

“But he speaks Spanish”: English-Only Policies and Colonial Mechanization of Home Languages

&

Uncovering Miss Amanda: Reflecting on the Power of a Critical Feminist Researcher

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A Thesis
In Educational Studies

Presented to the Director and Faculty of the Educational Studies Program
Department of Education
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This Master's thesis comprises of two individual articles, titled “‘But he speaks Spanish’: English-Only Policies and Colonial Mechanization of Home Languages” and “Uncovering Miss Amanda: Reflecting on the Power of a Critical Feminist Researcher”. Both can be found in the following document.

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Abstract

This article uncovers how English-Only policies in preschools perpetuate colonial understandings of language and citizenship. Constructing the use and value of students' home languages predominantly for disciplinary purposes, ethnographic research found that teachers embodied English-Only policies to produce the English Language Learner (ELL) as "Other". As witnesses to this knowledge production process, white, native English speaking students reproduced similar constructions of the ELL-Other through the mimicry of the teachers' disciplinary use of home languages. The school becomes a space that not only produces the ELL-Other, but also a space that continuously reifies the validity and endurance of the ELL student as Other in opposition to the native English speaking Self. As a site of colonial education, the preschool is where native English-speaking pre-citizen students and teachers employ a language made illegal by English-Only policies to define and deny citizenship to ELL students.

E is for English

Today, we are learning about the letter “e”. Ms. Baker, the head preschool teacher, asks students to share any “e” words they know. Anna yells out, “eggs!” and Amber follows with “elephant!” With some scaffolding, more students call out: “everybody!”, “ear!”, “excited!” Inspired by the momentum, April shouts out, “awesome!” Ms. Baker is quick to correct that although it sounds like an “e” word, awesome in fact starts with the letter “a”. “Once again ladies and gentleman,” she continues, “I apologize that it is the English language that we all have to learn. Oh! That’s another ‘e’ word. We all speak...” A chorus of four- and five-year olds yell out, “English!” Trailing her peers, Amber quickly adds, “Except Alexander. Alexander doesn’t speak English.” Ms. Baker corrects, “No, Alexander does know English,” but Anna, another preschooler, matter-of-factly responds, “No, he speaks Spanish.”

This brief classroom interaction illustrates how students as young as four and five witness the construction of language and identity under English-Only mandates in education. Amber and Anna, both white, native English-speaking students, are grappling with understandings of Alexander’s language abilities, an emerging bilingual Spanish-English Latino student in their class. English is framed by white, native English-speaking Ms. Baker as the language that “we” (the class) speak, but Amber is quick to point out that Alexander is not included in this blanket “we”. Ms. Baker tries to correct this misunderstanding because Alexander does, in fact, possess emerging English skills, but Anna too excludes Alexander from the English-speaking classroom because of the fact that he speaks Spanish. During this sense making process, he sits quietly just two seats to the left of Amber, yet is never acknowledged in the first person. Alexander is no longer these students’ peer, but is rather transformed into an object of inquiry.

This article analyzes the complex and multifaceted ways in which English-Only policies perpetuate colonial understandings of language and citizenship in the preschool classroom—an often overlooked and under-theorized space of formal schooling. Informed by a colonial discursive analysis of state language policies, I spent four months conducting ethnographic research in a preschool classroom to examine classroom discursive practices that emerged when working with linguistically diverse students under English-Only mandates. Observations quickly highlighted how imperial ideologies within language policies were enacted and co-produced by teachers in the preschool classroom. Through teachers’ mechanization of home languages¹ as a disciplinary tool, students’ home languages were devalued and later appropriated to further police and control the body and language of English Language Learners (ELLs). This embodiment of colonial discourse by teachers also functioned to “teach” these manifestations of power to all students in the classroom, facilitating the mimicry of colonial discursive practices in students as young as four and five years old. This peer discipline and representation resulted in the reification of the native English-speaking white citizen Self in opposition to the raced, de-citizenized, ELL-Other.

Data and Context

The Preschool Classroom

Research for this study took place in a preschool classroom in a public school district’s early childhood education center in a mid-sized city in Massachusetts. This specific school was selected to serve as a site of analysis not only because of its diverse linguistic population, but

¹ I use “home language” throughout this paper to refer to the first languages of students that the school labels as “English Language Learner”. By mimicking the language of the school, I do not wish to reproduce the State’s devaluation of these languages by failing to acknowledge the presence and importance of these languages outside of the home, such as in the community and media. I am instead interested in the division of the private and the state and how the school frames the use and value of various languages as private “home languages” or state “school” languages.

also because of its association with a larger public school system and thus its inherent relationship to the state and accountability to its English-Only policies. This early childhood center is a unique educational space that serves over 400 students through the sixteen preschool and nine kindergarten classrooms. State school enrollment data² reports that the student population is largely Hispanic or White (45% and 34%, respectively), with significant communities of African American, Asian, and multi-race students (6%, 9%, and 4%, respectively)³. These demographics mirror the diversity of the city as a whole, except for the school's significantly smaller white population (34% as compared to 69%) and a higher rate of students whose first language is not English (53% as compared to 32%). This smaller percentage of white students enrolled in a public school, relative to the city population, reflects the national racial trend in urban public schooling (Logan, Stowell & Oakley, 2002). Additionally, language and racial diversity within the school reflect its location in a neighborhood that has one of the city's highest percentages of communities of color, linguistic diversity and foreign-born populations.

The majority of observations occurred over the span of four months in a single classroom, permitting me to gain a deep understanding of participants and classroom culture. The class was lead by a head teacher I call Ms. Baker and an assistant teacher I call Ms. Ambrossi, both white, native-English speakers. Of the twelve students, parent reports identified seven students as white, four as Asian (Japanese-American, Korean-American, and two South Asian Indian-American), and one as Latino (Salvadoran-American). Between the twelve students, five different languages

² Citations for city and school demographics will not be included in order to respect the anonymity of participants.

³ As reflections of data collected by the State, it is important to note that racial demographics reported here are limited to vague racial categorizations offered by the State. Therefore, these demographics reflect how the State and its institutions recognize and race individuals (Vaught, 2011), but not necessarily how individual actors self-identify.

were spoken: English, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish and Korean. Nine students' dominant language was English, two of which were also learning a second language (Japanese and Punjabi). The remaining three students spoke a language other than English in the home –Spanish, Punjabi or Korean – and were labeled “English Language Learners” by the school due to their emerging English skills.

School Mandates: English-Only Policies.

Despite the linguistic diversity in the school and classroom, this school district is located in a state with imposed English-Only education, which makes it illegal for public schools and public school teachers to teach students in any language besides English. This law, Chapter 71A of the Massachusetts General Law (“English Language Education...”; hereafter Chapter 71A), is embedded within the United States’s long and complex history of language education. In the United States, “language has always been the companion of the empire” (Flores & Murillo Jr., 2001, p. 188), evident in the ways that English-Only models of education were historically used with Indigenous peoples throughout the North American continent, as well as various ethnic minority groups, to assimilate and “Americanize” those that posed as threats to a unified national culture (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003). This assimilation was, in part, achieved through the devaluation of native language abilities of students and the construction of these students as “Other” in order to delineate the boundaries of a falsely imagined “unified” nation (Flores & Murillo Jr., 2001, p. 184). What is often presented as a language issue operates as proxy for resentment and fear towards immigrants and racial/ethnic minorities (Johnson & Martínez, 1999-2000; Schildkraut 2001; Huber, 2011).

However, the communities most influenced by these policies have returned with an equally strong history of resistance, including civil rights cases such as *Delgado v. Bastrop*,

Mendez v. Westminster, and *Alvarez v. The Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District*. Most often cited is the 1974 court case *Lau v. Nichols*, which made it an obligation of the government to provide “appropriate language” accommodation to all students in order to protect students’ rights. Despite this civil rights milestone, bilingual programs implemented in response to *Lau* were limited and situated within a locally specific cultural and political environment in San Francisco, California. Additionally, the law didn’t provide any specifications about the type of educational programs school districts were to impose.

In Massachusetts, the state in which this research project took place, transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs were instituted from the 1970s to the early 1990s (de Jong, Gort & Cobb, 2005). As compared to other bilingual programs that preserve and promote bilingual abilities, TBE programs only use students’ home languages “to the extent necessary to allow a child to achieve competence in the English language” (Crawford, 1998, p. 56). Similar to many national models, students in Massachusetts were offered TBE classes for three years and then completely transitioned into English mainstream classrooms. In the early 1980s, debates about the effectiveness of TBE programs emerged, with many opponents arguing that students in these programs were not learning English quickly enough, burdening their academic progress. Any instruction done in home language was seen as a distraction from English acquisition (Crawford, 1998).

Soon after, Question 2 was introduced. Similar to Proposition 227 and Proposition 103 in California and Arizona, respectively, this ballot initiative challenged the effectiveness of bilingual education and instead proposed English-Only education. An important shift from government decision making to voter decision making, this initiative was overwhelmingly passed by Massachusetts’s voters, successfully mandating “all public school children must be taught

English by being taught all subjects in English and being placed in English language classrooms” (sec. 1 para. 1). This policy is intended for “English Learners” or ELLs, defined as “children who cannot do ordinary class work in English and who either do not speak English or whose native language is not English” (sec. 1 para. 2). Upon entrance to the school, all ELLs are afforded one year of “Sheltered English Immersion”, where home languages can be used minimally to facilitate access to curriculum and English acquisition. After this short period, ELLs are transitioned into an “English language mainstream classroom” where they are taught “English as rapidly and effectively as possible” (sec. 1, para 6) and supported by English as a Second Language (ESL) pullout instruction. Although only legally imposed for K-12 education, the school principal of my research site informed me that this school district officially extended this mandate into the preschool years. Thus, in my ethnographic site, all teaching and learning was to be in English and only English.

A Feminist Defamiliarization of the Preschool Classroom

The methodology guiding this research is a feminist, ethnographic methodology, which attempts to uncover, analyze, and disrupt powered and oppressive institutions (Mohanty, 1984; Narayan, 1993; Fine & Weis, 1996). To adequately examine the multifaceted power dynamics operating in the field, feminist principles of research guided my own self reflection on the ways power operated in the site as related to my research questions as well as in the researcher-participant relationship (Stacey, 1988; Narayan, 1993; Nelson, 1996). Recognizing the multiplicitous power dynamics present in the research process, feminist principles of research remind us that the researcher inherently enters an uneven relationship in the field due to power afforded to them as researcher as well as one’s multiple and shifting positionalities in various structures of power (Patai, 1991; Narayan, 1993; Wolf, 1996; Stacey, 1998). These various

positionalities afford a particular, yet partial, viewpoint of structures and the production of knowledge, undermining claims of objectivity in the field (Narayan, 1993; Wolf, 1996). Instead, energy is focus on how power is operating in the site in order to unlearn familiar contexts, ideas and events (Narayan, p. 15).

This unlearning process can be facilitated by Kaomea's (2003) theory of defamiliarization, which offers an interpretive technique to help identify and interrogate the multifaceted colonial and imperial power structures operating within one's research site. This anti-oppressive and decolonizing methodology (Smith, 1999; Kumashiro, 2000, 2001) is used throughout the data collection and analysis process to "uncover more complicated, nuanced stories of (post)colonial complicity and entanglement" (Kaomea, 2003, p. 23). By looking "beyond the initial and overwhelmingly positive impression of the familiar" (p. 15), defamiliarization is able to illuminate the silences, absences and erasures of dominant colonial narratives.

This defamiliarizing feminist methodology was used throughout my data collection and analysis in order to understand how dominant ideologies of language and citizenship were communicated in the first years of formal schooling. Data collected consisted of classroom and school observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers and other related educators in the school, and a review of related nation-wide, statewide, and district-wide policies. This article focuses on the linguistic discursive patterns surrounding one particular student, whom I call Alexander, the same student who became the classroom's object of inquiry in the opening anecdote of this paper.

Alexander was one of three ELLs in the classroom, and the only Spanish-English bilingual student. While teachers and students constantly spoke Spanish to Alexander, home

languages were never used with the two other students labeled at ELLs (Korean and Punjabi). This uneven use of home languages is reflective of contemporary anti-bilingual debates that are predominantly centered on Latino Spanish-English bilingualism (Tatalovich, 1995; Johnson & Martínez, 1999-2000; Bartolomé & Leistyna, 2006; Huber, 2011). Therefore, access to these anti-Spanish and anti-Latino undertones of English-Only debates emerged in this classroom through the use of Spanish with Alexander. Through my representation of his experiences in the classroom, I do not intend to reproduce the objectification of his presence I often witnessed, but rather uncover how linguistic discursive patterns directed at and about him functioned to construct larger ideas of language identities to mark or establish access to citizenship as it is tethered to language proficiency. Examining how these microphysics of power operated, and the resistive and subversive ways Alexander responded, helps to uncover the complexities and nuances of deep-rooted power structures operating within and throughout the school.

Postcolonial Theory in the School

The theoretical framework guiding this research is postcolonial theory, which analyzes and explains current cultural phenomena based on historical and contemporary instances of colonization and imperialism (Fanon, 1967; Said, 1979; McClintock, 1992; Bhabha, 1994). Colonization occurs within contact zones, which comprise of any social space where two or more cultures meet in contexts of highly asymmetrical power relations (Pratt, 1991). It is within contact zones where White, imperialist patriarchal ideologies of formal European colonial rule interact with other ideologies, states and subjects (Mohanty, 1984; McClintock, 1995).

This research project locates schooling as one of the many contact zones present in students' lives (Phoenix, 2009; Vaught, 2014). As a mechanism of colonial power and knowledge production, the school is framed as a dominant, imperial institution, while students

and their “othered” bodies, cultures and epistemologies can be framed as various iterations of the “colonized.” These different iterations are products of the various levels of “contact” between the State and students due to students’ various locations in systems of power and oppression. For example, students labeled as “English Language Learners” come into significant “contact” with the State because of specific legislative measures that dictate how they can and cannot be taught English or supported as bilingual learners, whereas native English speakers are protected from this “contact” because their language abilities are already consistent with the State’s linguistic demands.

With that said, it is important to note that not all students can be framed as the “colonized” because their race (white), class (middle-upper class), gender (male), first language (English) and/or citizenship (American) grant them exclusive access to colonial citizenship, and are the ultimate beneficiaries and subjects of colonial rule (Fanon, 1967; Bhabha, 1995). As compared to American citizenship that is claimed through a social security number or green card, colonial citizenship is mediated by visible and invisible markers of difference to mark exclusionary access to citizenship and hegemonic power structures (Spivak, 1988; Harris, 1993; Stoler, 1995).

The analytical frameworks of colonial discourse, representation, and discipline can help illuminate the ways in which colonial power and knowledge production operates in the school. I will delineate those here, and put them into conversation.

Knowledge Production Through Discourse, Representation, and Discipline.

Colonial discourse is “an ensemble of linguistically based practices unified by their common deployment in the management of colonial relationships” (Hulme, 1986, p. 123). As a strategy of knowledge production and control, colonial discourse works to construct and

represent subjects, and to justify the colonial governance over these subjects. Said (1978) identifies and theorizes the mechanization of colonial discourse through Britain's colonial cultural representation of "the East" and argues for the examination of this colonial knowledge production in order to understand how it operates.

Borrowing from Foucault's (1980) theory of knowledge and power, Said (1978) argues that colonial discourse functions from the understanding that "knowledge gives rise to power, but it is also produced by the operations of power" (Childs & Williams, 1997, p. 98). Through the power of knowledge production, colonial rule and the beneficiaries of this power are able to construct and represent (Spviak, 1988) the subjects and cultures of colonized "Others" as backwards, degenerate, and uncivilized. Most importantly, the "Other" is always constructed in opposition to and in order to delineate the boundaries around the normative center, or the colonizer "Self". This construction of Other not only functions to define and confine the colonized, but also justifies the superiority of the colonizers and their colonial rule.

One way in which knowledge and power function to produce the Other in the school is through microphysical technologies of discipline. Compared to dominant macrophysical understandings of power as a repressive possession of an elite few, Foucault (1977) understands power as a microphysical system of relations between institutions, cultural fields, and people within the State. One technology of this microphysical power system is discipline, which functions to control individual bodies and operations of the body.

This article seeks to identify where and how discipline, representation, and colonial discourse interact in the school to communicate knowledge about various subjects, specifically those subjects constructed as the "English Language Learner". If colonial discourse functions to

construct and govern various subjects operating in a space, how does discipline act as a technology of power to produce colonial representations in the classroom?

Contextualizing English-Only Policies in the Preschool Classroom

I sat with Ms. Baker after school one day to talk about how she is able to support the various linguistic abilities in her students in a school where “all public school children must be taught English by being taught all subjects in English and being placed in English language classrooms” (sec. 1 para. 1). Speaking specifically about Alexander, she said, “You know it’s hard because it’s almost a sink-or-swim situation. So I try to support him behaviorally in the classroom by cutting directions down and trying to use a little bit of Spanish to make sure he understands.” Ms. Baker lists off the strategies that the State’s professional development workshop instructs teachers to use when working with English Language Learners, including visuals, simple sentence construction, and gestures. Although helpful in some teaching situations, State provided support and training ultimately resulted in frustration for Ms. Baker. In describing moments of miscommunication with ELLs, Ms. Baker says, “I sort of wish there was a more functional way [of communicating with ELLs] as opposed to these willy-nilly attempts”.

In a school where teaching in a student’s home language has been made illegal, teachers are left in a precarious situation where they are expected to teach students in a language students may not understand. The ability to effectively support and educate students who are just beginning to learn English becomes a challenge to be met with creative agency and energy (Diaz-Soto, 1997; Verplaetse, 2007; Delpit, 2009). As the first year of formal schooling, preschool is an important initial contact with predominantly English-speaking spaces. For many students, this is the first time they are expected to speak English. For others, bilingualism has been fostered since birth.

In an increasingly linguistically diverse community, Ms. Baker has been grappling with this question for the entirety of her seven-year preschool teaching career, where she is consistently faced with the challenge of supporting a wide variety of linguistic skills and abilities within one space. In the interview above, Ms. Baker recognizes the unsupportive, high-stakes English-Only environment in which she is located, and the “sink-or-swim” consequences for her ELL students (Fine et al., 2007). Although the state offers strategies to support ELLs, including visuals and parsed language use, Ms. Baker ultimately describes these as “willy-nilly”, or insufficient, unreliable and in opposition to “functional” teaching pedagogies.

Despite this lack of institutional support, I often observed Ms. Baker enact agency to work within these mandates. Most impressively, she had picked up many of the languages of past students, including Spanish, French, Russian and Japanese. Although not fluent in all, she uses common phrases and terms to foster communication with her students. She jokes, “I can say ‘sit down’ in seven languages.” I asked how she feels restricted by Chapter 71A’s English-Only mandate as well as the school’s own interpretation of the law. She is quick to point out, “we’re not teaching in other languages. We’re giving those sort of intraverbal phrases – emergency phrases almost – in order to make sure that the student and the family are comfortable so that we can access them and allow them access to the school. That’s the paramount thing we care about and we’re interested in.” Now speaking as “we”, what I assume refers to her fellow teachers, Ms. Baker delineates the use of home language not as a teaching tool, but rather a resource for teachers to access students, as well as a resource for students to access the school and learning opportunities.

I often witnessed Ms. Baker’s commitment to facilitating access to the various ELLs in her classroom, most often using home language to clarify instructions and routines. For example,

when communicating with Alexander, clarification was mostly used to translate where he should be or what he should be doing; “Your turn in block area; *vas a jugar con los bloques*”; “bathroom time; *baño*”. Her translation was used to ensure that Alexander was privy to what was happening in the English-Only classroom that did not meet his linguistic abilities. Recognizing the importance of home language use in students’ access to the classroom and educational opportunities, Ms. Baker works within restrictive and unsupportive policies and mandates to use home languages in a way she defines as best for her students.

And, as mandated through law, teaching, or curriculum related clarification, was never observed throughout my four months in the classroom. In staying true to Chapter 71A’s demand that no instruction occurs in home language, Ms. Baker used students’ home language limitedly, usually only during one-on-one conversations about classroom routines. However, even this limited use was seen as risky. Following her explanation of how she uses home language to facilitate access, she added, “And no one has ever busted me for doing it. So, I’m gonna keep doing it.” Although finding space within English-Only mandates for resistance, Ms. Baker recognized the risk she was taking in doing so. It is unclear who encompasses the threat that would “bust” her—a fellow teacher, the school principal, district superintendent, or higher-up in the department of education—but it is a seething presence that restricted even more use of home languages to facilitate access to the classroom. Therefore, despite Ms. Baker’s creative ways of negotiating a mandate that does little to support her linguistically diverse students, lack of institutional support and this unnamed threat made it difficult to use home language in effective and supportive ways to fully facilitate ELL students’ access to the classroom.

Mechanization of Home Language as Disciplinary Tool

While recognizing her good intentions, the “intraverbal” uses of home language ultimately devalued home language and disciplined students for not knowing English. Data analysis revealed how larger imperial ideologies produced through English-Only mandates translate and manifest in the classroom space. Colonial discursive readings of classroom interactions highlighted how English-Only ideologies of language and citizenship were constructed through discipline to produce the dual representational process of colonial rule: construction and governance of the Other. The following analysis will map how English-Only policies were manifested and enacted in the classroom and what knowledge was produced in this colonial process.

The corrective training of the ELL.

To illustrate mechanization of language, I return to Ms. Baker’s statement that she can say, “sit down” in seven different languages. Although, as described above, this demonstrates Ms. Baker’s commitment to learning the various languages her students speak, this use of home language to command her students ultimately results in oppressive mechanizations of home language. This command, in whichever of the seven languages, functioned predominantly to discipline students.

In fact, discipline was the most common use of home language in the classroom. Falling outside the bounds of teaching, discipline was an acceptable usage of students' home language and worked to both communicate and produce understandings of students’ home language use that perpetuated imperial ideologies of language. Foucault (1977) defines discipline as a technology of power where the microphysics of power target the body to mold subjects into a normalized, controlled mass through punishment and coercion. When discipline effectively

produces “subjected and practiced bodies” or “docile bodies” (p. 138), circulating discourses that produce knowledge and representations of the world are able to proliferate.

In the classroom, this technology was evident in the ways Spanish was mechanized to control Alexander’s movement and language use. When he was not properly playing in the block area, Alexander was scolded, “*No! No más! ¿Quieres jugar o quieres sentarse?*”; when he was not listening to the teacher’s demands, he was ordered, “*¡ven acá!*”. In true disciplinary fashion, these commands functioned to control both the body and mind of students. For instance, when commanded to “sit down”, the student’s body is directly targeted in order to control their movement. Furthermore, when this command is in the student’s home language, discipline functions to control the mind of the subject in training by assigning the use of home language in the classroom for primarily disciplinary purposes. This disciplinary technology of power (Foucault, 1980) produces knowledge and in turn inscribes on the student’s mind when and where home language is to be used and its value in relation to other languages.

When a home language is predominantly mechanized to discipline, power produces knowledge (Foucault, 1980) to communicate certain meaning about this language, its value, and its purpose. To the students who speak this language, they are implicitly taught their home language is used when they have done something wrong or they are in trouble. Home language becomes associated with doing something incorrectly, ascribing negative value to its use. This devaluation of home language is representative of the devaluation of home languages through English-Only policies and ideologies in the U.S., particularly the Spanish language (Anzaldúa, 1987; Castillo, 1994; Attinasi, 1997; Flores & Murillo Jr., 2001). Alexander does not need to read Chapter 71A to learn that his home language is devalued in the school through the illegality

of its use in the classroom. Instead, this devaluation is constantly reiterated to him everyday when he is disciplined in it.

Moreover, home language becomes a tool of teachers as agents of the State—those employed by the State and burdened with upholding state mandates in the school (Williamson, 1991; Vaught, 2014)—to access students’ subjectivities to discipline them. Under English-Only policies, home languages are further devalued when they are mechanized by agents of the State to gain access to punish or discipline students. Through the devaluation of students’ home languages, we can see colonial discourse proliferating through the technology of discipline as it works to represent to this specific student the value of his home language and when it is to be used appropriately.

Lateral Effects of Corrective Training.

This colonial discourse also finds strength in the public display of this imperial language use. Disciplinary power proliferates not only by molding the subject at which the discipline is directed, but the “lateral effects” of all those witnessing the disciplinary action (Foucault, 1977). This complex microphysical relation of power “shapes and molds people, their dispositions and values, and their practices” (Schirato & Danaher, 2012, p. 46).

Although the examples listed above only include a teacher communicating with one specific student, all subjects operating in the preschool classroom find themselves implicated in this microphysical knowledge production process. This includes other students labeled as ELL as well as students whose first language is English, or those students whose language abilities meet the requirements of imperial linguistic demands. They become witnesses or, better yet, “students”, of these imperial ideologies as they observe the imperial mechanizations of home language in the classroom.

From the teacher, students learn the alphabet and the days of the week; they learn how to say “I’m sorry” and “yes please, thank you”; they learn how to sit “criss-cross-applesauce” and raise their hands. They also learn that “we” speak English in school, except when “we” punish those who do not understand it. “We” is constructed in opposition to those excluded via visual markers of difference, in this case, language. When Alexander was yelled at in the hallway when walking towards the cafeteria, "*¡Escuchas! Si quieres caminar, tienes que escuchar*", the entire class became audience to the “proper” use of home language. When the class lay down for naptime and “*¡Parate!*” echoed through the classroom, Alexander was further secured as an Other in the classroom, for all peers to see. As compared to the use of English in all other communication contexts, this use of Spanish to scold Alexander at this moment operates as a strategic way of perpetuating the hegemony of English, or the legitimization of English as the norm to which all other languages are measured as deviant or subordinate (Macedo, Dendrinos & Gounari, 2003). This enactment of representation not only works to construct the way in which home language is to be used, but also constructs Alexander as an “ELL-Other” to his relationally constructed English-speaking peers who can claim membership in the “we” classroom.

Through discipline, colonial discourse becomes embodied through Ms. Baker’s actions. Although familiar with Chapter 71A, it is most likely that Ms. Baker has not read or studied it, thus not familiar with the intricacies of the colonial discourse throughout it. But, she very much embodies this policy through the ways she mechanizes and represents Spanish as a disciplinary technology. Power operating in the classroom is not simply about the way in which the school constructs the ELL-Other through policies and laws, but how these ideas are translated and performed in the classroom through the mechanization of Spanish as disciplinary technology. This embodied colonial discourse traverses the macrophysical power dynamics and instead

becomes pervasive in microphysical powers between and within subjects operating within larger state institutions. Through this embodiment, or the operation of power through the body, the school becomes a space that not only produces colonial discursive understandings of ELLs, as evidenced by the devaluation and appropriation of home language, but also a space that continuously reifies the validity and endurance of the construction it has created by teaching it to all subjects (students) in the school. Thus, the school becomes a space to learn about the ELL-Other.

Productions of the Other through Embodiment

We can see the effects of this embodiment through various students' performed understandings of Alexander in the classroom by returning to the two main functions of colonial discourse: the construction of the backwards, deficient ELL-Other and the justification of English-Only education over home language use in the classroom. I argue that the embodiment of colonial discourse in the classroom works to implicate students in colonial productions of the ELL-Other and English-Only policies that govern them. It needs to be noted that discipline is not the only way in which knowledge is produced about the ELL-Other in the classroom; it is but one of many technologies of power that work to produce and reproduce colonial representation and relational constructions of ELL students as Other. However, through the specificity of this analysis, the complexity and nuances of this technology of power can be made visible as well as its contribution to larger deep-rooted structures of power.

Learning the Construction of the ELL-Other.

In the cafeteria, students scurried around to clean up their lunches to transition to rest time. Of course, there were some stragglers enjoying the last few bites, carefree to the mandated ending of their meal. The assistant teacher Ms. Ambrossi noticed Alexander as one of these

stragglers, and instructed him to throw away his lunch. Alexander did not take notice, and continued enjoying his food. “Alexander, throw away your lunch,” Ms. Ambrossi repeated, this time louder and sterner. During this interaction, Amber, a four year-old native English speaker, leaned over and whispered in my ear, “He doesn't understand because he speaks Spanish.” She did so with a grin on her face, almost as if it is a secret she has figured out and was letting me in on.

This was just one of many conversations I had with students that evidenced the perceptive ways they witnessed their peers being constructed in the classroom. Here, we see Amber constructing meaning around Alexander’s language abilities, or more notably, his lack of English language abilities. From classroom interactions between teachers and students, she is coming to an understanding that Alexander does not speak English because he speaks Spanish. She ignores any bilingual abilities by constructing a binary of either being an English speaker or a Spanish speaker. Revisiting her logic, “He doesn’t understand [English] because he speaks Spanish.”

This logic was pervasive throughout my observations and conversations with students. On multiple occasions when a teacher instructed a student to ask Alexander for something, whether a toy or request, the student would respond that they could not ask Alexander because he would not understand. The students’ binary understanding of Alexander's language abilities reflect the language of Chapter 71A, which reductively defines ELLs as a student “whose native language is not English” (sec. 1 para. 2). As long as a student’s first language is not English, despite a second language that is English, they are still an “English Language Learner”. An ELL becomes anyone who is not a native English speaker, placing them in opposition to the native-English speaking student. This creates the binary of the native English speaking Self and the

ELL-Other, and is evidenced by Alexander's classmates' perception that they cannot communicate with him because there is no "in-between" the native English speaking Self and ELL-Other.

Through this binary, basic communication between peers is thwarted in the classroom, effectively pushing Alexander outside of the classroom community. As was illustrated in the opening anecdote, Amber confidently counters Ms. Baker's claims that all students in the classroom speak English by singling out Alexander. After it is established that "we all speak" English, Amber responds, "Except Alexander. Alexander does not speak English." The language of the conversation shows that "our" language is English, but not Alexander's. This constructs Alexander as not one of "us", pushing him outside the bounds of the community. He is singled out and constructed as "Other" strictly because of his language abilities, or lack thereof. Students' construction of a binary of language serves to reify the construction of the English-speaking Self and English Language Learner Other.

Governance of the Other: Resistance and Subversion.

Despite reflecting the reductive understandings of students' language abilities as either English speaker or English learner and perpetuating exclusive understandings of school membership, many students resisted the State's call to educate students in only English. In fact, many students took it upon themselves to speak to Alexander in Spanish. Similar to the teachers in this classroom, students subverted English-Only mandates by recognizing that speaking to someone in a language they do not quite understand is frustrating and often ineffective. These four and five year-olds often resisted the call for English-Only education in the classroom by speaking a language that these policies try to ban from the classroom. After embodied colonial

discourse teaches students that Alexander is an ELL, thus does not speak English, students recognize the fallacies of trying to communicate with him in English.

The students that most often attempted to speak Spanish with Alexander were Amber, Anna, and Rosie, a close-knit group of girl friends. All were white, native English-speakers who were learning Spanish in the afterschool program housed in the same building. The program had just started at the beginning of the year, so students were learning basic Spanish vocabulary, like numbers, colors and salutations. All three students demonstrated much excitement in their second language acquisition and often practiced their Spanish skills in the class, asking a friend to pass the *agua* or telling a teacher that the toy was *rojo*. Furthermore, during independent reading, Amber, Anna and Rosie would often sit together and take turns translating a book into their understanding of Spanish. This, of course, was not Spanish, but rather gibberish with some Spanish sounding phonemes and a couple Spanish words, like "como" and "dos". Soon, they began using this fake Spanish with Alexander.

For instance, free play in the classroom had just ended and it was time to clean up. Amber, Anna, and Rosie were in the house area, racing to be the first group to be dismissed for lunch when Alexander joined them. He started putting things away, but not in the "proper" way. He put the plastic silverware in the bucket Amber is using to gather the fake food, and put the play toolbox in the pretend refrigerator. Anna and Amber were getting noticeably frustrated; "No Alexander, forks don't go in here!" "Alexander, stop! That's not where it goes!" Despite their cries, Alexander continued cleaning up the way he saw fit. I cannot pretend to know why Alexander ignored their requests; it might have been a language barrier, related to his location on

the autism spectrum⁴, intentional resistance and a display of power, or a myriad of other factors. The list of interpretations is infinite, and as a researcher, I cannot further objectify him by representing his intentions in this instance. But, what the data can provide is an insight into how Anna, Amber and Rosie interpreted Alexander's behavior and how they decided to respond to it.

Anna turned to Rosie and asked, "How do you say food in Spanish?" Rosie pondered for a bit and then confidently responded, "*minole*". Trusting her friend's Spanish abilities, Anna turned to Alexander and said, "Alexander, only *minole* in this bucket. Only *minole*." Once again, Alexander disregarded Anna's wishes. So, Anna returned to Rosie and asked, "How do you say food in the bucket only?" Rosie paused to think, and then responded: "*minole dan niranda sale*." Anna repeated, "Alexander, *minole dan niranda sale*." The English equivalent of Anna's request would be, "Alexander, blah, blah they give blah blah leave". Amber too chimed in, "Yeah. Alexander, *minole* in the bucket". Thereafter, all three students started to direct Alexander in this created "Spanish" language. At some point, he acknowledged that they were talking to him, or at least including him in their activity, and started mimicking what they were saying to him in this fake Spanish. He still did not put things where they want him to put it, but he was laughing and having fun with repeating the sounds his peers were directing towards him.

Initially, I was struck by Anna, Rosie, and Amber's complex understandings of language. They were recognizing Alexander was not responding to their requests in English, and because they have been taught that Alexander does not speak English, they decided to communicate with him in the language they understood him to know: Spanish. Yes, the Spanish they spoke was gibberish, but it was *Spanish* gibberish; they mimicked certain sounds and phonemes found in

⁴ Although inherently informing his experiences in the classroom, it is out of the purview of this article to fully analyze Alexander's specific intersectional experiences as an ELL located on the autism spectrum (Crenshaw, 1991; Sullivan, 2010; Hetherington, 2012), as well as national trends in over- and misdiagnoses for linguistically and racially diverse students (Brown, 2004).

Spanish and not English and even threw in a couple real Spanish words. These students recognized that they needed to speak to Alexander in a language they knew him to understand and then had the cognitive abilities to differentiate English from Spanish.

These instances reveal the complicated nature of communicating with ELLs in the classroom. If Alexander did not understand any English, it is true that it would not make sense to try and ask him something he would not understand. But, Alexander is bilingual; he is definitely stronger in Spanish than English, but one and a half years in an English dominant preschool classroom has taught him basic English skills. As mentioned before, clarification through home language use is rarely used in the classroom, so by age five, Alexander has already adapted in some degree to the “sink-or-swim” model of English-Only education that Ms. Baker identified earlier (Fine et al., 2007). But, nonetheless, at this instance, these three students are engaging in the State’s construction of Alexander as an ELL, or as a student “who cannot do ordinary class work in English and who either do not speak English or whose native language is not English” (“English Language Education...”, sec 1 para 2). I observed this understanding in students numerous times: “But Alexander doesn't speak English”; “He does not understand because he speaks Spanish”; “He only speaks Spanish. He speaks it at home. He doesn’t know English”. This is what these students have learned. This is the knowledge that has been produced and communicated to them through microphysical powers within the classroom. So, they simultaneously engage with the colonial discourse through the construction of the ELL-Other, but also resist the logic that “all public school children must be taught English by being taught all subjects in English and being placed in English language classrooms” (sec. 1 para. 1). They simultaneously reify and subvert the colonial discourse in which they find themselves implicated.

Defamiliarization to Uncover Mimicry

However, in thinking about Amber, Anna, and Rosie's perceived resistance of English-Only mandates, defamiliarization reminds us to look "beyond the initial and overwhelmingly positive impression of the familiar" (Kaomea, 2003, p. 15) to uncover the hidden "(post)colonial complicity and entanglement" (p. 23). Although Anna, Amber, and Rosie's Spanish gibberish showed complex understandings of language, they reduced Alexander's resistance to a deficit in language abilities. Additionally, they were not using this language to speak *with* Alexander, but rather speak *at* Alexander. These students were directing and commanding him to clean up the house area the way they wanted to—the "proper" way. This was compounded by the fact that this interaction took place in the house area, a space set up for students to practice and explore domestic roles of the private sphere. Thus, when I observed three white, native-English speaking girls directing a Latino, native-Spanish speaking boy's actions in the house area, it reflected larger raced and gendered roles in the private sphere (Lowe, 1998). By commanding how Alexander acts in this space, Amber, Rosie, and Anna effectively labeled Alexander as a guest in their house, commanding his compliance of their rules through his own "language."

This unidirectional and controlling use of Spanish mimicked the way I saw teachers using Spanish with Alexander as a disciplinary tool. Mimicry, like English-Only policies, is an "elusive and effective strategy of colonial power and knowledge" whereby the colonized is expected to imitate the colonizer and conform to colonial rule and norms (Bhabha, 1994, p. 126). It is most often used to theorized how the colonized Other imitates the colonizing Self, but here we see mimicry operating through the pre-Self's imitation of the Self. In other words, four- and five-year-olds Anna, Rosie, and Amber are mimicking their teacher, Ms. Baker, an agent of the colonial state. Furthermore, Alexander then enacts his agency by mimicking their mimesis of

disciplinary mechanizations of Spanish, bringing up important questions about his resistance and subversion of this knowledge production process.

This short classroom interaction demonstrates the strength of discipline in perpetuating colonial discourse; the public displays delegitimizing Spanish successfully communicated to various students that non-English languages are used in specific and particular moments in the classroom. When home languages are used to communicate *at* and not *with* ELLs, they are most often used to direct, punish, or police students. Knowledge is thus produced through this space about how and when home languages should be used when speaking with the ELL-Other. This is evident by the way Anna, Rosie, and Amber are mechanizing “Spanish” when speaking to a student they have decided cannot understand English. In doing so, dominant ideologies are co-produced and reproduced in subjects as young as four. The school becomes a space that not only produces the ELL-Other, but also a space that continuously reifies the validity and endurance of the construction it has created by teaching and co-producing it in the earliest years of formal schooling.

Alexander’s Agency and the Duality of Mimicry.

It is also important to remember that with power comes resistance (Foucault, 1980), evidenced constantly by Alexander’s resistance to embodied colonial discourse in the classroom. When Amber, Rosie, and Anna attempted to direct Alexander in the house area, Alexander also employed forms of mimicry when he began to mimic the Spanish gibberish being used to direct him. As compared to the form of mimicry described above, this second form of mimicry is a tool of those deemed “Other” to appropriate and mechanize tools and strategies of colonial power (Bhabha, 1994). Rather than reproduce colonial governance, this mimicry flips the surveillant gaze from “object” to “subject” to disrupt, destabilize and undermine colonial authority.

Although Alexander's agency to resist the three girls' commands was read as a language deficit, it can instead be understood as a display of his agency in a space that constantly works to define and control him. Through his mimicry of their Spanish gibberish commands, he trivialized and resisted their attempts to direct him. With power always comes an equal generative force of resistance (Foucault, 1980), seen constantly through Alexander's agency to resist and defy the many instances of colonial embodiment in the classroom.

Reification of Self through Discipline and Representation of Other

Returning the Anna, Amber and Rosie's mimicry of Spanish, further defamiliarization highlights the contradictions of language policies in the classroom by interrogating which students are able to freely speak and experiment with a language that English-Only policies make illegal to use with students deemed the ELL-Other.

The Subjects that Speak Othered Languages.

In a single space, the same language is permitted by some subjects, but not by others. Specifically, Anna, Amber, and Rosie learn Spanish in the same building during the district-run after-school program, and then practice this language during the school day. In the exact same space that functions to erase the home language of the linguistically diverse students (predominantly students of color), opportunities were given to white, native-English speaking students to learn one of the languages that the school was working to erase.

At lunch, I would hear Amber ask Rosie to pass the *agua*, and then giggle. When practicing shapes during circle time, Anna would excitedly yell that an octagon has *ocho* sides. Many students also began greeting Alexander, "*Hola Alexander. ¿Como estás?*" This is not to say that students should not be learning other languages. However, these student access and privilege to bilingualism is comparatively experienced to the many ways Alexander's linguistic

skills are devalued, pushed aside, and made illegal in the classroom. In a single space, a language can be both a foreign language and a home language. Only native English speakers are afforded the opportunity to develop their bilingual skills in the school. Chapter 71A marginally addresses this linguistic double standard, but it locates foreign languages acquisition only in a foreign language class (sec. 1, para. 2). But, as evidenced by various students' use of Spanish in the preschool classroom, this reductive separation of language use is not so neat within the preschool classroom.

It is clearly not about the language that is being spoken, but rather the subjects that speak it (Macedo et al., 2003). The language of Chapter 71A makes clear whom this policy is intended for: English language learners, who the policy reductively conflates with immigrants (sec. 1 para. 2); language is successfully used as a proxy for national origin, hiding underlying xenophobic and racist undertones in English-Only policies and ideologies (Johnson & Martínez, 1999-2000). In the "diverse" classes, both English speakers and English learners are present, and by extension of the policy's language, both citizens and immigrants are present. As such, Spanish is permitted in certain subjects and not others; the citizen is free to learn and speak an "Othered", "foreign" language while the immigrant, or noncitizen, is barred and punished for speaking their "Othered" home language. English-Only laws are not anti-Spanish, but anti-Spanish Other, or anti-immigrant-Other.

In the case of this preschool classroom, three white, native English speaking students can be conceptualized as the State's citizen Self, or at least the State's pre-citizen Self (Williams, 1991; Meiners, 2007; Kumashiro, 2008; Vaught, 2014). Due to their protections as pre-citizens, Anna, Amber and Rosie are afforded opportunities to learn and speak Spanish within a space that mandates English-Only education. Conversely, this same language is used to discipline one of

their peers, Alexander, who is relationally constructed as the immigrant “ELL-Other” and whose bilingual abilities are made illegal and devalued. Furthermore, as illustrated above, these students often “practice” their bilingual abilities to police Alexander. Lateral effects of disciplinary power have produced the understanding that this is how home language is to be used with Alexander. Through the knowledge-producing tool that is mimicry, Anna, Amber, and Rosie are mechanized by the State to co-produce imperial understandings of language and citizenship.

It is important to note that I use citizen here to convey the ideology and construction of citizen and colonial citizenship, not the material manifestation of citizenship through social security number and/or green card. While not to deny the importance of State recognized forms of citizenship and the material realities of this recognition, citizenship as an ideology works to construct a more exclusive category of citizenship (Harris, 1993; Stoler, 1995), and the related access specifically in the school (Valenzuela, 1999). In fact, Alexander was born in the United States, thus a documented citizen afforded basic civil rights and material benefits. However, larger constructions and ideologies of citizenship tied to language and race deny him access to many of these rights. Through colonial discourse, nation boundaries are established through defining which subjects make up a nation, or those constructed as the citizen-Self in opposition to the “immigrant-Other” (Said, 1979). Due to his status as ELL, Alexander was constantly “Othered”, made immigrant, and excluded from his citizen right to a quality public education.

To Speak For the ELL-Other.

The language of Chapter 71A constantly calls upon notions of citizenship and nationhood in defense of English-Only education. It reads, “Immigrant parents are eager to have their children become fluent and literate in English, thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement” (sec. 1 para. 2). Once again conflating

citizenship with language abilities, the State claims that English is the gateway allowing “immigrant children” to participate in American economy and society. Using the trope of the “American Dream”, this law represents false images of meritocracy and inclusion in the United States through English-Only education. Furthermore, this law consistently positions the superior English-Only model in opposition to bilingual education. In speaking on behalf of ELL students and their families, the colonial state constructs a binary narrative about the superior educational potential of English-Only education as compared to its opposite bilingual education. Through representation, the State speaks on behalf of immigrant parents to clarify their wants and needs. This is evident through the way in which Chapter 71A came into effect: through the citizen’s right to vote. As evidenced above, ELLs and their parents are constantly conflated with immigrant, thus are denied citizenship and the citizen’s right to vote. Therefore, when colonial discourse has constructed the ELL as immigrant, any democratic voting process of how to educate them is placed out of their hands, and rather into the hands of white, native-English speaking citizens (Harris, 1993; Macedo, 2000; Macedo et al., 2003; Bartolomé & Leistyna, 2006).

This representational process also became evident in the school. We are at lunch when all of the sudden I hear a teacher from another classroom scolding Alexander. Apparently, rather than throwing it away, he has put his lunch tray on the ground and simply walked away. She sternly tells him to pick it up, but he does not comply. In fact, he does not even look at her or acknowledge she is talking to him. Frustrated with his lack of compliance, she moves closer and grabs his arm to turn his body to face her. Immediately, he turns and repeatedly hits her hand that has grabbed him. The teacher gets increasingly mad. As she is scolding him, I hear Anna yell from the background, "He speaks Spanish! He speaks Spanish!"

Yet another instance where Anna recognizes the fallacies of English-Only education, her insertion at this moment can be taken as her standing up for Alexander during an escalating disciplinary moment. She is trying to communicate to this teacher that Alexander is defying her demands because he does not understand the language she is using. “He speaks Spanish, [so he cannot understand you]!” She is defending his assumed disobedience, perhaps even asking the teacher to stop scolding him because he cannot understanding what she is saying. However, as demonstrated in previous anecdotes, the link between home language and discipline is strong and pervasive in this preschool space. Thus, Anna’s speaking for Alexander can be interpreted as a call for this teacher to discipline Alexander using Spanish. As demonstrated throughout this article, the use of Spanish with Alexander in this classroom has been constructed as a disciplinary tool to control Alexander. “*¡Escuchas! Si quieres caminar, tienes que escuchar*”; “*¡Parate!*”; “Only *Minole* in the bucket”. Despite a few times where Spanish was used to clarify instructions, the predominant use of Spanish is to discipline. Thus, Anna takes notice when this teacher deviates from the norm and, consequently, tries to amend it. “He speaks Spanish [so scold him in Spanish]!” Just as Ms. Baker ultimately mechanized Spanish as a disciplinary tool to control the body and language of Alexander, Anna is potentially urging this teacher to gain further access to punish Alexander through his native, private language.

The way Anna speaks for Alexander in this moment resembles the representation process present in Chapter 71A. As compared to being spoken *at* when disciplined in his home language, Alexander is spoken *for* at this instance. In a space that largely silences him due to the ways in which his home language is made illegal and stripped of value, he is left maneuvering situations in a language in which he does not yet have a strong hold. With this hindered communication, it becomes the precedence of his English-speaking pre-citizen peer to speak on his behalf. To be

represented, or spoken for, leaves Alexander's needs and wants to be understood and voiced by someone else—in this case, five-year-old Anna. This works to further silence and exclude him from participation in the classroom. As demonstrated above, Anna's understandings of Alexander's language abilities and educational needs are largely implicated in larger colonial ideologies and construction of the ELL-Other through the embodiment of colonial discourse in the classroom. Thus, when she represents the needs of Alexander, it can be seen as an iteration of larger colonial mechanisms that function to decide what is best for the subjects it others. Additionally, upon returning to the class after this instance, Miss Baker turned to me to ask what happened because she was taking her lunch break in another room. Yet again, someone constructed as the citizen-Self was asked to speak on behalf of Alexander. And, this process will continue to happen through the inherently powered representational process of research and through this very article (Stacey, 1988; Borland, 1991; Wolf, 1996).

It needs to be noted that Alexander was not passively standing by, waiting for Anna, or me, to speak on his behalf. In fact, his resistance in this moment demonstrated how he found ways to speak for himself, just not through dominantly recognized verbal language, and instead, through his actions. In the cafeteria, Alexander was grabbed by a teacher and he immediately responded by trying to hit her hand off his body. In this preschool classroom, there are three golden rules, one of which is "Hands on your own body." This moment potentially demonstrates Alexander's resistance to this teacher's breaking of rules through her discipline. If not consciously related to the classroom rule, Alexander is reacting to larger ideologies that dismiss the consent of children to having their body touched (Pérez, 2015; Taylor Strelevitz, personal communication, August 29th, 2014). Regardless of the fact that he has broken cafeteria rules by placing his tray on the ground, he has not given consent to have other hands on his body.

However, this resistance is read as further evidence of disobedience, seen by the teacher's continual punishment of Alexander at this moment. This is one of many instances where Alexander resisted the pervasive power that worked to construct and govern him as an ELL-Other in the classroom, but also how his resistance is often not recognized or legitimized by dominant narrations of his actions. And, unfortunately it is at this misreading where the Self learns the need to represent the Other.

In representing the ELL-Other, the pre-Self student becomes implicated in colonial power systems. They learn to not only act as colonial power but also embody a specific postcolonial subject that directly benefits from colonial power. As seen through Amber, Anna, and Rosie's mimicry of teacher's use of home language to discipline, these students perpetuate microphysical instances of power to continue to construct Alexander as the ELL-Other. When policing Alexander's clean up in the house area with Spanish gibberish, these students act as a metonym of the teacher's actions, and thus the State's actions, to continue to devalue his home language and represent when and where it should be used. Furthermore, using either Spanish or English, the pre-citizen Self acts as, and is applauded for being, representative of the ELL-Other by speaking on their behalf. When Alexander's resistance was stripped of its value and instead read as unintelligible disobedience, space was created for the pre-Self to speak on behalf of him. Consequently, through both mimicry and representation, the pre-citizen Self was able to act as a colonial intermediary between the State and the ELL-Other.

Situated between the teacher, the State, and Alexander, these students become a point of contact to facilitate the interaction between the State and the Other. This extends Pratt's (1991) literal understanding of contact zones as physical spaces to microphysical contact zones between subject through language and discourse. Located within the contact zone of the classroom

(Phoenix, 2009; Vaught, 2014), language use and its colonial discursive co-productions becomes an additional embedded contact zone between different subjects and the State. Through language, these young girls bring up State productions of the ELL-Other to put the State in contact with Alexander through their own microphysical interactions. Thus, the State is able to continue to construct and govern Alexander through these young girls' embodiment of State mandates. Furthermore, when these young girls become representatives of the "ELL-Other" and report back to the State, the cyclical nature of colonial discursive knowledge production to justify colonial rule is perpetuated.

The role of these students as disciplinary agents effectively embodied English-Only mandates to construct the Self and Other. Furthermore, when they are applauded for this embodiment, teachers effectively siphon parts of their own duties as disciplinary agents of the State on to the students. Ultimately, through this intermediary of power through multiple contact zones, colonial rule and the fundamental relational construction of the superior Self are co-produced throughout and within various microphysical levels of power.

Reification of Citizen Self.

In the preschool classroom, we see Alexander constantly othered and controlled by teachers, but what is less evident is how this process functions to reify the educational achievement of the native English speaking Self present in the same classroom. This was illustrated by the ways in which Anna, Amber, and Rosie were afforded learning opportunities in a second language, as compared to Alexander's mandated "English-Only" education. It is also evident by the ways in which each respective student's language abilities are received by teachers. For instance, one day during free play, I watched from afar as Alexander, Anna, and two peers played in the block area. Ms. Ambrossi sat with them scaffolding their play. At one

point, she tried to get Alexander's attention: "Look at this Alexander. Over here. Alexander, look here." Alexander took no notice, and continued building his small structure. Ms. Ambrossi tried again, but was once more met with no response. Noticing the failed communication, Anna faced Alexander and translated, "*Mira, Alexander*". Ms. Baker, who sat just feet away, turned to me and said in an astonished and admiring way, "Wow, look at that. Anna is already bilingual."

In translating for Alexander, Anna was able to practice bilingual skills and consequently received praise from Ms. Baker for doing so. As impressive as Anna's cognitive and language awareness were at this moment, it is important to note whose bilingual abilities are applauded, or better yet, noticed at all. The degree to which Anna can be considered bilingual—native English and emerging Spanish—can be no greater than the degree to which Alexander should be considered bilingual—native Spanish and emerging English. Yet, Alexander's emerging bilingual abilities were not noted because his complete language abilities are categorized as the deficient ELL-Other. Once again, Anna, as pre-citizen English speaker, was able to foster bilingualism, while Alexander, constructed as the immigrant ELL-Other, was denied all bilingual capacities and potential.

Furthermore, Anna directly benefited from Alexander's presence in the classroom; through conversations with him, Anna was able to foster her bilingual skills and receive praise for these skills. Alexander's language abilities were commodified to support Anna's bilingual development. Anna's "good student" image was further perpetuated when she "helped" Alexander with her bilingual abilities. Echoing Delpit's (1995) claim that diversity benefits white students and not the students who "bolster" claims to diversity, specifically students of color, this "inclusive" and "diverse" classroom works to ultimately benefit the educational success of the student already meeting the needs of the State's linguistic demands. Importantly,

these are not the students Chapter 71A claims to help; this policy was drafted to increase the educational achievement of “English learners” (sec. 1 para. 2). However, it becomes clear that mandated English-Only policies operated in multiple ways to perpetuate the educational success of native English speakers through the miseducation of ELLs.

Here, we see mutually constituting aspects of the Self-Other relationship: by speaking *at* or *for* Alexander through the contact zone of language and discourse, microphysics of power operate through various pre-Self students (Anna, Amber and Rosie) to co-produce colonial implications of English-Only policies, including the construction of the ELL-Other and the English-Only governance of the ELL-Other. Simultaneously, Anna and her peers ultimately benefit from this embodiment of colonial discourse when they are applauded and further reified as the “good” student, or the pre-citizen Self. English-Only policies continue to perpetuate the success of the white, native English speaking citizen Self on the back of the failure of the immigrant, ELL-Other.

Conclusion and Implications

In mapping the multifaceted ways power operates in the preschool classroom through policies and subjects, this paper defamiliarizes home language use to illustrate how multiple subjects become implicated in and didactically perpetuate the State’s construction of the immigrant ELL-Other. Through imperial processes of knowledge production, such as representation and mimicry, colonial understandings of language and citizenship were mechanized to control and govern the ELL-Other in a way that effectively excluded them from the preschool classroom, all the while relationally reifying the pre-Citizen-Self. In this preschool classroom, where the Self and Other are present and veiled under calls for “multiculturalism”

and “diversity”, the structure still remains to benefit the Self, ultimately perpetuating the Self’s success at the expense of the Other.

This analysis offers a framework for postcolonial theory in U.S. educational theory. By demonstrating how language acts as a site of power that is mediated through children, teachers and the law, the literal understanding of contact zones as spaces (Pratt, 1991) can be extended to contact zones of discourse within and among subjects. This Foucauldian conceptualization of power reinvigorates the understanding of contact zones to demonstrate the innovative uses of postcolonial theory in U.S. education scholarship to uncover colonial power co-productions.

Equally important to note is the subversive and resistive potentials to these powers, as evidenced by Alexander’s disruption and/or complete dismissal of both teachers’ and students’ disciplinary constructions of his subjectivity. In understanding the pernicious and invisible ways power functions in the earliest years of schooling, we also gain an understanding of the gaping holes and inherent contradictions of these structures in our continual efforts to decolonize education. This becomes especially evident in early childhood education, an often under-theorized space of formal schooling. By calling attention to the academic integrity of early childhood education, this article acts as a reminder to the critical education community of the importance of its examination. I recognize the risk taken by uncovering how four year olds are implicated within colonial systems of power. However, in order to examine the multiplicitous ways in which power operates in the school and larger institutional powers, educational scholars need to be able to critically analyze all subjects within the education system, despite moral attachments to childhood innocence or theoretical dependence on developmental theory.

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Uncovering Miss Amanda: Reflecting on the Power of a Critical Feminist Researcher

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Abstract

Through the self-reflective analysis of the researchers' various positionalities in the field, this article adds to feminist methodologies by complicating dominant understandings of power present throughout the field. During ethnographic research in a preschool classroom, I was "hailed" by teachers and students to perform "Miss Amanda" as teacher, complicating many ethics of feminist research, such as transparency and reciprocity. An interrogation of this process revealed that representation and narration of self is not solely in the hands of researcher, but implicated in relational constructions between various subjects located in larger systems of power. By extending power analysis from the researcher-participant relationship to larger systems of power, I suggest that feminist researchers have a more complete understanding of power within and outside of the field in order to work within the systems that feminist research tries to disrupt.

It is the end of the day and things are particularly hectic for a preschool classroom. I am helping the head teacher, Miss Baker, clean up after Sam and Daniel's impromptu water fight when we hear a scream and consequent cries from the other side of the room. Hunter has just bitten Alexander so hard that it has broken the skin. Per school protocol, the assistant teacher, Miss Ambrossi, escorts Alexander to the school nurse to fill out an injury report form. While she is gone, Miss Baker is busy coaxing a crying kid out of the bathroom while also supporting another student's daily breakdown. As the only other adult in the classroom, I am left to get nine students ready for the dismissal bell that will ring in just a few minutes. We rush to put on jackets and backpacks to the all-too-common background noise of cries and tantrums. When each kid is bundled, I suddenly realize it is just the students and I. Nine pairs of eyes stare at me, waiting for their next direction. Not sure what to do, I ask if they want to sing a song. We sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and "The Wheels on the Bus." In the background, I hear Miss Baker call the office and tell them we need another teacher in the room. Anna, a four-year-old student, must have overheard the request as well because she turns to her friend April and says, "We need another teacher." April thinks for a second before responding, "But Miss Amanda is here. Why do we need another teacher?" Confidently, Anna responds, "Miss Amanda is here, but we need another teacher."

This short classroom interaction is reflective of countless moments during the course of my four-month ethnographic study in which I was called upon as "Miss Amanda", an additional teacher in the classroom. Five-year-old Anna's astute understanding of my role as pseudo teacher demonstrates, in part, the complexity of my role as ethnographic researcher in the classroom. Noticing that Miss Baker is calling for another teacher, Anna challenges April's claim that we do not need another teacher because I am there. Her response, "Miss Amanda is here, but we need

another teacher” could be interpreted as her saying we need another teacher in addition to Miss Amanda, but it could also be her affirming that Miss Amanda is there, but the classroom needs a *real* teacher. She is insightful into the role I have in the classroom as not quite teacher, but an adult with some authority.

I had entered this class just two months prior to conduct ethnographic research to understand how the school reproduced colonial understandings of language and citizenship. Guided by postcolonial theory, which explains current power structures and institutions as iterations of white, European colonization and imperialism (McClintock, 1992; Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1979; Fanon, 1967), I entered this site framing the school as a site of colonial knowledge production and control and the teachers as agents of the state tasked with facilitating this knowledge production (Williamson, 1991; Vaught, 2014). Focusing on how home language was used with students labeled as “English Language Learner”, I found that both teachers and students embodied colonial discursive constructions of language and citizenship through the mechanization of home languages as a disciplinary tool.

Observing power operating in the classroom through teachers and students, I also reflected on my own presence in the classroom and the power afforded to me as researcher, especially as a white, native English speaking woman embedded in a long history of colonial uses of ethnographic research (Narayan, 1993; Wolf, 1996; Smith, 1999). I was guided by feminist methodologies of reflecting on one’s own positionality in order to understand and interrogate power as it relates to the researcher-participant relationship and representation in the research process (Stacey, 1988; Borland, 1991; Wolf, 1996).

As I will demonstrate throughout this article, the complex process of one’s shifting “multiplex subjectivity”— or the multiple and shifting positionalities one holds in various

structures of power (Rosaldo, 1989; Narayan, 1993)—is evident through the ways in which my role as Miss Amanda emerged in the preschool classroom. My embodiment of Miss Amanda illuminated my various positionalities within the preschool classroom as neither complete insider nor outsider, participant nor observer, teacher nor researcher.

Through my own self-reflexivity as Miss Amanda, I consciously interrogated the ways power operated through my various positionalities throughout different contexts and with different people. I strived to continuously reflect how I was positioning myself in the classroom and its alignment with feminist ethics of research, such as transparency and reciprocity (Stacey, 1988; Nelson, 1996; Wolf, 1996). This reflection process soon gave way to an understanding that power is not unidirectionally flowing from researcher to participants, as many feminist principles of research frame power in the field. Rather, the field itself is powered, embedded within larger structural power systems that narrate and represent the researcher and the research process. This multifaceted power construction is evident through the ways the researcher is narrated and constructed in the field by participants as well as through larger discourses surrounding the site. For this particular research project, Miss Amanda was “hailed” to perform self as teacher. This hailed performance collided with my own commitment to feminist principles of research, illuminating tensions of simultaneously working within and against powered institutions. I argue that through self-reflection and identification of this co-construction process, the feminist researcher is able to develop a deeper understanding of larger institutional powers and the ways they work on and through all subjects, including the researcher.

Emergence of Miss Amanda

On the first day of fieldwork, the head teacher, who I call Miss Baker, introduced me to students as “Miss Amanda, our new friend.” Despite my initial introduction as a friend, over the

following four months, I was positioned, and at times positioned myself, as an additional teacher in the classroom; I structured students' play time, helped run small group activities, and even ran whole group activities when the two classroom teachers were consumed by a particularly hectic event. It often felt like I was there to teach rather than conduct research. In fact, the identification badge I wore in the building read, "student teacher". Mandatory for all guests in the building, I was given this badge on my first day in the school because there were no badges that read "researcher" or "observer". "Student teacher" was "close enough". Just one visible construction of me as Miss Amanda as teacher, the persona that I came to embody was most evident through my relational construction to students. To them, I was positioned by teachers, and positioned myself, as an additional teacher in the classroom. Upon entering fieldwork, this was not my intention, nor an explicitly stated intention of the head teacher, but emerged throughout my time in the class.

On my first day of observations, after Miss Baker introduced me as "Miss Amanda, our new friend", one student, who I call Anna, asked why I was there, to which Miss Baker responded, "Why don't you ask her?" Anna called me over to the library and repeated her question: "Why are you here?" I responded, "I'm here to help out in the classroom and see how you all learn." Satisfied with my answer, or perhaps already bored with the conversation, she nodded and immediately asked, "Can you read this?" and handed me the class's edition of *Hansel and Gretel*. I accepted the book and spent the next fifteen minutes reading aloud to Anna and her two friends until it was time to clean up.

This interaction reflected the majority of my actions throughout my first month in the classroom. Still learning the routines of the class, I spent most of my time acting as an adult volunteer in the classroom; I helped students build their castles during block time, untangled

costumes for dramatic play, and tied a shoelace here or there. But, as I spent more and more time in the classroom, my role began to shift.

A quite explicit example of this occurred about a month into my fieldwork. Rami and a few friends had been building a Lego spaceship in the carpet area when the class bell rang, signaling time to clean up. Most students began dismantling their Lego creations to put the individual pieces back into the bucket, except Rami. He instead came over to me, “Miss Amanda, do you want to know why Optimus Prime is the strongest transformer?” I had quickly learned that Transformers was Rami’s favorite conversation topic, and usually engaged him in these conversations. This time, however, we only had a few minutes until lunch, so I respond, “Rami, I would love to hear about Optimus Prime, but you first have to help your friends with the Legos”. Disregarding my directions, he continued spewing his Transformers facts. I repeated my request, “Rami, it’s time to clean up. Will you please help your friends clean up the Legos?” Still met with no response, I asked once more. At this point, Miss Baker intervened with a stern voice: “You listen when a teacher asks you to do something”. Rami immediately turned around and joined his friends to clean up.

At this moment, I became consciously aware of how I was being positioned as a teacher in the classroom, even if students were pushing back on this positionality. In this direct reference to me as teacher, I began to question how and why I came to represent a teacher in the classroom and what that meant for me as a feminist researcher. Guided by a feminist self-reflective methodology, this moment of uncertainty catalyzed an interrogation of my various positionalities in the field and power that operated through them.

Reflecting on Self as Teacher and Self as Feminist Researcher

In this initial reflection of Miss Amanda as teacher, I immediately thought back to my first day of fieldwork. Although I was introduced by Miss Baker as a “new friend” and introduced myself to students as someone who was there to “help out and see how students learn”, one of the first actions I performed as participant-observer was to read a book aloud to three students. Although not entirely encompassing the role of teacher, not even five minutes into my observations I performed actions that were associated with being a teacher or with instruction.

I attributed my comfort doing this to previous work in preschool classrooms. Before starting this research project, I worked in a different preschool classroom for two years. In fact, it was from my experiences over those two years that my research questions about English-Only language mandates in the preschool years emerged. Although different programs in different cities, I found many similarities between the two classrooms, which made it easier to pick up on the rules and routines in my research site. Furthermore, during my fieldwork, I was in the middle of my own student teaching experience in a fourth grade classroom for my graduate studies. This parallel student teaching experience as well as my history of teaching in a preschool classroom afforded me a certain “insider” teacher status, which allowed me to perform teacher roles easily, and often unconsciously, in the preschool classroom.

In understanding this role, I began to question how my performance of teacher was perhaps undermining feminist calls for ethical research specifically related to transparency and power. “Feminists have struggled with presenting and representing their selves and the problems, dilemmas, and contradictions of engaging in deception” (Daniels, 1983 cited in Wolf, 1996). The constant presentation of me as teacher began to make me feel uncomfortable due to how it might be exploiting the researcher-participant relationship through the elision of my role as researcher.

It was no longer just a mislabeling through an identification badge, but what I feared could be an undisclosed and unethical presentation of researcher. In my positioning as an additional teacher in the classroom, there was no conversation with students about my role as researcher. The only exception to this was my conversation with Anna on the first day of school when I presented myself as someone who was there to “see how you all learn”, an explanation of researcher I found appropriate at the time. Even my initial presentation of self as researcher further positioned me as Miss Amanda in this moment due to a reductive “developmentally appropriate” portrayal of researcher to young students.

This initial decision to not have explicit conversations with students about my role as researcher was guided by consent protocols mandated by Institutional Review Board (IRB). As the institution set up to protect participants’ rights in research, the IRB does not require students younger than seven years of age to give consent or verbal assent to participate in research; only guardian consent is necessary. There is no requirement at all that children younger than seven years-old are told anything about their involvement in the research project. Therefore, after obtaining the consent of all twelve students’ guardians, I did not think twice about transparency with my preschool participants.

But, as the construction of Miss Amanda became stronger and stronger in the classroom, I soon began to question if it was ethical to embody this role as teacher when I was very much not one. My lack of transparency of role as researcher was compounded by the fact that I felt like I was actively deceiving students through my performance as teacher. Although many feminist researchers advocate for involved researcher-participant relationships, as compared to falsely claimed objective distanced research (Stacey, 1988), would not any false embodiment of “teacher” contradict feminist principles of transparency that attempt to mitigate exploitative

relations of research? This lack of transparency with students, though considered “ethical” by the IRB, brings up interesting considerations for feminist researchers when working with young children.

More Than Just Insider as Teacher

I return to my initial understanding of how Miss Amanda emerged. Yes, my performance in the classroom was inherently influenced by my history in preschool classrooms, but this performance cannot be so simply explained. My initial description of self as “insider” due to history as teacher is a reductive understanding of the insider-outsider relationship in research. In theorizing the ways in which a researcher’s various positionalities interact in the field, Narayan (1993) negates the strict binaries of “insider” or “outsider” historically associated with research and instead advocates for more complex understandings of a researcher’s multiple and interacting hybrid positionalities within various structures of power.

To complicate my previous claims, I was not just a researcher with teaching experience, but a white, feminine, gender-performing woman with teaching experience. Reflective of the overwhelming majority of teachers in the United States’ public school system (Delpit, 1995; Milner, 2007; Leonardo, 2009), my body afforded me certain degrees of “insiderness”, or degrees of endogeny (Nelson, 1996), that presented me as an “insider” teacher in the early childhood classroom. I so nicely fit the role of Miss Amanda as teacher, and thus was often asked to perform it. Along with my experience and often unconscious performance of teacher actions, I was called to be a teacher in the classroom. This can be seen once again on my first day of fieldwork when four-year-old Anna *asked* me to read a book to her; she *asked* me to perform the role of teacher. I was yet another white, feminine, gender performing woman in the early

childhood classroom, so Anna interacted with me as she interacted with the majority of adults in the classroom.

Similar requests of Miss Amanda as teacher evolved to more substantial tasks and activities. For instance, circle time just ended and students were being assigned to different stations in the classroom for free play. Before I could decide which station to observe, Miss Baker turned to me and asked, “Will you supervise the roundtable activity? It is the same activity I did yesterday. Just read this book aloud and students will follow along with their own version.” Prior to this request, I usually spent free play going between the different stations observing and interacting with students in causal ways. But, in this moment, Miss Baker was asking me to perform instructional duties and facilitate these students’ learning process. I was surprised by her request, but quickly complied, and soon found myself leading a small group activity in my research site.

Following, I was asked to lead more small group activities, to scaffold students’ handwriting practice, and to read-aloud to the class during circle time. How other adults positioned me in the field demonstrates the ways in which the researcher too is a “potential object of study” in the research process (Nelson, 1996, p. 184), or another cultural actor in the field to be constructed during the research process. Representation and narration of self is not solely in the hands of researcher, but implicated in relational constructions between various subjects located in larger systems of power (Foucault, 1980). I was asked by both students and teachers to perform my Miss Amanda duties because we were located in a highly raced and gendered system that designated who is a teacher. This shift from researcher as subject to researcher as object (Karim, 1993) demonstrates how participants are active subjects in the research process and have power “to shape and control the ethnographer and the ethnographic

encounter” (Kondo, 1986, p. 80). Thus, I was effectively called into being, or interpellated as, Miss Amanda, an additional teacher in the room.

Interpellation encompasses how people experience subjectification through processes of normalization and representation (Fanon, 1967; Althusser 1971; Foucault 1977, 1980; Butler, 2004). By “hailing” people into a certain discourse or ideology, institutions “includ[e] them in categories that prescribe and enforce particular ways of thinking about themselves and of acting as subjects” (Phoenix, 2009, 104). These interpellated subjects are constructed by the structures through which they move. In the preschool classroom, this means that larger discourses within the institution of schooling, and more specifically early childhood education, functioned to “interpellate” Miss Amanda and my experience in the school. My research site was able to narrate how I experienced myself during the research process, a process only made visible to me through my feminist principles of self-reflexivity.

This interpellation found strength in many ways. As described above, another white, feminine, gender-performing woman working in early childhood education, I was called to action to perform my Miss Amanda duties. And, every time I was asked to perform such actions, I responded with compliance, or what might be better understood as strategic compliance, which I will elaborate on later. This cycle of expectations and complied performance mutually positioned me as an additional teacher in the classroom and interpellated me into Miss Amanda.

Bless you Miss Amanda

One force perpetuating this cycle of interpellation was Miss Baker’s explicit appreciation of my help in the classroom. For instance, lunch had just ended and I was about to leave the classroom after completing my observations for the day when a student had a particularly bad breakdown. He started attacking Miss Baker—kicking her, pulling at her shirt, biting her arms.

Witnessing the situation escalate, and having been in this situation before, I called the front office to ask for the behavioral specialist. As routine, I tried to distract the other children who were playing at various centers. Soon, the behavioral specialist arrived and she and Miss Baker left the room with this student for a break in the “quiet room.” It just so happened that the assistant teacher, Miss Ambrossi, was out at her lunch break, so I was once again left in the classroom with eleven other students. I spent the next five minutes going from center to center, talking to students and scaffolding their play. Soon Miss Baker returned. Looking exhausted, she said, "Bless you, Miss Amanda".

This explicit display of gratitude and appreciation occurred often in the field. When saying our goodbyes at the end of my observations, Miss Baker routinely added, “thank you for your help today”. She was often referring to the support I provided throughout the day, whether leading a small group activity or reading a book during circle time, but I often felt very uncomfortable with her explicit display of gratitude because gratitude in many ways established an expectation of my presence in the future as Miss Amanda as teacher and not as researcher.

It was also hard to push back on these expectations, because to me they seemed like manifestations of material constraints in the classroom. Common to many public schools, this classroom was noticeably understaffed. As evidenced by this specific moment, as well as many others used in this article, the preschool classroom can be a hectic space, and it is not uncommon for both teachers to be consumed by a single student or conflict. Therefore, I often stepped in where I believe a full-time teacher should have been present, and was consequently thanked for doing so. While this may act as a form of reciprocity to both teachers and students by supporting the learning opportunities when things got out of hand, it is also embedded in a larger schooling structure that leaves teachers with insufficient resources (Kozol, 1991). Therefore, it can be

argued that the structure of the class also required that I enact Miss Amanda as teacher. This functions as yet another way to call Miss Amanda to action, and then continues to perpetuate this compliance with expressed gratitude. I am called to action to perform Miss Amanda, and then “blessed”, or thanked, for doing so. Furthermore, because of her gratitude, I felt more compelled to continue to perform Miss Amanda. In my field notes reflecting on being blessed, I wrote, “After always being thanked, I feel like I need to continue doing what I am assuming I am being thanked for.” The interpellation of Miss Amanda gained strength through this reciprocity in an understaffed classroom to further construct my performance as teacher.

Collision of Miss Amanda and Feminist Research

After I had been successfully interpellated as teacher, what were the implications for my role as feminist researcher? Although always thanking me for performing Miss Amanda and further interpellating me in to that role, I was still in the classroom as researcher. Thus I felt as if I was being thanked for being a researcher in the classroom. Feminist principles of research remind us that the researcher inherently enters an uneven relationship in the field because of the power afforded to them as researcher (Patai, 1991; Stacey, 1991; Wolf, 1996). The multiplicitous power dynamics operating during the research process inherently result in an exploitative research process, and despite best intentions, there is no such thing as a “reciprocal” or “egalitarian” researcher-participant relationship (Gorelick, 1991; Reinhartz, 1992; Wolf 1996). Therefore, when I was thanked for my help in the classroom, I felt as if somehow my performance of Miss Amanda as teacher obscured the power I held as researcher and potentially the criticality of my research goals. Thus, I began to question how my enactment of teacher acted as a potential guise of reciprocity to obscure transparency with teachers to further perpetuate exploitative power relations in the research process.

Contradictions of Reciprocity.

Some feminist scholars argue that “truly feminist” research must benefit someone other than the researcher (Geiger, 1990, p. 178), whether through the provision of resources, like medical services or money, or through opportunities of “empowerment” and increased sense of “self worth” (Langellier & Hall, 1989; Wolf, 1996). Others argue that reciprocity just acts as an attempt to deal with guilt of the “predatory nature” of research and in no way counters the inherent power and exploitation in the research process (Scheper-Hughes, 1992; Razavi, 1993; Wolf, 1996). Finding myself constantly thanked for being in the classroom, I questioned how reciprocity was functioning in contradictory feminist ways; on one hand, my performance of Miss Amanda can be seen as an explicit form of reciprocity through the provision of services to participants. On the other, this reciprocity in no way countered the inherent inequality of power within the research process, and perhaps functioned to further hide exploitative aspects of the research process. Although this reciprocity was asked of me through the interpellation of Miss Amanda, I questioned if my compliance to do so implicated me in deceptive acts of my positionality as critical researcher.

With that said, my compliance to step into this role of teacher should not be seen as an inherent, normalized reaction of a researcher in an educational space. When presenting this work to my thesis committee, I was challenged to think about my compulsion to step in at moments I thought necessitated my intervention. My thesis committee and I were grappling with the complexities of who were the true beneficiaries of my interventions—teachers and/or students—and if it could be conceptualized as reciprocity at all. I acknowledged the complexities of this question and added, “but wouldn’t it be more exploitative if there was a kid crying and I didn’t do anything about it? It would be reciprocity toward the kid, as well as the teacher because they

have one less thing to worry about.” I was immediately challenged by my thesis advisor to question how I had framed this hypothetical child as helpless and in need of my assumed inherently beneficial intervention. Employing desires of imperial feminism (Mohanty, 1984) I found myself implicated in many discourse of teaching and childhood that I was trying to disrupt through my research. The framework with which I had approached the classroom, although critical in many ways, still held undertones of mothering discourses of teaching (Wooten & Vaught, n.d.), evidenced through my compulsions to “take care” of students. Thus, my understanding of reciprocity was stemming from deep-rooted assumptions of children, teaching, and motherhood.

Compromised Transparency.

By “helping out in the class”, and being thanked for doing so, I felt I had unconsciously managed to hide my research agenda within this performance of Miss Amanda; Miss Amanda was not understood to be there to uncover how English-Only mandates perpetuate colonial understandings of language and citizenship and how teachers and students embody this policy and its subsequent constructions. And, Miss Amanda certainly was not being thanked for doing so. Thus, Miss Baker’s explicit gratitude made me realize she did not truly understand how I was narrating her and the classroom, resulting in guilt in a perceived lack of transparency with participants. Therefore, in understanding how my transparency was compromised, I did not believe I could truly claim any form of reciprocity and was perhaps implicated in a very explicit example of how reciprocity can further make invisible exploitative power relations. In other words, although often helping out in the classroom as Miss Amanda, I never dropped the critical lens of understanding colonial power dynamics between the different subjects in the classroom.

For instance, upon leaving the classroom one day, Miss Baker said, “Thank you for your help today. It was a rough one,” to which I responded, “Of course. I’ll see you next Monday.” I left the school and before heading over to my bus stop, I immediately took out my notebook to document a conversation I had earlier with Miss Baker that evidenced racialized and colonial understandings of English Language Learners. As I wrote these field notes, I felt torn between staying true to my research goals to uncover colonial power dynamics within the school, but also did not want to achieve this through exploitative researcher-participant relationships. Just minutes before, Miss Baker had thanked for “helping out”, but it was through this helping out that I was able to access this compelling data.

These interpersonal feelings of guilt illustrate the empathetic emotional experience of feminist research in constantly striving to understand participants as humans located within oppressive structures of power in opposition to “cold, distanced, exploitative, and ‘male’ methods” (Stacey, 1988; Wolf, 1996). Although viewing my participants as representatives of larger institutional power dynamics (Fine & Weis, 1996; Vaught, 2008), they were still human beings with whom I was interacting. Therefore, the thought of disrespecting or actively deceiving them for my own research gains tugged at my morals and beliefs about conducting ethical feminist research. But, these feelings of guilt are no justification for minimizing one’s critical lens and duty to uncover and disrupt power. Although feelings of guilt or discomfort can act as a sign of self-reflection in the inherently exploitative research process, these emotions cannot eclipse the need to uncover the specificities of the oppressive structures against which we write (Vaught, 2008).

Miss Amanda as Cute Researcher

This self-reflexivity of guilt and discomfort produced an interrogation of how the interpellation of Miss Amanda as teacher collided with an interpellation of, or lack there of, my role as researcher. An understanding of how I was narrated and constructed as researcher can be seen quite literally through the combination of words “Miss” and “Amanda” that result in the way I am addressed in the classroom. The use of “Miss” is embedded within a long history of gendered personal titles functioning to assign gender identity, as well as relate women to men through the institution of marriage (Weatherall, 2002). A longstanding tradition in schooling, teachers are commonly referred to with these gendered personal title uses, harkening to the time when only unmarried women were teachers. Thus, this assigned personal title constructed me as a teacher in the school.

However, the use of my first name, in comparison to last name, signaled a decreased level of authority. Every other teacher in the building is addressed by their last name: Miss Baker, Miss Ambrossi, Miss Cabral, and Miss Jenner. Although the use of “Miss” secured me as teacher, the use of my first name distanced me from the “real” teachers in the school. And, it is true that I was not a real teacher. I was not licensed by the state. I was not an employee of the school. I was not in the classroom to teach state-mandated curricula. I was in the classroom to observe, research, uncover, and disrupt. Thus, not being referred to as Miss Miller, or a real teacher, adequately reflected my role in the classroom as not a true teacher.

However, when addressed by students, all adults in the school were referred to with their last name, including secretaries, nurses and specialists. Therefore, the use of last name does not just assign location as a teacher, but location as an adult, a positionality from which I, as Miss Amanda, was excluded. I never had a conversation with Miss Baker as to why she chose to introduce me as Miss Amanda, as compared to Miss Miller, and thus cannot claim to know if this

was intentional or strategic. But, what is important is what “Miss Amanda” communicated. The combination of feminized uses of the personal titles in the often hyper-feminized field of education, along with my own conventionally feminine gender performance, resulted in a highly feminizing and infantilizing labeling and construction of me as “Miss Amanda⁵”.

This infantilization of Miss Amanda as researcher was evident through the ways I was introduced by Miss Baker to other teachers as a “student doing a project in the classroom.” My subjectivity as student overshadowed my subjectivity as researcher, which might be reserved for professors, doctoral students, or other types of “real” researchers. As a noticeably younger Master’s student, Miss Amanda becomes the “cute” researcher doing a project for her school. If not completely negated, my own integrity as researcher and scholar was devalued.

Coming to this understanding, my initial reaction was discomfort with how I was being perceived by my participants. When the narrating gaze shifted from participants to researcher (a remarkable flip of representation processes in the research process), I felt uncomfortable with the way I was perceived by my participants and frustrated with the assumptions of intelligence and critically that operated through the feminization and infantilization of my body. It felt like an affront my abilities as researcher, stirring up insecurities about my integrity as emerging scholar in the field.

Yet, the devaluation of research capabilities is nothing new for feminist researchers who constantly fight for the legitimacy of their research interests, theories, methods, and arguments (Wolf, 1996). The feminization and infantilization of my embodiment of researcher with which I

⁵ The personal title “Miss” can be found in many cultural contexts inside and outside of the school with a plethora of connotations. This includes Black cultural and southern White practices, which often demonstrate respect or tradition. However, in this specific context—a predominantly white, mid-sized Northeastern state—the use of “Miss” functioned to locate me in a diminutive, feminized role as related to other titles I was given.

became so uncomfortable stems from paternalistic productions of masculinist research (Stacey, 1988) that define what real research looks like (“objective”, “rational” and positivistic”) and the researcher who conducts this “real” research. Therefore, it was not these participants’ individual paternalistic understandings of research in which I found my self implicated, but rather larger exclusionary ideologies of who is considered a real researcher.

Additionally, I was conducting my research in a preschool classroom, a space that is constantly overlooked as a space of academic rigor. Despite an emerging field of critical theory in the early childhood years (Diaz Soto & Blue Swadener, 2002; Diaz Soto, 2006; Cristensen & Aldridge, 2013) academia as a whole rarely acknowledges preschool as a place for critical research. Thus, the very place where I was conducting research functioned to delegitimize my claim to critical researcher because “real” researchers cannot be found in the preschool classroom.

The Specter of Miss Amanda

“She thinks you’re just so sweet and nice” relayed Taylor, an undergraduate peer in my writing group. “And she thinks you”, now turning to Amanda B, another graduate student in our writing group, “are intimidatingly smart”. It was early on a Friday morning and the three of us had met in an off-campus coffee shop to do some work together. Taylor was referring to a conversation she had with yet another member of our writing group, Grace. Both undergraduates, they had been discussing their potential futures in academia, using two graduate students they knew best, Amanda B. and myself, to scaffold their imagination. Reacting to the relational construction of the two Amandas, I repeated dryly, “Just so sweet and nice? That’s it?” Both Taylor and Amanda laughed. “She obviously thinks you’re smart,” Taylor continued, “she just also thinks you’re really nice.”

Grace, Taylor and I were enrolled in a graduate-level class exploring the principles and complexities of conducting feminist research in order to support our ongoing engagement with our respective theses. Amanda B. was our teaching assistant. Part of my graduate studies cohort, as well as my roommate, Amanda B. and I were already close friends, but the rest of us had just started to get to know each other in order to support each other in the our thesis writing processes. This conversation at the local coffee shop occurred during one of many informal gatherings where we often worked through various hierarchies related to age, education level, and TA status, evident in this conversation between Taylor, Amanda B. and myself. When our conversation had died down, I stood to go grab some tea. “Does anyone else want anything?” I paused for a second and then added, “You know, because I’m just so sweet and nice”. Responding appropriately to my bitter sarcasm, my peers laughed and declined my offer.

At this moment, the specter of Miss Amanda became visible in my peers’ unintentional implication of me in similar narrations of the “cute” researcher. Just as Miss Amanda emerged through relational constructions to students and teachers in the classroom, these relational constructions to undergraduate peers as well as my graduate-level, teaching assistant peer reproduced similar narrations. Relationally constructed to “intimidatingly smart” Amanda B., I felt slighted when a member of my critical research community reproduced the same discourses that I felt diminished my legitimacy as researcher. The ghost of Miss Amanda had escaped the confines of the preschool classroom and was haunting me outside of fieldwork. She was present in the café; she was present in my researcher community; and she was even present in spaces I was not—Taylor and Grace’s conversation a few days before.

This moment of crisis in understanding self spurred reflections on the presence of Miss Amanda across many spaces throughout my lifetime. Miss Amanda was nothing new. Gordon

(2008) writes, “If haunting describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities, the ghost is just the sign, or the empirical evidence if you like, that tells you a haunting is taking place” (p. 8). The specter of Miss Amanda acted as a sign of the ways my gender and gender presentation are narrated in dominant patriarchal and heteronormative systems of power. Through this hypervisibility, I became aware of how Miss Amanda was placed onto me as well as my own generation of her. The complied interpellation found in the classroom could be extended to a lifetime of engagement with expectations of gender and gender performance. Miss Amanda was and is feminized, and often infantilized, and her intelligence is read second to her niceness. Miss Amanda was never decision-less or naturally occurring, but rather a constant interaction within and between larger ideologies around gender and gender performance and my own engagement with them.

The specter of Miss Amanda reminds us how power is made invisible to certain standpoints and positionalities and the work that can be done to partially uncover and identify them (Hartsock, 1983; Collins, 1986; Wolf, 1996; Narayan, 2004). This moment of crisis made visible how patriarchal and heteronormative systems of power function to narrate my own subjectivity and how I unwittingly colluded with them. In my first identification of Miss Amanda, I had assumed she was a product of the preschool classroom and the feminizing discourses surrounding early childhood education. But, by making visible the larger structures that narrate subjectivity, I was able to identify the ghost of Miss Amanda in all aspects of my life, even in spaces I had assumed I had legitimized researcher status.

Simultaneous Complicity of and Resistance to Miss Amanda

Identifying Miss Amanda as a larger construct with the potential to haunt me throughout many spaces, including future research projects, how does the feminist researcher acknowledge and work with this ghost to maintain feminist ethics of research? It can be argued that my complicity with the positioning of Miss Amanda in the preschool classroom as cute researcher reified oppressive patriarchal and masculinist conceptions of research, countering the feminist principles that drove this research. As a critical feminist, some might argue it was my job to challenge the dominant ideologies of research that were produced through the creation of Miss Amanda. However, I believe my embodiment of Miss Amanda is not that simplistic and instead can be viewed as simultaneous complicity and resistance to masculinist conceptions of researcher. Through the interpellation of Miss Amanda, I am both denied recognition as researcher while simultaneously able to further access data for a research agenda. This should not be mistaken as a justification of exploitation of participants, but rather a subversion of larger institutional powers and the ways they work on and through all subjects without consent, and often with out notice.

For instance, it was through my “good” performance of Miss Amanda that further facilitated my access the preschool classroom and even the graduate student classroom. My “cute” subjecthood was read as safe and nonthreatening. While I was thanked for performing Miss Amanda, my compliance with these roles further solidified my access to the site. Through “good” performance of Miss Amanda, there was no question that I belonged in the early childhood classroom. As I enacted my roles as Miss Amanda, I continued to observe and maintain my role as researcher. Albeit, at times, these two roles conflicted. For instance, I once found myself observing a particularly exciting moment relevant to the larger research project on students’ home language use under English-Only policies. However, in the middle of my

observation, Miss Baker asked if I would supervise a small activity on the other side of the classroom. I instinctively complied, leaving my researcher role to enact my Miss Amanda duties. At this singular moment, my role as researcher was hindered when Miss Baker hailed me to be teacher. But, once again, my compliance to perform Miss Amanda re-solidified my access to the site for future observations. In fact, this writing about my experiences and the use of it as data re-establishes my role as researcher and illustrates the utility of Miss Amanda in the research process. As a “covert informant” I am able to use the State’s narration of my subjectivity to further gain access to uncover the State’s powered and cultured constructions.

Miss Amanda as Covert Informant

This simultaneous complicity to and resistance of the interpellation process can be seen through my overall performance of Miss Amanda as teacher. Three days a week for four months I entered the school, signed in as a guest conducting observations, and then asked whoever was managing the front desk for a “student teacher” badge. As I slipped the badge on, I had a conscious shift to and acceptance of Miss Amanda. As described above, this performance evidences the successful interpellation of me as teacher; I effectively became a stand-in for teacher, or what scholars have identified as an agent of the state (Williamson, 1991; Vaught, 2014). This interpellation functioned to further the outreach of teacher and state power. I became a stand-in for another real teacher in the room, through whom the teachers could use as an additional disciplinary agent. Returning to my interaction with Rami during clean up time, Miss Baker reminds him of my authority as teacher; “You listen when a teacher asks you to do something”. In this instance, Miss Baker is not just reasserting my authority, but the authority of teacher in the classroom. “You listen when a *teacher* asks you to do something”, not “You listen when *Miss Amanda* asks you to do something”. In fact, one of the four rules in the classroom is:

“We listen to the teacher to be safe.” Veiled in a call for safety (Kumashiro, 2008), a founding pillar of the “successful” early childhood classroom is student compliance with teachers. When Rami resisted my requests for him to clean up, he not only resisted my authority as teacher, but entire classroom and school expectations that children are compliant to teachers’ demands. Thus, my hybrid role as guest teacher often acts as a mechanism to further permeate the power of teacher as agent of the state in the classroom.

An explicit hail for me to reinforce this power and my simultaneous resistance and compliance of this hail came one day in the cafeteria. Miss Baker was enjoying her lunch break in the classroom while Miss Ambrossi was taking one student to the school nurse, so I was once again left to facilitate dismissal and return students to the classroom. I was helping students clean up when all of the sudden I heard a teacher from another classroom scolding Alexander, a five-year-old Latino in my classroom. I turned and realized this teacher was scolding Alexander because he had placed his lunch tray on the ground rather than in the trash. Furthermore, he took no notice of this teacher’s discipline and walked back to his seat. Frustrated with his perceived disobedience, she walked over to him, grabbed his arm, turned his body to face her, and continued to scold him. Startled by her touch, Alexander began to hit her hand that has grabbed him. The teacher got increasingly mad and was soon scolding him for not throwing away his lunch, for ignoring her, and for hitting her. At this moment Miss Ambrossi returned and intervened. She relieved the other teacher from her disciplinary duties and escorted Alexander back to the classroom alone. I followed soon after with the rest of the class and was immediately met by Miss Baker and Miss Ambrossi. “So what happened?” If only it were that simple.

To me, “what happened” was an illustration of the use of unnecessary physical control with students’ bodies and Alexander’s resistance to this teacher’s lack of consent to touch his

body. I also thought about his location on the Autism spectrum and how he was often hypersensitive to touch and sound. But, I knew what the dominant interpretation would be: Alexander had disobeyed this teacher's commands and became violent. Familiar with national trends of the criminalization of black and brown students as young as four (Ferguson, 2000; Vaught, 2013; Department of Education, 2014), as well as larger systems of schooling that mandates obedience and compliance of students, I did not want to reproduce this dominant discourse. How was I going to properly perform Miss Amanda while not conceding my values and beliefs?

Identifying tensions between my complicity with the interpellation of Miss Amanda and staying true to my ethics as critical researcher who maps and uncovers power, I negotiated a response: "I didn't see the beginning, but I know Alexander only hit her after she grabbed his arm. I think he hit her because of his hypersensitivity to touch, and it must have really hurt him or made him uncomfortable." I offered a partial understanding of how I understood Alexander's actions.

At this moment, I was yet again interpellated and called to be an agent of the state to collude with other teachers to narrate and represent a student's experience. In my response, I was able to partially subvert this role, to a certain extent, without undermining access to the space by strategically using a "scientific" understanding of his response. I am still unsure if this was a fair response, if even possible. While trying to subvert dominant understandings of disobedience and criminalization of black and brown students, I potentially reified ableist notions of behavior by locating his disobedience in what is commonly identified as a "disability". Another option would have been complete subversion by explaining my critical, yet partial, understanding of the event. Instead, I described something I found "palatable" for the teachers, yet not full colluding with

what I was expecting them to want me to say, i.e. a validation of the teacher's disciplinary actions. Additionally, I do not know how the teachers interpreted my response, or if they received further details from other teachers later in the day. Therefore, my response may have been forgotten soon after. However, a feminist reflection of my negotiation process in this moment highlights the complexities of the "covert informant" in the research site.

Conclusion

The examination of how "Miss Amanda" emerged and thrived, and well as how it complicated my role as researcher, led to a reflection of not only my own power as researcher, but the complex powered terrain of the field. While the committed feminist researcher must be conscious of how power operates within the researcher-participant relationship, they must also interrogate how the field itself powerfully narrates and constructs the researcher. Extending the analysis of power to the field complicates many feminist conceptions of transparency and reciprocity that often reductively frame these processes as unidirectionally flowing from researcher to participant. While the researcher has power to narrate the research project and the participants within it, participants and the field itself also possess power to flip the gaze back onto the researcher. This dynamic flow of power became evident through the emergence and interpellation of Miss Amanda as teacher and cute researcher.

Through the interrogation and identification of Miss Amanda, I was able to identify raced and gendered productions within the early preschool classroom, but only after I interrogated my own positionalities within the site and my co-production larger discourses of teaching, mothering and imperial feminism. Feminist researchers will always find themselves located within systems of power and oppression that function to construct the researcher's subjectivity. This necessitates self reflexivity of one's location within these systems to understand how these power systems

unknowingly map power onto one's body, how one might be colluding with these power structures, and how to use this subjectivity to one's advantage as a "covert informant". This is a constant process of unlearning, uncovering and disrupting, and one that produces much discomfort, but further facilitates a deep engagement with the research field to uncover and disrupt institutional systems of power.

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