Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Transcript:

There is no one single version of English, or any other language. Everyone speaks in a dialect (Wolfram, 2000).

The terms dialect or variety refer to patterns in the way people use language and include distinct rules around pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar structures (González, 2008; Rickford, Sweetland, & Rickford, 2004; Wolfram, 2000).

For example: African American Vernacular English, Chicano English, Appalachian English, and Cajun Vernacular English are all dialects - or varieties - of English. Some examples of dialect can be found in sentences like these…
Standard English is just a variety too

Transcript:

Standard English refers to a specific variety of English that is privileged in schools and that functions as an unspoken prerequisite for participating in the K-12 education system (J. Hernandez, personal communication, February 16, 2017).

School policies require students to become proficient in Standard English, often at the expense of the language or dialect that they speak at home and in their community (Rickford et al., 2004).

Standard English is held up as the “correct” or “proper” way to speak and write, while other languages and dialects are stigmatized as incorrect or inappropriate for school (Godley, Carpenter, & Werner, 2007; Wheeler, 2006; Wolfram, 2000).

Language and dialect are intimately connected to cultural identity. Telling a student that his language is wrong is sort of like saying that a part of him is wrong.

Video
Transcript:

I felt like a second class citizen. The teachers were unfortunately very vocal and I think that, in part, inspired me to go to into the work that I do now. Were very vocal about saying I did not sign up to teach these kinds of kids. I did not sign up to work with English language learners, or you know, different terms…language minority students are terms that have been used through the years. But, it was the message was clear that we were somehow less-than. So, you know, it does something to your identity and it does something to your readiness to learn when you’re walking into the classroom already being seen as someone who has a problem, or a deficit, or a challenge to overcome. So, instead of saying you know what, that’s great that you can speak two languages and maybe you could use your first language to help you with this project, or to help you write this. It was seen as, well they probably are not as bright or as capable of doing the work as our students who are monolingual English.

Defining contrastive analysis

Transcript:

The question facing teachers is this: how can we affirm and sustain students’ home language while also helping them learn Standard English?

The answer lies in teaching students to analyze - and make strategic decisions about - language use. One way to do this is through an approach called contrastive analysis.

Contrastive analysis teaches students to notice and compare differences in language variety in order to accomplish two goals (González, 2008; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). First, to develop knowledge of the patterns, rules, and grammar of a new language or dialect. Second, to develop the skill of being able to choose which language variety is most appropriate for a given audience or setting.
Chapter 2: Important Mindsets

Important Mindsets

Transcript:

Contrastive analysis is an asset-based approach to language instruction because it operates from the assumption that a student’s home language is a valuable - and in fact, indispensable - resource for learning a new language or dialect.

Before you attempt to use contrastive analysis with your students, take a moment to consider and examine your own beliefs about language. Click to compare deficit- and asset-based orientations toward language.

How to do it

Transcript:
When you first introduce the concept of contrastive analysis, you may find it helpful to follow each of the actions that we will explore on the following slides. However, as students grow in their ability to recognize and analyze differences in language patterns, these activities will naturally become “mini-lessons” within the school day.

**Identify**

If you are just getting started with contrastive analysis, take time to observe how your students write and speak. This will help you identify grammatical patterns in a student’s home language (Wheeler, 2006; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Here are some examples of common pattern differences you might notice:

**Discuss**

If you are just getting started with contrastive analysis, take time to observe how your students write and speak. This will help you identify grammatical patterns in a student’s home language (Wheeler, 2006; Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Here are some examples of common pattern differences you might notice:

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For a complete list of references, refer to the On-Demand Module ‘Contrastive Analysis.’
After you identify trends and patterns in your students’ language use, the next step is to engage in a discussion of language with them.

This discussion should work toward two outcomes.

The first is to explore how we make choices about language based on situation, audience, and purpose.

The second is to help students recognize patterns in their home language and how they compare with patterns or rules in Standard English. The best way to do this is by comparing and discussing multiple examples, like so...

Identifying trends should not be the teacher telling students what the pattern is; rather the teacher should help students discover it on their own.

Create

Transcript:

The patterns and rules that you identify as a class should be recorded in some way so that students can reference them during writing or speaking activities. One way to do this is by creating - or having students create - anchor charts. For a given grammatical structure like plurals, the chart could show the pattern in students’ home languages alongside the corresponding rule in Standard English.

Here are some examples of what this could look like.
Encourage students to use contrastive analysis both in and outside of the classroom. When students notice a pattern in their home language, take the time to guide them through analyzing it.

On the other hand, don't attempt to do it *all the time*. If you constantly stop instruction to do contrastive analysis, it could come across as just another attempt to “correct” students’ language use, and backfire. Instead, think about times when it would be most helpful for students. One example might be as a mini-lesson during writing or revision activities.

**An important distinction**

It's important to recognize the difference between students whose home language is a *variety* of English - such as African American Vernacular English or Chicano English - and students who speak an entirely *different*...
language at home such as Spanish or Mandarin.

“When the grammar patterns of a student’s first language transfer into her expression of English, we hear the grammatical echo of her first language” (Wheeler & Swords, 2006, p. 9). Consider a student whose first language is Spanish, she may say something like this, “We went to the house of my nana.”

What this student did was a word-for-word translation from Spanish to English. In this instance, you would use contrastive analysis to highlight grammar differences between two languages. Remember to be intentional about how and when you use contrastive analysis. Over-use could be seen as over-correcting.

What research says

Transcript:

Research has found that telling students their home language is wrong is not only damaging to their identity, but is also an ineffective teaching practice (Brown, 2009; Rickford, n.d.; Wheeler & Swords, 2004).

In fact, studies done in three different cities compared contrastive analysis to a corrective teaching approach. All of these studies found that students who learned to use contrastive analysis were able to write and speak more effectively than students who had a teacher constantly correcting them (Wheeler & Swords, 2006).
Chapter 3: Closing and Videos

Closing

Transcript:

Contrastive analysis helps teach students to notice differences in language and consciously decide which language variety to use in a given situation. More importantly, contrastive analysis embraces, rather than negates, students’ academic and cultural identities.

We’ll close with a video where two teacher educators highlight the power that teacher attitudes and actions have on language development.

Video

Transcript:
When teachers have an asset mindset toward language, they take the responsibility on them. They don’t look at kids and say this kid has a difference that isn’t appropriate for school. They have to ask themselves what have I done to demonstrate my expectations for language? How did I teach the language of school? They have to recognize that it is such a specific form of talking that only people who speak Standard American English possess naturally from a school environment. And so they have to…it has to be taught. Not all kids come prepared with that.

First of all, I think it acknowledges that language learning is not easy. I think often time students don’t…don’t feel like teachers understand how difficult it is to learn English. That it’s something that should just happen quickly and seamlessly. But learning a new language is extremely difficult and I think if the teacher is acknowledging that there are these challenges and different ways that we use language. I think it honors their feelings about how difficult this process is. Secondly, I think it…it relays to the students that they are valued for what they bring in. What they have is of use, to not only the student but the classroom in general. And that they have something to add to the conversation about language and how language works.