

2-28-2020

Best Practices for a Translingual Pedagogy: an Undergraduate Perspective

Jacob S. Wilson
Portland State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/honorstheses>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), and the [Linguistics Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Wilson, Jacob S., "Best Practices for a Translingual Pedagogy: an Undergraduate Perspective" (2020). *University Honors Theses*. Paper 834.
<https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.853>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

Best Practices for a Translingual Pedagogy: An Undergraduate Perspective

Jacob S. Wilson

An undergraduate honors thesis project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in

University Honors

and

Spanish, English

Kate Comer, Ph.D.

Portland State University

2020

Abstract

This thesis traces the last nine years of translingual scholarship in the hopes of theorizing best practices to enact a translingual pedagogy in first year composition (FYC) contexts. Despite translingual theory's high profile in the field, scholars like Ligia Mihut (2019) have brought attention to the fact that little has been done to bring translingual theory into classrooms. After reviewing relevant literature in Composition Studies, the author explores how translingual tenets can be implemented within current university curricula. Through three well-established pedagogical approaches, the author suggests, instructors can adopt translingual practices that support students' linguistic agency and challenge monolingual ideologies. Ultimately, this work hopes to advance meaningful conversations among scholars and teachers developing best practices in translingual FYC pedagogy.

Best Practices for a Translingual Pedagogy: An Undergraduate Perspective

The imperatives to enact a translingual pedagogy are growing around a body of scholarship that has a strong theoretical base. Translingualism challenges the current paradigm that sees language difference as a barrier to learning and therefore discredits the languages and language varieties of many marginalized and minority students. Given the increasing number of linguistically diverse students in universities, translingualism argues, we must change the role of language in the writing classroom. After years of upholding dominant language discourses and monolingual ideologies, writing instructors are realizing they must confront these inequities in order to help students navigate them. Nevertheless, as Ligia Mihut (2019) recently stated, there has thus far been “an overemphasis of theory and thereby, failure to achieve praxis when it comes to language rights and social justice” (p. 80). My work will contribute to these efforts to fill this gap between theory and practice with best practices for instructors in first year composition (FYC). As an undergraduate student I want to emphasize the value of listening to students when instructors attempt a translingual pedagogy. Dialogue among students, teachers, and scholars will be crucial to its success. In that spirit, I want to suggest that instructors can use familiar pedagogical approaches in the field in order to enact a translingual pedagogy.

This thesis outlines the last nine years of scholarship in translingualism to show how the field has come to this crucial moment. Like scholars such as Cavazos (2018) and Mihut (2019), I argue that there are small steps that can be taken in the classroom within current institutional structures. I propose best practices that can help those teaching FYC courses to take steps toward practicing a translingual approach. By doing so, instructors can confront the racist and

discriminatory ideologies in writing instruction and replace them with practices that support the linguistic diversity of their students.

What is Translingual Pedagogy?

Translingualism in Theory

The translingualism movement first began in 2011 in an opinion piece titled, “Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach.” Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and John Trimbur (2011) ask the field to consider the ramifications of language ideologies in their composition courses. They argue that current models in composition view language as static and constrained by rigid rules and suggest a reorientation to language that “insists on viewing language differences and fluidities as resources to be preserved, developed, and utilized” (p. 304). According to the authors, a translingual approach challenges the myth of Standard Edited American English (SEAE) and reflects the reality of language usage better than current practices in the field. While it seems revolutionary in thought, translingualism simply seeks to help students understand how “writers can, do, and must negotiate standardized rules in light of the contexts of specific instances of writing” (p. 305). In short, translingualism asks instructors to stop seeing language difference as a barrier to learning how to write. This reorientation to language is the basis for the field as it moves towards embracing linguistic and cultural diversity in student writing.

Following up on their initial articulation, Lu and Horner (2013) started clarifying translingualism as a theoretical framework by locating “a translingual approach as one that recognizes differences *as the norm*” (p. 585). In light of this they advocate for a “temporal-spatial framework” to a translingual approach that locates student agency in both

writing that challenges the norm and also adheres to said norm (p. 587). In their own words, “we can argue for teaching students from subordinated groups to produce standardized forms of English not in terms of their need to submit to dominant expectations, but instead in terms of the fertile mimesis and critical agency these students’ (re)productions and recontextualization of that English might constitute” (p. 598). No matter whether students are challenging or adhering to SEAE, there are complex choices being made. This framework locates agency in students to put forth what they want about themselves and their language choices in their writing. Writing instructors can then support and respect a student’s desire to challenge or adhere to dominant language discourses by utilizing Lu and Horner’s (2013) framework.

Translingualism seeks to topple the practices and assumptions by which the field has grown from. It is why instructors must seek to confront these assumptions head on to begin reversing and challenging these harmful practices.

The Tradition behind Translingualism

This development builds on the long history of language rights advocacy in the field. One pivotal moment in language rights history was the CCCC’s Students Right To Their Own Language (SRTOL) statement of 1974. Given the increasing number of linguistically diverse and multilingual students coming to United States universities, scholars recognized the need to address the new challenges that these students presented to writing instruction. SRTOL was commissioned as an institutional statement that affirmed and invited other languages and dialects of English into the academic sphere. Geneva Smitherman (1995), one of its key contributors, highlights the important role SRTOL played in the battle for language rights in the field of Composition Studies. She claims that CCCC’s “ was responding to a developing crisis in college

composition classrooms, a crisis caused by the cultural and linguistic mismatch between higher education and the nontraditional (by virtue of Color and class) students” (Smitherman, 1995, p. 19). She further describes the methodology of the statements creation along with offering readers a behind the scenes look into how the statement came to be. Smitherman (1995) attests to the collaborative nature of the document saying that it was the product of various viewpoints where in some cases the statement was progressive and in other cases not so much. In her own words Smitherman (1995) says SRTOL was the result of “what comes from working *within* the system” (p. 24). Her work stands as testament to the long fought battle for student languages rights within the discipline and the need to continue fighting this battle.

As more students enter universities with various linguistic backgrounds, fields like as English as a Second Language (ESL) and Second Language Writing (SLW) became increasingly important. Their work to provide student-centered pedagogies to prepare students for English heavy curricula is crucial to the success of many students in the academy. Despite the work of such experts, however, Matsuda (2006) argues in “The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity” that universities are making harmful assumptions about the linguistic resources students have: universities believe that students populations are largely monolingual when in fact a majority of these students are multilingual or speak a different variety of English. He uses current university practices as evidence of these assumptions, in a damning work that highlights the ingroup mentality within higher education but also within English and Writing departments across the nation. The long history of engagement in student language rights has been foundational to the current translingualism movement as it works towards dismantling the discriminatory practices within the field.

Critiques of Translingualism

Since 2011, numerous scholars have attempted to develop this approach. As indicated above, the fight for student language rights has a long history in the discipline, and as a result the recent translingual conversation has grown alongside conversations within ESL and SLW. Jonathan Hall (2018) usefully outlines how translingualism has historically grown with these conversations. He acknowledges Thomas F. Gieryn's (1983) "boundary work" concept as a way to explain how disciplinary boundaries can be seen as both a space for distinction but more importantly as a space for collaboration (p. 781). He shows how translingualism and its boundaries have emerged in light of all the cross disciplinary work with ESL and SLW. His discussion then hopes to change perceptions about translingualism as a field so that the correct barriers can be made for more cross disciplinary work to occur and to avoid misunderstandings between fields. Hall (2018) urges instructors in the field of translingualism to make better use of disciplinary boundaries by collaborating with other disciplines as a way to continue exploring possible translingual approaches. A good example of prior boundary work comes from Atkinson et al. (2015) who worried that the current translingual movement has minimized the work being done in both ESL and SLW disciplines. They ask for instructors and institutions to not see translingualism as a replacement for these fields but as a parallel yet distinct conversation. While these scholars are supportive of the translingual movement, they feel that their work is being marginalized and needs to be distinguished.

Scholars in these fields then began asking for instructors in Rhetoric and Composition to educate themselves about language in order to better understand the disciplinary boundaries between translingualism, ESL, and SLW (Guerra 2016; Gevers 2018; Matsuda 2014). Their

expertise in language provided much needed clarification on what role code-meshing should play in the writing classroom. Briefly, code-meshing refers to the ability of a writer to combine various linguistic registers into one's writing. It encapsulates a variety of visible writing practices and it has been one way to approach translingual theory in the classroom. This focus on code-meshing though, has been critiqued for glancing over the need to develop student rhetorical language usage. Matsuda (2014), for example, noted that a focus on visible difference in student writing risks valorizing difference to the point that it may damage student writing. He aptly labeled such a valorization of linguistic difference as “linguistic tourism” (p. 482). Matsuda (2014) makes it clear that valorizing student writing could lead to stereotyping that could reinforce desires to seek out the exotic. In other words, this focus in student writing glances over more nuanced understandings of language that appreciate the rhetorical agency in small acts of defiance against dominant discourses. It then becomes crucial for translingual scholars to not demand but invite code-meshing into the classroom in order to not become linguistic tourists. Juan C. Guerra (2016) concurs with this position, saying that instructors should help students gain a “rhetorical sensibility” about language usage in a translingual approach instead of demanding or valorizing essays with code-meshing. Yet, he also attends to another question of whether or not instructors should engage students in explicit debates about translingualism. Students would then be better equipped to challenge SEAE if they are informed and invited into this conversation. While his work only briefly explores this question, his discussion emphasizes the value of students taking part in the conversation when instructors try to implement a translingual approach.

As sentiments about code-meshing and its relation to translingual theory grew to more of a consensus within the field, scholars have continually revisited code-meshing to further develop this consensus. In response to Gevers' (2018) critique of translingualism's efficacy for multilingual students, Schreiber and Watson (2018) seek to illuminate the differences between code-meshing and translingualism. They clarify that code-meshing in a translingual approach emphasizes the need to give students space for linguistic agency rather than producing difference in their writing. The authors respond to the need to challenge SEAE in the classroom by asking instructors to continue reporting on their attempts implementing translingual pedagogy. In this same vein, Watson and Shapiro (2018) examine the types of monolingual ideologies a translingual approach opposes so that instructors know what they are combating when implementing a translingual approach. By first outlining four different types of monolingual ideologies, the authors argue for the importance of instructors to attend to all four types in order to eradicate them from classrooms. They further advocate for the use of course outcomes in order to combat all forms of monolingual ideologies in the classroom. Such work, as they contend, will begin to unravel the discriminatory practices that are linked to SEAE. In doing so, these scholars make a persuasive argument for instructors to know what monolingual ideologies are in order to confront them effectively in classroom practices.

Articulating related concerns, Gilyard (2016) argues that the current rhetoric in translingual scholarship needs to be cleared up in order to live up to its potential. He urges translingual scholars to emphasize the political imperative to advocate for students who are being oppressed by current language ideologies in the university so that the field can "forge a stronger narrative" about itself (p. 284). Otherwise the field risks minimizing the need for instructors to

combat language ideologies in the classroom. He further contends that the field would benefit “[b]y remaining wary of a sameness-of difference model, soft-pedaling the language-as-abstraction trope, supporting work on language competence, and fronting language-rights discourse, translingualism avoids becoming off-putting to scholars of color” (p. 287). Gilyard (2016) recognizes translingualism as the way forward, but has brought attention to a number of things that are problematic for the field. By recognizing these inconsistencies in the field, Gilyard (2016) wants instructors to continue developing translingual approaches in the best way possible. Thus pushing the field of translingualism to align itself with making the university accessible to marginalized and minority students in the academy whose languages and cultures have historically been discredited as inferior.

Five years after Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur’s initial call, the 2016 *College English* special issue explores the implications of translingualism for various pedagogies. Scholars including Jerry Won Lee (2016), John Trimbur (2016), Canagarajah (2016), Anis Bawarshi (2016), and Rebecca Leonard and Rebecca Nowacek (2016) chart how translingual perspectives could influence other pedagogies and theories in Composition Studies. As a relatively new push for language rights advocacy, translingual theory has been a new and exciting topic for the field. This special issue realizes the potential of translingual theory, pointing towards how the field has embraced translingualism as an approach to language. The fact that so many leading scholars have taken note of translingual scholarship is a testament to the importance of this work and a compelling argument for instructors to bring translingual theory into FYC.

Implementing a translingual approach opposes static perspectives on language and acknowledges the reality of language usage. It positions students as negotiators of language and

not mimetic agents of standards. The field agrees we should subvert the gate-keeping practices related to monolingual ideologies that prevent our students from maximizing their rhetorical potential. So how can instructors begin to address these issues?

How has Translingual Pedagogy Been Implemented?

Since 2011, some scholars have attempted to find ways to implement translingual tenets in the classroom. An early attempt at pedagogical implementation came from Canagarajah (2011), who wanted to find out how teachers could teach code-meshing. Using teacher research, Canagarajah categorizes four types of code-meshing strategies that were employed by a multilingual undergraduate student. Canagarajah advocates for what he calls a dialogical pedagogy which emphasizes the relationship between student and instructor to question the rhetorical language choices a writer makes. He argues that a dialogical pedagogy can invite linguistic diversity while possibly helping students become aware of their language choices. Later in the 2016 *College English* special issue, Canagarajah (2016) reports on a graduate-level linguistics course that used literacy narratives as a way to explore how to prepare future educators to implement a translingual approach. Performing a classroom ethnography, he recounts some of the challenges of implementing a dialogical pedagogy in the classroom. He also stresses the importance of a practice based approach so that students would use or think about language rhetorically. As previously mentioned the focus on physical language difference has been critiqued by many, but both works from Canagarajah are useful in theorizing ways to create spaces and pedagogies for code-meshed texts.

Another pedagogical implementation comes from Jay Jordan's (2012) *Redesigning composition for multilingual realities*, which documents his experience implementing an

intercultural rhetoric framework. As evident in the title, Jordan's book strives to consider how instructors can begin thinking of new ways to "reorient composition as a field and a set of practices" (p. 4). He conducts a lengthy discussion in which he explains how the field has gone about addressing multilingual realities in the past and then the present. Following these discussions he shows how and why these practices have been inadequate and even harmful for multilingual students. Jordan asserts that instructors should, as a result of these harmful practices and assumptions, consider new ways of subverting the current model to support the growing number of multilingual students in university contexts. While not expressly translingual, his work is useful for theorizing how to bring together diverse perspectives and languages in the writing classroom. He synthesizes research in SLW and ESL into a new perspective in FYC that hopes to coalesce the various linguistic backgrounds that students have. He then reports on a classroom experiment in which he collaborated with a professor in the field of SLW to do peer review across two different classrooms in the hopes of allowing students to bear witness to the various linguistic and cultural backgrounds at the university. He discovered that an intercultural rhetoric framework benefits students by illuminating the various perspectives and literacies their peers bring into the classroom. This allows students to acknowledge the realities of multilingualism in the university, which is crucial for a translingual pedagogy.

Approaching translingualism through a multiliteracies perspective, Laura Gonzales' (2015) affirms the importance of acknowledging these perspectives and literacies in "Multimodality, Translingualism, and Rhetorical Genre Studies". In this article, Gonzales (2015) outlines how multilingual students can inform student perspectives on genre and multimodal projects. She conducts group interviews with students, in which they described their experiences

completing multimodal projects in their composition courses. What was most surprising about her findings was the fact that multilingual students were approaching multimodal projects in a more complex way than their native English speaking counterparts. Many of her multilingual students said that they were able to layer meaning in their projects which allowed them to traverse their personal language barrier in creative ways. She asserts that a translingual approach to genre studies would allow teachers to appreciate the skills and perspectives that multilingual students bring into composition courses. In short, she affirms that multilingual students can serve as models for how to approach multimodal projects. In other words, she shows how multilingual students have a lot to offer to the writing classroom due to their various linguistic resources. Cavazos (2018) focuses on how a translingual approach can be molded to a multilingual FYC context. The interviews she conducts reveal the need for FYC instructors to support multilingual students in the classroom in order to find ways to negotiate their writing and language usage. She further states that in doing so, instructors will be able to “explore how different languages enhance academic learning in equitable and inclusive ways” (“Linguistically inclusive pedagogies” para. 1). Her work illuminates a need to address how multilingual student perspectives will shape writing instruction under a translingual approach.

As these works demonstrate, instructors are finding effective ways to integrate translingual tenets into their classrooms. They strive to help students navigate their linguistic resources so that the field can respect and invite marginalized voices. Inspired by these attempts and theoretical discussions, I will now discuss my own ideas for integrating translingual theory into FYC.

How Might Translingual Pedagogy Be Integrated?

In this section I will focus on three pedagogical strategies in Composition Studies that seem well positioned to integrate a translingual approach. While each approach described here deserves an in-depth discussion, such coverage is simply outside the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I hope to acknowledge the important work that is being done within each, and their further potential. At the scale of classroom design, I consider the efficacy of a Writing about Writing (WAW) approach to translingual scholarship in FYC contexts. Via such an approach, students can then make informed decisions for their own language goals. Then, I explore the use of literacy narratives to give students the space to practice their language goals. Finally, I approach the challenging question of assessment by advocating for the use of grading contracts. Together, these recommendations demonstrate how well translingualism can be integrated within popular teaching approaches, with powerful results. My perspective as an undergraduate student has given me the opportunity to research these approaches through the eyes of a student. Through such a perspective I want to advocate for more undergraduates to be included in translingual debates. I maintain that there can be real benefits to letting undergraduate students weigh in on translingual theory, especially when instructors begin formulating best practices for a translingual pedagogy. For that reason, the approaches I have chosen are meant to give students power in the classroom which will provide them the opportunity to see how they can help shape our practices as a field.

Translingualism and Writing about Writing

In order to embrace a translingual approach in FYC, students will need to understand what it means and why it matters. One way to achieve this is through a WAW approach to translingualism as Cavazos (2018) suggested. This will entail teaching translingual debates to

students and having them engage in the scholarship via assignments and class discussion. As a result, many of the current practices in the field can be utilized in a translingual approach by first situating the classroom to challenge and dethrone SEAE as the language of the academy.

Theorized by Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle (2007) in “Teaching about Writing: Righting Misconceptions: (Re)envisioning ‘First-Year Composition’ as ‘Introduction to Writing Studies,’” and their subsequent 2010 textbook, WAW has brought attention to the inadequacies of current FYC classrooms that attempt to teach everything students need to know to be successful writers in the university. WAW faces the reality of writing by making clear for students that writing is a process learned over many years. Since its inception, WAW has aimed to reinvent FYC by letting students read writing scholarship while they practice writing. Continued research has shown promise in this approach because it makes clear what instructors are trying to accomplish and it lets students learn about writing from the vast amount of scholarship in the field. A WAW approach opposes the idea of teaching a sole academic discourse that is transferable to other writing contexts in the university. It instead teaches students that various academic discourses write differently and that students should learn how to navigate those discourses to become effective writers for whatever community they are a part of. In addition to this, a lot of work has also been done to theorize what sorts of topics can be taught to students which leads us to consider whether or not translingualism can fit into such a framework.

Downs and Wardle (2013) later argue that a WAW pedagogy takes advantage of Jan Meyer and Ray Land’s (2006) “threshold concepts” in order to select content that will be taught to students (p. 3). Put simply, a threshold concept is one that challenges prior understanding of a

topic. Often it is a discipline specific topic and it leads to a new, more profound understanding of said topic. Much like some theories or approaches in Composition studies can act as threshold concepts, translingual theory seems adept to challenge students' assumptions and particularly those related to language. For this reason, I think translingualism can arguably be a threshold concept for the field of Composition studies. This would position the translingualism field and its scholarship in a unique position that would allow instructors to teach the field's findings in language while also practicing them in the classroom. If instructors are to help students make rhetorically effective language choices in their writing, instructors need to demystify what a translingual approach means. Instructors can then begin the important work of helping students make informed language choices for themselves by helping them navigate dominant language discourses.

When I say instructors should engage their students in translingual debates, I mean to let them read the scholarship. Like Downs and Wardle (2013), I believe that students will find interest in scholarship that pertains to them and especially topics that have had long standing ramifications for them. While many readings would seem potentially helpful for students to engage in translingual scholarship, I avoid suggesting readings in this work. Given my position as a student, I merely want to advocate for instructors to consider teaching these debates to their students in order to demystify both a translingual approach and the role of SEAE. By having students read and discuss translingual scholarship, instructors can then situate their classroom practices to reinforce translingual tenets. As many scholars such as Cavazos (2018) and Gonzalez (2015) have suggested, instructors have a lot to learn from students and the linguistic backgrounds they bring into the classroom. This is one way to let students enter into the

conversation. By making explicit just what instructors are trying to accomplish via a WAW approach to a translingual pedagogy, students would then be able to see that language is shaped by its users and not by a rulebook.

A WAW approach to translingual scholarship will also be useful in discovering if students in FYC want to embrace translingualism as an approach. Canagarajah (2016) had proposed the idea of having students learn about translingualism while practicing it. While he was referring to that possibility within the context of a graduate level linguistics course, it could be useful letting FYC students also engage with the scholarship. One advantage might be the opportunity to gather more empirical data from students in the classroom, which the field needs. Such an approach in the classroom could help answer questions regarding students' desire to challenge SEAE, which many scholars have raised. While this is a valid concern, WAW does not ask the instructor to force students to challenge SEAE. Rather, instructors can give students the information they need to make that decision for themselves. As Lu and Horner (2013) advocate, instructors should locate agency in both instances of students either challenging or adhering to SEAE. This would then provide students agency and power over how they shape their texts for whatever audience they are writing for. Therefore, a translingual approach should give students the option to put forth what they want about their language and culture in their writing. Whether students choose to challenge or adhere to SEAE, a WAW approach to translingual scholarship will give students the tools to begin navigating these choices in their writing. By positing the classroom as a space to interrogate language and monolingual ideologies, instructors can not only acknowledge how the field has contributed to the assimilationist agenda in the United States but in a much stronger way, ask students for help in finding a solution.

Again, as an undergraduate student, I can attest to the value of learning about composition studies while practicing writing. It challenged my preconceived notions about the practice and opened my eyes to the vast amounts of scholars who are dedicated to exploring this fascinating subject. I suggest a WAW approach to translingual theory because this same orientation can lead to students discovering the nuances between language and writing through the vast amounts of scholarship dedicated to this issue. Students who come into FYC might assume that SEAE is the standard for correctness in academia and in life after college. Challenging that notion by taking a WAW approach to translingualism will prepare students for the various rhetorical situations they will encounter during and after university. Instructors must be critical of SEAE because the current paradigm is limiting and discriminatory for many students, so instructors should call SEAE what it is: an institution of racism that upholds white privilege. Opposing this dominant discourse will then allow students to make language choices from an informed stance. From here students can then understand what it means to challenge SEAE or adhere to it in their writing in order to see how they themselves shape language. The next step then is to figure out how to support these choices in the classroom.

Translingualism and Literacy Narratives

I want to answer that question by arguing for the use of literacy narratives in a translingual pedagogy. I think instructors will then be able to invite and acknowledge the various cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students into the classroom. Students can then exert their linguistic agency in a writing situation meant for personal exploration.

Since Mary Soliday's (1994) "Translating Self and Difference Through Literacy Narratives," research has shown that literacy narratives can help marginalized students explore

how language plays a role in their literacy development. Soliday's (1994) work explores how such a project gives students agency in expressing how literacy has contributed to their current identity. Recent work in this approach has only reinforced the importance of letting students in FYC explore this development in their lives, while resources such as the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives have given a space for students to share their narratives on a digital platform. In translingual scholarship, literacy narratives have been used as a means to let students explore code-meshing strategies (Canagarajah, 2013, 2016). In short, the literacy narrative is a promising genre in FYC pedagogy, offering an important opportunity for students to explore their personal literacy development.

Literacy narratives allow students to reflect on how their past literacy experiences have led them to the present moment. Canagarajah (2013) usefully demonstrates how the literacy narrative genre allowed for one of his students to code-mesh and practice her language goals. While his study focused on what kinds of code-meshing strategies she used, it innately shows how the literacy narrative is a flexible and negotiable genre of writing that gave the student the space to challenge SEAE in various ways. Also as Canagarajah (2013) argues, his approach as an instructor to her code-meshing strategies gave way to a more nuanced negotiation of meaning that allowed his student to also teach him. In short, Canagarajah's (2013) theorization, while focusing on visible difference, also shows how students can begin exercising the linguistic agency that a translingual pedagogy affords. Moving forward though, the literacy narrative can be situated in a translingual pedagogy because it not only gives students the literal space to be creative with their writing, given the flexibility of the genre, but also a chance to enact their language goals. What I mean to suggest is that the literacy narrative project in FYC allows

students to practice various registers and/or languages if they so choose. It would also give the instructor the opportunity to get to know each student's literacy background. Because literacy narratives are already well supported by scholarship, they are ripe for experimentation with translingual pedagogy.

Of course, as Guerra (2016) and others have reported, getting students to practice their language goals or even consider them can be difficult. I still think that offering the space for students to practice their language goals is important, whether they choose to take advantage of it or not. As previously mentioned, many students will be new to this idea of SEAE as an institution of white privilege, so literacy narrative can be a space for students to reflect on how SEAE has shaped their own language practices throughout their lives. Plus, through Jay Jordan's (2012) intercultural rhetoric framework, literacy narratives may also help students discover the diverse perspectives that their peers have brought with them into the classroom. Jordan (2012) reported on how peer review can help students acknowledge diverse perspectives to various degrees. In many ways, the literacy narrative not only helps instructors bear witness to these diverse perspectives in the university but it also gives students this chance as well. This move is one of the more powerful ways instructors can give students the opportunity to practice and acknowledge translingual perspectives in the classroom. Doing so would help students confront SEAE and its unrealness in an academic context. Thus a literacy narrative project within a translingual approach accomplishes two outcomes: it gives students the space to practice and negotiate their language goals, and it allows students to examine dominant discourses through witnessing how their peers' literacies have developed in relation to those discourses. By reading

and writing literacy narratives in dialogue with translingualism, students have the opportunity to develop agency and critical awareness.

By using literacy narratives, instructors can support students' emerging language goals. From here it is important to consider how to assess students, a complicated question for translingual scholars. I suggest instructors can look to growing research on anti-racist assessment practices.

Translingualism and Grading Contracts

After instructors both demystify a translingual approach to students and invite them to practice their own language goals, the next step then is considering how to assess student writing in a translingual pedagogy. Recent work on contract grading can be useful for implementing translingual tenets in assessment.

Contract grading in composition classrooms has been used as a means to disrupt subjective grading practices. Contract grading entails that instructors and students work together to create the expectations for assessment. It usually takes the form of a document that details the expectations for the course which can be openly negotiated in the classroom. They urge students to participate in creating a portion of the classroom and to increase dialogue between students and instructors in order to deemphasize grades. Writing scholarship has long attempted to chart new ways to grade student essays, and contract grading has remained on the radar in these conversations. Danielewicz and Elbow's (2009) work explored and explained the importance of using contract grading to increase focus on learning how to write instead of the resulting grades. Most notably, Asao Inoue (2015) has called for contract grading as a means to enact anti-racist

pedagogies. Thus contract grading became more than an alternative to grading but a manner to subvert discriminatory practices in writing assessment.

Asao Inoue's (2019) recent work on labor-based grading contracts has furthered such a perspective on assessment. A labor-based grading contract is one that recognizes student labor as the means of assessment. Students are solely graded based on the labor they have achieved with no attention given to "standards." Therefore the only grade in the course is the final grade which is determined by the amount of labor performed. Inoue (2019) argues that this approach "changes the rules of the grading game in such a way that White language supremacy can not only be seen for what it is, but effectively countered" (p. 9). For this reason, Inoue (2019) contends that labor-based grading contracts resist this agenda and subvert discriminatory practices that marginalize underrepresented and minority students. Using labor-based grading contracts, then, is a way to further invent the classroom as a space for learning and understanding.

This method answers many doubts about assessment within possible translingual pedagogies. For one, labor-based grading contracts resist the idea of grading based on standards, allowing instructors the position to negotiate writing with students without having to appease a dominant discourse. Instructors can then support student language goals by working with them to build that rhetorical sensibility Guerra (2016) supports. Grading contracts allow for assessment of student writing from a position of respect and tolerance. It advocates for more negotiation of meaning between writer and reader which will be needed if instructors are to learn from their students. It further sediments another translingual tenet by establishing the classroom as a space for practice. What I mean is that the classroom can be seen as one where students can take risks

in their writing without the fear of the instructor's red pen. More importantly, though, since every student will have very different language goals, assessment will need to be individualized.

Labor-based grading contracts afford individualization by circumventing subjective grading practices that are within a one-size-fits-all model. It asks instructors to see student work as work and not a product to assess. Therefore, feedback can be focused on the students learning needs and goals.

While I do want to advocate strongly for Inoue's labor-based contracts, there is value in other forms of grading contracts for translingual pedagogies as well. Both rubric style and subtractive contracts, for example, offer a level of flexibility for instructors that have to navigate institutional demands. Both adopt many of the practices that are crucial to taking a translingual approach, but a major difference lies in how students improve their grade. Rubric and subtractive style grading contracts ask students to work harder by revising or submitting work that is carefully polished. While this seems to uphold the discriminatory practice of grading based on standards, I would argue that it grants the instructor a level of flexibility under various university frameworks. Both still challenge grading in new ways and shape the class into one that supports dialogue between instructors and students.

Grading contracts are tools that can further sediment the classroom as an area of negotiation and practice which will allow students to practice their language goals if they so choose. No matter the type of grading contract that is to be used, de-emphasizing grades will help instructors invite students to think about their writing as a learning process and not a product. Moreover, recent research suggests contract grading can resist discriminatory practices that harm marginalized and minority students. As scholars in translingualism have argued, the

field needs to advocate for and support these students in order to be pedagogically viable.

Contract grading is one way to align translanguaging with current discussions surrounding critical pedagogy and questions of access. For this reason, I hope that instructors consider implementing contract grading and report on their classroom experiences.

Conclusion

Composition Studies has a rich history of advocating for our students, and translanguaging advances that mission. The practices that I have suggested above are a means to begin taking action to improve access and combat monolingual ideologies in FYC. If there is one thing I can say for certain as an undergraduate student, it is that students in FYC will have an opinion about translanguaging theory—they too will want to be a part of the process. In short, involving students in this pursuit may help shape future approaches for a translanguaging pedagogy. The pedagogical tools that I have suggested work to support students' linguistic agency within FYC. They endow students with knowledge of the field, spaces to practice their language goals, and an equitable assessment framework. All of these aspects then position the classroom as an inviting space meant for learning and growth. Students will take notice of instructors' efforts to listen and will inevitably become an important ally for instructors if they are allowed to participate in these discussions.

As a translanguaging approach becomes more realizable, it will be crucial to keep in mind a few things as instructors move forward. For one, as Schreiber and Watson (2018) mention, there will be flawed applications of translanguaging pedagogies. It is inevitable, but that should not stop instructors from exploration. After such practical experiments, it will be even more crucial for instructors to report on their experiences. Secondly, given the flexibility of language, translanguaging

pedagogies should be just as flexible in order to fully acknowledge the realities of language usage. If we acknowledge that language is forever changing, then pedagogies will have to constantly change to accommodate these fluctuations. It will be difficult to articulate a full translingual pedagogy for this reason, but again this should not stop instructors from attempting to be flexible in their approaches. Watching out for these obstacles will keep our sights on bringing equitable practices that invite linguistic diversity into the writing classroom. As many have stated before, these small steps in the classroom and in our departments will lead to the larger institutional changes that the field should continue advocating for. Beginning to combat these dominant discourses by letting students learn and challenge them is what will make a difference for marginalized and minority students in the university.

If students want to advance and practice their linguistic resources in their writing, writing instructors should support them in this goal. Because, from here, students can then be better prepared for the variety of writing situations and discourses they will encounter after their studies.

Works Cited

- Atkinson, Dwight, et al. (2015). Clarifying the relationship between L2 writing and translingual writing: An open letter to writing studies editors and organizations leaders. *College English*, 77(4), 383-386.
- Bawarshi, A. (2016). Beyond the genre fixation: A translingual perspective on genre. *College English*, 78(3), 243-249.
- Canagarajah, S. (2011). Codemeshing in academic writing: Identifying teachable strategies of translanguaging. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 401–417.
doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01207.x.
- Canagarajah, S. (2016). Translingual writing and teacher development in composition. *College English*, 78(3), 265-273.
- Cavazos, A. G. (2019). Encouraging languages other than english in first-year writing courses: Experiences from linguistically diverse writers. *Composition Studies*, 47(1).
- Danielewicz, J., & Elbow, P. (2009). A unilateral grading contract to improve learning and teaching. *College Composition and Communication*, 61(2), 244-268.
- Downs, D., & Wardle, E. (2007). Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re)envisioning “First-Year Composition” as “Introduction to Writing Studies”. *College Composition and Communication*, 58(4), 552–584.
- Gieryn, Thomas F. (1983). Boundary-work and the demarcation of science from non-science: Strains and interests professional ideologies of scientists. *American Sociological Review*, 48(6), 781-795).

- Gilyard, K. (2016). The rhetoric of translanguaging. *College English*, 78(3), 284-289.
- Gevers, J. (2018). Translanguaging revisited: Language difference and hybridity in L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 40, 73–83. doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2018.04.003.
- Gonzales, L. (2015). Multimodality, translanguaging, and rhetorical genre studies. *Composition Forum*, 31(7), compositionforum.com/issue/31/.
- Guerra, J. C. (2016). Cultivating a rhetorical sensibility in the translanguaging writing classroom. *College English*, 78(3), 228-233.
- Hall, J. (2018). The translanguaging challenge: Boundary work in rhetoric & composition, second language writing, and WAC/WID. *Across the Disciplines*, 15(3), 28-47, wac.colostate.edu/docs/atd/trans/hall2018.pdf.
- Horner, B., Lu, M.-Z., Royster, J. J., & Trimbur, J. (2011). Language difference in writing: Toward a translanguaging approach. *College English*, 73(3), 303-321.
- Inoue, Asao B (2015). *Antiracist writing assessment ecologies: Teaching and assessing for a socially just future*. Fort Collins, Colorado: The WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press.
- . (2019). *Labor-based grading contracts: Building equity and inclusion in the compassionate writing classroom*. Fort Collins, Colorado: The WAC Clearinghouse.
- Jordan, J. (2012). *Redesigning composition for multilingual realities*. Urbana, IL: CCCC.
- Lee, J. W. (2016). Beyond translanguaging writing. *College English*, 79(2), 174-195.
- Leonard, R. L., & Nowacek, R. (2016). Transfer and translanguaging. *College English*, 78(3), 258-264.
- Lu, M.-Z., & Horner, B. (2013). Translanguaging literacy, language difference, and matters of agency. *College English*, 75(6), 582-607.

- Matsuda, P. K. (2014). The lure of translingual writing. *PMLA*, 129(3), 478–483, doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2014.129.3.478.
- Matsuda, P. K. (2006). The myth of linguistic homogeneity in U.S. college composition. *College English*, 68(6), 637. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25472180>
- Meyer, J.H.F. Land, R. (2006). Introduction. In J.H.F Meyer, Land R. *Overcoming barriers to student understanding: Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge*. (pp. 3-18). New York: Routledge.
- Mihut, L. (2019). Linguistic pluralism: A statement and a call to advocacy. *Reflections*, 18(2), 66-86.
- Schreiber, B. R., & Watson, M. (2018). Translingualism ≠ code-meshing: A response to Gevers' "Translingualism revisited" (2018). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 42, 94–97. doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2018.10.007.
- Soliday, M. (1994). Translating self and difference through literacy narratives. *College English*, 56(5), 511. <https://doi.org/10.2307/378604>
- Smitherman, G. (1995). Students' right to their own language: A retrospective. *The English Journal*, 84(1), 21-27, doi.org/10.2307/820470.
- Trimbur, J. (2016). Translingualism and close reading. *College English*, 78(3), pp. 219-227.
- Watson, M., Shapiro R. (2018). Clarifying the multiple dimensions of monolingualism: Keeping our sights on language politics. *Composition Forum*, 38, compositionforum.com/issue/38/monolingualism.php.

