“We are the ‘Other’”: The Future of Exchanges between Writing and Language Studies

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Years ago at a biannual Watson Conference at the University of Louisville, in the “wrap-up” final Saturday morning open discussion, luminaries in the field raised the question of language study and teaching in relation to writing study and teaching. In the room were scholars and teachers invested in first-year composition, second-language writing, writing in the disciplines, and other writing domains. “I do not teach ‘language,’ I teach writing,” stated a highly-influential, respected, and thoughtful colleague emphatically, and heads nodded. The lively debate that ensued highlighted a question that we cannot afford to marginalize: what is the relationship, in U.S. writing studies, between scholarship about writing and scholarship about language?[1] What should it be?

The growing transnational work in the US is opening up new ways to answer these questions as well as reminding us of longstanding efforts to do so, in a very complex network of questions about language and teaching and writing and disciplines, disciplinary boundaries, intrinsic goals, and defining the epistemological edges to our work. Attention to these questions is itself transnational.

> La mondialisation de la communication, la multiplication des échanges professionnels entre des personnes appartenant à des communautés linguistiques et culturelles diverses ainsi que la pluralité des supports de diffusion de ces échanges impliquent de mieux connaître les modes de fonctionnement des discours qui émanent de ces communautés et de mettre en lumière les traits spécifiques qui les caractérisent. (von Munchow & Rakotonoelina, 2006, p. 9).

Both A. Suresh Canagarajah (1996) and Mary Muchiri et al. (1995) noted decades ago that compositionists have made claims about academic writing, knowledge, and language from a particularly U.S.-centric position, something simply no longer tenable in this increasingly interrelated world context.

1 I use “Writing Studies” as a term meant to encompass all of the many domains of writing work—research and teaching—today: WAC, WID, first-year composition, multimodal composition, writing didactics, academic literacies, technical-professional writing, and so on.

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Bruce Horner (2006) notes that globalization, while increasing what seems to be a monolingual dependence on English, is in fact fragmenting that English in ways that make a focus on single-standard English quite misguided. Claire Kramsch (2014) notes in parallel that foreign language teachers were traditionally prepared to teach a new or different language to students who all shared another language—essentially, a monolingual ideology underpinning foreign language teaching. For Kramsch, it is time to reject the "standard monolingual native speaker as our ideal," embracing instead the "living multilingual subject" in language teaching (Kramsch, 2014, p. 251; see also Heidrick, 2006 and Cook, 1992 among others). And Kramsch points to L2 users' impatience with monolithic "standard" language rules as they play with language across modes, media, contexts, and varieties; their goal is communication. These learner expectations do not mesh with traditional teaching.

Kramsch's point fits into a national trend in which "departments of English and foreign language in particular see the reshaping of their curricula as essential for responding to shifting educational needs and student interests," and foreign language programs can really be affected—the increase in global studies efforts and programs usually calls out more language training, in speech but also in writing (Schultz, 2011, p. 66), and transdisciplinary programs such as the one described by Alyssa Cavazos et al. (2018), (modern languages, applied linguistics, and composition-rhetoric) facilitate exchanges about writing and language coursework. This increased pressure, coupled with new ways of conceptualizing what that teaching does and is, makes the discussions about foreign language writing instruction highly relevant.

"Others"?

The "other" in my title is meant to suggest that there are disciplinary and epistemological domains that have been pitched as oppositional to the detriment of our collective, collaborative work; "we are the other" suggests that perhaps language and writing studies are closer than we think, certainly a proximity that defines work on writing in some countries. There are additional layers to this "other"ness. U.S. writing studies seems to sometimes "other" writing instruction and research in countries outside the US that might have different teaching and research traditions. The field of writing studies has also, at least according to some, seemed for the most part to "other" the language fields of second-language writing, foreign language writing, and linguistics within the US, both for their practices and for the disciplines that inform their scholarship. Those same disciplines, interestingly, are often the ones also shaping writing research and teaching around the world—research that has also been depicted as marginalized (Horner et al., 2011). Translation studies and comparative literature scholarship have treated transnational and translingual subjects for decades but are rarely included in U.S. writing scholarship. World-wide, deeply plurilingual contexts

such as in Africa or Europe have driven writing research in ways from which U.S. scholars could draw important insights (*cf.* Arezki, 2018; Belondo, 2011; Kara-Abbès, Kebbas, & Blanchet 2011; Kara-Abbès, Kebbas, & Cortier 2011; Ndamba, 2018; Peeters, 2011; Prasad 2014; Rasoloniaina, 2011; Reimer, 2018; Rispail 2011). Some of this work raises essential questions in new ways, as for example in French scholarship calling for a "decolonization" of multilingualism in the face of societal interdiction and scholarly hesitancy to take on the "other-ness" of linguistic diversity (Prax-Dubois, 2019). And finally, foreign language writing instruction is perceived as the "other" in L2 writing (Reichelt, 2011).

In thinking about these "others" I do not want to try to address deeply, here, any of the frequently-posed questions about whether second-language writing and writing studies are distinct fields or disciplines (Matsuda, 1999; Silva & Leki, 2004; Silva et al., 1997); whether second-language writing indeed is "situated at the intersection of second language studies and composition studies" (Silva et al., 1997, p. 399); whether the two "intellectual formations" (Matsuda, 1999) should or should not merge; or whether the division is rather between applied linguistics and composition studies (Silva & Leki, 2004). I can say with some certainty, however, that there have been communication challenges among these fields, as suggested also by Guillaume Gentil (2018), within the US and in global interactions, and, in a related debate, more generally among scholars who feel writing faculty teach language, and those who feel we do not, as I noted above. That question has led to the marginalization that scholars like Paul Kei Matsuda (2006) have described, noting that "second-language issues have remained peripheral to composition studies" (p. 571), or to the warnings about the ways L1 scholarship and teaching might negatively impact L2 writers' learning and progress (Leki, 2006).[2] Tony Silva et al. (1997) argued already decades ago for much more interaction between composition and second language studies, to the benefit of both, and Jean Marie Schultz (2011) has suggested that "the potential bi-directional effect of writing instruction in both the L1 and the L2 holds exciting potential for significant linguistic and rhetorical cross-fertilization" (p. 73).

I will put my focus on how *language* and *linguistics* in general have been othered, and how a transnational framing might offer an opportunity that we must not miss to think differently—a path, a prompt, and a provocation—serving as catalyst for exchange and collaboration and making "the language question" essentially unavoidable for U.S. writing scholars, in the way it has already been unavoidable around the world.

2 Note that a range of complex questions is linked to this central question, but cannot be taken up here: questions about "2nd" language writing, the field of applied linguistics, whether L2 writing is field of its own or part of composition or Writing Studies, etc. These questions raise further questions about "the field," who "we/us" are when invoked in scholarly works, discipline(s)—see Horner (2018) and Donahue (2018) for further discussion.

International, Global, Mobile, Superdiverse, Transnational …

The terms "international" and "global" are sometimes used interchangeably, but differentiating them is useful in the context of writing research and writing program administration. Internationalizing is built from the starting point of "nations" and then imagines "inter"-nation interactions. "Internationalizing higher education" tends towards the idea that U.S. colleges might expand their reach, establish campuses overseas, or draw additional students from other countries. Globalization, on the other hand, generally draws on such questions as increasing economic interdependence, the "shrinking" of the world stage (driven in part by social media and the internet), and the re-hierarchizing of multinational corporations over nation-states. Unlike "internationalization," with no "nation-" in its root, "globalization" focuses our attention on common experiences driven by something other than nation-state configurations.

Another useful concept, this time from social geography, is "mobility." This frame, drawn into writing studies in the past decade or so (cf. Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Lorimer Leonard, 2013; Nordquist, 2017; Ploog et al., 2020), can offer additional insights into the shifting nature of society, a nature that can only influence higher education in multiple interrelated ways, a human geography that serves to make sense of the geographical nature of being-in-the-world today (Verstraete & Cresswell, 2002; see also Horner, this volume). A mobility perspective considers place as radically open and permeable (Verstraete & Cresswell, 2002). In this model, the stability of place and of one's place that we seem to have counted on becomes less foundational, replaced by an expectation that people will move, travel, engage, whether virtually or in person, whether in real time or asynchronously, in every lived context.

While terms such as "global" or "international" have been used frequently in the past couple of decades of attention to writing studies' scope in contexts outside of the US, including by me, perhaps it is "transnationalism" that can best decenter the U.S.-centric perspective, moving us into a "trans" frame, rather than an "inside-outside" one (see Horner, this volume, for a deep exploration of the affordances connected to the "trans" frame). "Transnational" is understood most commonly as "*working across* national contexts." Steven Vertovec (2009), noting the massive expansion of interest in transnational issues, describes transnationalism as "economic, social, and political linkages between people, places, and institutions crossing nation-state borders and spanning the world . . . sustained cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formations." Earlier, Vertovec (1999) explored transnationalism as the interaction between country of origin and new country, via migrants and migration, noting that both home country and new country become a site of social action in which migrants operate (cited in Dahinden, 2009). This transnational interaction evolved in intensity and

simultaneity (Dahinden, 2009). For Dahinden, two types of transnationalism took shape: diasporic transnationalism, which is grounded in economic investment and close ties between home and new, and an evolving "transnationalism in mobility" which understands transnationalism not as the exploration of movement from one space to another to settle there but a "circular, perpetual, and permanent mobility" (Dahinden, 2009, p. 3) which is in fact part of the strategy of the mobile. "[T]o be transnational involves a mode of acting and performing (i.e. building up transnational social relations and practices) as much as it involves a mode of thinking, feeling and belonging" (Université de Neuchatel, Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, Laboratoire d'études des processus sociaux, n.d.).

If we take the three prongs of Hall's exploration of "trans" as linked to the transnational (this volume), we can see the richness of the frame: "trans" as transition, as betweenness, and as "beyond-ness" would lead to understanding the transnational as more than only working across, but as working in-between national spaces and eventually working beyond "nation" and "national" while still recognizing the modes in which nations do exist and work. To pick up on the distinction Benedict Anderson made of "imagined communities" that ML Pratt further developed decades ago, nations imagine themselves to be sovereign, bounded, and fraternal—which they both are and are not. We face both the reality of some forms of border (after all, walls, checkpoints, borders, armies, and actions of heads of state who perceive sovereignty exist) and the reality of fluidity, porosity, connectivity that is often beyond the control of agents and institutions. As Gentil (this volume) suggests, there are *both* national/regional challenges and transnational challenges. It is particularly connected to a translingual perspective on fluidity in language and writing (and other) practices, to "translingualism as a diverse and strategic social practice" (Canagarajah and Gao, 2019, p. 3).

These transnational questions do not, of course, uniquely belong to composition studies nor to U.S. scholarship, but are prevalent in other contexts and disciplines. "*Si le transnationalisme est considéré comme une incise épistémologique dans l'histoire des sciences sociales, c'est parce que ce courant de recherche révèle à la pensée sociologique elle-même le nationalisme méthodologique qui l'a habité*" (Lacroix, 2018, p. 7). Transnationalism as a strand of sociology has allowed sociology to see itself as "methodologically nationalistic." This trend allows the home country to be the automatic point of reference and, equally importantly, leaves scholars unable to carry out research outside of a "nation-state" framework; it also seems to me to underscore the frequency with which we tend to say "other than" English or "outside of" the US in this same referential way. (See also Schneider 2019; Shajahan & Kezar, 2013; and Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, who focus in particular on methodological nationalism in higher education research). The social sciences and in particular migration studies have been "epistemologically straightjacketed," which encourages scholars to miss the dynamic in play, "transcending the symbolic and

spatial limits of the State, and in particular those brought on by human migration" (Lacroix, 2018, p. 7). Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller (2004) further note that traditional approaches can obscure the social processes and institutions in play. They call for scholars to rethink and reformulate the concept of society such that it is no longer automatically equated with the boundaries of a single nation state.

But as Ludger Pries and Martin Seeliger (2012) note in their chapter in *Beyond Methodological Nationalism: Research Methodologies for Cross-Border Studies*, while it has become clear that the critique of methodological nationalism is essential, it is also important to remember the weight and influence of national analyses, to not "dissolve the geographic-spatial bonding of the social into the air of deterritorialization, spaces of flows and global cosmopolitanism" (p. 219). This same point is good to keep in mind for our understanding of language(s). Gentil (this volume) reminds us that fluid, mixed, meshed understandings are important, but so is acknowledgement of the reality that even if socially constructed, the discreteness of languages still powers much of our daily linguistic understanding, and Ofelia García and Li Wei (2014) note that the linguistic repertoire that is one comprehensive and dynamic repertoire still works with features that are "socially constructed as belonging to separate languages" (p. x). These conceptual conversations and trends in other disciplines, for example migration studies, are deeply valuable to composition as we make our way into this territory and underscore the degree to which we need to understand and attend to language knowledge in order to be effective participants in the conversation.

Work in transnational writing research thus demands that we think beyond, that we focus on the ways in which language and writing intersect and align in other traditions in the world. In Europe, for example, the linguistics research tradition, cross-pollinated with the tradition in *la didactique* as part of education sciences, anchors higher education writing research firmly in language study as part of writing study, or maybe more as two parts of the same thing. When we start working with transnational assumptions about language, culture, affiliations, patterns of exchange, and the ways they shape literate activity, we end up needing to understand the language relationships as wholly integrated into our questions about literacy, and we thus need to understand language itself, how it functions, what it does.

Transnational movements are making it necessary for us and for our students to engage with language when we engage with writing, whether in terms of writing and English or in terms of writing and any language in the world. Because of their focus on social and economic mixing, inevitability of movement, or heterogeneous communities and communications, the phenomena raise questions about what constitutes "literate competence," a broad term that can be used in any writing domain. Questions can include those about the qualitative difference between people who are (apparently) monolingual vs bi- or multi-lingual: difference in metalinguistic awareness, for example, or in cognitive processes (Cook, 1992).

For years now, scholars have been identifying the changing nature of student writers in those contexts. In the US, Silva and Matsuda (2001), Matsuda, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, and Christina Ortmeier-Hooper (2006), Christine Tardy (2011), Irwin Weiser and Shirley Rose (2018), and many others have been pointing to the increasing diversity of U.S. society and higher education landscapes, including of course U.S. writing programs and classrooms. There is no doubt that the population in U.S. higher education is rapidly changing. But this is a change that, it turns out, like so many things, is shared around the globe. European institutions are seeing high rates of international enrollees, from across Europe (encouraged by the Bologna Process) but also from Asia, South America, and Africa; my Korean colleagues report high numbers of students from China seeking to complete their education in Korean universities; and so on.

But this change within our classrooms is only part of the picture. The change is also, more universally perhaps, to the world in which graduates will do their work and live their lives. The workforce of the 21st century is highly mobile and diverse, whether because of employee travel outward (from the migrant farm worker to the CEO) or place-of-work reception of employees from diverse locales and contexts. As research in mobility studies has amply demonstrated, for both positive and challenging or traumatic reasons many people today are on the move in the work world. It remains to be seen how the COVID-19 pandemic will have changed the ways in which people are "on the move," but I believe that change will be in mode rather than in substance, and in some ways we will have seen mobility increase.

That diversity has done nothing but grow, to the point where Vertovec (2007, 2009) and Jan Blommaert (2013) among others have suggested we are in an era of "superdiversity." This evocative term first developed in reference to migration phenomena and their effects on the social, cultural, and linguistic fabric in British metropolitan areas, but it seems clearly adaptable to world-wide trends in movement—both forced and chosen—of people. It has become a term of force in the 21st century. Adrian Blackledge and Angela Creese (2017) recently explored both "diversity" and "superdiversity" to highlight the limitations of concepts such as diversity, multiculturalism, integration, or assimilation in "their power to explain the complexity of contemporary societies" (p. 2) and to sharply remind us that this superdiversity is born of both positive and negative mobilities within and across borders: "migration, invasion, colonization, slavery, religious mission, persecution, trade, conflict, famine, drought, war, urbanization, academic aspiration, family reunion, global commerce, technological advance . . ." (p. 2).

The sociolinguistic transformations in superdiverse contexts include the transformation of dominant languages. English monolingualism may appear to be inevitable, but in fact "our [monolingual] colleagues need *languages* (emphasis mine) to gain a perspective on themselves and to move beyond the comfortable and mobile milieu in which they live" (Tonkin, 2001; cited in Schultz, 2011, p.

72). As language questions move us into new milieux, we (re)discover the other we have been thinking was alien to us in our more recent history. As Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) suggests, "the self comes into existence only by virtue of its relationship to all that is other" (Nystrand et al., 1993, p. 294). This relationship suggests a different way to think about the writing-language dynamic, by looking back at U.S. writing studies via elements of language study.

Language . . .

How did U.S. writing scholarship move from the entrenched trio of literary theory, composition, and linguistics cited by Martin Nystrand et al. (1993) to the "I am not a language teacher" and the marginalization of linguistics research in writing studies?[3] From the late 1970s on, certainly conceptualizations of writing changed in ways that de-emphasized direct interest in language. Nystrand et al. noted in 1993 that "[w]hereas ideas about composition were traditionally limited to analyses of text features, subsequent and more recent models have conceptualized writing in terms of cognitive and social processes" (p. 306), that shift burgeoned into new directions less anchored in linguistics.

"Linguistics" or "linguistic science" is of course not a monolith; Chomskyans are not functionalists or pragmatists, and applied linguists work differently than theoretical linguists. The L2 writing scholarship is grounded, primarily, in applied linguistics, and I would like to explore the relationship to linguistics in other forms.

If we want to use the notion of "other" to explore the ways in which language studies and writing studies interconnect, we need a sense of when these domains became "othered" in the US. The question of language was certainly not always held at arm's length nor divided from writing studies. It is a complicated question I'll simply sketch here. Nystrand et al. (1993), in their detailed analysis of the development in the US of what was at the time understood as composition studies, reference deep interrelated epistemological and research connections involving language and writing in the 1960s–1970s. Every phase of their extensive review is based on theories of and research about *language* and *language use*. Indeed, many of the foundational thinkers they cite are linguists, from Searle or Grice or Austin to Bakhtin, van Dijk, or Beaugrande. They remind us of the essential role played by sociolinguist Labov in turning scholarly understanding from deficit models to

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3 This has been the case until quite recently. In perhaps an example of the cyclical nature of trends in research and theory, the effect of "big data" and the availability of very large corpora, alongside technological development in computational linguistics, has ushered in a new period of attention to linguistic methods in composition.

speech community models of language variety, enabling the work of many writing scholars, including Mina Shaughnessy.

Another factor was the link between speech, foreign language teaching, and language vs. writing. Eli Hinkel (2010) notes that successful foreign language programs, heavily influenced by structural linguistics, focused on speech. Even though scholars such as Widdowson (1978) pushed against any separation of the four essential skills of reception and production of both speech and writing (cited in Hinkel, 2010), it is possible that linguistics seemed increasingly distant to writing scholars because of its strong connection to speech. Matsuda (1999) clearly notes this challenge in the evolution of work in second language writing, which might suggest the same phenomenon developing in writing studies more broadly. And finally, structuralism itself, a foundation for both linguistics and literary theory (two of the three fields Nystrand et al. take into account), fell out of favor, while U.S. composition studies moved towards its own identity, grounded in social construction and critical theory, both antithetical to structuralist accounts of language, writing, and composing.

And why might it be time to come back? Language has always been inextricably at the heart of writing research and teaching, but it is now so starkly clear in its centrality that U.S. writing studies must reimagine its relationships of exchange. Matsuda's comprehensive review of what he calls the "disciplinary division of labor" (1999, p. 700) provides ample evidence that language questions even in the specific domain of second language writing were rarely present in various signature histories of the discipline to that point, histories that Silva, Ilona Leki, and Joan Carson (1997) call ethnocentric. I do not think this has radically changed since, though there have been many works attending to the history leading to the current landscape (just a quick sampling could include Jun, 2008; Leki et al., 2008; Matsuda 2003, 2005; Santos et al., 2000).

In this framing, inevitably questions about the deep field of *second* language study will arise—the one facet of language that is embedded in writing studies discussions today, even if far less than the second language writing community has argued is necessary. Matsuda (1999) reports an emphasis, in earlier decades, on linguistic training for writing teachers (especially if they were to teach second-language students) and the roots of disciplinary division coming in part at that point. He suggests that structural linguistics encouraged, in the 1960s, the development of separate ESL classes with specifically-trained faculty, a move that ultimately contributed to waning attention to language issues in writing classrooms, programs, or initiatives. While his emphasis is on the declining interest in language issues, he notes specifically that this decline was about second-language components.

Silva et al. (1997) focused certainly on second language writing, but also and significantly on "other" language writing alongside, making a similar philosophical case for "broadening the perspective" of composition studies' work. They predicted

decades back that the absence of attention to writing in other languages, in our history, could even have the huge effect of leading to "inadequate theories of composition" (p. 400) overall:

> A theory of writing based on only one rhetorical tradition and one language can at best be extremely tentative and at worst totally invalid. Such a theory could easily become hegemonic and exclusionary; that is, English/Western writing behaviors could be privileged as being "standard" . . . and such a theory could be seen as monolingual, monocultural, and ethnocentric. (p. 402)

Note that this point underscores not only an openness to other languages but also to other traditions and other disciplines. The U.S. focus in the scholarship I have cited here is partly because some parts of what I report here are in fact from particular U.S. traditions that have not taken shape in the same way in other countries or contexts; transnational work helps to bring that into focus. But it is also the case that whatever scholarship *is* available, scholarship that would help build the more complete theory of writing Silva et al. call for, is much broader than the U.S. pool of English-medium scholarship; we just don't often see it. In addition, the writing studies ⇔ language studies split that I've been focusing on here is a U.S.-specific split; many other traditions have divided disciplinary labor and inspired disciplinary liaisons differently, rooted in different grounds, often published not in English, and developing careful attention to disciplinary structures and epistemologies. When we engage with scholarship because the transnational context demands it, we grow the models Silva et al. mention with broader disciplinary contributions, broader concerns about writing, and a much wider swath of research not published in English.

French scholars, theorists, and linguists, for example, have worked on these topics for a very long time. U.S. ethnocentrism and monolingualism (without suggesting the US has cornered the market on these -isms . . .) have enabled ongoing work that does not take these into account, so when we explore topics such as knowledge transfer or the nature of "code," we limit our knowledge base. Transnational approaches to research demand that we grow our knowledge base, including in terms of languages in which we read and disciplines from which we consider drawing. As Cavazos et al. note, transdisciplinary work becomes essential to transnational work as it evolves; "engaging in transdisciplinary conversations with our colleagues [in other disciplines] is critical in responding to the linguistic needs and assets of our students" (2018, p. 21; see also Hebbard & Hernandez, 2020; Hendricks, 2018).

Such a return to language questions entails, as well, attention to English, specifically, in relation to U.S. composition. A progressive view of English, as Englishes, has been amply developed in composition and much more extensively in sociolinguistics (cf. Ives, 2015; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2010; Nihalani, 2010; Tupas & Rudby, 2015; Saxena & Omoniyi, 2010). It directly raises a question that both second

language writing and writing in any discipline or context must engage head-on: is writing about English, in the US, and if it is, which English? Here as well, linguists support our inquiry. Ruanni Tupas and Rani Rudby (2015), for example, argue that “There is no one English but many Englishes. No one has exclusive rights to the language; anyone who speaks it has the right to own it” (p. 1). As early as 1985, linguist Dell Hymes was already stating unequivocally that “the functional equality of all languages has been a tenet of the faith from the founders of structural linguistics to most practitioners of linguistics today” (p. v). If we accept this view we must engage in questions of class and power and equity; while both writing research and second-language writing research in the US, each in its own way, have done so, neither has ultimately resolved the fraught question of the role of a particular English in college writing, first-year and, perhaps even more, across the disciplines.

As much as there has been tension in the applied linguistics/second language ⇔ composition/writing studies interactions, heightened by the later-developed translingual scholarship (see for example Atkinson et al., 2015; Canagarajah, 2015; Hall, 2018; and multiple chapters in the 2020 volume *Reconciling Translingualism and Second Language Writing* including those by Matsuda, Tardy, Nancy Bou Ayash, and Brooke Schreiber), there is no question that these interactions are also bringing key attention back to language. Silva and Leki’s 2004 treatment of applied linguistics and composition in relation to second language writing underscores essential differences in paradigms, traditions, and scope, and suggests that the separation between second-language work and composition was a mutual moving-apart. But they quite powerfully detail the similarities and argue that “it might be preferable for L2 writing to consider reconciling the differences between its parent disciplines” (2004, p. 10), pulling from both applied linguistics and composition studies.

Translingual and translanguaging scholarship, as well as the MLA with its 2007 report *Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*, have pushed new attention on language in writing, the kind of attention L2 scholars have been advocating, by attending to a changing understanding of language and language practices (and as another example of how we sometimes focus with blinders on, the same attention is given in other fields and contexts to translingualism in centuries of history and in all ages and grade levels—it is far from unique to college writing concerns). Horner (2006) asks that compositionists move towards “an explicit policy that embraces multilingual, cross-language writing as the norm for our teaching and research” (p. 570). This kind of call, multiplied across the past decade, cannot leave composition scholars lukewarm and begs us to learn much more about (trans) language—about the rhetorical assets of our students, their “already-sophisticated and diverse language and writing abilities” (Cavazos et al., 2019)—for which we must learn more about language.

The way we use the terms we use becomes part of this attention to language. That is, attention to language also means attention to the language we use, to

clarification and differentiation and depth in our terminology, as Gentil (this volume) notes when he talks of translingualism, translanguaging, and the possibilities of terms such as crosslingualism, biliteracy, or transliteracy. "Translingual" and "translanguage" invoke different aspects of language practice, as do codeswitching or codemeshing (see above, Creese & Blackledge, 2017, as well, on terminology and clarity). Terms are introduced, take hold, and can ultimately become indexical or be surpassed, transformed. They also can, like the term "transfer," get cemented in use even as multiple scholars note their shortcomings.

Language Research with Benefits to Composition

We can begin to see that if work on college writing had stayed closer to language questions over the years, we might be more ready to understand some of the new challenges to writing in any discipline for the 21st century. We would have, collectively, the full linguistics background to understand claims made about codeswitching, codemixing, and codemeshing or to embrace the distinctions between translingualism and translanguaging, to account for differences among dual literacy (a literacy in two languages with "the added ability to move confidently and smoothly between languages for different purposes" (Estyn, 2002, p. 1), European *plurilinguisme* models that can not only share key principles of translingualism but also clarify that plurilingual repertoires in transnational mobility must be socially valued (Prasad, 2014), or variants of multilingualism that are not additive but rather models of language production, reception, and meta-linguistic awareness in movement (Gentil, this volume).[4]

As an example, the rich field of "contact" linguistics, a subfield of sociolinguistics that surfaced in the 1970s, provides useful underpinnings to studying language mixture, presenting it as "a creative, rule-governed process that affects all languages in one way or another, though to varying degrees" (Winford, 2003, p. 2). It is, according to Winford, quite normal for speakers and writers in contact situations to bypass communicative barriers and compromise in order to communicate, or to use what Pratt (1991) describes as the "literate arts of the contact zone." Many different factors govern this activity—from range of typological similarity of the languages to the spread, dominance, or prestige of each language involved (p. 2). The results of language contact appear in a range, from linguistic diffusion to structural convergence to the blurring altogether of any boundary between the languages (Pratt, 1991).

4 I am fully aware of the distinctions some scholars provide among second language and foreign language learning (see Cimasko & Reichelt, 2011; Reichelt, 2011), but here I am trying to clarify a distinction not everyone makes between ESL and "X"SL (say, for example, French as a Second Language, "FLE," literally translated "French as a Foreign Language").

Another example comes from foreign language writing scholarship. As I've noted, "second" language writing is not equivalent to *English* as a second language writing.[5] Research in *foreign language* writing instruction (instruction in languages that are neither a language someone grew up with nor a language that dominates in the context in which a speaker-writer is functioning, per Melinda Reichelt, 2011) has blossomed in recent decades after a long stretch of neglect. Reichelt (2011) notes that "a great deal of FL writing occurs around the world in various contexts" (p. 4), and it is the object of a range of studies of its writers' texts, processes, strategies, and perceptions, the ways it is taught and learned, and contexts of its use and development.

I will now develop, briefly, two key components of language research with reference to how they might inform existing language discussions in writing studies: one is about "transfer" and is grounded in applied linguistics, and the other is about using the term "code" to reference language and is grounded in French functional linguistics. I hope it will be clear that they could also inspire new conversations. Just as the significant European critiques of "transfer" as the term and frame for how writers reuse, adapt, and transform writing knowledge and know-how (Astolfi, 2002; François, 1998; Le Boterf, 1994; Meirieu & Develay, 1996; Perrenoud, 1999) suggest that we need to broaden our knowledge base, the work in socio- and applied linguistics and foreign language writing on key features like "code" opens up new ways to consider them for writing studies. In a way, they bring us back to a claim made by first language, second language, translingual, and foreign language writing scholars alike: language and writing are inextricably wound together, and the different interests of each research group are more productively seen along a continuum than in discrete oppositions.

I'm going to focus in on two brief examples among many possible ones that suggest unexploited knowledge that could help build fruitful exchange between writing and language research. In the process of considering these examples, we might see how the "inadequate theories" predicted by Silva et al. (1997) could be developed and grow to include theories of linguistic transfer and of linguistic code.

Transfer?

In writing studies, attention to this model of knowledge acquisition and reuse has been rapidly developing, but in education and didactics, it has been studied for a

5 "Whereas the concept of multilingualism has traditionally been used to describe a speaker's development of equal levels of proficiency in a number of distinct languages, the emerging plurilingual paradigm suggests that individuals develop an interrelated network of a plurality of linguistic skills and practices that they draw on for different purposes in a variety of contexts" (Prasad 2014, p. 52).

century.[6] In exploring this question here I align myself with Michael-John DePalma and Jeff Ringer (2011; 2014), who have thought about "transfer" through the lens of (second) language learning carefully and thoroughly, in particular in reference to WAC teaching and learning. What I suggest here complements and extends that work, in an effort to show how linguistic understandings of "transfer" layer and complicate current U.S. writing studies understandings. DePalma and Ringer note that (1) the "transfer" discussion was embedded in language-learning before it trended in mainstream composition; (2) this conversation has largely focused on reuse more than adaptation (see also Donahue, 2012; 2016b) and "adaptive transfer" offers a more accurate framing; and (3) L2 transfer research has focused in part on how to help students transfer their rhetorical knowledge from one language context to another (DePalma & Ringer, 2014). They define "adaptive transfer as a writer's conscious or intuitive process of applying or reshaping learned writing knowledge in order to negotiate new and potentially unfamiliar writing situations" (DePalma & Ringer, 2011, p. 141). This version is dynamic and transformative.

The meaning of "transfer" in second-language and in foreign language research and teaching (remembering that second-language writing research is richly developed in many languages, not just in English as a Second Language), compared to recent writing studies work, is different—and potentially inter-informing. Linguists and didacticians around the world study the ways a speaker or a writer uses knowledge from one language (usually an "L1") in another language (usually an "L2"), with positive or negative effect (the negative tellingly considered to be "interference").

For example, the research suggests that:

- L1 literacy abilities and strategies do not *automatically* lend themselves to successful work in L2 writing but they also do not *automatically* obstruct work in L2 writing (see among others Saffari et al., 2017).
- The work in first-year writing is, based on what we know from "transfer" research, often simply too dissimilar from what will be required later in various disciplinary and professional contexts for it to help students in later courses (Leki, 2006). For Leki, in the case of L2 students in particular, this is simply not a tenable practice.
- Language transfer is bi-directional; working with two or more languages in fact enriches writers' competence in both languages, for example in developing their ability to write complex sentences in both languages and their cultural sensitivity towards monolingual writers (Schultz, 2011).
- Writers at earlier stages in language acquisition may have more trouble transferring some writing strategies (Wolfersberger, 2003).

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6 For an overview of transfer in U.S. conversations, try *Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer* (Anson & Moore, 2016).

- Well-developed L1 abilities can have long-term positive effects on developing those same abilities in an L2 (Sparks et al., 2009).
- The practices writing teachers and scholars have seen as multimodal are proposed in foreign language research as multilingual, and thus they are forms of transfer in the domain of foreign language; Kramsch (2014) suggests that they include "translating a poem or a song into a picture, a narrative into a visual, and vice-versa" (p. 253).
- Only when "L2" proficiency is well developed enough will "L1" abilities be positively useful to a speaker or writer (Ito, 2009); competence and writing process are very different for students with different language levels, and different kinds of activity thus support "transfer" differently for different kinds of students (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992).

These transfer effects are also being studied in relation to multilingualism. Vivian Cook's (1992) framing of multilingual and multicompetent phenomena has proven illuminating. Other scholars such as Ingrid Heidrick (2006) have shown that in speakers and writers learning additional languages, the second language is actually a stronger resource from which the user draws than the first language. As Heidrick notes, "there is no reason why that existing knowledge [to be transferred] should not include previously-learned non-native languages" (2006, p. 1). Indeed, Heidrick seeks to understand what exactly influences the choices multilinguals make in terms of which language(s) they select from for a given utterance (2006). In this subfield, "transfer" of lexical and grammatical structures from one language to another is a productive phenomenon, not an interference. Deep, fundamental empirical research about the functioning of these various forms has led to linguistic conclusions that could nourish the composition discussion.

This language knowledge transfer scholarship is a resource by and large untapped to date in discussions about university writing and knowledge transformation more broadly, across years and disciplines, in the US. And yet each of these points above offers insights into "transfer" that illuminate more general questions about how it might work and how we might enable it as our students move across years and disciplines. The very model of "transfer" as a progression from one learning experience to another is in fact something that scholars interested in language use have questioned. Canagarajah (2006) argues for a much messier and more dynamic process in which students "shuttle" back and forth among a variety of linguistic and discursive elements, in the process transforming the contexts in which they are communicating. We might think about writing knowledge transfer also as "shuttling" rather than linear trajectory. We could also imagine that the work in contrastive rhetoric offers us cultural layers to "transfer." With this lens, variations in writers' approaches and text features are not failures but alternatives (Silva et al., 1997); "transfer," again, is not a linear progression but a layering of useable options

for a writer who we can designate as "rhetorically flexible" across time, contexts, and disciplines (Donahue 2016).

My question for this first example is, how might this extensive body of work on language and transfer help the current and rapidly-expanding thinking about writing knowledge and transfer? Are there clues about writing knowledge re-use and adaptation that this work can offer? Can it help us re-imagine the very nature of "transfer"? DePalma and Ringer (2014) suggest that "Narrow conceptualizations of transfer . . . reduce readers to decoders" (p. 46) rather than, I would suggest, dialogic co-constructors of meaning. Can the broader work on language knowledge "transfer" help us to rethink teaching writing?

Code?

Another richly productive connection is in terms of language as "code" (and its connection to terms built on "code," like codeswitching, codemeshing, or codemixing (though see Woodall, 2002, "Language-switching" for an alternative model). These language activities have provoked some strong debate in recent years, taking center stage in discussions of multilinguality, "trans"linguality, second-language writing, and diversity (Canagarajah, 2011; Guerra, 2012; Lu & Horner, 2013; Matsuda, 2013; Young, 2009; Young et al., 2014; Young & Martinez 2011).

If, however, language research and writing research partnerships had already been more frequent, the exchanges might have been different, because they would be grounded in different initial understandings of both "code" and code interaction in the dynamic models of language structure and language use available. The fact that "code" is at the root of several dynamic language terms in our current debates is actually quite interesting. "Code" has been critiqued in some branches of linguistics for some time. It is seen in French linguistics, for example, as a very limiting term that focuses on fixed structures rather than dynamic language practices; a concept much more appropriate to structuralist assumptions about language that many linguists moved beyond by the 1970s or 1980s, around the same time literature was moving away from structuralist and modernist frames, and composition from positivism and empirical research (Nystrand et al., 1997). Transnational work highlights the degree to which language scholarship, in both U.S. linguistics and world-wide writing research from other disciplines including linguistics, clarifies or otherwise illuminates questions in the U.S. writing studies community.

While not every scholar takes "code" head-on the way that the French functional linguists do, many scholars depict language function in ways that suggest an understanding of language that is far more fluid than the structuralist version underpinning code-based models that dominated European and U.S. linguistics for many decades (Matsuda, 1999; Silva & Leki, 2004). As early as the late

1800s, some linguists were arguing that no language comes from a single source (Winford, 2003), a precursor to hybrid or non-code models. Kramsch (2014) asks how language teaching might focus less on language structures and function and more on the social process of "enunciation" ("énonciation" or the actual putting-into-words production of discourse) (p. 8). Cook's multicompetence model (1992) proposes that individuals with multiple languages may be working with a merged language system rather than separate and distinct languages—"codes"—from which speakers or writers pull discrete pieces. Blommaert (2010, cited in Blackledge & Creese, 2017) talks of "language-in-motion" and sociolinguistic transformation; Garcia and Wei (2014) define "translanguaging" as starting "from the speaker rather than the code or the 'language' and focuse[d] on empirically observable practices" in ways similar to French functional linguistics. Translanguaging "refers not simply to a shift or a shuttle between two languages but to the speakers' construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language" (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 14). Building from Goffman, they note that we might be led away from seeing languages as "distinct codes" and rather see "individuals engaged in using, creating, and interpreting signs for communication" (2014, p. 14). This kind of "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1971, cited in Hinkel, 2010) is a way to focus on the communicative value and function of communication in social contexts.

For French linguist Frédéric François, "code" is restricted to accounting in a limited way for what governs lexicon and syntax. He suggests we might use "language codes" to capture the diverse, pluralized, fluid ways language actually works and to help us unpack communicative competence, and reserve "linguistic code" for the limited structural questions (personal correspondence, 2017). In a superdiverse context, language as "code" simply doesn't make sense. I want to note, then, that proponents of both codemeshing and codeswitching—terms used in more than one of the disciplines mentioned earlier—might want to consider the ways in which "code" (and thus presumably the various terms connected to it) might be, linguistically, a term that runs counter to the fluidity, hybridity, and dynamism they support. The distinctions being carefully drawn and argued between codeswitching and codemeshing could be beside the point if the "code" model on which they are built is not the model that works for the kind of language activity in play.

If we start the discussion at "code" we might find ourselves in a different debate. Initial analyses of the regularity and creativity of code-switching (as well as language shift and language creation) arise out of the contact linguistics research mentioned earlier (Winford, 2003), as does the establishment of "conventionalized" mixed languages. In other words, I suggest we back up from the various debates about codeswitching, codemeshing, and codemixing—debates that would themselves benefit from more attention to years of research in the field of "contact

linguistics" mentioned earlier, and the well-established definitions and models provided there—to the root debate about the very nature of language.

If it is language in use that interests us, language that shapes and organizes our perceptions (as noted by Vygotsky, cited in Berthoff, 1999), language as symbolic form, with symbols that "derive their meaning from the force of social convention" (Kramsch, 2014, p. 7), then as Blackledge et al. (2013) have argued, we must move beyond "code" in order to shift away from a focus on "languages as distinct codes to a focus on the agency of individuals engaging in using, creating, and interpreting signs for communication" (p. 193). My question to us all, out of this second body of work, is how might linguistics thinking about the nature of language, its resistance (in some branches) to language as "code," be useful to our explorations of students' language use—all students' language use across disciplines and contexts—in writing today? Thinking about the dynamic nature of language seems to me to be our common interest, and one we must take up in preparing our students for the international, global, mobile contexts in which they work and live.

Conclusion

"Transfer" and "code" are just two examples of the potential for deep exchange. What I draw from these really brief examples (so much more could be said!) is that writing studies across time, contexts, disciplines, and expertises in language as connected to writing have the potential to be highly complementary, in response to transnational pressures and promises. Now is the time to collaboratively deepen the pool of expertise in order to best prepare all students in all disciplines for a superdiverse world. We are the other—or maybe, we are each other.

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