Articles

Translingualism in Composition Studies and Second Language Writing: An Uneasy Alliance

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Although some translingual advocates call for collaboration amongst composition studies, translingual, and second language writing theorists, current misinterpretations of translingual theory represent the field of second language writing in a negative light, making an alliance amongst the scholars of these fields unlikely. Translingualism is embedded in inclusive rhetorics, which, we demonstrate, equate difference with the ability to think divergently. From this perspective, linguistic difference is a catalyst for critical thinking, and linguistic standardization is discrimination. Although this view is accurate, translingual theorists are at risk of misinterpreting second language classrooms as sites of forced linguistic homogenization. The teaching of form and genre are particularly contentious as translingual theorists, who may be unaware of research in second language writing, believe that these elements are taught in second language classrooms without tolerance of linguistic variation. Because translingualism is deeply rooted in inclusive rhetorics, second language teachers are unable to object to this negative view of their field without affiliating themselves with exclusionary rhetorics. However, theorists such as Larsen-Freeman, Halliday, and Tardy write about form and genre using terms similar to those used by translingual theorists, suggesting that current second language writing theory recognizes linguistic variability and the interdependence of form/genre and context. Therefore, alliances amongst scholars in the fields of composition studies, translingualism, and second language writing would be possible if the negative view of second language writing implied by misinterpretations of translingual theory could be redressed.

Bien que quelques tenants du translinguisme prônent une collaboration entre les études en rédaction, les théoriciens en translinguisme et ceux en expression écrite en langue seconde, des interprétations erronées de la théorie du translinguisme présentent actuellement le domaine de la rédaction en langue seconde sous un jour négatif, rendant peu probable une alliance entre les chercheurs de ces domaines. Le translinguisme est intégré à la rhétorique de l'inclusion qui, nous le démontrons, présente la notion de la différence comme synonyme de capacité de raisonnement divergent. Selon cette perspective, la différence linguistique est un catalyseur pour la pensée critique et la normalisation linguistique constitue une forme de discrimination. Même si ce point de vue est valide, les théoriciens en translinguisme risquent de mal interpréter les cours en langue seconde comme

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des sites d'uniformisation linguistique imposée. L'enseignement de la forme et du genre est particulièrement controversé car les théoriciens en translinguisme, ignorant peut-être la recherche portant sur la rédaction en langue seconde, croient que l'enseignement de ces éléments dans les cours de langue seconde se fait sans tolérer la variation linguistique. Puisque le translinguisme est fermement ancré dans la rhétorique de l'inclusion, les enseignants en langue seconde ne peuvent contester cette vision négative de leur domaine sans s'affilier à la rhétorique de l'exclusion. Toutefois, certains théoriciens comme Larsen-Freeman, Halliday et Tardy s'expriment sur la forme et le genre en employant des expressions qui sont similaires à celles qu'emploient les théoriciens en translinguisme, ce qui permet de croire que la théorie actuelle portant sur la rédaction en langue seconde reconnait la variation linguistique et l'interdépendance de la forme, du genre et du contexte. Des alliances entre les chercheurs des trois domaines (rédaction, translinguisme et langue seconde) sont donc envisageables si l'on corrige l'opinion négative face à la rédaction en langue seconde qui ressort des mauvaises interprétations de la théorie translingue.

KEYWORDS: translingualism, second language writing, second language education, composition studies

Translingualism is a theoretical perspective on the production of texts that respects linguistic variation that reflects a writer's multiple identities. Atkinson et al. (2015) defined translingual writing as

> a particular orientation to how language is conceptualized and implicated in the study and teaching of writing … [that] … privileges the view of multiple languages as resources, and calls for a more agentive use of various language resources in constructing and negotiating meaning, identity, and even larger ideological conditions. (p. 384)

Trimbur (2016) wrote that translingualism "grows out of a heightened awareness of linguistic heterogeneity" (p. 219) that calls for respect of linguistic variability in the texts of both monolingual writers who may choose to write in a range of registers or dialects and multilingual writers who may choose to codemesh (Canagarajah, 2011) or blend languages in ways that express their unique meanings. The challenge translingualism poses for additional language learners and their educators is how best to decipher and negotiate the shifting boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable linguistic variation.

Translingualism has implications for classroom teaching, as well as program administrators, researchers, and journal editors, because it has blurred the traditional distinctions between the fields of composition studies (the teaching of English writing to English first language students) and

second language writing (the teaching of writing to second language students). The resulting lack of clarity was so troubling that in 2015, Atkinson et al. published a short letter in *College English* titled "Clarifying the Relationship Between L2 Writing and Translingual Writing: An Open Letter to Writing Studies Editors and Organization Leaders." They wrote that "there seems to be a tendency to conflate second language (L2) writing and translingual writing, and view the latter as a replacement for or improved version of L2 writing" (p. 384). Atkinson et al. (2015) argued that while translingual theory and L2 writing share a concern about the way composition studies has historically privileged a standardized (native-speaker) variety of English, translingual writing is not a substitute for L2 writing. The authors positioned translingual writing at a midpoint between the fields of composition studies and L2 writing. Lu and Horner (2016) also noted a tendency to equate translingual writing with L2 writing (p. 212), stating that, as the definition of translingualism is constantly emerging, translingual theorists must continuously work at refining its meaning. We believe Atkinson et al. are correct in their statements that translingual theorists are misinterpreting translingual writing as equivalent to, a replacement for, or an improvement on L2 writing, and that L2 writing is diminished by this misconstrued interpretation. It is the problematic outcome of this misinterpretation that the first author navigates in her professional life every day, and that this article seeks to address.

The traditional distinctions between the fields of composition studies and L2 writing have been bridged over the years by articles that call for collaboration amongst researchers from both orientations. In 2000, Matsuda and Jablonski considered the metaphor of learning to write within the disciplines, even in one's own language, as equivalent to learning a new language. Although they cautioned against taking this metaphor too literally (as a literal interpretation risks simplifying the complex process of learning an additional language), they pointed out that the metaphor highlights the possibility that researchers in writing across the curriculum (WAC) studies, historically associated with English departments, might usefully collaborate with second language writing researchers. Together, educators in both fields might develop a "mutually transformative model" (2000, p. 4) of cooperation that could enhance the democratization of academic discourses within the university. More recently, Horner, Lu, Jones Royster, and Trimbur (2011) suggested that the development of a translingual approach to teaching writing would require collaboration across "traditional disciplinary boundaries separating composition studies from ESL [English Second Language], applied linguistics, literacy studies, 'foreign' language instruction, and translation studies" (pp. 309–310). A similar call to collaborate came from Jeffery, Keiffer, and Matsuda (2013), who advocated for composition studies and second language writing scholars to work together to develop a new writing construct based upon a translingual approach. Shapiro (2014) wrote

about a group of African American students who protested the marginalized representation of their race in a newspaper article about low scores on standardized tests. One of Shapiro's recommendations to address the students' frustration was for greater collaboration between teachers of English language learners and English mainstream classes to better align curricula so that minority students might move more seamlessly into mainstream classes. Similarly, Siczek and Shapiro (2014) encouraged cooperation between WAC and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) experts to enact universities' commitment to globalization and inclusion and to support second language writers in the disciplines. Despite the apparent interest that composition studies and WAC scholars have in collaborating with second language writing instructors and researchers, an alliance is unlikely, given that translingualism has unfortunately been interpreted as a replacement for L2 writing.

To exemplify how the misinterpretation of translingual theory as a replacement for L2 instruction is reflected across institutions of higher education, we offer a narrative (italicized below) of our lived experiences that demonstrates how L2 education is being displaced by translingual researchers under conditions that are not conducive to collaboration.

> *We are in a meeting. Around the table are representatives from the Department of English Language and Literature, and the Department of Drama and Speech Communication. I'm there too; I'm the Director of the English Language Studies, which offers English Second Language courses on campus. We represent the "communication skills units" at our university. We are meeting with representatives from the Faculty of Math who have decided that all of that faculty's first-year students will take a communications skills course with a focus on either speaking or writing. We are deciding how the students will be allocated (or will allocate themselves) amongst the units. There is a significant amount of funding at stake.*
>
> *A faculty member from the English department says, "Well, we all know that ESL students do better in classes with native English speakers than they do in ESL classes." My heart sinks. The speaker is an advocate of translingualism, which is deeply embedded in the inclusive rhetorics of antiracist, feminist, classist, gendered, and accessible education. To object to what the faculty member says, to resist translingualism, is to align myself with exclusionary rhetorics—racist, antifeminist, class-denying, gender-stereotyping, and inaccessible education orientations. And I won't do that. I can see the representatives from Math wonder why we have ESL classes at all.*

This incident provoked four questions that guided the development of our argument about the impact of translingual theory on composition studies and second language writing scholars. These questions also illuminate the challenges that translingualism poses for second language writing educators.

1. What is translingualism?
2. How is translingualism connected to inclusive rhetorics?
3. How does translingualism position second language writing instruction as discriminatory, rather than inclusive?
4. How can translingual and second language scholars find common ground?

What Is Translingualism?

Translingualism recognizes that native English speaker norms exist only in theory, not in practice; it decentres the idealized native English speaker from models of second language learning, and it brings the language practices of multilingual speakers to the core of models that describe how English language learners communicate; it recognizes that all communicative acts are socially situated in unique contexts; it calls on monolingual speakers of English to be open to linguistic variability in the speaking and writing of nonnative speakers of English; and it demands that instructors and administrators reevaluate policies that discriminate and marginalize students on linguistic grounds (Canagarajah, 2007, 2011, 2013; Horner, Lu, et al., 2011; Horner, NeCamp, & Donahue, 2011; Lu & Horner, 2013). Translingualism resonates with us; we support these perspectives, particularly as they acknowledge the linguistic talents of the students who study in our classes. However, as administrators, we feel that misunderstandings of translingual theory suggest that second language educators are less progressive in their approach to ideology and pedagogy,[1] and this unfortunate misunderstanding may be broadcast broadly across institutions of higher education.

How Is Translingualism Connected to Inclusive Rhetorics?

Translingualism seems almost inevitable if one follows the trajectory of inclusive rhetorics in the field of composition studies. In the 1970s, some American universities adopted an open admissions policy that brought many nontraditional students into the university system. Those students, mostly poor students and students of colour, challenged professors and administrators with reading and writing skills that were not commensurate with the skills of traditional students (Villanueva & Arola, 2011). Many of these new students were dubbed "basic writers" (Shaughnessy, 1977), and theorists began to scrutinize the social conditions and systems that prevented these students from achieving the literacy that would allow them full participation in society and the economy. The underlying conditions that perpetuated low-level literacy were poverty and racial or ethnic difference. In the ensuing years, difference (any difference from the norm of traditional students) became equated with unique perspectives, critical thinking, and original expression.

And difference, when applied to linguistic variation, was seen positively by translingual theorists.

A good starting point from which to trace this trajectory is Bartholomae's paper, *Inventing the University* (1985/2011). In that paper, Bartholomae identified the characteristic of resistance to "commonplaces" (commonly held ideas) as essential to good writing. He stated that students produce expert writing when they position themselves in opposition to the writers who precede them. Bartholomae defined the writer's challenge as expressing a unique voice within the confines of a given genre; distinctive expression, rather than replication, is the key to writing success. Theorists writing after Bartholomae draw on this analysis to reinforce the notion that difference is a catalyst for critical thought and effective writing, and that duplication of expression reflects the opposite.

The belief that difference is a stimulus for unique expression was taken up by Jones Royster (1996/2011) as she advocated for the voices of people of colour. She stated that people of colour use multiple voices, and the resulting hybridity is a source of originality. She wrote that hybridity "allows for the development of a peculiar expertise that extends one's range of abilities well beyond ordinary limits, and it supports the opportunity for the development of new and remarkable creative expression … genius emerges from hybridity" (p. 563). She encouraged people of colour to speak and write in their distinctive, authentic voices. She emphasized that difference engenders a flexibility that allows people of colour to adapt to a variety of contexts and, as a result, generate strong, engaging, and unique texts.

Feminist theorists in the field of composition studies also argued that difference is a source of valuable insight. Flynn (1988/2011) wrote that women's voices have traditionally been excluded from academic discourse. She stated that women's writing may be different from men's in important ways, and that it has been repressed. She saw that female "difference [has been] erased in a desire to universalize" (p. 583). This universalization, or replication of male standards, has been exclusionary to women and has prevented women from expressing their own ways of knowing. She concluded by encouraging women to exercise the power that comes from difference.

Ritchie and Boardman (1999/2011), similarly writing from a feminist perspective, also equated difference with originality. They identified three orientations that women have used to express their voices: women have written like men in order to be included, others have written about feminist concerns without explicitly connecting their issues to composition studies theory (establishing a metonymic or parallel relationship to the field), while others have written to disrupt traditional male texts. Women writing within the first orientation (like men) have succeeded in replicating traditional male-dominated discourse, and have won acceptance for the views of white, middle-class women, but they have been less successful at questioning the systemic power imbalance between men and women. Those women who have written

in parallel to the field of composition studies have usefully drawn attention to issues of voice and employment inequities; however, it is the energy of women writers who have disrupted or opposed institutional and societal values that perpetuate "one of feminism's most important benefits—the proliferation of differences" (p. 611). And these differences support the expression of multiple perspectives that are essential to good writing.

Difference was also a focus for Brodkey (1989/2011), who wrote about class and gender and their influence on student motivation to write. In her teaching, she paired six of her graduate students with Adult Basic Education (ABE) students who wrote letters to each other over a two-month period. Brodkey discovered that the graduate student writers claimed the "teacher role" in the exchanges, dictating acceptable topics of discussion in their letters. In three cases, Brodkey noted that the ABE writers tried to introduce class-related topics into the correspondence (for example, one woman wrote about a violent crime in her neighourhood), but in each case these attempts were disregarded by the graduate students whom, Brodkey believed, felt that class distinctions should not be discussed in an academic forum. Although the option to continue the correspondence beyond the two-month period existed, none of the corresponding pairs continued to write. The author speculated that although class and gender concerns were central to students' lives, academic discourse represented the classroom as a classless, raceless, gender-blind place. When student realities were judged inappropriate for academic writing, the motivation to write was stifled. Although Brodkey's study did not suggest that difference produces strength, it is a caution to all writing teachers that denial of difference eradicates motivation.

With reference to gender difference, Waite (2009) believed that her own gender ambiguity (she identified as a female with male traits) allowed her to see across gender boundaries as well as other frameworks—"heterosexism, racism, classism, and sexism" (p. 2)—that seem immutable because they are embedded in apparently natural systems. Her own constant questioning of these systems predisposed her to think critically about all boundaries. She wrote, "When the lines begin to blur, we can begin to make new ways of knowing" (p. 15). Waite equated her difference with the creation of new knowledge and the ability to think critically.

Dolmage (2009) similarly associated difference with desirable traits. He wrote that western theorists have chosen to associate physical disability with femininity and emotional, irrational thought. This association has marginalized both women and people with disabilities. Dolmage wrote of Hephaestus, the Greek god of fire and metallurgy, who has been depicted with his feet facing in opposite directions. This characteristic (which today might be interpreted as deformity) was interpreted at the time as strength. With a foot facing each way, Hephaestus's choice of direction could not be anticipated, and this was seen as a physical manifestation of his ability to think divergently. Dolmage noted that in this case, "disability" was

interpreted as a desirable human variation. He suggested that we interpret embodied difference as a source of subversiveness that might powerfully disrupt dominant discourse. His writing offered another example of how difference can be interpreted as desirable, powerful, and a stimulus for critical thought.

In addition to rhetorics that argue for inclusion of diversity based on skin colour, gender, class, gender ambiguity, and disability, there are also precedents for translingual theory that draw attention to strength that is inherent in cultural diversity. Writing within a movement called "alternative discourse," Bizzell (1994/2011) argued that traditional curricula in English literature departments (organized by nationality and time periods) be reorganized according to "contact zones" (Pratt, 1991, as referenced in Bizzell), defined as geographical regions (not marked by national borders) and time periods where cultures meet and struggle. Bizzell stated, "This model treats difference as an asset, not a liability" (p. 463), and she expressed hope that this approach to curricula would allow all students to see themselves represented accurately in the literature; they could read about and study the struggle in cultural contact zones while finding parallels in the struggle to express their own unique views in writing. Lu (1994/2011) also referenced Pratt (1991) and used the term "contact zone" to describe the interactions of multicultural students within a classroom. Lu offered an approach to teaching composition that recognized the forces that students of minority cultures negotiated as they wrote in their second languages. Her approach made these forces explicit and offered students a chance to choose which form of discourse best conveyed their meaning. She described one of her Hawaiian students who used the phrase "can able to" (p. 474) to express the idea of possibility without control, which was the outcome of the student's negotiation of meaning, taking into account her knowledge of English linguistic form, American cultural values, and her sense of cultural powerlessness in the United States. Lu argued that what appeared at first to be linguistic error was actually a representation of the student's attentiveness to the forces that engaged her identity: a negotiation within a cultural "contact zone." Lu suggested that her student's difference opened up new ways of understanding and reflecting on one's position within society.

Another stream of theory that argues for inclusion of diversity is that of critical pedagogy. Pennycook (2004) defined critical pedagogy as teaching that encourages the development of objective distance, the identification of bias and faulty logic, the redressing of social inequities, and the problematizing of practice. Benesch (1999) summarized the argument against and for including critical thinking within a second language classroom, and she narrated her experience of teaching from a critical stance by discussing the murder of a homosexual student with her second language writing students. During the discussion, Benesch's students deepened their understanding of how fear of difference was the hidden justification for violence.

Theorists who support critical pedagogy believe that diversity can stimulate new perspectives on dominant discourses that are critiqued with the end goal of inclusiveness.

The belief that difference is an asset is now explicit in Canadian public discourse as well. In January 2016, Prime Minister Trudeau spoke to the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, stating that Canadian cultural diversity was a strength and an explanation for innovation and economic success. With the concept of difference so tightly tied to strength inherent in hybridity, multiple perspectives, and critical thinking, it is not surprising that linguistic difference should also be equated with the ability to think divergently and critically. Rhetorics of inclusion maintain that difference is a source of strength, and this is one of the key tenets of translingualism; linguistic difference is an indicator of the ability to write from multiple perspectives, and a catalyst for critical thought, which is characteristic of all good writing. Therefore, to speak against translingualism is to resist these historic discourses, and to risk aligning oneself with the exclusionary rhetorics of racism, antifeminism, class denying, gender stereotyping, and inaccessible education. And that is a dangerous thing.

How Does Translingualism Position Second Language Writing Instruction as Discriminatory, Rather Than Inclusive?

One of the earliest and most influential texts about linguistic difference is the policy statement on Students' Rights to Their Own Language, adopted by the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 1974. This document established best practices for teaching students who are multilingual and/or multidialectical. The creation of the policy statement was driven by the desire to redress the social and academic conditions that privilege Standard American English and condemn speakers of nonstandard English dialects to marginal academic outcomes. The document states that students learn the dialect of the environment in which they live, and that learning new (standard) dialects is difficult. While students are learning a new dialect, teachers should focus on strengthening content, logic, and organizational elements of a text before emphasizing the surface features. Responding to surface features may reflect the desire to homogenize and enforce conformity to a dominant discourse that is considered superior only because of socially constructed historical precedent. All dialects are equally useful for expressing strong arguments, and teachers must set aside their own biases and recognize that language diversity enriches communication, just as diversity in the arts is respected as creativity. As a bedrock text, this policy statement set the groundwork for respectful treatment of students with divergent linguistic backgrounds. Further, it clearly states that hyper-attention to grammar (surface features) should be avoided because it destroys difference and enforces conformity.

As grammar is taught in many ESL classes, translingualism associates ESL classes with enforced conformity; grammar teaching is viewed as the imposition of socially constructed constraints of a privileged dialect on students whose divergent viewpoints will be smothered by an overattenuated focus on form. Further, any teaching that might be construed as prescriptive is seen as an attempt to erase difference. From this perspective, the teaching of genre in a traditional prescriptive manner is also a concern. Bawarshi (2016) wrote of the "fixation" (p. 244) on textual characteristics of a genre that are assumed to be stable. He stated,

> Dominant pedagogical approaches still fixate on genres as relatively static objects to be taught and acquired as part of disciplinary and professional enculturation. Genre explication—in the form of identifying prototypical genre conventions and relating them to their social function/purposes and in some cases also examining the ideological implications of these conventions—remains the pedagogical norm. At the same time, because genre knowledge is associated with disciplinary and professional participation, genres become used as benchmarks to distinguish between levels of literacy competence, such as what genres are appropriate and useful to teach in basic writing and "ESL" courses. (p. 244)

Bawarshi, a translingual theorist, associated the teaching of genre in ESL classes with the one-dimensional teaching of structure and other textual features that students are required to unquestioningly reproduce in order to be accepted as members of their discourse communities. This further maligned second language teaching by suggesting that ESL classes force students to write to an established template, eradicating their difference, virtually eliminating their potential to express unique meanings in critical ways that might create new knowledge by resisting dominant discourses.

For ESL educators, these associations are disturbing enough. However, Canagarajah (2007) further denigrated ESL classes by exposing the binary relationships that underpin models of second language acquisition (SLA) that, he believes, never accurately reflected the true nature of additional language acquisition. Canagarajah pointed to the dichotomies of grammar versus pragmatics, determinism versus agency, individual versus community, purity versus hybridity, fixity versus fluidity, cognition versus context, and monolingual versus multilingual acquisition (2007, pp. 923–924). His purpose was to demonstrate that these binary relationships reinforce the erroneous belief that native-speaker mastery is the goal of English language learners. This assumption prevents the recognition that English is being used as a lingua franca by multilinguals who *simultaneously* use English *and* establish English standards through use that are appropriate to their own contexts. Canagarajah emphasized that linguistic standards are intersubjectively created through use. Therefore, instead of striving to teach to

native English speaker standards, ESL teachers should endeavour to teach the skills and strategies required to decipher communicative intent through the alignment of interests between the learners/users and their communicative partners. Canagarajah wrote, "We [second language educators] have to deconstruct our earlier models and perhaps start anew" (2007, p. 924). His writing clearly exposed the weaknesses of traditional SLA models premised on the native-speaker ideal, and demanded that new, better models be constructed, models that more accurately represent English language use by multilingual speakers.

Lu and Horner (2013) responded to Canagarajah's call for new models of SLA. They proposed an alternative model, essentially placing English monolingual (although multidialectical) speakers inside the same model as English language learners on a grand spectrum that recognizes that we are all English language learners, and that all language acts are deviations from a nonexistent norm. This model effectively gathers English language users into a single model in an effort to avoid the marginalization of any group based on linguistic difference. This is the basis of the faculty member's statement that English language learning students do better in classes with native English speakers. The theory asserts that all English users simply lie on distinct points along a single continuum. This view suggests that there is no need for ESL classes; all students are English language users and their linguistic needs may be addressed in the same class. Therefore, ESL classes, which segregate nonnative English speakers in separate classes, marginalize these students based on language difference. Matsuda (2006) wrote of institutional policies of "linguistic containment" (p. 641) that keep English second language learners and their concerns from mainstream composition classes, and he objected to these policies because they have prevented ESL concerns from entering the consciousness of mainstream composition instructors. However, the use of the term "linguistic containment" also increased tensions around the separation of English second language learners from English first language learners, implying that ESL classes are segregationist and discriminatory.

Certainly, the response at our institution suggests that translingualism is being interpreted as a replacement for L2 writing instruction, and it promotes the view of ESL classes as prescriptive, enforcing conformity through the teaching of grammar and genre, requiring unquestioning replication of form in an effort to eradicate difference. As difference is desirable, a source of strength and a catalyst in the production of new knowledge, a stimulus for critical thinking and original thought, any attempt to eliminate difference reflects a disrespect for students' unique abilities. Further, as ESL classes separate ESL students from mainstream native English speakers, the classes are open to the criticism that they discriminate amongst students on the basis of linguistic difference. This view of ESL classes, interpreted through a misconstrual of translingual theory, is disturbing. And it is one

that ESL educators, who have long fought for the best interests of their students, will resist. If this interpretation of translingualism continues to offer a view of ESL classes as prescriptive and discriminatory, any collaboration amongst composition studies, translingual, and second language writing scholars is likely to be uneasy at best, unwelcome at worst.

How Can Translingual and Second Language Scholars Find Common Ground?

The problem that the faculty member in our meeting has with ESL classes is that they are sites of grammar (form or accuracy) and genre instruction, both of which require the observation of norms of some kind. The translingual advocate interprets this as the erasure of difference and obliteration of opportunity for the critical thinking that lies at the heart of good writing. The faculty member believes that ESL instructors teach grammar and genre to students in prescriptive ways that attempt to erase the hybridity and multiple perspectives generated by the students' linguistic diversity. This prescriptiveness corresponds to Berlin's 1982 definition of the "current-traditionalist" theory of teaching that represents truth (in this case, grammar and genre) as indisputable. However, it is our belief that translingual advocates are adhering to outmoded understandings of the teaching of grammar and genre. Today's ESL instructors are informed by frameworks that respect the strength inherent in linguistic variation, recognize the importance of context and local knowledge, and accept the mutable nature of norms.

One of the first frameworks for the teaching of grammar that incorporated the potential for variability and respect for student choice was that of Larsen-Freeman (2001), who wrote of developing student skill in "grammaring." By "grammaring," she meant the ability to work across her three-dimensional framework that promoted the teaching of form in conjunction with meaning and use. The initial component of form is equivalent to traditional views of teaching linguistic competence, although Larsen-Freeman's framework transforms rote repetition to meaningful practice by situating it within relevant local contexts. Meaning is defined as the clarification of the communicative goal that is achieved by using a specific form. And the teaching of "use" is the exploration of a range of forms that may be selected to accomplish similar communicative goals: it is the recognition that several forms may be more or less appropriate in a given context. The element of use encourages student choice based on context. This affordance of choice moves Larsen-Freeman's framework away from earlier conceptions of grammar that suggested learning grammar only involved mastery of correct form. Her grammaring framework opened the teaching of form to consideration of student choice based on variable contexts, which are some of the key principles of translingualism.

Another framework that is positive toward linguistic variability is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), an influential framework developed within a functional grammar perspective in the field of second language studies in Australia. SFL represents language as both a semiotic tool to transmit meaning and a medium that is shaped by members of a discourse community through use (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This focus on how language conveys meaning and is simultaneously shaped through its use is consistent with Canagarajah's (2007, 2011) belief that Lingua Franca English (LFE) is intersubjectively created, forged through each interaction between interlocutors, and fine-tuned according to each unique context. It is possible that current views of functional grammar within the field of second language studies are not in opposition to translingual principles and that the negative views of ESL classes suggested by misinterpreted translingual theory are not merited.

To return to the characteristics of SFL, Webster (2009) wrote that SFL defines grammar as a rich "systemic resource for making and exchanging meaning … through acts … which simultaneously construe experience and enact social relationships" (p. 5). Grammar is represented as features that operate within a "system network" that invites users to select potential paths through the network. Language is seen as a semiotic system used to express meaning on ideational (the writer's representation of reality and social activity), interpersonal (the writer's enactment of social relationships), and textual (the writer's need to organize information) levels. Liamkina and Ryshina-Pankova (2012) wrote that SFL has transformed the narrow traditional concept of grammar to "an elaborate system of interlocking linguistic choices" (p. 271). They stated that from a SFL perspective, "grammar is a rich resource for meaning-making" that may be viewed as a "system of interrelated choices" (p. 272). It is a "supraclausal phenomenon" (p. 273) operating above the level of the clause, involving exploration of the choices a speaker makes within a given context. The variability and interconnectedness of forms and the emphasis on speaker choice that SFL describes seem consistent with views of translingualism that insist on the importance of linguistic variability and flexible norms (Canagarajah, 2007, 2011; Horner, NeCamp, et al., 2011). This more complex view of grammar may be congruent with the views of translingualism, signifying that an alliance amongst composition studies, translingual, and second language writing educators might be possible.

The teaching of genre is another area of contention for translingual theorists who believe, like Bawarshi (2016), that the teaching of genre in ESL classes is prescriptive. They do not realize that second language writing scholars work with nuanced frameworks of genre that allow for variability across contexts. Tardy, in her book *Building Genre Knowledge* (2009), wrote that traditionally, genres *were* taught in prescriptive, static ways. This early approach to the teaching of genre was critiqued on multiple fronts:

the first is that teaching genre in prescriptive ways can reinforce the power structures that define the genres (Pennycook, 1997); another is that international scholars are disadvantaged by having to adhere to unfamiliar genres because the academic publishing system is largely controlled by English-speaking colleagues who have shaped acceptable genres within the contexts of their own cultures (Canagarajah, 2002; Donahue, 2009). Further, Freedman (1999) has argued that because genres evolve in response to changing disciplinary theory, they are difficult (if not impossible) to teach. There are also critiques of genre based on questioning the authenticity of learning a disciplinary genre in a classroom setting (Freedman, Adam, & Smart, 1994). However, Tardy (2009) pointed out that the writing classroom is not distinct from the disciplinary classroom, and that students frequently bring writing from their disciplines into the class, or are asked to explore genre features within their own fields of study. Against this background of debate, Tardy wrote about genre in ways that echo discourse produced by translingual scholars. For example, she stated, "When discourses become typified—that is, when the same events are carried out repeatedly through the same practices—they may be referred to as genres … and each of these may be carried out uniquely by different social groups" (2009, p. 12). Compare this with Lu and Horner's (2013) refutation of language rules stating that "the seeming regularities of language" (p. 588) are merely products of repeated practice that contribute to the process of "sedimentation." In both cases, rules (of grammar or genre) are not established truth, but the result of accumulated practice.

Tardy's own representation of genre knowledge is premised on the belief that genres are "social actions" used within specific communities of practice that are related to prior texts and that are "networked with other genres" (2009, p. 20). Genres within a network interact to shape how they are produced and received. According to Tardy (2009), genre knowledge is represented in a Venn diagram of overlapping forms of knowledge: formal (structural), rhetorical (purpose and "sociorhetorical context"), subject-matter (disciplinary), and process (procedural) knowledge. These four forms of knowledge converge in the creation of expertise, lending the writer expert status. This complex representation of genre is far from prescriptive; it acknowledges that genres are socially situated; that genres exist within complex, interconnected webs referred to as genre networks; and that genres both transmit meaning and are shaped through use. These characteristics are not incompatible with translingual theory, and they do suggest that an alliance amongst scholars in the fields of composition studies, translingualism, and second language writing is feasible. However, a rapprochement will only be possible if the misinterpretation of second language writing classrooms as sites of prescriptive teaching that eradicate difference is modified to reflect the reality: second language writing classrooms are sites of

learning that are informed by current, complex, nuanced theories of both grammar and genre.

It is indisputable that ESL classes separate ESL students from English first language students. The question that remains is whether that is a useful separation for students. In her own practice, the first author notes that ESL students in classes with English first language students are sometimes quiet, and that classes of ESL students can be lively and interactive without English first language students, although this may not always be the case. There is room for debate about whether ESL classes offer a more authentically translingual context than mainstream classes on the grounds that most transactions in English take place between nonnative speakers of English, rather than between nonnative and native speakers of English (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Matsuda (2006) advises that parallel sections of ESL and mainstream classes be offered so students may select the course in which they feel they will learn most effectively. Therefore, there is no need to view ESL classes as sites of egregious discrimination based on linguistic difference. However, this view does exist, and its persistence is a barrier to cooperative working relationships amongst composition studies, translingual, and second language writing educators.

It is not translingual theory that is objectionable; it is the misinterpretation of translingual theory that suggests that translingual writing is a replacement for L2 writing that is misleadingly incriminating. This reading of translingualism suggests that ESL classes are discriminatory bastions of traditional grammar and genre teaching, and as this view is increasingly broadcast throughout institutions of higher education, the likelihood of an alliance amongst the educators in the fields of composition studies, translingual theory, and second language writing diminishes. Despite the encouragement from some scholars (Horner, NeCamp, et al., 2011; Jeffery et al., 2013; Matsuda & Jablonski, 2000; Shapiro, 2014; Siczek & Shapiro, 2014) for practitioners in the fields of composition studies, translingual theory, and second language writing to collaborate, this is unlikely to happen given the view of ESL classes that misconstrued translingualism projects. With translingual theory deeply embedded in inclusionary rhetorics, translingual theorists are presenting themselves as the saviours of students marginalized by discriminatory linguistic policies and prescriptive teaching. These scholars are choosing to ignore current, flexible theories of grammar and genre that are not inconsistent with translingual ideology. Larsen-Freeman's grammaring theory, Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, and Tardy's genre theory are widely known and disseminated within the field of second language writing, and they offer extensive possibilities for rich and fruitful collaborations. One must hope that scholars in composition studies, translingualism, and second language writing take up these opportunities for the benefit of all language learners.

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Note

1 With thanks to Reviewer A, whose comments assisted in phrasing this particular idea.

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