints on language into the classroom but critical education involves reconsidering what one has thought about their own experiences and about language in society, how do instructors accomplish both? How do instructors incorporate linguistic justice without telling students what to think about language treatments or social inequalities? As these instructors demonstrated in their critical education, they often found themselves having to reflect and relearn alongside students. By trying to help students develop various ways of thinking, involving social and historical context or empowered voices in the educational context, instructors sought not to tell students what to think but to interrogate such thinking in the first place; even if they told, they told students to reconsider on their own. And so the radicality of linguistic justice practice, in this case, is shown not only in the way it prompts instructors to discuss hegemony and language but also in the way it asks instructors and students to think about the presence of hegemonies in the classroom and in the educational space.

5.0 Conclusion: What Do Linguistic Justice Futures Look Like?

Throughout this project, I was able to explore some places—from individual offices and classrooms to departments and the university itself—instructors spent time in as they conducted their work and navigated the concepts within and relating to linguistic justice. In these places, instructors stacked bookshelves with pedagogical guides, works on language and composition research, and novels. They sipped coffee and matcha and water as they pondered questions that they variously answered with theoretical concepts and ideas and with day-in-the-life accounts of their classroom work.

In my talks with them, I came to understand the way their conversations about and the concepts they discussed alongside linguistic justice are aligned with place, via the institution, the department, and the classroom. As they discussed the department and university influences, they talked about the makeup of the department and its meetings. Their discussions of students—and indeed the class sessions I observed—placed them in front of wooden lecterns and next to green chalkboards. When they turned attention to others' views of education, such as those represented in educational models, and to the way the linguistic justice movement involves them drawing connections between academia and social movements, they considered the way their actions and the academic spaces they occupy may be seen by those outside the university. Beyond the places they occupy, instructors continually oriented their linguistic justice discussions with past, current, and future conversations about the movement. Their theories were continually grounded in historical considerations and referenced continuing conversations about the topic's themes. Their consistent discussions of students' experiences and futures allowed them to turn focus to both the

way their dialogic interactions incorporate potential future conversations and the way their linguistic justice theories align with future-oriented goals for the social movement.

Drawing from these considerations of place and time, the instructors I talked with sought to assess not only the current educational settings they occupied but the way they could work within such settings—with their many theories and stereotypes—to transform individual classrooms into ones that forwarded linguistic justice. To embark on the task of shifting the mainstream educational contexts instructors worked in and alongside, they first surveyed the landscape they worked in. Taking their principal influences from linguistic justice theories and understandings of how language shows up in society, instructors established their own responses to such theories by reflecting internally on the morality they connected to linguistic justice, their labor in the classroom, and their work more generally. Once instructors established their theories about linguistic justice, they compared their work with that of colleagues and with the expectations placed onto them by departments and students. As they began conducting the practices they drew from these theories, instructors used methods like defining their own roles and creating models of The Student, which helped them navigate the many ideas playing into their work about what education should be.

Building on these initial practices, instructors turned attention to the classroom as a unique, specific setting to evaluate and manipulate their interaction roles and the classroom methods they use, finding ways to create interactions and experiences that aligned, to them, with linguistic justice pedagogies more than traditional or stereotypical roles and classroom interactions did. They implemented classroom methods to help enact experiences of dialogue, comfort, and agency students could take with them after graduation—thereby reinforcing their focus on futures. In the end, many of those I talked with wished to transform educational spaces as a whole into those

where linguistic justice, and its related ways of viewing language use and treatments, was perhaps more normative than the Standard English ideology the movement responds to.

While these instructors found their manipulations of the existing space and structures satisfying for the moment, they also emphasized the methods related to social movements and radical education that helped them move beyond the theoretical into direct, anti-racist action. Indeed, many of those I talked with discussed how the students they teach are increasingly open to discussing social issues. When they considered students in their work—as they continually did to assess and orient their classroom practices as well as theories on things like preparation—instructors pointed to students and “the next generation” as the catalyst for more direct action. In their efforts, they sought to ask students to critically examine their experiences—past, present, and potential future—for students themselves, who may be coming to university classrooms with negative experiences, especially, in this case, in regard to language (requirements) and educational spaces. However, their efforts to imbue students with specific techniques and ways of thinking about language, oftentimes alongside but sometimes before or in place of linguistic justice materials like those detailing the histories and social contexts of languages, also helped them feel as though their practices would contribute to creating the generational change they saw as necessary to ensuring concepts related to linguistic justice become more widely known and acknowledged. And so, as these instructors acknowledge, linguistic justice conversations and classroom practices are not only aware of and often attend to students’ potential futures, but instructors’ very theories exist in a temporal space that will hopefully become more permanent through their linguistic justice practices and pedagogies.

As these conversations keep happening and instructors keep trying to move the needle toward a linguistic justice-aligned idea of language and speaker acceptance, they’re also working

within structures and with actors I did not focus on in this work. In regard to their professional situations, instructors represented and briefly discussed themes of labor and gender that I only briefly touched on through the above account. When instructors considered whether and how much to incorporate linguistic justice into their thinking and practices, they mentioned how they had little time or resources to do so, even if the topic was apparently discussed in the department. Such concerns also coincided with the precarious employment status of many of the instructors I talked with. Compared to their tenure-stream colleagues, appointment-stream and sometimes part-time faculty—constituting most of those I talked with—at times discussed their status as underpaid and/or overworked and sometimes balancing multiple jobs, such as at different universities. Within circumstances like these, while they felt invested in linguistic justice and the experiences of the students in their classes, their employment status greatly influenced what they felt they could do with their own time. Further, the same teaching faculty, along with their position's lack of alignment with or compensation for doing the research required to fully invest in and explore linguistic justice-related pedagogies, may worry about misaligning too much with the department, as their more precarious employment meant their positions were perhaps less open to their own research agendas or potentially radical pedagogical interests than those of their tenure-stream colleagues, whose longer-term contracts also relied on their pursuing research. Finally, such concerns could also have informed the way instructors talked with me about their theories and about their experiences of working and within the department. Alongside labor, and especially in relation to the educational models I discussed in Chapter 2, some instructors touched on the ways gender shows up in their work—either for them as an individual or within a role, like English teaching, that may be gendered itself. In a future project, therefore, greater attention might be paid to instructors' labor conditions—including the way they negotiate these with questions of gender

and therapeutic roles—and the ways instructors’ attitudes or practices differ depending on their position in the university.

Importantly, while instructors continually centered students in their discussions, I did not do the same in my analysis because, in providing a more whole account of instructors’ experiences, I avoided providing only a marginal account of students’. However, students’ voices are central to linguistic justice conversations, especially since such conversations may explicitly start from students’ experiences in educational settings, as Baker-Bell’s (2020) contribution did. As mentioned, the instructors I talked with not only invoked students’ experiences to assert the importance of and explain the reasoning behind their work but also pointed to students as the real changemakers of the linguistic justice movement. Because of this, future work that seeks to understand the ways students view both things like language, inequalities, and education; instructors’ efforts, in general and outlined herein in regard to linguistic justice; and their own futures is essential.

The educational space has many actors, and those actors are continually working within—and potentially avoiding or trying to overwrite—the power differentials and hierarchies aligned with their roles. Additionally, the instructors I talked with grounded their discussions of linguistic justice by considering how societal assumptions about language not only reflect power differentials but show up in written language requirements. As these instructors taught students ways of writing or reading, linguistic justice was a continual concern, as they wondered whether to teach students in a way that aligned with the way they were taught and with an understanding of how students’ language may likely be treated based on societal assumptions or in a way that aligned with linguistic justice and therefore could contribute to disseminating the understandings of language central to the movement. While I focused on conglomerations of instructors’ voices

throughout this work, they came to no joint conclusion about which side to fall on. However, their continual focus on the future meant they were apt to convey to students the way their writing holds sway for not only their own relationships to languages but also for continuing, shifting conversations about writing as conveying the self through language—as well as the way societal attitudes show up in relation to such language, especially once written.

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