

CHAPTER 3.

LINGUISTIC JUSTICE: RIGHTS, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES FROM A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. In this chapter, Mihut proposes and develops a linguistic justice approach as a frame for pedagogies of language pluralism. This approach, she argues, simultaneously and necessarily incorporates at least two moves: on the one hand, it exposes monolingual standards and on the other hand, it actively integrates cross-cultural rhetorics and translanguaging writing in the classroom. In a linguistic justice frame, both actions—critique of monolingualism and integration of plurilingual practices and theories—are essential to centering and valorizing linguistically-rich practices. The chapter will first introduce theoretical influences and historical background on language rights including Geneva Smitherman's (1995) work on the background of the "Students' Right to Their Own Language" statement (SRTOL). It will further discuss how we can move to practices by drawing on research on both multilingual, international scholars teaching in the US and scholars teaching writing in different disciplines in Eastern Europe. Based on these practices, Mihut shows how the legacy of SRTOL has helped us develop an international perspective for linguistic justice and calls for a change in WAC by attending to one of language rights statements that have emerged in the last three to four years.

In 2001, I came to visit the US, only a few months after the 9/11 attacks. I sought medical expertise regarding a congenital eye problem. A group of friends from Greenville, SC arranged the details of my visit: the medical consultation, travel expenses, lodging, and other. Before my arrival, I applied for a visitor/tourist visa at the U.S. embassy in Bucharest. I arrived at the embassy with all the necessary documents (the official invitation, letters of financial support, medical documents, etc.). The most important was proof of employment, which was my best attempt to show I had attachments to Romania and was not going

to overstay my visa. At the time, I was an English high school teacher in my early twenties. I waited my turn with anticipation and a good dose of anxiety. As I made my way to the window where the officer started the visa interview, I noticed we talked through the mediation of an interpreter. This was unexpected because I spoke English fluently, which was evidenced by my employment status as an English teacher. However, I remained silent and followed obediently the question-answer protocol. I was asked basic questions and after that, we proceeded to the medical-related questions. To my surprise, after I would give my answer in Romanian, the interpreter would translate my answer, and then proceed with additional commentary: “But I am not so sure” or “That’s unlikely.” With these editorializing comments, he simply invalidated my account. As you can imagine, this was both entertaining and quite disconcerting. I was dealing with a real, yet unusual medical problem and the interpreter simply did not believe my account. The interview continued until at one divine moment, the officer read my application and noticed that under employment, I had listed: English teacher. He looked up and for the first time engaged me directly in English: So, you speak English? “Yes. I do.” He immediately dismissed the interpreter and proceeded to talk to me directly in English. I presented my case in detail. No editorializing. Just facts. My plea was successful, and I was granted the visa for my visit.

This personal account, a narrative of power, access, and advocacy, is also an account of linguistic justice in a transnational setting. My knowledge of English opened a door for me that another tried to block. I became my own advocate in a situation of unequal power dynamics, in a system already set in its tracks to silence or confine the petitioner to a pre-established role, of little influence on the outcome of the interaction. It was unjust for the interpreter who held the institutional authority to use it to deprive me of access and medical expertise. Many have advocated for fundamental rights in situations of injustice, however my interview at the U.S. embassy shows I barely had any right to speak or express my own voice. And even if there was such a right, I did not know how I could use it in situations of unequal power. My position of precarity has taught me lessons of silence, not of rights, since the translator, although one person, points to an established system that often constrains individual agency and personal or public advocacy. The same questions about language rights persisted when I moved to the US. As a transnational scholar, I recognized the “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” (SRTOL) resolution’s (Committee on CCCC Language, 1974) rhetoric of rights, but for me, this approach was insufficient: How can students have language rights when the education systems shaping them had not been adjusted to welcome their enactment? Moving through specific aspects of SRTOL, in this chapter, I highlight the urgent need to consider

systems of power and institutions that shape decision-marking processes leading to transformative change. Specifically, I focus on the gap between SRTOL's promise and the limits of its enactment.

There are systems of linguistic power before students make it to our classroom, while they are in our classroom, and after they leave. We face issues of justice or injustice, daily, weekly, not just occasionally. As language is embedded in every fabric of our world, we need to consider linguistic justice approaches throughout systems and processes to address problems of inequity in the writing classroom, in research and practice, and in scholarship and research. WAC scholars are uniquely positioned to effect change in all these areas as they work within systems of education and disciplinary knowledge. By exploring the legacy of SRTOL in my pedagogy and research, I will show how a linguistic justice approach from a transnational lens can be a vehicle for change.

While language policies concerning the English-only imposition emerged in the late nineteenth century primarily in the colonies and Indian nations, the full manifestations of these policies grew stronger with the Americanization movement at the turn of the twentieth century (Flowers, 2024). In retracing the English-only origin story and the progress and resistance to language policies, Katherine S. Flowers (2024) highlights two decades—the 1960s and 1970s—when language rights achieved remarkable success (and resistance) through legal battles, including a series of laws favoring bi- and multilingual education (the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 or the amended Voting Rights Act of 1975). During these decades, more equitable approaches to education and respectively to language manifested through court decisions such as the 1973 ordinance in Dade County declaring bilinguality and biculturality official, open admissions, and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) resolution, “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” (SRTOL) (Flowers, 2024).

Now in 2026, fifty-two years since the first significant language policy in our field, a return to this historical moment may offer new insights about the impact and legacy of SRTOL. The resolution (Committee on CCCC Language, 1974) both changed the face of our profession and to some extent, left it (almost) the same. This contradiction is explored further in this chapter as I follow the history of the resolution, with attention to the resolution’s background work, its impact on practice, and the emergence of subsequent language rights policies. This contradiction has been captured by several scholars in profound ways (e.g., Kinloch, 2005; Kynard, 2007; Smitherman, 2015; Wible, 2006, etc.). Carmen Kynard (2007), for instance, refers to the “possibilities of SRTOL, always imagined and yet never fully achieved” (p. 361), while Scott Wible (2006) remarks that the resolution and its background documents lacked “specific strategies to take to the classroom” (p. 442). Wible (2006) further counterposes a critique of

this “lack” as he offers a detailed analysis of the Language Curriculum Research Group (LCRG)’s work in the 1960s and 1970s, a rich pedagogically focused initiative that remained peripheral or little known to the larger NCTE/CCCC membership. A general examination of SRTOL may reveal its limitations—the pedagogical enactments—but a deeper, analytical exploration shows complex and transformative effects. I’d like to pursue this contradiction between the promise of SRTOL and its enactment by looking closer at one aspect that has frequently been neglected in the reception and legacy exploration of SRTOL—the background work. In the “Foreword” to *Students’ Right to Their Own Language: A Critical Sourcebook*, Smitherman (2015) points to the uniqueness of this collection as it centers our attention on this little-known work, and even less-read documents that accompanied the resolution—a thirty-two-page document published in *College Composition and Communication* that extended and amplified the original SRTOL (see Committee on CCCC Language: Background Statement, 1974). I am interested in this background work of SRTOL and the process surrounding pedagogical applications as it underscores the amplitude of many stakeholders connected to SRTOL, it clarifies the initial contradiction, and it also points to another less-known aspect: the impact on other language resolutions and advocacy for linguistic pluralism, including global and transnational language justice work.

“STUDENTS’ RIGHT TO THEIR OWN LANGUAGE” (SRTOL): THE FIRST STEPS

Offering an overview of the socio-historical context of SRTOL, Smitherman (1995) explains that in the fall of 1971, more than 50 years ago, CCCC officers appointed a committee to draft a language resolution. This action was initiated in response to the socio-historical changes in the nation at the time. That moment in history, marked by the effects of the social movements, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and growth of the Black Power, has been instrumental in engendering changes not only for African Americans but for other marginalized groups such as women and immigrants in their fight for equal rights. Due to the laborious work of the first committee on language justice (because that’s the best descriptor of that work) in 1971, what we now know as “Students’ Right to Their Own Language,” the first draft of this resolution was born a year later, in 1972:

We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style.

Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. (To Readers of CCC, 1974)

A quick overview of the work on SRTOL between 1971 and 1974 shows a few important lessons: 1) Change within the system is *important* work, 2) Change within the system is *slow* work, and 3) This change is also *persistent* work.

First, change within the system is important work. From the background on SRTOL, we learn that the conditions for change were not particular to CCCC. Smitherman explains that the change for equal rights fired up work across professional organizations: NCTE, CCCC, Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, American Sociological Association, Speech Communication Association, American Bar Association, and “on and on across disciplines and throughout the Academy” (1995, p. 22). A convergence of efforts across academia and within disciplines created an incredible momentum for change. This work became significant because it moved stakeholders to take action and address inequity from the top down. Top-down approaches exert power of direction that spreads much faster to constituents within the system. Other key influencers such as the Black Caucus (see Kynard, 2007) or the work of the Language Curriculum Research Group made possible through the support of a Ford Foundation grant (Wible, 2006) also believed in the promise and vision of SRTOL and the necessity for research on pedagogy on Black sociolinguistics. However, working within the system also means obstacles, stoppages, or deviations often dictated by the ebbs and flows of larger political movements. Between 1971–1974: efforts were made to work with NCTE to obtain its support of CCCC’s language resolution (CCCC being self-governed but structurally part of NCTE). But that did not happen. NCTE eventually adopted a lesser version of SRTOL and this hesitation limited the initial resolution’s impact.

Second, change within the system is slow work. The move from theory and praxis is often a contested process, with challenges and new opportunities to refine our theories. It is this gap between theory and practice that is often the

motive for why many scholars deemed SRTOL as unsuccessful. However, many of these scholars neglect the process and the work on pedagogy that was started in the background even if part of that work was never published. After the passing of SRTOL in 1972 by the CCCC Executive Committee, background work was necessary that would support, expand, and explain concepts stipulated in the resolution and eventually, translate the resolution into actionable items. Another committee was formed to accomplish this, which involved extensive research and work on language variation and teaching and learning recommendations, including a bibliography of 129 entries (Smitherman, 1995). In this document, 15 issues were addressed in the form of questions. A selection of these questions is included here: “What Do We Mean by Dialect?”, “Why and How Do Dialects Differ?”, “How Do We Acquire Dialects?”, “Why Do Some Dialects Have More Prestige Than Others?”, “Does Dialect Affect the Ability to Read?”, “Does Dialect Affect the Ability to Write?”, “Does Dialect Limit the Ability to Think?” and a series of questions about grammar, handbooks, standardized tests, impact of dialects on employability, etc. (Committee on CCCC Language: Background Statement, 1974).

Despite the usefulness of this background document, CCCC found, rightfully so, that more support was needed to encourage the implementation of SRTOL in the classroom. In a next step, the CCCC Executive Committee charged a new committee to focus on praxis: activities, mini-lessons, and practical guides for the implementation of the resolution. After four years of work (1976–1980), unfortunately CCCC wavered in its full support of the resolution and decided not to publish the document (Smitherman, 1995). Smitherman (1995) explains that the socio-political context had shifted during this time toward a more conservative stance, and SRTOL, unfortunately, remained a theoretical document at least for a while. In many ways, then, the resolution captures the contradiction I alluded to earlier: a discrepancy between the promise of a great change and no apparent or immediate meaningful change in practice, a mismatch between theory and practice. But SRTOL accomplished something beyond the theory/praxis dichotomy. By proclaiming linguistic rights, even in their theoretical form, the resolution helped create a path for affirming African American vernacular *and* other languages beyond. In her 1995 article, Smitherman explains the resolution’s role in setting the stage for new linguistic justice actions:

We’re now in the period of a new paradigm shift, from a provincial, more narrowly conceived focus to a broader internationalist perspective. We thus are being forced to address the issue of multiple linguistic voices, not only here, but in the global family. NCTE and CCCC, having grappled with these

issues through the “Students’ Right” era is, I think, well-positioned for a leadership role in formulating a national language policy for this nation. (p. 26)

As she accounts the history of SRTOL, Smitherman’s visionary discourse advocates for an internationalist, multilingual perspective that is surprisingly anachronistic for the times when it was delivered. Similarly, Kynard (2007) points to the Black Caucus’s role at NCTE in 1980 in taking a stance for “global human rights and dignity” (p. 362). These global perspectives concerning language or human rights derived from SRTOL have rarely, if ever been traced to this resolution. And since 1995, there have been limited efforts to continue the work of SRTOL with an internationalist perspective.

However, in the early 2000s, a noticeable, even if contested at times, paradigm shift toward the valorization of multiple languages and dialects occurred more prominently. Scholarship advocating for bi-, multi-, and translingual approaches began to flood top journals or venues in the field including the special issue on Cross-Language Relations in Composition in *College English* (2006); Christiane Donahue’s (2009) “‘Internationalization’ and Composition Studies: Reorienting the Discourse”; Bruce Horner et al.’s (2011) “Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach”; Canagarajah’s (2013) *Literacy as Translingual Practice Between Communities and Classroom* (2013); Martin’s (2015) *Transnational Writing Program Administration*, and numerous other publications.

As with SRTOL, the emphasis on language rights from a global or international perspective has focused on theoretical underpinnings and despite isolated examples, pedagogical suggestions remained rather limited. From SRTOL, I have learned that there must be intentional work on praxis. To this end, I began to look at practices that showed linguistic justice, even if not officially under this nomenclature. Included below is a list of my research agenda, the data source, and resulting publications focused on praxis:

- 2015–2019. Data: my own pedagogy practice, development of a syllabus statement on linguistic pluralism, and the circulation of the statement (publication: Mihut, 2019)
- 2016–2019. Data: blog posts on pedagogy from scholars affiliated with the Transnational Composition Group (publication: Mihut, 2020)
- 2016–2022. Data in the form of student research projects at Barry University (over 200 papers) (publication: Mihut, 2021)
- 2016–2023. Data from pedagogy practices of transnational scholars in four countries: Romania, Nepal, India, and Colombia. (publication: Mihut, 2025)

This research agenda from the last decade-plus shows a direct focus on pedagogy, which has allowed me to observe where linguistic justice is present or lacking and what we can do to address the latter. In short, I will introduce a quick overview of various practices of linguistic justice.

In 2015, the Transnational Composition SIG of CCCC published a series of blog posts written by our members and affiliated colleagues to affirm the group's mission and increase its visibility. My analysis of these blogs on translanguaging or transnational pedagogy together with research on pedagogy of transnational scholars is synthesized in a few key points¹: 1) Transnational scholars engage *beliefs about language standards and writing* such as language ideologies and views on writing in the classroom; 2) Transnational scholars critique US-based *methods of writing instruction and assignments* (e.g., discussion-based seminar, lectures, the teaching of standard grammar, argument-based papers, and standardized genre expectations, etc.); 3) Transnational scholars develop *cross-cultural, globally-oriented curricula* (e.g., integration of cross-cultural themes and readings: reading on global citizenship, transnational socio-political issues, transcultural knowledge and specific: the use of classical texts in China, writing style in Japan, etc.); 4) Transnational scholars display a commitment to *cross-linguistic approaches*/diverse rhetorical traditions and engage national and global reforms (transnational scholars in international settings); and 5) Transnational scholars' trajectory of their own scholarly development—the language(s) they speak, their mentors, or their affiliation, etc.—determine largely the role they play in engaging transnational and linguistic justice issues.

From this research on pedagogy, I formulated the linguistic justice approach. In my view, a linguistic justice approach encompasses:

a series of pedagogical suggestions that reorient and attune students' discursive practices to language difference, global geopolitical and social contingencies, and cross-cultural rhetorics. Linguistic justice implicates an enactment of the politics of difference defined not only in U.S. terms but rather developed across rhetorical traditions and writing cultures. In a linguistic justice frame, both actions—critique of monolingualism and integration of plurilingual practices and theories—are essential in centering and valorizing linguistically-rich practices. (Mihut, 2020, p. 270)

This conception of linguistic justice approach is derived from pedagogical enactments of linguistic pluralism as an asset. It is different from other theory-praxis

1 An in-depth analysis of these blogs are synthesized in Mihut (2020).

approaches because it first looks at the practice of plurilingual valorization in order to build the theoretical frame. Of the five points listed earlier, I will focus on two: methods of instruction and cross-cultural curricular developments.

METHODS OF WRITING INSTRUCTION AND ASSIGNMENTS

In discussing methods of writing instruction and assignments, I found that many instructors with transnational experience critiqued argument-based papers, discussion-based seminars, and the teaching of grammar with only Standard American English (SAE) rules. Regarding discussion-based assignments, the critique reveals that students from cross-cultural or international backgrounds can be alienated because of unequal participation or limited oral skills disrupting the formation of a truly democratic dialog. Silence, one scholar explains, can often be equated to deficiency. Also, students coming from home cultures and communities where power relationships between students and teachers are hierarchical will find it more difficult to engage in class discussion and voice alternative viewpoints to their instructors because such interventions often denote disrespect. Many of these students, then, avoid participating actively in class.

The argument-based or thesis-driven papers have also received criticism. Two scholars from Nepal, now both based at U.S. institutions, acknowledge that learning new genres such as the argument-based paper takes time as students write and interact across languages and cultures. Also, the critique further suggests that the argument-based paper seems to be the default genre, when alternative writing genres could be equally valuable. Instead, these scholars propose a “review essay exploring multiple perspectives” whereby students write about an issue “without’ taking a position on it” (Sharma, 2017). Students are encouraged to account for multiple angles and various stakeholders connected to the selected issue. One of these scholars, Santosh Khadka (2015), further proposes a pedagogy of change through adaptations: a series of “*intercultural, inter-linguistic and inter-academic adaptations.*” The repeated use of the prefix “inter”—between, moving between and among languages and cultures—suggests that writing must emerge in a space of in-betweenness. Writing is never singular, an expression of one argument, one language, or one culture. Rather, writing in a linguistic justice frame acknowledges the interconnectedness of our experience and the multiplicity of languages and cultures that writing can and should capture.

Another example of linguistic justice in practice concerns writing assignments, specifically work on writing genres based on studies of comparative writing cultures in Europe. An influx of studies of writing in the European contexts takes

a comparative approach, much vaster and encompassing than US-based studies, covering not just one course, but multiple courses, curricula, institutions, and countries. Mira Bekar et al. (2015), for example, compare educational genres in three countries, two in Eastern Europe (Romania and Ukraine) and one from Southeastern Europe (Macedonia). One of the comparisons shared in this study is included in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Six Genres Mentioned Most Often at the Three Universities

Priority	Macedonia	Ukraine	Romania
1	Notes (68)	Notes (84)	Notes (91)
2	Essay (59)	In-class exam (56)	In-class exam (54)
3	Seminar paper (36)	Research paper (50)	Seminar paper (45)
4	Reflections (33)	Essays (45)	Essay (38)
5	Proposal (32)	Seminar paper (34)	Summary (23)
6	Narrative/creative text (27)	Technical report (20) Narrative or creative text (20) Journalistic text (20)	Research paper (22)

This study’s work on genre accounts for variations across languages, disciplines, national contexts, and writing cultures. Bekar et al. (2015) explain:

Much more than by a particular language, writing is determined by matters including the effects of educational ideologies and traditions, the type of control a country exerts on the educational system, conceptions of literacy development, the involvement of students into disciplinary conversation, the assessment procedures, language policy and the degree of explicitness of teaching writing. (p. 121)

Bekar et al. (2015) acknowledge, like my previous work on the blogs, beliefs and ideologies that are embedded in our institutions and educational systems. Most importantly, they show how power and control loom over types of literacy. In fact, in a recent edited collection focused on linguistic justice in practice, Eunjeong Lee et al. (2022) identify exactly this need to disrupt “racist and monolingual ideologies” by looking at established institutional structures (p. 5). This move from micro—the classroom experience—to the macro—larger institutional ideologies and practices is important to consider in linguistic justice work. Bekar et al.’s (2015) study also offers important contextual frames: historical context on each country and their educational system (Macedonia’s independence from former Yugoslavia in 1991, Romania’s education system that followed the French

and German model, the former due to the Romance language connection, and the Ukrainian education with new BA and MA programs). The authors also provide several survey results, including a table of the most significant genres for each country with both generic genre language—genre families—and with a specific designation of each genre in the original language as identified by the surveyed participants from each country. This careful inclusion of each country's specific language and genre practice from the perspective of the people on the ground demonstrates critical linguistic justice work; this work accounts for power dynamics (which country was independent or not in the former communist bloc); belief systems (such as orientation towards EU values); language in action (perception of other languages, including English as a *lingua franca*), and contextual information for the writing genres under analysis. In other words, this study enacts a linguistic justice approach as it takes on a multilingual approach to writing genres while acknowledging power dynamics across institutions and nation-states.

CROSS-LINGUISTIC APPROACHES: RHETORICAL TRADITIONS, ENGAGING NATIONAL AND GLOBAL REFORMS

A second dimension of linguistic justice can be observed through larger, more global changes, at the curriculum level or through engagement with national or global reforms. In my research, I noticed that US-based transnational scholars approached linguistic justice work at the micro-level, in the classroom, at the level of assignments and specific lessons. However, many transnational scholars in international settings took actions that were more global in nature, engaging diverse rhetorical traditions, or national or global reforms beyond the classroom.

For instance, in Eastern Europe, I found that scholars often explained their way of teaching writing by referring to three intellectual traditions permeating European universities—the Anglo-Saxon, German, and French traditions. Each one of these, Sonia Pavlenko et al. (2014) explain, captures a distinct intellectual approach and purpose: (the Anglo-Saxon) to advance a theory, the German: to engage in dialog, or the French: to display eloquence. I found numerous references to these writing traditions in scholarship on European writing and in my primary research.² In one of my studies of writing in Romania, a respondent

2 From those of us in the U.S. context, I'd like to preemptively address a potential critique in referring to these traditions; they often got slotted under contrastive rhetoric approaches. However, we need to understand these traditions from the perspectives of those on the ground. My respondents mentioned them because they used these rhetorical traditions to explain writing in the classroom in their specific national context.

attributed the “lack of a [writing] tradition” to the influence of other larger rhetorical traditions. Specifically, he referred to the French tradition, and later, he praised the Anglo-Saxon rhetoric:

This has to do with the French influence that was fairly strong, that at some point configured our [educational] institutions. This is what the French influence did: it made it so that Romania would not talk about writing. Writing was learned through imitation. ... But things changed in France, too. (Mihut, 2025, p. 53)

He also mentioned that in his writing courses, he includes a bibliography of texts written in Romanian by Romanian authors but also by English authors, such as John M. Swales and his well-established rhetorical moves. This openness towards the Anglo-Saxon and English influences is interesting especially since he is a professor of Romanian studies with a background in French language and literature. Yet, despite his affiliation with the French, we find him critiquing the French influence on the Romanian writing culture but embracing the Anglo-Saxon writing.

This example shows writing in countries or cultures that have often found themselves at the margins, in this case Eastern Europeans at the margins of Europe, will often seek affiliation with larger, more visible writing cultures. This linguistic alliance is a strategy for achieving legitimization, of seeking to be seen and acknowledged. At the same time, this reveals the significant role that multilingual scholars have in advancing, shaping, resisting, or redirecting linguistic rights and work across cultures and contexts. This Romanian scholar rejects the French influence, while embracing the English rhetoric. In his pedagogy, he draws on both Romanian and English authors, but not on French. He advocates for a type of desirable linguistic pluralism while dismissing an old form of bilingualism that pulls him to a past that he doesn't need. This selective appreciation of linguistic pluralism and advocacy work has meaning only within the larger linguistic context and history of education in Romania, as Bekar et al. (2015) explained.

Linguistic justice work at the micro level (in the classroom, at the level of assignments and the ideologies that shape our choice of genres and classroom activities) and at the macro level, in large curricular reforms (e.g., the Bologna process in the European Union)³ or major rhetorical traditions shows an active

3 The Bologna process refers to the Bologna Declaration, signed on June 19, 1999. The Declaration adopted a series of guiding principles to emphasize greater connectivity and the seamless transfer of credits and credentials across national systems in the European Union. This restructuring of higher education fostered significant growth in institutional partnerships and scholarly exchanges across Europe, particularly between its Eastern and Western regions. See Doroholschi et al. (2018).

and dynamic engagement with writing across languages, genres, cultures, institutions, and nation-states. It also reveals that linguistic justice work is not one-size fits all. My linguistic justice work stems from my background as a transnational scholar. My thinking about linguistic justice has been influenced by the SRTOL resolution in the US, and it has developed over time through community-based writing and pedagogies in South Florida, a context where multilingualism is thriving and celebrated. It continues to be refined and revised by deep work across pedagogies, languages, and cultures. Each one of these aspects shaped my view of linguistic justice but not entirely as expected. I couldn't buy into the rhetoric of rights, since I grew in Romania where individual rights were often denied. Others have raised questions about whether this was the right approach. For instance, Patrick Bruch and Richard Marback (2002) show the ambivalence of rights rhetoric in SRTOL: while it afforded a position of dignified humanity to African Americans that has been denied for centuries, it also failed to recognize the systemic circumstances that favored the exclusion in the first place. In her remarkable book, *Linguistic Justice*, April Baker-Bell (2020) affirms the personal, historical, and political dimensions of linguistic justice. In her framing, linguistic justice is about "Black Language and Black Liberation" and "an antiracist approach to language and literacy education" (p. 7). What interests me is the exigence that shaped Baker-Bell's conception of linguistic justice. She mentions the marginalization, and contempt for the Black language, which ultimately means the dehumanization of Black students (and individuals). For this reason, a rhetoric of rights that Bruch and Marback (2002) advocate seems befitting because it contributes to African Americans' realization of "selfhood and citizenship" as instituted by the U.S. Constitution (p. 652). Ultimately, a variety of approaches is necessary.

Whether conceptualized in the US or in a transnational context, whether nation-bound or transnational in nature, linguistic justice calls for attention to language, power, and advocacy work.

This is particularly important to WAC scholars since their work already advocates and negotiates with various stakeholders to foreground the centrality of writing within and across disciplines. Acknowledging the presence of cultural, disciplinary, national, and all sorts of boundaries that need brokering, WAC scholars must consider more critically the role of language and languages in shaping disciplinary knowledge. In her article about disciplinary formations, Donahue (2018) argues that scholarship from linguistics, didactics, or foreign language writing can enrich the work of WAC scholars. To this end, she proposes two terms: code and transfer, whereby transfer is discussed through a second language disciplinary angle. Making a slightly similar argument, Laura Aull and Shawna Shapiro (2023) also orient our attention to how linguistics/applied linguistics can enrich the field

of rhetoric and composition by highlighting language use/language in action, evidence-based methods of studying language, and many more. Interestingly, in the history of SRTOL, a significant role has been given to sociolinguistics and research on Black English in establishing its legitimacy as a language. In other words, Donahue (2018), Aull and Shapiro (2023), Wible (2006), and others show that research on language and sociolinguistics can enrich our argument about the centrality of writing, and even further, I would argue, linguistic justice's role in our approach to writing in WAC.

Despite the seemingly slow work in moving from the theoretical tenets of SRTOL to practical enactment of linguistic justice, we now benefit from abundant work. Research and pedagogy on Black English are robust and so is scholarship on pedagogy on linguistic justice and translingual/transnational writing. While SRTOL's legacy has been contested, decades later we witness a different narrative. Not only has SRTOL created an opportunity for international perspectives to flourish, but the resolution also shaped a series of future language policies. These language policies, which I explore briefly in the latter section of this chapter, have gained momentum in the last five-plus years. If we pay attention, they can reorient our work in WAC towards linguistic justice setting a transformative agenda for the next decades.

CURRENT LINGUISTIC JUSTICE STATEMENTS

A final point is that change within the system is *persistent* work. If we follow the evolution of SRTOL and language policies, we notice intense activity in the early 1970s, some activity in the 1980s with the engagement with English-Only, and most recently, a boom of linguistic justice statements and policies, fifty-plus years after SRTOL resolution. What has changed? Since 2020, the exigence for linguistic justice has been occasioned by pressing political, economic, and social movements. These changes prompted both a deepening and expansion of linguistic justice policies to different domains of our work. I included below a selected list of these policies with a note regarding their expansion or deepening of the origin SRTOL:

- 2023 (February): “Statement on Support for Gender Diversity/Trans, Two-Spirit, and Nonbinary Students, Staff, and Faculty” –**expansion**
- 2022 (November): “Position Statement on Citation Justice in Rhetoric, Composition, and Writing Studies”–**expansion**
- 2022 (November): “Statement on Language, Power, and Action” –**deepening**
- 2021(June): “Statement on White Language Supremacy” –**deepening**

- 2021 (revised June): “Ebonics Training and Research” (May 1998, revised May 2016)—**deepening**
- 2020 (September): “Black Technical and Professional Communication Position Statement with Resource Guide”—**expansion**
- 2020 (July): “This Ain’t Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!”—**deepening**
- 2020 (revised May): “Statement on Second Language Writing and Multilingual Writers” —with bibliography (January 2001, revised November 2009, reaffirmed November 2014) —**deepening**

Today we benefit from more than a dozen policies on linguistic justice. Yet, the history of SRTOL taught us that systems can change, and that if we wait too long, the conditions favoring good change can evaporate. Unfortunately, WAC has a long tradition of neglect or marginal attention to multilingualism, one that has been noted by various scholars, including Analeigh E. Horton’s (2024) review of WAC’s historical and contemporary monolingual epistemologies. While Horton’s (2024) larger goal to center second language writers in WAC is different from my own, she notably identifies the absence of multilingualism from WAC’s agenda in major reports or projects, such as Robert Jones and Joseph Comprone’s (1993) report; Chris Thaiss and Tara Porter’s (2010) article on the state of WAC/WID in 2010; or more recently, Thaiss’s (2021) plenary address at the International Writing Across the Curriculum conference. As such, any larger-scale projects or reports have either neglected or designated multilingualism to the margins.

As we transition into the next 50 years, I ask: How will WAC work look like if today, each one of us takes at heart one policy of those listed earlier? Or, if we start small, take one assignment and ask: How can I reframe this with a linguistic justice approach in mind? Where is linguistic justice needed in this lesson/unit/course? What can I do to accomplish that work?

In 2016, I developed my own version of SRTOL (see Mihut, 2019) and I included it in the syllabus of a course titled “Techniques of Research.” Similar to WAC, in this course students of different majors study one discourse community and conduct an interview with a member of that community. Since the inclusion of the linguistic pluralism syllabus statement, students have conducted interviews in languages like Spanish and Arabic, read secondary sources in French, learned about educational systems in the Caribbean, Germany, Italy, The Gambia, Hungary, and Montenegro, and created genuine partnerships with marginalized communities and knowledges. All this started with one course policy. While there is no magic formula to produce change, taking one small action about language ideologies can engender surprising transformations.

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