3

"KILLING THEM SOFTLY"

> When I came to school and was speaking like that when I was younger, all my teachers would tell me that's not the right way to talk. I just started crying…it took me down. I thought they were trying to scrutinize me!
>
> *Janel, Leadership Academy*

I open up chapter 3 with these words from Janel because they shed light on how we are killing Black youth softly through anti Black Language pedagogies. Her words underscore a point that Toni Morrison made in 1981:

> It is terrible to think that a child with five different present tenses comes to school to be faced with books that are less than his own language. And then to be told things about his language, which is him, that are sometimes per manently damaging … This is a really cruel fallout with racism.
>
> *(Toni Morrison, qtd in Rickford & Rickford, 2000)*

As my responsibility to the Black students I have had the privilege of working with, I open chapter 3 by centering the voices and counterstories of the students at Leadership Academy. I am referring to their stories as counterstories because research, theories, and pedagogies on Black Language education are not very inclusive of Black students' perspectives about their language learning or everyday language experiences. Smitherman (1998) reminds us that "language is critical in talking about the education of a people because it represents a people's theory of reality; it explains, interprets, constructs, and reproduces that reality" (p. 154). By listening to their stories in my own research, I was able to see how their experi ences with language counter the dominant story about Black Language and what Black students need in a language education. Their counterstories affirm that

eradicationist and respectability approaches to Black Language education do not account for the emotional harm, internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism, or consequences these approaches have on Black students' sense of self and identity. Their voices and stories matter! And as educators and researchers, we must listen and engage their perspectives in our research, theories about language learning, and pedagogical practices. The questions I ask readers to consider while reading this chapter are: What stories do Black students tell about their experiences with the language education they are offered in school? How are Black students impacted by Anti Black Linguistic Racism?

My First Read of Leadership Academy

I started my project at Leadership Academy (hereafter LA), a public charter school located on Detroit's Westside, in the spring of 2013. Though I was born, reared, and raised on the Westside of Detroit, I was not too familiar with LA because it had been open for only two years when I began my work there. I learned about the school through Ms. Helen, a teacher at LA who I met when I began my teaching career back in 2003. Ms. Helen and I go way back—she participated in many of my previous Black Language Pedagogy research projects. LA served approximately 200 ninth and tenth grade students, and ninety nine percent of the students who attended were Black American. More than half of the teachers who taught at LA were white. All of the classes at LA were gender based, including the two ninth grade ELA classes I worked in. LA had a strong focus on preparing their students to be scholars and leaders who would achieve at the rigorous level necessary to ultimately graduate with a college degree and thrive in life. As I began learning more about LA, I could not help but give it the side eye. The gender based classrooms rubbed me the wrong way because they are not inclu sive of transgender and gender non binary students, and they reinforce gender binaries and cisheteronormativity. I also did not care for LA's very strict dress code policy and uniform expectations because they perpetuated anti blackness. For example, the students were prohibited from rocking head scarves, hoodies, or haircuts with designs—all Black cultural styles and fashions. The schools' strict and oppressive uniform policies and gender based classrooms suggested that the students' gender and cultural freedoms and identities were being vilified, policed, and seen as antithetical to learning and success.

When I arrived at the school on the first day that my project began, something felt very familiar about the school. Perhaps it was the brown two story brick building with a few portable classrooms located on the playground, indicating that the school was overcrowded, that was reminiscent of some of the elementary and middle schools I attended in Detroit in the 80s and early 90s. Maybe it was the heavy, metal double doors or the metal detectors that reminded me of some of the high schools I taught at in the city. Once I made it past the metal detectors, the walls greeted me with beautiful mural paintings of Black students that communicated "Black academic excellence." I

also noticed a painting of the school's logo and mission statement on one of the walls. To get to Ms. Helen's classroom, I walked past a line of tan lockers, and I took a flight of stairs to arrive on the second floor. I noticed that a few of the steps were cracked and stained, which was a strong indicator that LA had purchased a vacant school building but did minimum renovations—a common narrative among Detroit charter schools. I opened one of the double doors to enter the second floor and I noticed two students walking down the hall wearing the school's uniform (khaki pants and navy blue shirts), and I heard a few voices in the teachers' lounge that was located across from Ms. Helen's classroom. I entered Ms. Helen's room, and we greeted each other with a hug. She did not have any students in her class at the time because her second hour was her prep. As I chatted with Ms. Helen, I looked around the room at the desks that formed a Socratic circle. I noticed a Do Now prompt on the board that asked students to write about violence and video games. Next to the Do Now was a screen that was connected to a projector. In the corner of the room was an outdated TV and VCR attached to the wall that looked like they had not been used in decades. The wall in the back of the room was decorated with student work. The room was well lit and had multiple windows that provided a view of the neighborhood that surrounded the school: brick ranch style houses, green grass, colorful flowers, and a few cars parked in front of some of the houses.

*"*What They Call You Where You From*?" Separating the Real from the Fake*

The bell rang, and students began trickling into the classroom one at a time. A few of the students noticed me sitting in a desk in one of the corners of the room. One of the students waved, and I waved back. Another student looked at me from head to toe. His eyes seemed to ask, "who are you and what are you doing in my class?" A student, who I would later come to know as B.O.B., asked Ms. Helen: "Who is dat, Ms. H?" Ms. Helen introduced me to the students by saying:

> Remember I told you all about Ms. Baker Bell? She's here from Michigan State University and will be working with us for a few months on a project about language. She's not like those other people—you know the ones that I'm talking about. They come watch us and then we never see them again. Ms. Baker Bell is not like that; she's good!

The "other people" that Ms. Helen was referring to are the "hit it and quit it" researchers that enter into schools and classrooms, collect data, and bounce. Researchers have hit and quit LA so much that even the students had their own vetting process for determining who were legit researchers and who were not. For example, a few days after coming to the school, some of the students asked Ms. Helen if they could ask me a few questions because *they needed answers*.

"Ms. Baker Bell, Did you grow up in the D?" Janel asked.

"Yep, I sure did," I responded.

"Eastside or Westside?" Chasse followed up.

"Westside! Fenkell and Southfield." I replied.

"What high school did you attend?" Lola asked.

"Redford" I said. I was wondering if they had heard of the school because it had been closed for nearly a decade.

"Dang, that school ain't even open no more. My aunty went there too." Allistar responded.

We all laughed.

"Okay! Okay! You said you was a teacher in Detroit too, right? Which schools did you teach at?" Fetti asked.

"I taught at DAAS, Crockett, and DIA," I answered.

"How old are you? You got any kids?" Janel asked.

"Yeah, I got two kids. And, how old do I look?" I chuckled.

"Can you tell us what this is going to be about?" B.O.B. questioned.

"Overall, I want to learn about your experiences using language at school and in the world. I am hoping that my learning from y'all will help me and other teachers become better at our jobs," I added.

The students' series of questions are reflective of what I would call a Detroit literacy practice. That is, when Detroiters meet other Detroiters, they ask a series of questions that helps them to place each other geographically on a map and/or distinguish *the real* (those who live/lived in Detroit) from *the fake* (those who claim Detroit but have never lived there or did not live there pregentrification).

Black Language Artifact 1: Black Language & Identity

The first Black Language Artifact (Figure 3.1) was designed to initiate a conversation about Black Language and White Mainstream English at the same time of unveiling the students' initial attitudes toward both languages. The activity, which I refer to as an attitudinal assessment, asked the students to: (1) read two language samples,[1] (2) draw an image, cartoon, or character that reflects each language sample, and (3) write a paragraph that expressed their thoughts about both languages and the speakers of those languages. At that time, the students were not aware that *language sample A* represented features of Black Language and *language sample B* represented features of White Mainstream English. This move was intentional as I did not want the students to become distracted or influenced by the labels used to identify the language variations this early in the study, but instead, my purpose was to capture their language attitudes and reveal how they were impacted by Anti Black Linguistic Racism before and after

I implemented the Black Linguistic Consciousness raising component of the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy.

Inspired by Kirkland and Jackson's (2008) study on Black students' language attitudes, I used the following Black Language Artifact as a pre and post activity to help determine whether or not the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy could interrupt the students' internalization of Anti Black Linguistic Racism.

Albeit straightforward, the attitudinal assessment activity provided deep insight into the ways the students navigated and negotiated Anti Black Linguistic Racism. Additionally, as I will illustrate later in this chapter, inviting the students to draw images to represent the language samples helped me get underneath their language attitudes where their perceptions of their cultural, racial, and intellectual identities in the face of anti blackness and white linguistic and cultural hegemony were buried. Drawings, like other visual texts, can reveal additional information about youth and children's beliefs, values, and perceptions that may not get cap tured through written or oral communication (Albers, Holbrook, & Flint, 2013). For instance, Kirkland and Jackson (2008) found that having their students create drawings afforded them an opportunity to represent visually how "attitudes about language speak back to selves and societies" (p. 142). I asked the students at LA to work individually on the attitudinal assessment before I invited them to partici pate in a group dialogue about their responses to the activity. I offer a composite counterstory of that dialogue, which highlights how deeply ingrained Anti Black Linguistic Racism is in our education system and in the minds of many Black

Language A:	Language B:
▪ People be thinkin' teenagers don't know nothin'. ▪ We be talking about current events all the time in our history class. ▪ Yesterday, we was conversating with Mr. B. about the war--it was deep. ▪ The teachers at South High is cool. ▪ But Ms. Nicks do be trippin' sometimes. Like that time she got really mad because Rob called her a dime piece. ▪ Ms. Nicks better quit trippin' or imma drop her class like it's hot. ▪ My cousin think the students at South High are all mean and stuff. ▪ The students ain't as bad as she think though. ▪ I told her she wrong about that.	▪ Teenagers know more than people think they do. ▪ We discuss current events in our history class on a regular basis. ▪ Yesterday, we were having a conversation with our teacher about the war--It was a rich conversation. ▪ The teachers at South high school are cool. ▪ However, my cousin thinks the students at South high are disrespectful. ▪ I informed her that she was mistaken. Not all of the students are disrespectful.

FIGURE 3.1 Attitudinal Assessment

students. Before presenting the dialogue, I want to briefly discuss why I chose to use composite character counterstorytelling to recount the students' experiences and attitudes about language.

Composite Character Counterstorytelling

Composite character counterstorytelling is a critical race methodological tool that allows researchers to merge data analysis with creative writing to expose patterns of racialized inequality and deepen our understanding of the ways race and racism affects the lives and lived experiences of people of color as indivi duals and as groups in schools (Cook, 2013). This method is used to counter majoritarian myths and narratives that get perpetuated about linguistically and racially diverse groups in education. Many researchers who use this method analyze the data and create a story involving composites and fictional characters. According to Solorzano and Yosso (2002), composite character counterstories are not simply fictionalized narratives and imaginary characters drawn from data; instead they are grounded in real life experiences and actual empirical data and are contextualized social situations that are also grounded in real life, not fiction (p. 36).

I used composite character counterstorytelling as a mechanism to represent both complexity and simplicity in interpreting and presenting the central ideas gleaned from the rich and multifaceted data gathered in this study. In particular, composite character counterstorytelling provided me with a method for weav ing together the interview transcripts, field notes, research memos, artifacts, and other research data into a coherent narrative that captured and provided a thorough depiction of how the students at LA understood their linguistic reali ties. To be clear, the events that I describe throughout this book, such as the dialogue I write about below, did actually occur. However, because the study took place across two classrooms, the use of composite character counterstory telling created space for me to bring together data from both classes to present a collective portrayal that more fully speaks to the cumulative impact of Anti Black Linguistic Racism and "draw attention to how individual experiences are representative of collective experiences within racial structures" (Cook, 2013, pp. 190–191).

Within this collective portrayal, I created composite characters by represent ing multiple students at LA as a single character to capture richer, more detailed and robust stories of the students' language attitudes and relationship with Anti Black Linguistic Racism. Before constructing the composite characters, I ana lyzed the data and wrote the narratives of each student involved in the study to capture the essence of each individual. I then used the following three themes that emerged from the data regarding students' language attitudes and their relationship with Anti Black Linguistic Racism to construct the composite characters: *internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism, linguistic double consciousness*,

and *Black Linguistic Consciousness*. I return to these concepts along with an analysis of how they were reflected in the students' language attitudes later in this chapter. In addition to their language attitudes, I constructed the composite characters using aspects of their language use, body language, personalities, perspectives, histories, and language experiences. Again, the composite character counterstories emanate from data collected from multiple students who participated in the study. The counterstories that I present throughout the remainder of this book are reflective of the sentiments, words, and stories the students at LA shared.

Group Dialogue: So What Y'all Think?

"Okay, so let's talk about what y'all wrote for both language samples," Ms. Baker Bell said as she sketched a perpendicular line on the dry erase board to imitate the pre attitudinal assessment. "Let's begin with language sample A—what did you write?"

"It's slang and incorrect," Janel blurted.

Her response was immediately followed by B.O.B.'s comment, "Yep, I said the same thang! Slang and ghetto!"

As Ms. Baker Bell hurriedly wrote Janel and B.O.B.'s responses on the dry erase board (Figure 3.3)., the comments from other students came quickly:

"Trouble"

"Bad kids"

"Sloppy"

"Loud"

"From the inner city"

"Alright then. What did y'all think about language sample B?" Baker Bell queried as she continued to scribble their responses on the board.

"I said it's a person who is respectful, loves school, and is always ready and prepared," Lola commented.

"Umm hmm. I put proper and knowledgeable," Janel added.

"I imagined it to be someone from the suburbs," a voice from the back of the room added to the conversation.

"Alright! I got it! Now, who's interested in sharing with me the image they drew for each language sample and why?" Ms. Baker Bell asked.

Allistar looked around the classroom at the other students to see if anyone would respond before he did. "I'll go," he said in a nonchalant manner.

"For language A [Black Language], I said I think this is someone with little education or someone who is just trying to be cool. He has his beater on and sagging pants. Maybe it is what he like or even all he know. I think he knows better but just don't do it. He looks like a thug because he look like he does not care. He have no car but nice clothes, and he loves to talk about others."

"And, for language B [White Mainstream English]," Allistar continued, "I wrote that I think this guy went to college and have a interview. He is very smart and or is trying to fit in. He has a house and a car and is striving for the best."

Allistar then stood up to show everyone the images he drew to represent both language samples. I could hear some of the students laughing as he waved his drawing around for everyone to see (Figure 3.2)

Responding to the striking resemblance between Allistar and the character he drew to represent someone who would communicate in Black Language, Fetti Bravo, who was sitting next to Allistar, blurted out, "ole boy under language A look just like you, man."

Before Allistar could respond to Fetti, Chase interrupted with "Okay, okay. Let me go. It's my turn. For person A, I drew an African American who sags & wears their hat backwards. And drawing B is a white person who wears belts and their hats on straight."

"I think language A is somebody who dresses like a thug and runs the streets," B.O.B. shouted.

Lola, added, "Yeah, for character A, I drew like bad kids. Like they don't care about school…"

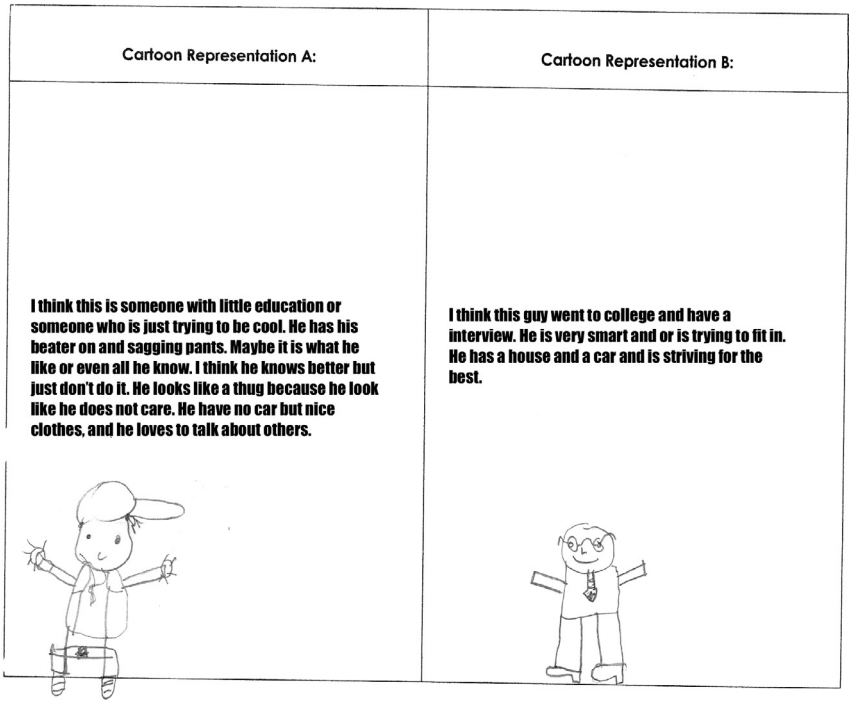

FIGURE 3.2 Allistar's Drawing for Attitudinal Assessment

Janel quickly interjected: "But that's not true. Just because you talk with slang don't mean you don't care about school."

"I'm not saying it's everybody, but certain people do think like that," Lola replied.

(Silence fills the classroom.)

"I'm just listening to this whole conversation and shaking my head. We can't assume because a person speaks a certain way that they are automatically bad," Fetti Bravo commented.

What immediately stands out from the group dialogue is that many of the students' drawings, comments, and perspectives reinscribe a linguistic and racial hierarchy that positions Black Language and blackness as inferior and White Mainstream English and whiteness as superior, thus reinscribing and reinforcing whiteness and anti blackness. For instance, "smart" and "good" became synonymous with white linguistic and

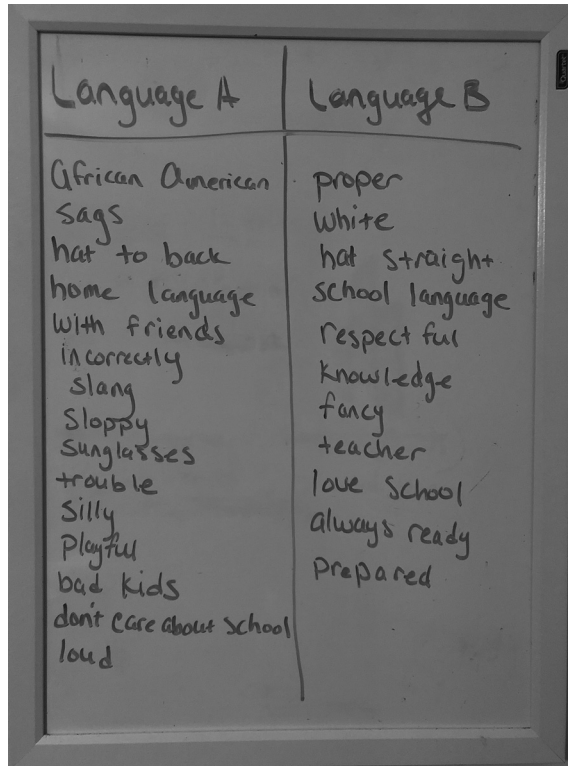

FIGURE 3.3 Responses Collected in Dry Erase Board

cultural norms, yet the students conflated words and images such as "disrespectful," "thug," "ghetto," "bad," "trouble," "skips school," and "gets bad grades" with Black linguistic and cultural norms. As difficult as it was for me to listen to Black students reinforce anti blackness and Anti Black Linguistic Racism, their perspectives are to be expected according to hooks (1992) who argues that Black people are socialized within a white supremacist society, white supremacist educational system, and racist mass media that teach us to internalize racism by convincing us that our lives (culture, language, literacies histories, experiences, etc.) are not complex and are unworthy of sophisticated critical analysis and reflection (hooks, 1992, pp. 1–2). This oftentimes leads to Black people unconsciously and sometimes consciously constructing images of ourselves through the lens of white supremacy (hooks, 1992, pp. 1–2). In this way, the students' responses to the attitudinal assessment mirror the ways in which they have been socialized to understand their linguistic, cultural, and racial identities in and through their language education and society.

Although the group dialogue suggests that many of the students did internalize Anti Black Linguistic Racism, it also shows that some of the students were beginning to engage in a form of dialogic consciousness raising (Paris, 2011; Baker Bell, Paris, & Jackson, 2017). We see this with Janel and Fetti Bravo, who push back on their classmate's assumptions about people who communicate in Black Language. Janel argues that "just because you talk with *slang* don't mean you don't care about school" while Fetti Bravo insists that "we can't assume because a person speaks a certain way that they are automatically bad." The students' responses during the dialogue are telling of why Black students need an Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy that provides them with "alternative ways to look at blackness, black subjectivity, and, of necessity, whiteness" (hooks, 1992, p. 5).

The Impact of Anti-Black Linguistic Racism

Following the group dialogue, I met with a few of the students individually to have a more in depth conversation with regard to their thinking about Black Language and White Mainstream English. The conversation, along with their responses to the attitudinal assessment and group dialogue, helped me to make sense of their language attitudes and how they were individually and collectively impacted by Anti Black Linguistic Racism before I implemented the Black Linguistic Consciousness raising component of the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy. Their responses suggested a complex and nuanced relationship with Anti Black Linguistic Racism. I use the following three descriptors to capture the complexity and the variations I observed in their responses throughout the study: *internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism, linguistic double consciousness*, and *Black Linguistic Consciousness*. I am using the descriptor internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism to describe the students' responses that indicated they unconsciously supported white linguistic hegemony and perpetuated anti blackness and Anti Black

Linguistic Racism. Linguistic double consciousness describes the students whose responses reflected their linguistic ambivalence. That is, their responses suggested that they both resisted and perpetuated Anti Black Linguistic Racism and white linguistic and cultural hegemony. Finally, I use the descriptor Black Linguistic Consciousness to characterize the students whose responses illustrated how they critically interrogated and consistently resisted white linguistic hegemony and Anti Black Linguistic Racism. Though I am describing Black Linguistic Consciousness in this chapter, I did not observe this perspective in any of the students' responses until after I implemented the consciousness raising component of the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy (more on this in chapter 5). In fact, my analyses showed that out of the 16 students who participated in the study from the beginning to the end, 14 of their responses to the attitudinal assessment and dialogue reflected Anti Black Linguistic Racism and two of their responses reflected linguistic double conscious ness before I implemented the consciousness raising component of the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy.

While these descriptors are useful in describing the variation, nuances, and complexities in the students' language attitudes and the ways they are impacted by the Anti Black Linguistic Racism they experience in school and in their everyday lives, it is important to note that their attitudes and perspectives may have also been influenced by the study taking place in the context of school—a space they associate with an "assimilationist and often violent white imperial project [that requires them] to lose or deny their languages, literacies, cultures, and histories in order to achieve in schools" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 1). Indeed, some of the students could have been so acclimated to "performing school" and not having their voices heard, that some of their responses to the early activities within the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy could mirror the broader lan guage attitudes and Anti Black Linguistic Racism that are perpetuated in schools rather than a full reflection of their own attitudes and beliefs. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I offer two composite character counterstories that illus trate the two dominant variations I noticed in the students' responses: internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism and linguistic double consciousness. These com posite character counterstories capture the students' relationship with Anti Black Linguistic Racism before I implemented the consciousness raising component of the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy.

A Composite Character Counterstory about Janel's Linguistic Double Consciousness

> "Girl, I be wearing my brother's basketball shorts and stuff," Janel said to Lola as they walked through the doors of Leadership Academy a few minutes before the first bell rang.
>
> Lola looked at Janel with a side eye and replied, "That's ghetto."

"I don't care," Janel replied and shrugged her shoulders as she entered the combination to the locker that her and Lola shared.

"Do we need our ELA books for Ms. Helen's class today?" Janel asked Lola.

"Nah, I don't think so! I think that lady from MSU is going to be here today what's her name?"

"Oh, that's right. Her name is Ms. Baker Bell! " Janel quickly responded.

Lola and Janel hung their coats in the locker and began walking to class. The girls wore navy blue vests, white shirts, light khaki colored dress pants, black belts, and black dress shoes—a required uniform at LA. Like many of the students, Janel and Lola's uniforms followed the school's dress code to a tee, but their Ebonics vio lated what some of their teachers deemed *the language of school*. When they turned the corner, their classmate, Allistar, ran past them, nearly knocking Janel's folder out of her hand.

"Little boy! If you don't slow your roll! You ain't bout to make it to class on time no way," Janel yelled.

"My bad, J! You know I cain't be late for Ms. Helen's class no more," Allistar responded as he continued running down the hall.

"Who is that speaking like they don't know proper English," Ms. Lockett said to Ms. French. When Ms. Lockett turned around and saw that it was Janel, her frown turned into a half smile. She shook her head and said, "Now I know you know better. Your PSAT scores are too high for you to be speaking like you lack intelligence, young lady." Ms. Lockett was the principal at LA, and Ms. French was Janel's math teacher.

Janel, who called herself the queen of code switching, smirked and said, "sorry, Ms. Lockett."

"Ummm hmmm," Ms. Lockett responded sarcastically.

As Janel and Lola walked up the stairs toward Ms. Helen's classroom, Janel said "You see how quick Ms. Lockett switched her attitude when she saw it was me speaking in slang?"

"Right! If that was anybody else, she would have went in on them," Lola replied as she shook her head.

"Fasho, girl! It's these high PSAT scores. They know I'm smart! I could sit here and talk like this for days, but if I'm getting my work done, I'm getting my work done," Janel firmly stated.

Janel and Lola walked into Ms. Helen's class and took their seats as the bell rang. A few minutes later, Allistar walked into the room sweating profusely. Janel looked at Allistar and said, "I told you! I knew you wasn't going to be on time."

Janel then glanced at the two language samples on the sheet that Ms. Baker Bell asked her and the other students to complete. "*People be thinkin' teenagers*

don't know nothin" Janel silently read to herself. *Hmmm. This is how me and my friends talk. We can all relate to this language,* Janel thought as she continued to ponder on the language samples. *Yeah, I'd definitely use this language with my friends because if I spoke in language B around them, they would ask me why I'm talking like that or they'd think I'm trying to be smarter than them or something. On the other hand, I would speak like language B when I'm around an administrator or teacher,* Janel thought as she reminded herself of the interaction she had with Ms. Lockett before class. *Okay, so I am going to draw a picture and write a response that show how these languages represent two sides of me.*

Janel drew her picture (Figure 3.4) and wrote the following response on the attitudinal assessment: The difference between language A and language B is: language A is used when I am with my friends, and I am comfortable enough to talk in "slang" or incorrectly. In language B, I don't want to seem unin telligent or ignorant, so I talk properly or knowledgeably in front of an administrator.

After Janel, Lola, and Allistar left Ms. Helen's class that day, they continued to talk about the activity and dialogue they had with Ms. Baker Bell. During lunch, they reminisced about their experiences using Black Language.

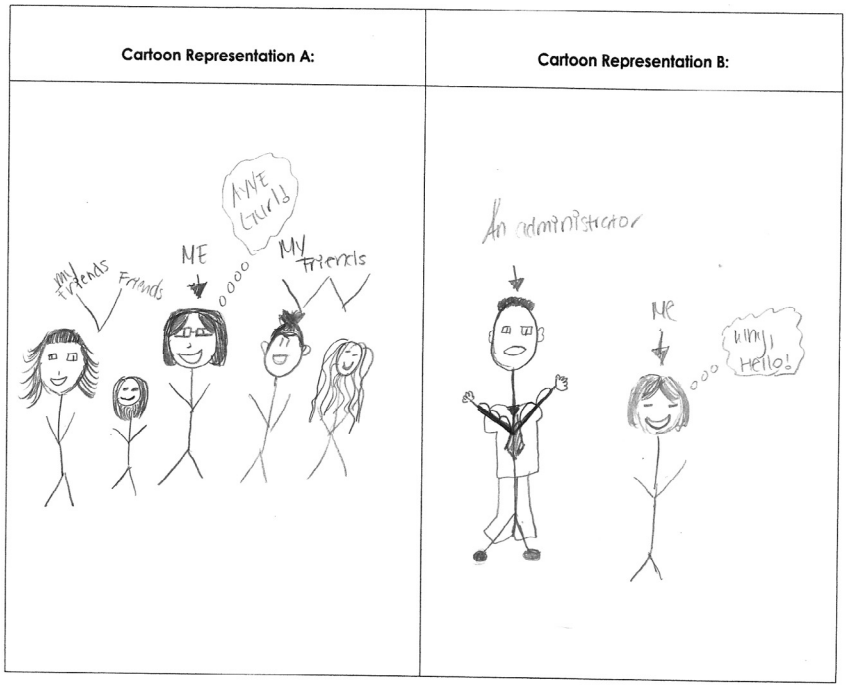

FIGURE 3.4 Janel's Drawing on Attitudinal Assessment

"But forreal … that activity really got me thinking about what's considered incorrect or slang," Janel said as she paid for her lunch. "Because when you're taught language, you're just taught a certain way to say things … and if you change it up, then it's incorrect. Like if I put *ain't* on a sentence test, they gonna say that's wrong, but if I say *am not,* then that's right so …"

"You ain't never lied," Lola responded as she threw her hands in the air to suggest she gives up.

"But if I say *ain't* to my friends, then *ain't* is right and *am not* is wrong," Janel added. Allistar nodded in agreement.

As the trio sat down at the lunch table, Janel reminded them of the language policing that happens in their math class. "Y'all know Ms. French will correct us too quick," Janel said as she opened up her bag of chips. Lola and Allistar laughed as Janel began imitating Ms. French.

"She be like 'that's not the right way.' And the students be like 'we not in English—this math class, Ms. French.'"

"Yep!" Allistar grinned. "Do y'all remember that time when I said the answer to the math problem was *one o fo*, and she made me repeat the whole sentence as if *one o fo* and one hundred and four don't mean the same thang?"

"I remember that," Lola nodded and shook her head. "So unnecessary."

"And truth be told …", Janel said, "Ms. Helen be correcting us all the time, but some of the other teachers don't care as long as we getting our work done."

"Nope, Ms. Helen don't like us using choppy sentences either," Allistar responded.

"Umm Hmm," Lola interjected to express agreement with Janel and Allistar.

"But real talk … when I came to school and I was speaking like that when I was younger, all of my teachers would tell me 'that's not the right way to talk' or they'd say I was speaking wrong. That made me feel sad, and I would just start crying. I thought they were trying to scrutinize me," Janel shared.

"Dang, J! That's sad!" Allistar responded.

"It really is! Even sadder that it happened at church too," Janel said in a very serious, but frustrating tone. "When I used to go to church, there were a whole bunch of boujee people who was like from 21 mile. They was like, 'she ghetto. She don't know nothing. She just gonna be a rat or turn out to be a baby momma' … they were being so judgmental. In church, though!? In church!"

"Because of the way you talk?" Lola asked.

"… because of the way I talk" Janel quickly responded. "They didn't know nothing about me. They didn't know if I went to school. All these As

and Bs I get in school, and they just assumed that I'm just unintelligent or I could be a baby momma or didn't do none of my work. They don't even know me," Janel said with frustration in her voice.

"Sometimes I feel like that when my parents correct me," Allistar said.

"Oh my god! If I'm with my momma, she'll correct me too, but if I'm with my daddy, he be talking the same way with me … he be like 'girl, you betta come on,' but that's only when he talking to us [Janel and her siblings]. When he talk on the phone, he be talking correct like 'hello,'" Janel said in a way to mimic white middle class ways of speaking. "I be like you ain't slick, daddy!"

Lola and Allistar started cracking up. Janel joined them in the laughter.

"But forreal … if I'm in my house, then I'm gonna talk how I feel like talking and that's probably going to be slang because it's easier. It's not like I gotta pronounce all those words. I just say what I feel like saying," Janel continued. "At the end of the day, I think it is more smart for you to talk in both languages rather than speak in one language or talk proper all the time. If you can do both, then it show that you are obviously smart."

The bell rang and Janel, Lola, and Allistar left the lunch room and walked to Ms. French's class.

Reflecting on Janel's Linguistic Double Consciousness:

In the composite character counterstory about Janel's linguistic double conscious ness, we are able to observe the ways in which she navigates and negotiates her linguistic identity across various situations. Her language experiences have con tributed to her feeling conflicted and ambivalent toward Black Language. In one way, Janel embraced Black Language and felt compelled to defend its honor, yet there are moments where she acquiesces to politics of respectability and perpetuates Anti Black Linguistic Racism. As noted in the counterstory, Janel continuously resisted and pushed back on Anti Black Linguistic Racism. For instance, she chal lenges the dominant narrative which suggests that a person who communicates in Black Language is academically inferior by pointing out her high PSAT score and superior grades in school. By highlighting her academic achievements while simultaneously admitting to being a speaker of Black Language, Janel is disrupting "interpretations of Black linguistic forms as signs of Black intellectual inferiority and moral failings" (Alim & Smitherman, 2012, p. 24). She also confronts the anti blackness embedded in monolingual ideologies when she states, "it is more smart for you to talk in both languages rather than speak in one language." In other words, Janel is suggesting that bilingual Black Language speakers are not linguisti cally inferior to monolingual White Mainstream English speakers. Janel's thinking

is in line with Alim and Smitherman's (2012) argument about the cultural linguistic hegemony that "imposes itself on people, and praises them for 'covering up' their own language varieties rather than rewarding them for speaking multiple language varieties" (p. 48).

The composite character counterstory also reveals how Janel and her peers developed creative ways to resist Anti Black Linguistic Racism. We see this in the scenario that Janel, Lola, and Allistar described from their math class. In response to Ms. French's language policing, the students suggested that they would use humor to remind Ms. French that she teaches math, not English. Essentially, the students are trying to help Ms. French understand that their linguistic background should not interfere with their ability to learn. We also see Janel use creative resistance in how she navigated and negotiated the language policing that Ms. Lockett subjected her to. Although Janel smirks and apologizes to Ms. Lockett for using Black Lan guage instead of White Mainstream English, in her conversation with Lola, she points out the irony in Ms. Lockett's response. That is, Ms. Lockett affirms Janel's intelligence at the same time of checking her for not sounding intelligent. Janel also tells Lola that while she's able to use her grades and PSAT scores as a shield to protect her from being chastised by Ms. Lockett, this is not the case for other stu dents whose intelligences may not be expressed academically or may get over looked in school spaces.

While Janel's counterstory illustrates that she found creative ways to resist the Anti Black Linguistic Racism she endured in school and in everyday life, it also shows how she sometimes internalized and perpetuated anti Black messages about her language. This is exemplified by her description of Black Language and Black Language speakers as "incorrect," "unintelligent," "ignorant," and "does not appear knowledgeable." These terms are informed by a white supremacist ideological lens that interprets Black Language as a symbol of intellectual and moral inferiority and reflects racist beliefs about Black people. Janel also illustrates that she has internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism in her rationale of how she navigates and negotiates language. In her written response, Janel states that she uses Black Language when she is with her friends because she feels comfortable speaking in "slang or incorrectly," and she explains that she will use White Mainstream English when she does not want people, specifically authority figures, to view her as unintelligent or ignorant. As Smitherman (1977) pointed out decades ago, this perspective is often upheld by members of the Black speech community, and it suggests that Janel, like many Black Language speakers, views her racial, linguistic, and intellectual identity through the white gaze in ways that negates her value.

Janel also describes the emotional harm and consequences enduring Anti Black Linguistic Racism had on her sense of self and identity. She explains that when she was younger, she would "break down" when her teachers chastised her for communicating in Black Language because she felt they were trying to scrutinize her. Janel's experience captures how teachers are complicit in the reproduction of Anti Black Linguistic Racism and "the debasement of black humanity, utter

indifference to black suffering, and the denial of Black people's right to exist" (Jeffries, 2014). Similarly, Janel describes how upsetting it was to experience Anti Black Linguistic Racism in the Black church—a social location that has historically nurtured and cultivated Black linguistic and cultural practices and a place that Janel associated with the biblical verse "do not judge or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1). Instead, Janel felt she was judged harshly by women she considered her elders simply because of how she talked. In addition to the emotional harm and indelible mark this experience left on her, Janel's experience offers an intersectional understanding of how her experience with Anti Black Linguistic Racism is also impacted by her gender and class identity.

For example, the church women says that Janell is "gonna be a *rat*" and will turn out to be a "*baby mama*." In the Black community, the lexical item *rat* is short for *hood rat* and describes a sexually promiscuous girl who lives in the hood (Smitherman, 1994). The lexical term *baby mama* emerged as a label to describe a child's mother, generally one who is not married to the child's father and is considered insignificant (Smitherman, 1994). Both rat and baby mama represent "a marked woman imbued with certain negative meanings in Black communities that often leaves her alienated" (Cooper, 2007, p. 322). The church women's chastisement of Janel's language can be seen as not only an attack on her language, but also a way to mark her Black, young female body outside of the norms of Black middle class culture (Cooper, 2007). Although white supremacy, anti blackness, and misogynoir are the cause of this state of affairs, it is important to highlight Janel's experience with the church women as an example of how Anti Black Linguistic Racism gets internalized and perpetuated within Black communities.

Although Janel and the women at her church were united by skin color and gender identification, their class was a different story. Janel captures the class difference between her and the church women by describing them as *boojee*, a lexical item within the Black speech community that often describes an "elitist, uppity acting African American, generally with a higher educational and income level than the average Black, who identifies with European American culture and distances him/herself from other African Americans" (Smitherman, 1994, p. 76). To further illustrate their boujeeness, Janel uses the rhetorical strategy *signifyin* when she states, "*they was like all from 21 mile*." Williams Farrier (2016) defines signifyin as:

> a ritualized kind of put down, an insult, a way of talking about, needling, or *signifyin on* someone else. Sometimes it's done just for fun, in conversations with friends and close associates. Other times, the put down is used for a more serious purpose. In this communicative practice, the speaker deploys exaggeration, irony, and indirection as a way of saying something on two different levels at once.
>
> *(Williams Farrier, 2016, p. 225)*

21 Mile is a road located in a suburb 13 miles north of Detroit. On one level, Janel is using the signifyin feature to communicate that the church women do not reside in Detroit. On another level, she uses this feature to suggest that the women are boujee, and prejudging her because she lives in Detroit and com municates in a language that reflects that community, which is majority Black and working class. It was not clear to me if Janel actually knew where the women resided, but what I find interesting is how far outside of the inner city she places them. Janel could have simply stated that the women lived in the suburbs, but she intentionally uses 21 mile to signify or exaggerate how removed the women were from the inner city. This comment not only suggests that the women were far removed from Detroit, but to also signify how far removed they were from the Black community, Black culture, Black Language, and blackness in general.

A Composite Character Counterstory about Allistar's Internalized Anti-Black Linguistic Racism

"Ok, bye Momma!" Allistar said as he jumped out of his family's blue minivan.

He looked down at his cell phone to check the time and immediately dashed through the metal double doors of LA once he realized he only had three min utes to make it to class. Allistar was an honors student and member of the varsity basketball team. He hated being late to his first hour because he knew Ms. Helen would tell his coach. On his way running to his locker, Allistar almost knocked a folder out of Janel's hand. As he approached his locker, he yelled to his lock ermate, Fetti Bravo, "Aye man … leave dat open!"

"Yo! Did you see the game last night?" Fetti asked Allistar.

"Did I see it? What kinda question is that?" Allistar said as he put his coat in the locker. Allistar and Fetti were referencing the 2013 NBA Finals. "Man, Lebron gon' win that MVP award this year! Watch!" Allistar said.

"Nah, man, what is you talking about!?" Fetti responded. The boys went back and forth until they heard the bell ring. "Aww snap … we late!" Allistar said.

The boys grabbed their folders and ran to class. As they entered Ms. Helen's room, they were greeted by Ms. Baker Bell. "Good morning! Y'all made it just in time for the first activity," she said as she handed them the stapled sheets of paper. As Allistar and Fetti sat down, Ms. Helen cleared her throat, making an "ahem" sound to get the boys' attention.

Allistar quickly responded, "My bad, Ms. Helen! My momma be running late in the morning."

"We'll talk about it after school. Come see me before practice." Ms. Helen replied and then turned to Ms. Baker Bell and said "Although he said that in a non eloquent way, he is really smart."

After seventh hour, Allistar and Fetti returned to Ms. Helen's class to discuss why they were late to class earlier.

"Ms. Helen had to meet with Ms. Lockett. She'll be back shortly," Ms. Baker Bell said as she flipped through the stack of papers in front of her.

"Aight. Is it cool for us to wait in here?" Allistar asked.

"Sure," Ms. Baker Bell replied. "Hey … while y'all waiting, can we talk about the activity we did in class today?"

"Oh, the good language, bad language stuff? Yeah, we can do that," Allistar responded. Fetti nodded in agreement.

"I noticed that you wrote that language shows one's knowledge, and a person who communicates in language A [Black Language] has little educa tion," Ms. Baker Bell said to Allistar. "Tell me more about your thinking about this."

"Well, when you speak like that. It shows you don't have knowledge because it's like you're not talking in complete sentences or you're not doing what they taught you at school," Allistar replied. "Usually when you see somebody who talk like that, they're a thug."

"Whatchu mean by thug?" Fetti asked.

"Someone who does not do the right thang. Someone who is constantly in trouble or in and out of jail. Someone who skip school. Don't get good grades," Allistar quickly answered.

"Have you ever been judged or labeled a thug when you're speaking like this?" Ms. Baker Bell says as she looks at Allistar.

"If somebody was to walk by and hear me, possibly," Allistar responds with uncertainty.

"But what about you? You talk like that too! You consider yourself a thug?" Fetti quickly asked.

"Nah!" Allistar replied. "I'm not a hood person, but I live in the hood. I speak the hood or whatever. It's just usually when you see somebody talkin' like that, this is how they dress and look," Allistar said as he pointed at the image he drew to represent Black Language. "It's portrayed this way on tv and in movies too."

"My dad use both [Black Language and White Mainstream English], and he's educated and far from a thug. Just because you speak like that don't mean you got to be hood or ghetto," Fetti stated. "You can see people sagging their pants and hat backwards and they can use language A and B. It all depends."

"True. I guess I'm talking about people who use it all the time—there's a time and place." Allistar replied. "You don't want to go up in no interview saying 'what up?'" Allistar added.

"Is it ever an okay time to use language A?" Ms. Baker Bell asked.

"Like my older brother. He in college right now. When he around his friends, he talk like that [Black Language]. But if he around certain people, he don't," Allistar responded.

"Yeah, that's the way I talk when I'm around my friends too. You don't have to say as many words. It's a shorter way to put stuff in a sentence," Fetti responded.

"So what influenced your thinking about when you should use this lan guage?" Ms. Baker Bell asked Allistar and Fetti as she pointed at the Black Language sample on the sheet in front of her.

"My momma and daddy. They told me not to speak like that," Allistar responded.

"My mom and school," Fetti followed up.

"My parents tell me not to speak like this because they don't want me and my siblings to go through what our daddy went through. He is from Trini dad and had a problem when he first came here [United States]. My mom had to teach him English so he could speak better and know what to say when looking for a job. Certain times, depending on where we go, some people might judge him and be like 'why he speaks like Caribbean?' or they sometimes say 'he's not from here.' They'll say little comments like that," Allistar added. "So if my parents hear me talking like that, they'll make me resay the sentence until I get it completely correct."

"Same! If I say something the wrong way, my mom will tell me to say something else. This happens at school too," Fetti said.

"Yep. In elementary school, I used to get away with talking like this, but once I got in middle school, I knew this was not the right way to talk."

"How did you know?" Ms. Baker Bell asked.

"I attended an all white school a couple years back, and no one talked in slang or sagged or anything like that," Allistar replied.

"What about now?" Ms. Baker Bell queried.

"At this school, you usually don't hear kids talk like language B [White Main stream English]. You usually hear them using language A [Black Language]."

"And what happens when you use language A here?" Ms. Baker Bell asked.

"I get corrected. Especially in Math and English," Allistar responded. "Teachers treat you like you dumb when you talk like that. Like earlier when Ms. Helen said I speak in a non eloquent way."

"How does that make you feel?" Ms. Baker Bell asked.

"I always feel a little upset like, what is it? What am I doing wrong? And, how can I fix it?" Allistar answered.

As Allistar finished talking, Ms. Helen walked into the room and told the boys to meet her in the hall. When Allistar stands up, he says, "Maybe I should say … you should not be judged because you speak a certain way or dress a certain way. You should be judged by your character. Language A represents the type of people you around and the neighborhood you in. You speak your environment, I guess."

Reflecting on Allistar's Internalized Anti-Black Linguistic Racism

The composite character counterstory about Allistar's internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism is reflective of the initial attitudes and perspectives I observed among many of the students at LA as well as other Black youth I have interacted with during my teaching and research. Allistar's counterstory illustrates how he unconsciously supported white linguistic hegemony and perpetuated anti black ness and Anti Black Linguistic Racism. For instance, he continues to describe Black Language speakers as intellectually and morally inferior: "little education," "don't have knowledge," "don't get good grades," "in and out of jail," "not speaking in complete sentences," "skip school," "trouble," etc. Yet, he char acterizes speakers of White Mainstream English as "very smart" and "striving for the best." Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2014) remind us that youth who absorb messages that suggest that their language is wrong, incorrect, dumb, or stigmatized may react with internalization, which is "a process whereby members of stigmatized groups accept negative messages about their self worth" (p. 65). Unlike the resistance we observed in Janel's counterstory, we do not see instances of Allistar pushing back against Anti Black Linguistic Racism or white linguistic hegemony. In fact, Allistar does not begin to reconsider his thinking until Fetti challenges his assumptions and stereotypes about speakers of Black Language, which illustrates the importance of creating space for Black students to engage in dialogic consciousness raising.

The composite character counterstory of Allistar also reveals that many of the Black students were aware that the "value attributed to particular languages is intimately tied to larger understandings of race and racial hierarchy in U.S. society" (Bedolla, 2003, p. 265). For example, the image Allistar drew to repre sent speakers of Black Language included a sideways baseball cap, sagging pants, and an Afro, which are cultural markers distinct to the Black community (see Figure 3.2). Like many of Allistar's peers' drawings, the image associated with White Mainstream English included a "suit and tie" and "eyeglasses." Reminis cent of Kirkland and Jackson's (2008) study, there was "an aura of success that pervaded the White Mainstream English character and an air of accomplishment was artistically woven onto the image" (p. 141). I also want to point out that Allistar and many of his peers associated fashions that are rooted in Black culture with inferiority, which illustrates how Black students oftentimes view "themselves as *other* through the dominant gaze" (Hayes, 2015, p. 16).

As argued by Pritchard (2017), fashion and literacy are interlocking systems of expression that provide youth a space to self create, self affirm, and adorn oneself with a sense of belonging. Fashion offers "an analysis of intervention into systems of power and domination historically, sociologically, economically, and rhetori cally" (p. 127). With this in mind, Pritchard encourages teachers and researchers to think more seriously about "the role of dress in literacy history, theory, and praxis as fashion is a useable surface on which to explore the seamlessness between the word and the world" (p. 129). Pritchard's exploration of fashion literacies helps to shed light on the value that's placed on fashion within many Black communities, especially among Black youth within those communities. From hoodies to head scarves, *what* Black people wear and how *we* wear it mat ters! Although cultural markers such as "sagging," "backward and sideways base ball caps," "head scarves," "beaters," and "white tees" are perceived negatively by dominant culture and older generations, this is not necessarily the attitude held among Black youth. For them, natural hairstyles and sagging communicate their fashion sense and symbolize freedom, cultural awareness, or their rejection to the values held by mainstream society (Hayes, 2015).

Allistar's criticism of Black Language, culture, and fashions were heartbreaking, yet unsurprising given the ways that anti blackness and white linguistic and cul tural hegemony get upheld in our schools, homes, communities, curriculum, classrooms, and society in general. But perhaps what was most troubling about Allistar's criticism of Black Language was that it disclosed traces of his unconscious negative view of himself and other Black people. For example, the clothing of the character he constructed to represent Black Language ironically resembled the fashions I observed him and many of his peers wearing on Free Dress Friday.[2] That is, many of the boys wore sagging pants, white tees, jewelry chains, and designer shoes. Further, as illustrated in his written response to the activity, he used grammatical features of Black Language to admonish the character he con structed to represent Black Language all while singing the praises of the character he constructed to represent White Mainstream English. When I first read Allistar's remarks, I was left with many questions: Did Allistar realize he was utilizing many of the same linguistic features as the character he drew to reflect Black Language? Why did Allistar think the character he constructed to represent Black Language look like a thug if he sported similar fashions? Allistar was an honors student who used Black Language, so why did he think Black Language speakers have "little education" based solely on their language? The answers to these questions mag nify Richardson's (2004) argument that when Black students are taught to hate Black speech, it indirectly teaches them to hate themselves.

Allistar's composite character counterstory also illustrates that school is not the only place where white linguistic hegemony and Anti Black Linguistic Racism is perpetuated. Allistar, Fetti, Janel, and many of their peers stated that their parents would correct them when they used Black Language, which indicates that Black Language is not completely valued in the context of home. As emphasized by

Kirkland and Jackson (2008), Black Language is not seen as socially or intellectually valuable even in the context of family. Indeed, many Black parents have also endured what Smitherman refers to as the "cycle of miseducation." That is, children are not taught in their language arts classrooms that all human languages and language varieties have inherent grammatical patterns and are systematic and rule governed. Instead, linguistic miseducation will occur through their teachers' obsession with teaching "correct" grammar, spelling, and pronunciation. These children will grow up to be mis educated adults. (Smitherman, 2017, p. 6). Adults mis educated about language will pass this miseducation, color evasiveness, and white linguistic hegemony onto others, including their children. In addition to miseducation, some parents, like Allistar's, believe that they are protecting their children from the linguistic violence they endured as children by teaching them to adhere to respectability politics and not use Black Language. They do not realize that this is actually interfering with their children's language and literacy learning. This further illustrates how Black Language speakers internalize Anti Black Linguistic Racism under the cloak of whiteness and underscores the need for researchers and teachers to consider the role of parents and family as we re educate Black students about their language.

Janel's and Allistar's composite character counterstories provide an in depth look into how Black students are impacted by Anti Black Linguistic Racism. Their counterstories affirm that eradicationist and respectability language pedagogies do not account for the internalized Anti Black Linguistic Racism, linguistic double consciousness, or the consequences these approaches have on Black students' sense of self and identities. Their voices and perspectives beg for an alternative language education that provides them with an alternative way of looking at Black Language. In the following chapter, I will lay out the Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy that I engaged the students at LA in, which is an essential step in getting Black students to unlearn anti blackness and Anti Black Linguistic Racism.

Notes

1 The samples included under language A were patterns that I heard students using at LA during the observation phase of the study.
2 A Friday where students were able to wear clothes outside of the school uniform.

References

Albers, P., Holbrook, T., & Flint, A. (Eds.) (2013). *New Methods in Literacy Research*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Alim, H. S., & Smitherman, G. (2012). *Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language, and Race in the U.S.* Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.

Baker Bell, A., Paris, D., & Jackson, D. (2017) Learning Black Language Matters: Humanizing research as culturally sustaining pedagogy. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 10(4), 360 377.

Bedolla, G. J. (2003). The identity paradox: Latino language, politics and selective dis sociation. *Latino Studies*, 1(2), 264 283.

Charity Hudley, M., & Mallinson, C. (2014). *We do Language. English Language Variation in the Secondary English Classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Cook, D. (2013). Blurring the boundaries. The mechanics of creating composite char acters. In M. Lynn & A. Dixon (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 181 194). New York: Routledge.

Cooper, B. (2007). Excavating the love below: The state as patron of the baby mama drama and other ghetto hustles. In G. Pough, E. Richardson, A. Durham, & R. Raimist (Eds.), *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminism Anthology* (pp. 320 344). Mira Loma, CA: Parker Publishing, LLC.

Hayes, S. (2015). "S.W.A.G. Style with a goal": Exploring fashion/style as a critical lit eracy of Black youth in urban schools (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest.

hooks, b. (1992). *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Jeffries, M. (2014, November 28). Ferguson must force us to face anti blackness. *Boston Globe*. Retrieved from https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2014/11/28/ferguson must for ce face anti Blackness/pKVMpGxwUYpMDyHRWPln2M/story.html

Kirkland, D. E., & Jackson, A. (2008). Beyond the silence: Instructional approaches and students' attitudes. In J. Scott, D. Y. Straker, & L. Katz (Eds.), *Affirming Students' Right to Their Own Language: Bridging Educational Policies and Language/Language Arts Teaching Practices* (pp. 160 180). Urbana, IL: NCTE/LEA.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Paris, D., & Ball, A. (2011). African American Language in U.S. education and society: A story of success and failure. In J. Fishman & O. Garcia (Eds.), *Handbook of Language & Ethnic Identity: The Success-Failure Continuum in Language and Ethnic Identity Efforts* (Volume2) (pp. 85 95). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pritchard, D. E. (2017). *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Richardson, E. (2004). Coming from the heart: African American students, literacy stories, and rhetorical education. In E. Richardson & R. Jackson (Eds.), *African American Rhetoric(s): Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (pp. 155 169). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Rickford J. R., & Rickford, R. J. (2000). *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Smitherman, G. (1977). *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

Smitherman, G. (1994). *Black talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Smitherman, G. (1998). Ebonics, King, and Oakland: Some folk don't believe fat meat is greasy. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 26(2), 97 107.

Smitherman, G. (2017). Raciolinguistics, "mis education," and language arts teaching in the 21st century. *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, 32(2), 4 12.

Solorzano, D., & Yosso, T. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter storytelling as an analytical framework for education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23 44.

Williams Farrier, B. (2016). Signifying, narrativizing, and repetition: Radical approaches to theorizing African American language. *Meridians*, 15, 218 242.