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**Communicating about Communication: Multidisciplinary  
Approaches to Educating Educators about Language Variation**

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Abstract

The quest to educate non-standardized English-speaking students has been a primary driving force behind developments in many fields represented by Compass journals, including sociology, geography, linguistics, psychology, history, literature, and education. Academics engaged in these multiple perspectives must join together, both to communicate knowledge about language variation to educators and to learn from educators' experiences with teaching non-standardized English-speaking students.

Following the conference theme of breaking down barriers, we draw on research gathered from multidisciplinary approaches to educational analysis by developing a *linguistic awareness* model that is designed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge about language variation between educators and researchers. Our model currently addresses three U.S.-based English language varieties: School English, Southern English, and African-American English. Drawing on these models, we highlight best teaching practices that can help non-standardized English-speaking students break down communication barriers to educational success in the pre-collegiate classroom.

We draw on previous endeavors by academics to communicate information about language variation to wider audiences, noting two important challenges: the need to couple language variation awareness with readily accessible, specific examples of language variation and the need to provide information about how to work with language variation within the increasingly diverse classroom. We contend that only with this specific knowledge can educators use linguistic information to help students from non-standardized English-speaking backgrounds achieve in schools. Otherwise, educators may not appreciate the relevance and immediate necessity of the information.

In our *linguistic awareness* model, we suggest realistic, cost effective ways to approach educators, including certification and re-certification courses, in-service workshops, websites, and wikis. A wiki of materials to accompany this paper may be found at <http://charityhudleymallinsoncompass.wmwikis.net/>. We also suggest future directions for linguistically aware educators to become resources for information on language variation and linguistic tolerance in their own schools and communities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The United States achievement gap—the finding that groups of historically underprivileged students, especially with respect to gender, race and ethnic background, and social class, perform below other students on a number of educational measures—is a matter of great national concern (Vanneman, Hamilton, Anderson, and Rahman 2009). Though the term “achievement gap” has long existed in the academic literature, the term “opportunity gap” has been introduced to shift the primary focus away from so-called underachieving individual students and schools and instead toward the persistent society-wide hurdles that hinder the opportunities for academic success for students from historically excluded cultural groups (DeShano da Silva, Huguley, Kakli, and Rao 2007).

In this paper, we review some of the interrelated, complex factors from across disciplines that underlie why historically underserved students may find it disproportionately difficult to succeed in school. Language and communication are at the core of many of these issues, and we present models developed by linguists for working with educators and schools to overcome achievement and opportunity-based challenges to students’ academic success.

## 2. INVESTIGATING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP AS AN OPPORTUNITY GAP

According to projections released by the U.S. Census Bureau, by the year 2050, members of non-White minority groups are expected to make up 54 percent of the general U.S. population, and minority children will make up 62 percent of the American youth population (Bernstein and Edwards 2008). Scholars from many disciplines have investigated the situations that directly affect the educational success of many groups of students, particularly students from cultural groups that have historically been denied access to education. Across educational contexts, the social class of a student's family, the family's racial and ethnic background, the student's gender, and the student's language skills are some of the important demographic and cultural factors that intertwine and correlate with how well a given student will achieve in school (Feagin, Vera, and Imani 1996, Ferguson 2001, Moses 2002).

Many groups of students, including students who are from underserved regions of the country, who are English Language Learners, whose families are immigrants, who have learning differences, and who are from historically excluded cultural groups may all have reduced access to education, often because they are more likely to come from lower social classes or from families with lower income backgrounds. The disproportionate allocation of wealth in U.S. society allows some schools to be better funded than others and also allows some privileged parents to send their children to better public, or private schools (Feagin, Vera, and Imani 1996, Oliver and Shapiro 1995). Resources at elite schools are more concentrated and classes are smaller. As a result, educational advantages are transferred from parents to children, within middle and upper class circles (Feagin, Vera, and Imani 1996, Roscigno 1998).

Educators' views about their students and educators' expectations for their students also converge in ways that lead to unequal treatment of underprivileged students within school settings. For example, Farkas (1996) found that educators judge students on non-cognitive, often cultural traits that may not be related to cognitive performance, such as attention paid to homework, neatness, lack of classroom disruptiveness, and facility in "School English," or a more standardized, academic variety of English that students are expected of to use in school settings. If, in the view of their educators, certain students sound better and act better, that is, if they come to school talking and behaving in ways that are closer to the norms that educators expect, then educators often treat them better as well.

In addition, the combination of educators' views about and expectations for their students contribute to persistent inequality in the methods of tracking underprivileged students into lower-level classes. Oakes (1987) finds that poor students and students from historically excluded

cultural groups are disproportionately tracked into lower level classes in ways that do not always reflect their actual academic abilities. Similarly, Bettie (2003) studied White and Mexican-American high school girls. She found that the Latina girls who were from more middle class backgrounds were often tracked into more advanced high school classes, whereas the girls who were from lower class backgrounds were often steered toward lower-level or more vocational classes. Thus, on the basis of demographic and cultural factors including race and ethnicity, language, gender, and social class, many schools remain a cultural battleground where some students are fundamentally disadvantaged.

The academic expectations that educators have for students are also intertwined with students' own internalized academic expectations for themselves. Students who feel that their educators have low expectations for them may be more likely to also believe that they have limited opportunities for school success, and they may be more likely to perform below their capabilities. Lovaglia, Lucas, Houser, Thye, and Markovsky (1998) found that psychological factors like low self-esteem can affect non-White students' motivation as well as their results on standardized tests, and these tests tend to be written in the standardized English with which some students are already familiar when they come to school (Charity Hudley and Mallinson forthcoming).

Some scholars have also studied whether disadvantaged students may develop an oppositional stance toward education that leads them to reject school culture and thereby perform less well at school. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) and Fordham (1996) popularized the term "acting white," which refers to a perception among some African-American youth that school success entails adopting the norms and values of mainstream White society and rejecting their African-American heritage. Some scholars have found support for the concept of "acting white," including Neal-Barnett (2001), Ogbu (2003), and Smitherman (2000). However, Tyson, Darity, and Castellino (2005) found that many African-American students are high achievers yet do not feel social ridicule or internal conflicts. Carter (2007) takes her work in a different direction, by exploring what the concepts of "acting black," "acting Spanish," and "acting white" all mean to African-American and Latino/a students.

There is a vast array of literature on the achievement and opportunity gaps facing many groups of underserved students in the U.S. As we have reviewed, many factors, including the unequal distribution of school resources, the tendency for some educators to hold biases toward and lowered expectations for students who come from historically excluded cultural groups, the tracking of lower income and non-White students into lower-level classes, and the self-fulfilling expectations that some students set for their own academic achievement, affect how students and educators interact within different school contexts across the U.S. At the core of many

of these issues of tracking, biases, and expectations are deep-seated issues of language and communication—as well as miscommunication.

### 3. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION AS KEY FACTORS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY GAPS

Linguists and educators have identified issues related to language differences as a major factor in the U.S. achievement and opportunity gaps. As sociolinguistics began to develop in the U.S., considerable attention was directed toward solving language-related educational problems (Hazen 2007). Many studies were funded by the U.S. Department of Education and other policy-oriented organizations (e.g., Labov, Cohen, Robins, and Lewis 1968, Wolfram and Christian 1976, Wolfram, Shiels and Fasold 1971). Quantitative data from these studies supported the claim that language varieties spoken by socially disfavored groups are not “broken” forms of English (a popular ideology) but rather are patterned and systematic varieties (see also Labov 1966, 1972, Wolfram 1969, 1972). As a result of their research, linguists have found that language differences particularly surface in educational contexts in the forms of student identity practices, teacher bias, tracking, and testing outcomes. We review these issues and then situate them within a broader sociological context.

***Student Identity Practices:*** Smitherman (2000) and Carter (2007) describe a “push-pull” that many African-American students face in classrooms and schools. As students push harder to assimilate to mainstream academic culture in order to succeed in school, they may feel forced to pull away from their home communities. Most people would find a message, even an indirect message that they have to suppress part of their linguistic identity to operate within the mainstream culture, to be hard to accept. But many groups of students that have historically been excluded from access to education, including African-Americans, Latino/as, Native Americans in the United States, and students from Appalachia, often live this reality every day.

***Teacher Bias:*** Education scholars and linguists agree that language varieties are not deficient forms of English, yet this message has not always trickled down to education practitioners. Many educators still hold damaging stereotypes about non-standardized varieties of English, particularly the variety that linguists call African-American English (Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, and Carpenter 2006, Lazar 2007, Terry 2008, Wheeler and Swords 2006). Educators may perceive students who speak African-American English, Southern U.S. English, Appalachian English, and other non-standardized varieties of English as being less capable; as a result, they may set lower expectations for their academic success and limit their learning opportunities (Goodman and Buck 1973, Lippi-Green 1997).

**Tracking:** Educators may expect students to sound like themselves, yet there are many cultural and social reasons why students may want to sound distinctly different. When educators ask questions and converse with students, they often best connect with students who closely mirror their own ways of thinking and speaking. Sometimes, this connection results in a gender difference, whereby educators feel more in tune with students who are of the same gender. More than three-fourths of all teachers are women (Corcoran, Evans, and Schwab 2004), and when male students do not sound like their educators, linguistic conflict can arise (Charity Hudley and Mallinson forthcoming, Ferguson 2001). Language differences are also a primary mechanism in the processes through which students are tracked into different levels of classes, because often, assessment tests and standardized tests rely on knowledge of a standardized variety of English (Charity Hudley and Mallinson forthcoming, Garrett 2009). Students who come to school with less prior exposure to a standardized, academic variety of English may therefore be viewed as less intelligent or less gifted, and therefore may be tracked into classes that are lower than their abilities.

**Testing Outcomes:** Educators generally have little detailed and often inaccurate linguistic information regarding English language variation and are not trained to deal with language variation in the classroom (Adger, Wolfram, and Christian 2007). Consequently, educators have limited ability to tailor their teaching methods to best serve non-standardized English-speaking students, often with serious consequences. For example, standardized tests tend to over penalize the use of non-standardized English features (Charity, Scarborough, and Griffin 2004, Charity Hudley and Mallinson forthcoming) and privilege those students who speak a standardized variety of English (Garrett 2009). Because common diagnostic measures and assessment tests are often linguistically biased, information about students' linguistic backgrounds is crucial for educators to prepare students to meet the linguistic requirements of academic and social success and thereby help address persistent U.S. achievement and opportunity gaps.

**Other Macro-Level Sociological Factors:** More macro-level sociological factors like residential segregation, racism, poverty, unemployment, and under funded schools also work in concert with linguistic factors to constrain many African-American students' educational opportunities (Labov 2008). In Labov's model, under funded school systems, which plague many schools that historically underserved youth attend, directly lead to inadequate instruction by educators, which lead to reading failure on the part of many African-American students. In addition, Labov also believes that *students'* use of African-American English also directly leads to *educators'* inadequate instruction. When students come to school and use African-American English, rather than the School English that is expected of them in academic contexts, educators are more

likely to deliver lower quality instruction to these students (Cunningham 1976-1977, Dreeben 1987, Goodman and Buck 1973, Sims 1982). As we noted above, this process may occur because educators may assume students who use African-American English are less skilled, less intelligent, or less capable than students who do not use African-American English. In other cases, educators may simply not know what to make of their students' use of African-American English, and they may be confused about why their students seemingly cannot or will not speak in a more standardized variety of English. Delivering lesser-quality instruction to students who use African-American English is thus a complex process that may occur for a variety of reasons, whether educators and students are conscious of them or not. Given concerns about how to educate linguistically diverse students, many linguists and educators have begun to work together directly to help educators better serve all students in their diverse classrooms. The premise for these actions is that with more information about language variation, educators will be far better equipped to deliver high quality education to all their students, no matter whether these students are White, Asian, African-American, Southern, Appalachian, Latino/a, special needs, gifted, low income, wealthy, girls, boys, English Language Learners, and more. The need is clear for educators to have effective tools for working with the growing population of culturally and linguistically diverse students in U.S. schools. To help educators work with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, however, more training must be given to educators. It is clear that students fare better in life socially, professionally, and academically when they learn to use the standardized, academic variety of English that is accepted at schools and in workplaces *and* when they are encouraged to maintain the language varieties that they have learned to speak natively, from home or other places. The support that comes from having every student's linguistic heritage honored and respected by educators fosters an educational environment in which all students, not just those who come to school already familiar with a standardized variety of English, have the equal opportunity to learn and grow.

#### **4. LANGUAGE-CENTERED ACTION PLANS FOR EDUCATORS**

The partnerships that have been established between linguists and educators have taken many forms. Some of these initiatives include writing print-based materials, generating multimedia and online materials, holding educator-training workshops, and engaging in service learning endeavors.

As we seek to complement and build upon the work that other linguists have done, we have also begun producing our own materials for educators. In our previous and ongoing work with educators, educators have expressed the need for more information on how language variation relates to

the ways that students perform academically, how to address the use of non-standardized English features in a student's speech or writing, and how to value the language patterns that students bring with them to school and build on them, while assisting the students in learning a standardized variety of English. Educators are also concerned with issues of cross-cultural communication (and miscommunication) as they interact with linguistically diverse students in their classrooms.

To answer these questions for educators, we have co-authored a book with the specific goal of making information about language variation accessible to all types of educators, to be published in the Teachers College Press Multicultural Education Series (Charity Hudley and Mallinson forthcoming). While we focus on addressing educators whose students speak varieties of African American English and Southern U.S. English, the information on language variation that we provide, as well as the sociolinguistically informed teaching strategies that we include, are relevant to all educators and school support personnel, whether they teach in diverse classrooms or not.

In Charity Hudley and Mallinson (forthcoming), we present information about language variation within a multicultural education framework. Many educators are already familiar with the goals of the multicultural education movement. Prominent authors in multicultural education, including Gay (2000) and Banks and Banks (2004, 2007), establish that there is an integral relationship between language and culture—that is, that language, in many ways, *is* culture. Other work, including Delpit and Dowdy (2001) similarly addresses language variation in the classroom across grade levels. From a multicultural education perspective, language is centralized as a key aspect of culture for all individuals, students and educators.

In Charity Hudley and Mallinson (forthcoming), we also make a particular effort to help educators understand language attitudes and language differences not just from a *deficit* or *prejudice-oriented* perspective, but from a *privilege* perspective as well. We help educators focus not simply on the negative outcomes associated with speaking stigmatized varieties, which often can unintentionally reinforce views of non-standardized English-speaking students as being pathologized or deficient themselves, but also on the privileges associated with speaking and writing in standardized ways and knowing the norms, conventions, and rules of School English. To make this point in Charity and Mallinson (forthcoming), we provide a short list that of “standardized English privileges” (see Table 1). This list is based on MacIntosh (1988), in which she reviews many of the privileges that White people carry in their “invisible knapsacks.” In much the same way, we suggest that standardized English speakers have many linguistic privileges available in their “invisible dictionaries.” We also have adapted some of the

following privileges from a similar discussion provided by social workers Chen-Hayes, Chen, and Athar (1999).

***Table 1. Seven Standardized English Privileges***

1. Standardized English-speaking students can usually be assured that the newspapers, magazines, and books they are asked to read for school will be communicated in the type of English that they are already familiar with.
2. Standardized English-speaking students can usually be assured that they will not be mocked, teased, or denigrated for how they pronounce their words.
3. Standardized English-speaking students can usually be assured that educators will never think they are less intelligent than they are simply because of how they talk.
4. When standardized English-speaking students encounter standardized tests, they can usually be assured that test instructions and test materials will be written in the English that they are already familiar with.
5. Standardized English-speaking students can usually be assured that most of their educators are trained to interact with them in ways that are based on communicating in the type of English that they are already familiar with.
6. Standardized English-speaking students can generally be assured that the way they talk will not be the subject of jokes or belittling in mainstream TV shows or movies.
7. Standardized English-speaking students can generally be assured that the way they pronounce their words will not interfere with their ability to be assessed in school, speak to people in authority, interact with a police officer, or, later in life, to obtain housing and be hired for a job.

We assure educators that we are not blaming standardized English speakers for having these socially conferred advantages. Rather, as Chen-Hayes, Chen, and Athar (1999) state, it is important to make educators, students, administrators, parents, staff, and others metalinguistically aware of these issues so that everyone can become advocates for linguistic tolerance. The message in every classroom should be, "Here we listen to what everyone has to say, no matter how they say it."

***Educator-Training Workshops***

To engage with educators, several past workshops have focused on linguistics and education. Some of the recent notable workshops were convened by Ray Jackendoff and Maryanne Wolfs at Tufts University in Summer 2006 and by Lisa Green at University of Massachusetts Amherst in Summer 2009. Anne Charity and William Labov also co-taught a course on minority language varieties and literacy, which dealt with questions

surrounding language variation and education, at the 2007 LSA Summer Linguistic Institute at Stanford University. In addition, Charity Hudley has conducted workshops on language variation for K-12 educators in Richmond, Virginia, and in Washington, DC, sponsored by the American Federation of Teachers.

In June 2009, Charity Hudley and Mallinson co-taught a one-week workshop entitled “Language Variation in the Classroom: An Educator’s Toolkit,” hosted by The Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Department of Education and the Division of Community Engagement (<http://www.community.vcu.edu/programs/sws/>). Ten educators from Virginia and Maryland attended the workshop, and participants ranged from kindergarten educators to college counselors to sign language interpreters. Via mini-lectures and group discussions that drew upon our forthcoming book, the participants developed their linguistic awareness and learned about key sociolinguistic topics in ways that were tailored to educational contexts. For example, as the educators learned about academic registers, they explored their own ideas about the features that constitute “educator talk,” or the ways that educators communicate with their students. In another example, as the educators learned that standardized tests must be carefully designed to avoid cultural and linguistic biases, they examined relevant educational assessments, including developmental tests, writing tests, and end-of-year exams.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the educators took home their “language variation in the classroom toolkit,” which included ideas for lesson plans, project plans, and presentations to be used in the educators’ own classrooms and schools. The workshop also culminated in the development of a course-specific, password-protected website, in a wiki format. Wikis enable the workshop leaders, teaching assistants, and attendees to have access to the online material in an editable format. These features ensure the educators’ permanent access to the site, easy participation in the discussion board, and the ability to collaborate by posting their own content for others. A wiki of similar language variation and education-oriented materials designed to accompany this article may be found at:

<http://charityhudleymallinsoncompass.wmwikis.net/>.

Our evaluations and assessments have revealed that, as a result of the workshop, participants have gained a greater understanding of the difference between random errors and differences in linguistic forms that are influenced by students’ language backgrounds and therefore feel better equipped to help students from all language backgrounds succeed in school. One participant called the VCU workshop “transformative,” and another relayed her own feeling of empowerment following the workshop, “You changed my life!” As is evident from the feedback, educators felt that information about language variation will inform their teaching practices, as well as their own personal

attitudes and outlook toward and assessment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

To expand these workshops, Charity Hudley has been awarded a National Science Foundation Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Minority Post-Doctoral Fellowship Starter Grant. The grant will fund Charity Hudley and Mallinson to co-lead language variation workshops with 100 educators in schools in Virginia and Maryland who have identified a need to learn more about language variation for working with linguistically and culturally diverse groups of students at their schools. Data collected from the workshop participants will reveal what knowledge the educators gained from the workshops and how it has informed their language-related teaching strategies. We hope that our findings will add to a small but critical body of literature that addresses not only what educators know about language variation but also how educators process this information and envision its use in their classrooms. In doing so, we aim to help other linguists refine and implement future workshops to similarly connect with educators.

### *Service Learning Endeavors*

Service learning is another avenue through which linguists have worked to integrate academic knowledge, research opportunities, and educational outreach, while involving students at their home academic institutions in the process. Through service learning projects, scholars and their undergraduate and graduate students have unique opportunities to share linguistic knowledge with members of schools and communities. Often, service learning initiatives are carried out in diverse communities and are oriented toward social change.

At the upcoming American Dialect Society conference, held in Baltimore, Maryland, in January 2010, a special panel session, sponsored by the American Dialect Society Committee on Teaching, is being held. Entitled "Cultivating Socially Minded Linguists: Service Learning and Engaged Scholarship in Linguistics and Education," the panel brings together linguists and practitioners who have implemented community engagement projects designed to serve non-standardized English speaking groups in various forms. Topics include:

- Models for an introductory undergraduate linguistics course that includes a service learning component on African-American English (Anne Charity Hudley and Bill Labov)
- A graduate level seminar that connects students with educators at a small Baltimore, Maryland, charter high school to raise students' and educators' linguistic awareness and facilitate the development of students' linguistic versatility (Christine Mallinson and Helen Atkinson)
- Partnerships in Texas and Oklahoma, that pair students with community agencies to serve non-native English-speaking community

Conference website: <http://compassconference.wordpress.com>

members and Native American language communities (Colleen Fitzgerald)

- An investigation into the effects of service learning on linguistically and culturally diverse college students enrolled in a first-year composition course, finding that non-native English-speaking students may expect and gain more from service-learning activities than native English-speaking students (Adrian Wurr)
- A partnership between two linguists, four faculty from a School of Education, and 24 in-service, middle grades teachers in North Carolina, in which educators received education in language variation and then developed educational content that is now available to any educator (Jeffrey Reaser)
- A summary of outreach materials, projects, and internships developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics, focusing on how these resources can be integrated into service learning courses at colleges and universities (Carolyn Temple Adger)

As these projects reveal, scholarship designed to serve non-standardized English speaking groups takes a wide variety of forms, and many practical challenges related to education can be addressed by applying linguistic knowledge to address community and educational needs. Other important materials on the topic of community engagement and in linguistics include Wurr and Hellebrandt (2007), Charity, Harris, Hayes, Ikeler, and Squires (2008), Charity (2009), and Fitzgerald (2009).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Language and communication are central to many of the serious challenges that are facing the U.S. educational system. When all students, but especially culturally and linguistically diverse students, perceive that their language is devalued in school, when they do not receive appropriate feedback from educators, and when they feel that they are being discouraged from continuing their education, they may perceive that their culture, their own family and friends, and even themselves are also devalued. Culturally and linguistically diverse students may not receive the tailored instruction that they may need to help them perform to the best of their abilities in classes and on standardized tests, and they may lose confidence in the learning process, in their educators, and in the school system. These students may even resist feeling like their language and culture are looked down upon in academic settings by disengaging from the standardized English-speaking school culture and climate altogether. Language differences and miscommunications not only may mean lost educational opportunities for many groups of students, but also may translate into lost job opportunities and lost income.

Having acquired a body of research that investigates language differences across various cultures, groups, and regions of the U.S., linguists are in a unique position to help scholars and practitioners across disciplines tackle questions about how the social aspects of language behavior intersect and manifest in educational situations. It is crucial that linguists and scholars from other disciplines share our knowledge, so that we may benefit from what others already know. At the same time, linguists and educators, as well as psychologists, sociologists, social workers, counselors, and other related scholars and practitioners, are faced with questions about how to disseminate all that we have researched and learned. Often, linguists and related scholars write their materials and research findings for academic audiences, but educators are well aware of the importance of language in the classroom. As a longtime kindergarten teacher who attended our VCU workshop said, she consistently found that, for the students in her classroom, “language is the rope that all other educational issues are intertwined around.” Educators are often not only well aware of the critical significance of language within the educational process, but are often eager to receive new knowledge to inform their teaching strategies as well.

In this paper and through our own research and outreach, we have encouraged a multidisciplinary model of *linguistic awareness* to bring together linguists, other academics, and educators to address contemporary, pressing U.S. educational challenges. Future work must continue to be interdisciplinary, drawing upon the strengths of linguists, educators, psychologists, education specialists, sociologists, ESL specialists, speech-language pathologists, and others. Future work must also be oriented toward outreach, as we strive to advance educators’ knowledge about language variation, refine methods for communicating linguistic information to educators, and address a diffuse and diverse network of educators. Although much work has been done, our model addresses the clear needs that remain to:

- *partner* academics with educators in linguistically and culturally diverse schools, districts, and communities,
- *disseminate* accurate linguistic knowledge to educators of linguistically and culturally diverse students,
- *explore* best practices for communicating linguistic information to educators,
- *assess* the results of providing linguistic training to educators, and
- *apply* these findings to educational policy.

We contend that more effort and energy should be spent on disseminating to educators, clinicians, and other practitioners relevant information that has already been gathered about language variation. It is crucial that researchers share knowledge with educators, clinicians and practitioners, while also adding to this body of information by continuing to document and analyze

how language variation interacts in real-world educational settings, within the contexts of local schools and communities. Linguists and related scholars should also be more involved in creating easy-to-implement and realistic language instruction strategies. These strategies must be both linguistically informed and educationally informed; that is, they must be oriented toward helping students understand the differences between non-standardized and standardized varieties of English, and they must be practical strategies that educators can use in the classroom with their individual students, because it is on the educator-student level that many educational changes occur. As linguists and educators continue to work together, they will be able to develop more action plans, strategies, and curricula that are geared toward addressing the specific needs and challenges of students and educators, who speak and interact in their own localized ways within their given schools and communities.

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