

"Tell Me Legally, Tell Me Legally": Linguistic Hegemony in Real Time

John T. Clark
Georgetown University
Department of Applied Linguistics

In this paper I demonstrate how a man, in real time interaction, makes relevant his social identity as teacher and African American as he tries to get the students to adopt stylistic and strategic aspects of educated middle class rhetoric, which I call the abstract speculative inquiry style.

When the teacher asserts certain institutional classroom interactional privileges associated with being a teacher (e.g., interrupting a student's turn) he highlights his identity qua teacher (and his interlocutors' identities qua students), and therefore highlights the power asymmetry of the social interaction. Insofar as the teacher exploits (and the students allow him to exploit) these power-asymmetrical interactional resources as he promotes abstract/speculative rhetorical inquiry, and attempts to silence concrete/empirical rhetorical inquiry, he and they imbue the character of teaching abstract/speculative inquiry with hegemonic, even coercive, political significance.

When the teacher foregrounds his shared African American social identity with the students he 1) does not assert those institutional classroom interactional privileges associated with being a teacher, and 2) uses more concrete/empirical features in his own rhetoric—even as he attempts to promote abstract/speculative inquiry. As a consequence of these co-occurrence facts, the teacher marks both a particular rhetorical style (abstract/speculative inquiry) as well as a hierarchical classroom interactional ecology with non-African Americanness or whiteness, while imbuing concrete/empirical inquiry and a more symmetrical conversational ecology with African-Americaness.

INTRODUCTION

Recently there has been increasing effort to understand how local, face-to-face interaction influences, and is influenced by, macrosocial structure and processes (Giddens, 1987; Erickson, 1995; Polyani, 1996). The challenge in making this microsocial/macrosocial connection is to show how macrosocial processes are played out in real time among ordinary human beings participating in ordinary interaction in a way that neither trivializes the role that local participants play (as so many macrosociological approaches do) nor trivializes the reality of general social processes (by ignoring them, placing them "outside" the local encounter, or by equating macrosocial processes with the mere sum total of all local actions).

Table 1. Outline of study's participants

Name of Class: "Street Law"

Site: Urban public high school, U.S. East Coast, 1993

Teacher:

- African American male, mid 20's
- private high school, elite university, elite law school

Students:

- mixed sex African Americans, ages 15-19

In this paper, I show how one man indexes two social identities available to him (*teacher* and *African American*; see Table 1) as he tries to get his students to use an abstract/speculative rhetorical style. I propose that his foregrounding a social identity of teacher while enforcing abstract/speculative rhetoric produces and reproduces the hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) practice of promoting *elite* styles of talk over *vernacular* ones in that abstract/speculative inquiry has been characterized both by the local actors in this study, as well as by previous academic studies, as a predominately middle-class, white discourse style (Schatzman & Strauss, 1966; Erickson, 1969; Kochman, 1981; Heath, 1983; Erickson, 1984). Moreover, the teacher's willingness to foreground a power-asymmetrical set of interactional relations simultaneous with his promotion of the teaching objective imbues the teaching objective (here, the teaching of an elite rhetorical style) with the logic of domination.

Not only, however, does the teacher imbue the teaching of an elite rhetorical style (the abstract/speculative style) with hegemonic significance by using the institutionally-derived conversational privileges at his disposal to enforce its use, but he also, indirectly, imbues both that rhetorical style, as well as the exercising of those classroom interactional privileges, with *non-African American*ness or whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993; Fine et al. 1997) in that whenever he indexes his African American social identity (through use of linguistic features and pronominal reference) he himself tends to use more features of the vernacular concrete/empirical inquiry style. Furthermore, whenever he indexes his African American social identity, he refrains from claiming those classroom interactional privileges that a teacher may otherwise claim. Therefore, he and the students can be seen as active agents in the production and reproduction of macrosocial structures, specifically, 1) that the abstract/speculative style indexes whiteness while the concrete/empirical style indexes African-Americanness, and 2) that hierarchical interactional ecology of the traditional classroom also indexes whiteness, while a less hierarchical interactional ecology indexes African Americanness, and the historically constructed African American *idealized* ethos of egalitarianism (Fordham, 1996, p. 77).

ELITE RHETORIC

The man in question is himself a law student who, as part of his law school's community outreach program, is teaching local high school students (Table 1) about the law, legal process and citizens' rights in a course entitled *Street Law*. In this class, I will argue that in addition to teaching the above, this teacher was also trying to get the students to emulate a particular rhetorical style, the abstract/speculative style in their rhetorical inquiry. I define the abstract/speculative style as:

Argumentation in which the rhetor assumes an "objective" stance in discussing situations in which concrete people operating in actual historical situations are either absent or abstracted, that is, *removed*, from the "real world," the concrete and the personally experienced.

The larger study from which this paper is taken (Clark, in progress) shows that the abstract/speculative style is similar to styles described in earlier literature as being typical of rhetorical styles used by the middle class and middle class white Americans (Schatzman & Strauss, 1966; Erickson, 1969; Kochman, 1981; Heath, 1983; Erickson, 1984). Therefore, in that the *Street Law* teacher was promoting an abstract/speculative inquiry style he was also promoting middle class, white ways of talk, which I will refer to interchangeably as the "*elite* rhetorical style," "*elite* inquiry," etc.

One aspect of elite inquiry, I claim, is the tendency of the speaker to pass herself off as being a spokesperson for "objective truth." This effect is gained by the elite rhetor using less human reference in her argumentation. In Example 1, the teacher, Len, models elite rhetoric during a class discussion of the areas of expression that are not protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech. "Pop that Coochie" is a raunchy rap video.

Example 1

1. Len: But is, "pop that coochie" a valuable idea or information?
2. Akeem: To some people.
3. Lakesha: Well, some people like it.
(...)
17. Len: So you think those videos should be banned, you think MTV is right when it snatches all those videos off?
20. Lakesha: Well, I don't think so because I have a lot of brothers and they like that stuff so you know I just want to look at them and let them look at them too.

Len's inquiry in 1 and 17 contains only one reference (i.e. "you") to a human

entity, contrasted to the students' multiple human references. In particular, there is no human semantic Experiencer for the predicate "valuable" and there is no explicit human semantic Agent (for the predicate "ban") (Chomsky, 1986; Radford, 1988), as highlighted in Example 1a.

Example 1a

1. Len: But is "pop that coochie" a valuable idea or information?

17. Len: So you think those videos should be banned, you think
MTV is right when it snatches all those videos off?

Rather, Len invokes an unseen Experiencer and Agent that can name "a (non-) valuable idea or information" and "ban" it from the airwaves.

Len's abstract query contrasts with the students' (Akeem and Lakesha) immediate response at 2, 3 and 20, in that they supply the missing human as in Example 1b (I use boldface to indicate my emphasis in transcripts and examples):

Example 1b

2. Akeem: **To some people.**

3. Lakesha: Well, **some people** like it.

(...)

20. Lakesha: Well, **I** don't think so because **I** have a lot of **brothers** and **they** like that stuff so you know **I** just want to look at them and let **them** look at them too.

In doing so, the students concretize Len's abstract inquiry. The *Street Law* students' preferred rhetorical style, the concrete/empirical style I define as:

Argumentation which is based on "real world," concrete, empirically demonstrated instances of human behavior.

The larger study from which this paper is taken (Clark, in progress) shows that the concrete/empirical style preferred by the *Street Law* students is similar to styles described in the earlier literature as being typical of the working class (Schatzman & Strauss, 1966; Lindquist, 1995); or of working class African Americans (Erickson, 1969; Kochman, 1981; Heath, 1983; Erickson, 1984; Ball, 1992). Accordingly, I will refer to the concrete/empirical rhetorical style as the "vernacular rhetorical style," or "vernacular rhetorical inquiry" etc.

The teacher, I argue, is modeling elite inquiry. Elite rhetors like Len strive for the broadest, most universal statements possible. The presence of people in their argumentation, particularly specific people, tends to detract from the goal of trying to sound as objective and as universal as possible. So, in Len's style we find

less human reference. When we do find human reference in Len's elite inquiry, the humans tend to be abstract generic ones contrasted with the students' use of specific human reference in their rhetoric as in Example 2:

Example 2

1. Len: That that's an argument, let me let me ask the uh, females in the room. What do you, I mean do you think pornography has a , a *special* detrimental effect on **women** ? In how it portrays **women**?
2. Lakesha: And you know what it, it's you know. those those **girls, they, they, wanna** be there.

The "women" that Len refers to in 1 are semantically generic, or, at very least non-definite and non-specific, while the human referents that Lakesha cites in 2 are the specific "girls" that perform in the videos.

Table 2. Summary of features distinguishing elite and vernacular rhetorical styles

Elite Rhetorical Style

Abstract people set in an abstract world in abstract time.

- **Less** human reference overall
- Tendency toward generic, **non-specific** human reference
- Less use of first-person reference
- "What **if**" and "What **should** be" scenarios

Vernacular rhetorical style

Real people experiencing the real world in real time.

- **More** human reference overall
- Tendency toward **specific, definite** human reference
- **More** use of first-person reference
- "What **is**" and "What **was**" scenarios

Examples 1 and 2 have shown a few of the features that distinguish elite inquiry from a vernacular rhetorical style. Table 2 summarizes these and other distinguishing features from the larger study which both describes the elite and vernacular rhetorical styles as well as describes how the students accommodate to and/or *resist* (Giroux, 1983; Erickson, 1987) the teacher's attempts to do so (Clark, in progress).

INDEXING TEACHER

One of the earliest and best understood aspects of usual classroom conversa-

tional ecologies in North America, Britain, Australia and France (Mehan, 1985) is the “radically asymmetrical” (Stubbs, 1976, cited in Cazden, 1986, p. 443) interactional privileges that the teacher “has.” As Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) point out, “Within the classroom the teacher has the right to speak whenever he wants to, and children contribute to the discourse when he allows them to.” (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975, p. 37). However, these rules are implicit (Green, 1983) and must be created and claimed by the interactants in actual real-time interaction (Erickson, 1975; Erickson and Schultz, 1982; Erickson, 1986; Erickson, 1995). In other words, in classroom interaction, the historically constructed privileges of the teacher are “there,” yet it remains for the teacher to lay claim to these institutional privileges, and it remains for the students to allow the teacher to lay claim to them, in face-to-face interaction. As these privileges are not automatic (they remain to be claimed) there is similarly no logical reason why these privileges *must be claimed*, although the odds are that they will be (Giddens, 1987; Erickson, 1995). Therefore, in *Street Law*, the law student charged with teaching these students has a choice in the manner in which he will get his students to learn how to argue a point in an elite rhetorical style. It is entirely possible - though not likely - that Len, the teacher, could have refrained altogether from making his identity as teacher relevant in the interaction. However, this was often not the case. That is, Len invoked his one-up social identity as teacher to “deliver the word” to the students, and he invoked or indexed his identity as teacher by performing the interactional privileges that have historically accrued to the institutional identity of *teacher*. Here, I will examine two of these institutionally available interactional privileges: (1) claiming institutionally available turn slots, and (2) interrupting.

Claiming institutionally available turn slots

The canonical structure of teacher-student talk consists of an *initiation* by the teacher, a *reply* by the student and a *evaluation* given by the teacher to the student’s reply. (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Mehan, 1985). This initiation-reply-evaluation (IRE) structure yields the simple fact that, unlike typical polite conversation, in which the current speaker can herself select the next speaker (or another speaker can self-select) (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), a student does not, typically, have this option in the classroom. That is, a student, during the reply act, may not select another student, nor may another student—typically—self-select. Therefore each student turn (canonically the reply) is bounded by a *teacher* turn. The following example shows Len indexing his social identity as teacher. He does so by, first, claiming a turn after each student turn, and second, by evaluating what Lakesha says in those claimed turns. We will see that Len gains the power to evaluate his students by his own local shaping of the institutional classroom turn economies.

Example 3

1. Lakesha: Yeah. I got it. I want to do the next one

2. Len: Okay Lakesha.
3. Lakesha: Um, A movie about, kid's pornography.
4. Len: Right.
5. Lakesha: I hate it. I don't think it should be.
6. Len: Tell me legally, tell me legally.
7. Lakesha: Um. I 'on't, I just don't think it's right.
8. Len: Well then what about the test? Does it meet any of the standards of the test? Or does it fail every standard?

Len indexes his identity as teacher by assuming and claiming the historically-received interactional privileges to evaluate what students says. At 6, the teacher rejects Lakesha's locating the persuasive basis of her argument in herself ("I hate it. I don't think it should be."). Instead he explicitly instructs Lakesha to appropriate the voice (Wertsch, 1991; Erickson, 1995) of a legal text that he had distributed that day (see Table 3).

Table 3. Class Handout: Legal definitions of obscenity

1. Obscenity
 - b. test:
 1. would the average person applying contemporary community standards find the material sexually offensive?
 2. does the material show illegal sexual conduct?
 3. does the material lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value?

The power to evaluate another one's way of making sense of the world is buttressed here by institutionally received classroom turn conventions, which, as we have seen, traditionally give the teacher - ahead of any other student - priority for a turn following any student turn.

Example 3a

1. Lakesha (student): Yeah. I got it. I want to do the next one
2. (teacher turn favored here)
3. Lakesha: Um, A movie about, kid's pornography.
4. (teacher turn favored here)

5. Lakesha: I hate it. I don't think it should be.

6. (teacher turn favored here)

etc.

However, social identity is a matter of interactional achievement, of performance in real time (Erickson, 1975; Erickson & Schultz, 1982; Erickson, 1986; Erickson, 1995) It is not enough to merely 'be' a teacher, one must claim or achieve that identity in moment to moment interaction. Teacher is as teacher does. And what Len does, and what Lakesha lets Len do, is claim the institutionally available turn slots *earlier* at 2 and 4. At 2, Len *shapes* what otherwise might be seen as a simple statement of Lakesha's will into a *request to be a ratified speaker*. In other words, he grants permission ("Okay Lakesha.") in a situation where permission was not necessarily asked for, and in so doing instantiates and produces a one-up teacher-student dyad. He is able to do this and not appear outrageously presumptive because of that institutionally available turn slot, which, if not automatically his, is and has been historically constructed as his for the taking. Similarly, at 4, while Len's brief response, "Right" has one reading along the lines of "Yes, you are on the correct task" it is also, like turn 2, an act of indexing teacher in that it occupies a turn that, by rights, a teacher may occupy, and thus it also continues the IRE rhythm established at 2. Moreover, this "right" at 4 has a nascent evaluative character, that is, "right" as in "good" which, in turn prepares and anticipates the evaluative character of turns 6 and 8, in which is the most crucial information is being communicated. In the guise, then, of the mundane task of "calling on a student" in the first 4 turns, Len has at once established a predictable, rhythmic teacher/student/teacher turn exchange as well as he has imbued his turns with the power to ratify and to evaluate. The hegemonic practice of devaluing vernacular bases of argumentation in favor of elite, legal ways gets a head start in the banal details of classroom management.

Interruption

If the historically-received teacher "has the right to speak whenever he wants to" as Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) claim, then he also has the right to *interrupt* a student as well as claim each succeeding turn slot. The following example shows two different instances of teacher interruption. In the first instance Len wields his right-to-interrupt as act of evaluation, whereas the second instance of interruption shows the teacher trying to reestablish a now broken IRE turn exchange.

Example 4

1. Len: So what is, so, so what is uh, Lakesha, what's obscene about the video?

2. Lakesha: Well, heck, first of all, one of them, one of the videos, was that um, see I

can't, remember but, it was one video they had one woman up there with nothin', she had=-

Len: → =Just just tell me tell me in accordance with this test. Tell me, relate, relate what you're sayin' to the test. Do you have a handout?

4. Lakesha: No=Yeah, I do but.

5. Tamika: You talkin' about En Vogue, the video "you and me"

6. Lakesha: Noo, [d]e old video with [d]em crazy um, Luke brothers and stuff. ((*chuckles*)) I just think it's, it's it's () I just don't think [it's

7. Len: [So so tell about the test, what is it, is it is it but is it that it lacks value? Is it that it's illegal?

8. Lakesha: Illegal. Psych. ((*laughter*))

At 3, Len less subtly and more aggressively indexes his social identity as teacher in that he *interrupts* Lakesha at 3 instead of waiting for her to finish her turn. Moreover, the words with which he interrupts her ("Just just tell me tell me in accordance with this test") negatively evaluate Lakesha's rhetorical strategy of unpacking the abstract term, "obscene," with a concrete description of real people in the real world. Yet here, unlike in the previous example, the students do not yield as easily to Len's attempts to pursue a teacher-dominant IRE turn sequence. Here, another student, Tamika, flouts the IRE turn ecology first by self-selecting, and second, by addressing another student (Lakesha) instead of the teacher. *What* she says as she does so is as significant as her stopping the IRE rhythm: that is, her clarification request! ("You talkin' about En Vogue, the video "you and me?") allows Lakesha to restart her concrete, personalized description of "obscenity" at 6. Again, Len interrupts at 7 ("So so tell about the test, what is it, is it is it but is it that it lacks value? Is it that it's illegal?"). In a display of resistance, Lakesha mouths what Len wants to hear, albeit with a caustic tag, "psych."²

Why does Len initially cut Lakesha off at 3? If Len-as-teacher has an institutionally received "easy-in" on any turn following a student's turn, then *why interrupt*? On one level, Len's breaking off Lakesha's turn has the effect of *silencing* her, perhaps not her personally, but silencing the rhetorical style she voices. Yet Len's initial interruption is about more than just clearing the air of that voice so that it is not heard. This interruption, like the blows of a courtroom judge's gavel, silences, indexes, an power-asymmetrical teacher/student dyad, and evaluates the talk that proceeded and provoked the gavel pounding to be uncouth and therefore, worthy of silencing.

However, we see that the students don't necessarily give in so easily. Tamika at 5 supports the reprimanded Lakesha and continues the concrete inquiry. When

Lakesha then responds to *Tamika*, instead of Len, she and Tamika perform an act of resistance which *reduces* the symbolic power of Len's *next* act of interruption at 7. In locking out Len from a turn at 6, Lakesha and Tamika depreciate the symbolic value of Len's next interruption (line 7) from evaluation from a conversational superior to a merely an aggressive bid for a turn.

INDEXING AFRICAN AMERICAN

We have seen how Len indexed a teacher identity for the purpose of underscoring what constitutes an acceptable rhetorical style. In this section I will show how and why Len indexes an African American social identity. The following example, taken from the same class, shows the class discussing another area of speech not protected by First Amendment free speech rights, so-called "Fighting Words." In this example, notice how Len indexes his African American social identity at 16, through the use of well known African American Vernacular English features.

Example 5

1. Len: Alright um, what about uh, Miguel could you do 4B fo' me please?
2. Miguel: "At a game one group of fans yells across the field at another group of fans 'your team sucks and so does your mother'"
3. Juan: That's fightin' words.
4. Miguel: Fighting words
5. Aisha: That's fightin' words.
6. Len: Well but look at look at the test. Look at the test.
7. Chanika: No matter the test ! They fightin' words!
8. Aisha: ((*generally saying the same thing as Chanika?*))
9. Len: But what but what what's the test? Now somebody=A, Aisha bring in the test. Read me the test under, under the standard, of the 4A1, in the text what's the test?
10. Aisha: "Test, are the words, more like an assault than information or an opinion" yeah.
11. Len: Okay, now, now read all of 4A for me.
12. Aisha: "Fightin' are, abusive or threatening words spoken face to face that are likely to cause a breach of the peace between the speaker and the listener, " But what I'm sayin' is-()

13. Chanika: If somebody say somethin' like that, the the, the whole stadium get quiet.
They go [Oooooooh!]

14. Aisha: [Oooooooh!]

15. (Chanika and Aisha laugh)

Len: → How many people have been to games. How many people have been to games. ((*most students raise their hands*)) College games, pro games. Now come on. If the Redskins (*zero copula*) on one side, and the Cowboys fans (*zero copula*) on the other, they (*zero copula*) yellin' back and f[o]th, "you suck, Cowboys, Indians, y[o] moth[ð] blah blah blah."

17. Chanika: They fightin'

18. Len: But, are they really fightin' words. What does the test say?

19. Chanika: [They fightin' words. Once you get your mother into it].

20. Len: Face [to face ((*louder*)) Face to face that are likely to cause]=I'm not saying that you're not gonna like it. But I'm sayin' when you (*zero copula*) watchin' a game, is that part of the game? To yell back and forth. My team your team my team your team.

21. Akeem: It matter what kind of game it is, if it's a professional game you' ain't I mean you ain't gonna even gonna hear 'em.

22. Len: But,

23. Chanika: ()

24. Akeem: But if it's like a high school, basketball, basketball game, when it's in that little gym, and somebody say, somethin' like "Your mother this, your mother that." It's, that's why=

25. Juan: =Fightin' words!

26. Chanika: [They gonna fight].

27. Len: [But, but what, but] what's the test? But what but what's the definition of fighting words? A, Aisha just read it, what do you need for people be fightin' words.

28. Chanika: It has to be threatening, or abusive. And face to [face.

29. Aisha: () [face to face, but I'm sayin' (pounding desk), that is fightin' words. I don't care what that program say!

30. Akeem: Well your paper wrong.

At 6, Len attempts an act of evaluation as he admonishes the students to "look at the test." However, the students, at 7, *reject* Len's evaluation ("No matter the test") at the same time they reject a redirection of the inquiry. Len strikes back and has Aisha, a student generally more accommodating to elite rhetoric, actually *read* the legal test at 12 - an interesting and, I believe telling way in which Len demonstrates the nature of his overall project, namely, if the students are unwilling to creatively appropriate the voice of elite rhetorical inquiry and texts, then he'll have them mouth it. However, the teacher's pet bites this time and, together with Chanika (12-15), she resists the legal definition of "fighting words" for another one grounded in experience. Len, in turn, dramatically changes his tactics at 16 in indexing an African American social identity through his use of well-known African American Vernacular English features, namely, the vocalized (that is, absent) liquid consonants, [r] and [l] and the deletion of the copula (Labov, 1972). First, note that Len *indexes African American* after his more coercive, teacher-indexing attempts have failed. But most crucially, note that at the same time Len marks Black he also appeals to his and his interlocutors' *concrete* experiences (local football games). This appeal is more typical of the concrete/empirical rhetorical style.

My final example, like the previous one, shows how Len indexes his identity as an African American as he accommodates toward a vernacular rhetorical style, though, presumably, with the purpose of selling the students an abstract proposition (i.e. that "women" in general [see example 2 above] are hurt by raunchy rap videos).

Example 6

270a. Akeem: Nobody didn't "get on stage and[you, pop that bottle!"]

270b. Lakesha: [They *wanted* to do it.]

271. Len: Well that that's, ((to *Akeem and Lakesha*)), that's always gonna be the presumption. People, in this country are doing what they want to do. Some times it doesn't always end up that way.

272. Akeem: I'm sayin' but.

273. Len: → **You and I know that.**

274. Akeem: I'm sayin', what I'm sayin', is that you can't say that the men, um, putting the women makin' them look bad because, no man didn't tell 'em [to take

275. Len: [You see, what your argument, what your argument is that, that, that, it's, okay it's a pornographic film and the woman wants to be there. Some people argue that maybe that was true in say the first pornographic film, but as pornography and obscenity and music video in our society has evolved, a

and we've been given more sexual freedom to show those things some people will argue that, by creating this type material you force women into those roles.

276. Akeem: How do you force 'em?

277. Lakesha: You don't. You don't You don't

278. Len: → Well it's it's the same thing that you know if you ever hear people say about Blacks in this country, have a "slave mentality"

In 273, Len says "You and I know that." This is a subtle, yet powerful appeal to Len's and the students' shared African American identity. It is also one of the very few times in not only this class but in all of my data that Len uses the word "I" to index himself in a personal way rather than in just some hypothetical, construct (as in: "Let's say that you and I...") (Clark, in progress). Just as striking as this rare use of authentic first person reference is its purpose: Len is trying to subtly show Akeem and Lakesha the consequences of limiting their inquiry of the world to real people experiencing the real world in real time. While Len uses very personal, concrete terms to do so, ("you and I") he is still pursuing an abstract thesis¹ as well as suggesting to his interlocutors that they already have the knowledge bases to do inquiry this way ("You and I know that."). The subtlety of his doing so in 272 ("You and I know that.") is made more explicit in 278 when he more explicitly mentions "Blacks in this country." More striking, especially in comparison with earlier examples given in this paper, is the lack of coercion with which he argues this point to the students: Unlike in the previous examples, the students don't have to mouth it or be told to do it under coercion through dogged claims on teacher turns following student turns or through interruptions.

Len may still be promoting elite inquiry, yet he does so by *not* relying as much on the conversational privileges of being a teacher. Although he does interrupt Akeem at 275, Len does not attempt to instantiate the IRE instructional sequences we saw in earlier examples. He is still trying to get the students to adapt more abstract rhetorical perspectives (by, for example talking about "women in general" rather than the more specific "women-who-perform-raunchy-dances") but he does so not by issuing negative, global evaluations (c.f. "tell me legally, "tell me legally" example 3), but by arguing more like a conversational equal.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I have attempted to show how the hegemonic discursive practice of a teacher trying to get his students to emulate the rhetorical style of the elites unfolds in real conversational time. From these examples, the foregrounding of one or the other of two of Len's social identities has different consequences, not just for the local encounter, but for the larger discursive practice of saying, and

acting on the belief that one way of talk is better or more valuable than another. That is, insofar as Len indexes the one-up role of teacher in teaching abstract-speculative inquiry, he inscribes that type of talk with the logic of dominance, one interruption at a time.

The distributional facts (Table 4) of Lee’s identity marking show that when Lee indexes African American identity, he also pursues a more vernacular (i.e. concrete/empirical) rhetorical style. Furthermore, Len’s teacher-indexing and African American-indexing occur in complementary distribution. That is, in these examples, Len never indexes teacher identity *at the same time* he indexes African American identity.

Table 4: Distribution of Teacher’s identity indexing and inquiry style.

	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6
Len indexes teacher identity	X	X	X	X		
Len indexes African American identity					X	X
Len uses more abstract/speculative inquiry	X	X	X	X		
Len uses more concrete/empirical inquiry					X	X

Therefore, Len, together with the students, mark both a rhetorical style (concrete/empirical inquiry) and a less hierarchical conversational ecology with African Americanness or blackness, as he and they mark both abstract/speculative inquiry and the more hierarchical classroom conversational ecology with *non*-African Americanness or whiteness.

Crucially, these local social actors are doing hegemony and resistance at the same time they are doing ordinary interaction. On one hand, they are not forced or determined by the larger social order to act as they do: the teacher may choose or not choose to claim his interactional privileges as teacher and the students may choose to either submit to or resist those privileges. On the other hand, these local social actors do not operate autonomously outside the larger social order: The institutional identities of “teacher” and “African American” enter the local encounter with a force and a momentum that holds at least some sway over the local

actors. This momentum is seen in how the students initially acquiesce to the IRE classroom turn conventions that Len claims. It is also seen in how Len himself uses a more vernacular concrete/empirical inquiry style as he indexes an African American social identity even as he is trying to get the students to use the more abstract/speculative style.

NOTES

¹ Or "other initiated repair" (Schegloff, 1979)

² "Psych" may be understood as functioning as a negative particle, similar to the humorous, clause-final "not" (c.f. "Illegal. (pause) not!").

³ I.e. *pornography* (an abstract cover noun standing in for specific concrete instances) *hurts women* (generic, non-specific "women in general, not specific women)

REFERENCES

- Ball, A. (1992). Cultural preference and the expository writing of African-American adolescents. *Written Communication* 9, 501-532.
- Cazden, C. (1986). Classroom discourse. In Wittrock, M. (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching*. London: Collier Macmillan.
- Chomsky, N. (1986). *Knowledge of language: Its nature, origin and use*. New York: Praeger.
- Clark, J.T. (In progress). Unpublished Dissertation Manuscript. Washington: Georgetown University.
- Erickson, F. (1969). *Discussion behavior in the black ghetto and in white suburbia: A comparison of language style and inquiry style*. Doctoral Dissertation, Northwestern University
- Erickson, F. (1975). Gate-keeping and the melting pot: Interaction in counseling interviews. *Harvard Educational Review*, 45, 44-70.
- Erickson, F. (1984). Coherence strategies in Black American conversation. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Coherence in spoken and written discourse*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Erickson, F. (1987). Transformation and school success: The politics and culture of educational achievement. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 18: 335-356.
- Erickson, F. (1995, February). *Can we have a discourse chunnel?* Paper delivered at Georgetown University Developments in Discourse Analysis conference, Washington, D.C.
- Erickson, F., & Schultz, J. (1982). *The counselor as gatekeeper*. New York: Academic Press.
- Fine, M. (Ed.) [et al.] (1997). *Off white: Readings on race, power, and society*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fordham, S. (1996). *Blacked out: Dilemmas of race, identity and success at Capitol High*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frankenberg, R. (1993). *The social construction of whiteness: White women, race matters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Giddens, A. (1987). *Social theory and modern sociology*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Giroux, H. (1983) Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of

- education: a critical analysis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 53, 257-293.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from prison notebooks* (Q. Hoare & G. Smith, Eds. and Trans.) New York: International Publishers.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words*. New York: Cambridge.
- Kochman, T. (1981). *Black and white styles in conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lindquist, J. (1995). "Bullshit on 'What if!'" *An ethnographic rhetoric of political argument in a working class bar*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Mehan, H. (1985). The structure of classroom discourse. In *Handbook of discourse analysis. Volume 3: Discourse and dialogue*. London: Academic Press.
- Polyani, L. (1996, October). *Language use and the maintenance of social order*. Paper delivered at the Georgetown University Discourse as Mosaic : Linguistic Reproduction of Identities and Ideologies conference, Washington, D.C.
- Radford, A. (1988). *Transformational grammar*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation. *Language*, 696-735.
- Schatzman S. and Strauss, S. (1966). In A. Smith (Ed.). *Communication and culture: Readings in the codes of human interaction*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sinclair, J. M., & Coulthard, R. M. (1975). *Toward an analysis of discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stubbs, M. (1976). Keeping in touch: Some functions of teacher talk. In M. Stubbs & S. Delamont (Eds.), *Explorations in classroom observation* London: John Wiley.
- Wertsch, J. (1991). *Voices of the mind*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

John T. Clark received a B.S. in German and linguistics from Georgetown University in 1985, an M.A. from Georgetown 1990, and is now finishing his PhD in applied linguistics. His primary interest is standard language ideology, specifically issues of hegemonic imposition of, and accommodation and resistance to, elite English as they occur in face to face talk. Other interests include second language acquisition and methodological issues in second and foreign language instruction.