Clarifying the Relationship between Translingual Practice and L2 Writing[i]:

Addressing Learner Identities

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1. Introduction

Most writing programs in schools and universities are divided according to whether students speak English as a native language (ENL) or a second language (ESL); as first language (L1) or second language (L2); whether they are residents or immigrants; all of which determine whether they are native or nonnative to English. There are theoretical and practical problems in making such distinctions. These concerns are especially pronounced in the context of globalization and multilingualism. In this article, I introduce a more expansive orientation to language that contests ideologies informing native speaker ownership. I then develop the implications for language and literacy acquisition. In the third section, I consider how disciplinary groups in multilingual writing instruction have taken up the reorientation in their pedagogy and research. Based on emerging questions and criticism, I clarify the implications for pedagogy. I conclude by offering a policy-level example of how practitioners are adopting these linguistic reorientations in creative and bold ways in relation to the Common Core State Standards, the US educational initiative launched in 2009 to define the learning goals that would prepare school students for college education and the workforce.

2. The problem

To begin with, it is difficult to enumerate one's language repertoires based on proficiency or time of acquisition. I grew up in a postcolonial household in Sri Lanka where English and Tamil were spoken, thus acquiring both languages from my infancy. I also played with Muslim neighbors who spoke a version of Arabic and Buddhist neighbors who spoke Sinhala, picking up their languages as well. I could be considered native[ii] to four languages. It is difficult for me to distinguish which language was learnt first in my repertoire. I was socialized into these

languages from infancy, making it difficult to say which is L1, L2, L3, and L4. Even based on competence, I find it difficult to decide on one as more important than others, as I have more proficiency in certain languages for certain skills. I speak more fluently and often in Tamil, while writing more fluently and often in English.

However, I cannot be considered a native speaker of four languages, as nativity is defined in terms of a single language one acquires since infancy in a homogeneous environment. Bloomfield (1933: 43) states: "The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language." Chomsky (1986: 17) adds the condition that this should be the only language spoken in a homogeneous environment, thus excluding bilinguals: "We exclude, for example, a speech community of uniform speakers, each of whom speaks a mixture of Russian and French (say, an idealised version of the nineteenth-century Russian aristocracy)." From this perspective, even Anglo Americans who might claim to be speakers of solely English cannot be considered native to it. This is because there is no homogeneous community with only one language. As Pratt (1991) has argued, we inhabit contact zones where languages and cultures always interact. Anglo-Americans are surrounded by diverse languages in social and digital spaces, influencing their English. They might be developing at least receptive proficiency in other languages. Furthermore, they switch between different registers and discourses, sometimes mixing other languages. In fact, English is already a "creole" language, accommodating words and grammars from different languages throughout its history (Fennell 2001). Therefore, nativity depends on a myth of homogeneity that prevents us from appreciating the diversity in the repertoire of native speakers of English. From all these perspectives, there is the realization that the native speaker construct is an ideology, labeled "native speakerism" (Holiday and Aboshiha 2009), that confers power on those who consider themselves the owners of a language.

There are detrimental consequences for identity deriving from the labels listed above. The terms *nonnative, L2,* or *ESL* identify learners according to a single scale of reference—i.e., their relative proficiency in English. However, this is a deficient identification when we consider that learners of English are bringing with them proficiencies in other languages. They bring many linguistic and educational resources from their repertoires that these labels don't acknowledge. Secondly, native speakerhood is treated as the target against which a learner's

proficiency is measured. However, multilingual learners may say that native speaker identity is not what they are aspiring for. I personally aspire to be a good *multilingual speaker of English*, who integrates English into my other repertoires and appropriates it for my own voice. I embrace the differences in my English as part of my identity. Therefore, native speakerhood is an inappropriate and unfair standard to judge my competence and use. Finally, these identity labels are rigid, as one can never cross the line from native to nonnative. Native speakerhood is a birthright, often associated with racialized attributes. However long I learn English and develop advanced grammatical competence, English will never be considered native to me, given my racial and geographical background. Non-Caucasian subjects have written about being treated as nonnative based on their physical features, despite the fact that English was the only language they spoke (see Lee's experience, in Canagarajah and Lee 2014).

Confirming these conceptual problems, we are beginning to see studies in composition and literacy that report resistance from students who are classified as ESL. In her article, "English may be my second language, but I'm not 'ESL'" (which is actually the statement of one of her subjects), Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) discusses how students consider such placement as detrimental to developing their written competence. Even students who are new to the US come with proficiencies in English and in writing that they consider unacknowledged when they are treated as ESL. Though instructors may consider these labels as motivated by altruistic reasons of separating students for sheltered instruction, labels have a way of defying good intentions. Toohey (2000) discusses how a Punjabi elementary school student classified as "learning disabled," partly because of her language status, becomes academically deficient. Toohey finds the student functional and communicative outside the classroom, contradicting the label ascribed to her. However, being placed in such a class and provided a reductive learning environment makes her develop deficient skills, confirming the label. Similarly, Harklau (2000) discusses a group of multilingual students in high school, who are not separated into ESL classes, as the school doesn't have adequate students to form such a track. Their teachers consider them "good kids" who are more motivated, harder working, and better behaved than mainstream students. The same students then move to community colleges, where more international students are enrolled. Here, they are all placed in ESL classes. Finding the instruction unengaging, the students develop poor academic performance and bad behavior. They are treated as "the worst"

by their community college teachers. Thus labels may not just *reflect* proficiencies, but *construct* proficiencies, often to the detriment of multilingual learners.

A final problem with these labels relates to their incongruity with the nature of writing. If writing is a rhetorical and multimodal activity, we have to question the importance given to language in identifying and separating students for writing instruction. Language is only one among many semiotic resources that go into text construction and literate interaction. If we design pedagogies based on students' nonnative status, we might unwittingly convey the message that writing competence is determined by one's language. That message goes counter to how writing and literacy are defined in more ecological, situated, and multimodal ways by leading scholars in the profession. Analogously, it is such an expansive, holistic, and plural orientation to language that we need in writing instruction, which I develop in the next section.

3. Contrasting orientations to language

The assumptions that undergird native speakerism, such as language ownership, purity, homogeneity, and territorialization, are a recent development in human history. They arose around the time of modernity in concert with other social movements and philosophical thinking of that time. What I collectively label the *monolingual orientation* constitutes a set of ideas that can be briefly explained as follows. Johannes Herder and other thinkers of European enlightenment defined the community as informed by a unique spirit emerging from their place of habitation. This spirit found its finest expression in that community's language. In developing this orientation, the thinkers were also territorializing the language as identified uniquely with a community and its place. With this move, languages become separated from each other, and made static to represent the different places of their native speakers. The notion of sharedness, which this terrritorialization celebrates, also becomes important for successful communication and intelligibility. That is, each language provides a shared grammar and values that make texts or interactions intelligible to that speech community. Later in time, structuralist linguistics, of those like de Saussure, theorized language as a self-standing system that defined itself by its complementary grammatical features. In adopting this perspective, structuralists separated language from other domains such as history, society, and ecology. Language was separated from other semiotic systems to define it as a more rational and precise mode of communication (Bloomfield 1933). Competence gets defined as one's mastery of the grammar, which is now

treated as the deep structure of a language. Drawing from Cartesian thinking, Chomsky (1986) went on to define the locus of this language competence as cognitive and sought to explain acquisition in terms of individual grammatical knowledge.

Scholars now consider such an orientation reductive. They see contemporary language practices as calling for a more expansive, situated, and semiotic orientation that resonates with the practices of nonwestern communities for centuries before the spread of European modernity. In fact, despite the power of the monolingual orientation, these language practices have always been present, perhaps unacknowledged by dominant scholarly and philosophical discourses, even in modernist European communities. Consider Trimbur's (2010) study on the formation of "English Only" in the US. While the founding fathers adopted a policy of expediency that subtly favored English, a vibrant multilingualism had formed around "a polyglot and multiethnic multitude that emerged through the very energies of mercantilism aboard ships and in port cities, in the slave castles of West Africa and on the New World plantations, and in pan-Indian resistance movements" (27).

The alternate language ideology is solidifying around the label *translingual orientation*, which has been introduced to the composition community in a recent opinion piece (Horner et al 2010). I elaborate on the linguistics informing this orientation in this section. The translingual orientation perceives a synergy between languages which generates new grammars and meanings. The prefix reminds us that communication transcends individual languages, and goes beyond language itself to include diverse modalities and semiotic systems. It also reminds us that language and meaning are always in a process of becoming, not located in static grammatical structures. Scholars avoid using the more common term "multilingual" for this orientation, as it has been traditionally conceived as multiple languages enjoying their separate identity and structure even in contact. Therefore, they refer to "multilingualism" in pejorative terms as "parallel monolingualisms" (Heller1999) or "two solitudes" (Cummins 2008). Furthermore, in translingualism diversity is the norm, with speakers bringing different semiotic resources to the same interaction. In order for communication to succeed despite this diversity, interlocutors adopt situated negotiation strategies. In this sense, the monolingual orientation is turned upside down, shifting the emphasis from sharedness to diversity, grammar to practices, and cognition to embodiment. It must, however, be emphasized that this orientation does have a place for shared

norms evolving from practice. Repeated situated engagement leads to a sedimentation (Hopper 1987: 140) of language resources into new contact languages, which can become registers and dialects over time. Certain evolving norms are bolstered by language ideologies to be treated as "standard language." The key difference here is that this ground up perspective on the constructed nature of norms allows for renegotiation and reconstruction in social interactions, which differs from the top down perspective on stable and inflexible standards in the monolingual orientation.

Composition scholar Matsuda (2014) has argued that the translingual orientation is a new western-academic fad intended to romanticize diversity and novelty.[iii] He is perhaps forming this opinion because compositionists have only recently encountered translingualism in American writing scholarship. However, this is a narrow view of the history of this orientation. As outlined above, it is the monolingual orientation that is recent. Translingualism as a practice is longer and ever-present, even in the West, despite the ideological dominance of monolingualism. Moreover, while translingualism may be a fad for some scholars, it is a fact of life for millions of people in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, as they have struggled for centuries to preserve such language and literacy practices. During colonization, drastic efforts were taken by Europeans to stamp out these literacies which didn't relate to the word-based and monolingual literacies they promoted (see Baca 2009 for Mexico; Khubchandani 1997 for India; Makoni 2002 for Africa). Such people will continue to fight for preserving their translingual practices whether the academic community romanticizes them or not. Furthermore, this orientation goes beyond composition to include diverse other disciplines where it has been theorized for a longer time—i.e., applied linguistics (García, 2009); sociolinguistics (Heller, 1999); new literacy studies (Gutierrez 2008); comparative literature (Pratt 1991); translation studies (Liu 1995); and comparative rhetoric (Mao 2013). Although not a homogeneous movement (for differences in perspective, see Canagarajah 2013a), my exposition above is an attempt to synthesize the thinking of scholars from diverse geographical and disciplinary backgrounds to develop their implications for composition.

4. Implications for competence

There are significant implications for writing competence and development. Consider first how this orientation differs from models we have adopted in traditional language and literacy learning:

Insert figure 1 here: Models of Literacy Acquisition
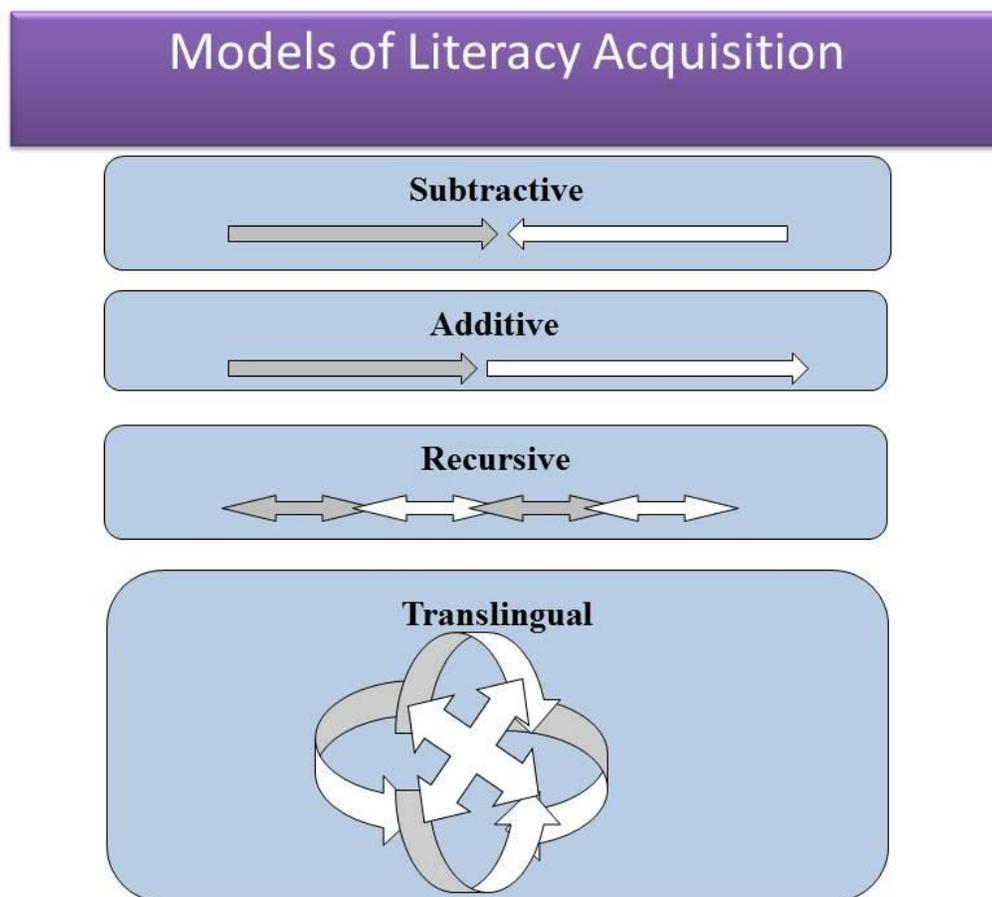
If we treat the shaded arrow as belonging to L1 and the white arrow as L2 (to limit the discussion to just two languages in one's repertoire), the first model perceives both languages as "interfering" with each other in learning, as their relationship is perceived as conflictual. This orientation to language acquisition is labeled "subtractive" as the proponents hold that the new language would suppress or override the other in order for learning to be successful. On this premise, parents and teachers have sometimes insisted on discontinuing the use of heritage languages in order for children to master English. However, over time, linguists perceived that

the languages don't have to be conflictual, but exist side by side. In the "additive" model, it was theorized that one can build a second language competence in addition to the first. However, the two languages were still perceived as distinctive and enjoying their autonomy, as if the learner had compartmentalized competences for each language.

The relationship between languages can be more complex and dynamic. In the "recursive" model, the languages in one's repertoire are treated as enabling the learning of each other, reconfiguring the competence of each in complex ways. To illustrate from my experience, when I learnt English in Sri Lanka, local schools didn't have a distinctive curriculum for composition. Writing (whether in Tamil or English) was part of whole language pedagogy, integrated with speaking and reading. The essays we wrote were largely descriptive, narrative, or expository, with teacher feedback (usually a terminal comment) focusing on their rhetorical effectiveness. It was when I came for graduate studies to the US that I developed my proficiency in the genre of academic writing, with the understanding that it had own norms and structures. When I moved back to Sri Lanka for teaching, I was under pressure to write academic articles in Tamil in order to share my knowledge with local scholars. I found it useful to adopt the genre of English academic essays with an anticipatory introductory paragraph that spelt out the thesis and body paragraphs with their clearly defined topic sentences. Some appreciated the way this writing inserted a difference into Tamil discourse, reconfiguring the repertoire of Tamil academic genres. Over time, I encountered some resistance to this writing. Readers commented that they found my style too calculated and explicit, underestimating their ability to interpret the meanings and presenting my ethos as condescending. I saw some value in their preference for indirection, and experimented with adopting it in my writing. I am now drawing from Tamil oral traditions and adopting more indirectness, narrative, and personal voice in my English academic writing (as I do in this article). What this example suggests is the recursive nature of my writing acquisition. As I move forward with one language, I am reconfiguring my other language— whose features I then use to transform the prior language. Furthermore, language learning is not a one-shot deal. Certain skills, registers, and genres in a language are mastered at different times, and they can influence existing repertoires.

However, even the recursive model doesn't go far enough in accommodating the complexity of translingualism. Consider the fourth model. It is different from the previous models in at least four ways:

1. The languages are not treated as separate. One shade of the arrow fuses into the other. The image captures the fact that it is difficult to define where one language ends and the other begins. Consider lexical items that get appropriated and transformed as they travel from one community to another.

2. Whereas the other models present acquisition as linear, the fourth model presents acquisition as multi-directional, with influences from languages on each other working in multiple ways.

3. While the other models present different languages (or skills) as having their own competence, the fourth model presents competence as integrated, with all languages in one's repertoire making up a synthesized language competence. We don't have different cognitive compartments for different languages.

4. When the other models present competence as progressive and even complete for each language, the circulatory nature of acquisition in the fourth model presents proficiency as always evolving. It is difficult to decide at what point a language has been completely mastered. Besides, as we acquire new linguistic and semiotic resources, our competence is constantly reconfigured, requiring new learning. Can even native speakers say that they have reached ultimate attainment, and not feel challenged by new genres and registers that they need to learn afresh?

The translingual orientation to language acquisition is also not new. Already in 1989, Grosjean cautioned his colleagues with an article perceptively titled, "Neurolinguists, beware! The bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person." In TESOL, British linguist Cook has been writing since 1991 against the separation of languages in the acquisition of English language learners. He coined the term "multicompetence" to challenge Chomsky's notion of competence for single languages. Multicompetence captures the idea that people multitask or parallel process with their languages, not keeping them disconnected when they are learning or using them.

5. Uptake in the writing profession

It is important to examine how writing scholars and practitioners are taking up the alternate orientation to language and literacy development. Scholars in L1 composition have been most receptive to translingualism. The "Opinion" piece on translingual writing calls for a reconsideration of all aspects of writing—i.e., error correction, pedagogy, curriculum, teacher development, and language policy (Horner et al 2010). L1 writing scholars are reporting on their classroom practices to further such translingual awareness among fellow instructors (see Bizzell 2014; Lu 2009; Lu and Horner 2013; Sohan 2009). In bilingual studies, translingualism has a longer history. Since 1971, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages has been formulating "plurilingual" competence as the target for all learners in continental Europe. In line with this thinking, students are encouraged to develop literacy in different languages for different functions. Students in one class might learn history in Spanish, geography in French, and philosophy in German. Languages are treated as complementary, avoiding the redundancy of performing similar functions in same languages. In the US, scholars like Ofelia García (2009) and Kris Gutierrez (2008) have been developing parallel literacy in both English and Spanish for young learners, demonstrating that one language can complement the other, and sometimes be fused in the same text. The field of TESOL (Teachers of English as a Second Language) has also reconsidered its pedagogies in relation to translingualism. After a symposium in the 2008 TESOL convention, in which senior scholars argued that learning of English cannot be separated from the other languages students bring with them (Taylor 2009), *TESOL Quarterly* published a special topic issue titled "Plurilingualism in TESOL" (September 2013) that features studies from around the world on reconfiguring pedagogical practices. Teachers of L2 writing/literacy in this professional community have published their classroom experiences with translingualism in TESOL publications (see Amicucci and Lassiter 2014; Jain 2014; Lee 2014; Marshall and Moore 2013; Sayer 2013).

The most explicit resistance to translingualism so far has come from the professional community labeled "Second Language Writing" (SLW, hereafter). Some SLW scholars feel that the translingual orientation might distract students from the basics of Standard English that they need for academic and social success. Ruecker (2014: 116) gives voice to these concerns with admirable clarity in a footnote in his recent article:

I refrain from advocating recently popularized translingual pedagogies because of my concern that this movement may do students a disservice in a few different ways, namely by ignoring or misrepresenting a rich history of second language writing knowledge (Matusda, "Lure") and by possibly delaying students' attempts to learn standardized language varieties. I recognize that it is important for teachers to validate students' multiple language resources in classrooms and for researchers to challenge the privileging of standardized varieties in areas like assessment; however, students like those in my study typically enter college classrooms with a clear purpose: to learn a privileged standardized variety of English. When students have busy lives outside the classroom and have much to learn to increase their academic fluency, it is important to be cautious when encouraging the use of a pedagogical strategy being uncritically pushed by many without the requisite expertise in the processes of language acquisition.

If we disregard the allegation that translingual scholars don't understand language acquisition, Ruecker highlights three major concerns that require clarification. Firstly, the view that translingual pedagogy might distract or delay students' need to learn "a privileged standardized variety of English." Translingualism doesn't ignore Standard English, as the theoretical exposition above demonstrates. Such norms are a social fact, and can be ignored only to one's peril. What translingual pedagogies favor is deconstructing Standard English to make students aware that it is a social construct. Asif Agha (2003) painstakingly details how a particular regional dialect in South East England was made to index privilege through ideological work via style manuals, newspapers, and dictionaries for many centuries. Making students aware of Standard English as an ideological construct is not inconsequential to pedagogy. It helps students critically engage with this variety to represent their voices and renegotiate its norms. If Standard English is treated as a stable preconstructed norm, students may feel intimidated. Worse still, they may adopt it mechanically, feeling that they don't have spaces for creativity.

We must also be aware that Standard English can be taught effectively while having students shuttle between different dialects or language repertoires. There is evidence that learners understand the norms better when they deviate from them (García 2009). As they move between different languages, learners develop a keen sensitivity to the norms operative in specific communicative contexts. Presenting only one grammatical structure repeatedly is considered

efficient in product-oriented behaviorist pedagogies. However, such grammar teaching has been exposed for its limited outcomes (Hartwell 1985). On the other hand, pedagogies that teach norms while allowing students to shuttle between codes and contexts adopt a more practice-oriented approach, which might be more effective in the long run.

To this argument, Ruecker would raise his second criticism. He states that L2 students don't have the time for such learning. But this is to consider multilingual students as having the capacity to learn only one language at a time. The assumption that learning multiple codes simultaneously is difficult is a monolingual bias. Multilingual students already bring experiences and resources of mastering multiple semiotic systems outside the classroom (in fact, without teacher help). Shuttling between codes to acquire diverse norms is something they always do in their multilingual communities (see Khubchandani 1997).

Ruecker raises a third concern that Standard English is what students want and, therefore, he prefers to ignore translingual pedagogies. Though it is true that everyone is under pressure to master privileged dialects for educational and social success, we have to also teach students where this desire comes from (Motha and Lin 2014). We have to discuss the dominance of monolingual ideologies that make these privileged dialects appear natural. Besides, giving in uncritically to this desire will result in students losing their heritage languages and diverse repertoires they bring with them.

Behind such criticism is the anxiety of SLW scholars about their professional status. To that end, they have recently published in *College English* an "Open Letter" to assert the distinction between L2 and translingual writing (Atkinson, et al 2015). Regrettably, the authors fail to explain the purported differences behind their theoretical orientations and pedagogical approaches.[iv] They give more space to professional concerns, such as preserving opportunities for them in journals, conferences, and in the job market.

One of their criticisms is that "Translingual writing has not widely taken up the task of helping L2 writers increase their proficiency" (Atkinson et al 2015: 384). Ferris (2014), reviewing recent publications, also charges that translingual pedagogy is under developed. While it is true that we don't have textbooks or rhetorics yet to promote translingual writing, it is not as if there are no pedagogical models. The publications cited from L1 composition, bilingualism,

and TESOL above feature writing and teaching practices that emerge from classrooms. However, these pedagogies may not satisfy SLW scholars, as translingualism goes against predefined pedagogies and prepackaged methods--as Jordan (2012) also argues in his efforts to design a pedagogy beyond the native/nonnative divide. What most translingual practitioners adopt are broad pedagogical principles to design instruction, with activities and assignments developed in collaboration with students as the course proceeds. Principles such as dialogical pedagogy, ecological orientation, and practice-based approaches have been adopted to design their courses (see Canagarajah 2014 for the rationale). Since translingual practitioners are sensitive to each and every student's voices and interests, they cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all pedagogy even for a single class. As the mix of each class is unpredictable and students' interests evolve during the course, teachers have to develop their pedagogies actively through classroom negotiations. This orientation to pedagogy is not new. Models of collaborative pedagogies (Morita 2004), participatory teaching (Auerbach 1994), and Vygotskyan scaffolding (Lantolf and Thorne 2006) have been discussed in L2 circles for many years.

Perhaps a concern for SLW scholars is the uptake of their own research and pedagogies in writing studies. Note that Ruecker also faults translingual practitioners for ignoring "a rich history of second language writing knowledge." It is possible for translingual practitioners to benefit from L2 research and pedagogy, as for SLW scholars to enrich their work along the translingual orientation. SLW scholars have done impressive empirical research on issues such as genre analysis, composing processes, peer feedback, teacher feedback, and error correction. However, these findings could be adopted to impute or impose deficiency on students if they are not informed by empowering language ideologies. In fact, SLW scholars have argued against critical ideologies, considering them as either irrelevant to the "pragmatic concern" of teaching L2 writing or treating them as reductive (see Swales 1990: 9).

I will demonstrate how I adopt the findings from error treatment in SLW research in my teacher development courses on second language writing, a practice that is informed by my teaching of basic writing for many years. I illustrate from the comprehensive textbook by Ferris and Hedgecock (2015), which I have used for these courses through its many editions from 1998. The authors synthesize the useful findings on corrective feedback (CF) that Ferris has herself conducted over the years: that CF does help students revise their texts and carry over to

subsequent writing; focused CF is more valuable than unfocused CF; and explicit CF (with labels, codes, or explanations) may be more valuable than unlabeled CF (283). Based on these research findings, they go on to advise that: "teachers of L2 writers need to study aspects of grammar that are particularly problematic for nonnative speakers of English"; "need practice in recognizing and identifying errors in student writing"; "need practice in developing lessons and teaching grammar points and teaching strategies to their writing students"; and "should become familiar with language structures needed for different task types and academic disciplines" (Ferris and Hedgecock 2015: 345-346).

However, their orientation overlooks the negotiability of grammar. In assuming Standard English as the norm and target, it might give the impression to teachers and students that grammar is predefined. It also doesn't inquire into the intentions of authors to accommodate the ways grammar usage might be mediated by rhetorical considerations. Consider Min-Zhan Lu's (1994) experience with negotiating a Malaysian Chinese student's unusual modal and the subsequent classroom discussion that led to a deeper grammatical understanding among her students. Such experiences have motivated scholars to develop more complex CF practices that facilitate the awareness that grammars are negotiated, rhetorical, and changing (see Canagarajah 2013a: 188-191; Krall-Lanoue 2013; Lu and Horner 2013).

Based on such considerations, I adopt the textbook slightly differently. While the authors provide many good suggestions to identify students' errors for protracted and strategic CF (in the form of charts to be filled out by teachers and students), I add a few additional steps. I ask that the rationale for the grammatical deviations be further explored. My chart looks like the following:

Insert figure 2: Chart for Error Correction

	Error	Student's norm	Dominant norm	Possible reasons for difference
Student A				
Student B				
Etc.				

Note that "errors" are different from "mistakes" in that the former are systematic and suggest the personal "grammar" of the writer. Teachers may have to consult students to fill out the fourth column on the possible reasons for atypical usages. While being open to rhetorical explanations, which will lead to effective ways of incorporating students' preferred forms in their essays, teachers can also identify structures that have been inappropriately internalized so that they can help students better. What I have found in the approach of some teachers is that they hastily define as mistakes certain structures which are established usage in postcolonial communities. This exercise can develop an understanding of norms as relative to different contexts and help teachers clarify the differences better. It is salutary that Ferris and Hedgecock (2015: 346) advice that "Teachers need to understand the principles of second language acquisition and of composition theory and specifically how language development in writing courses fits into those theories." Though they engage with process theories of writing in their treatment of CF, one can imagine incorporating the translingual orientation in shaping grammar correction.

As for disciplinary territoriality, seemingly a major concern for SLW, we can take a cue from scholars in L1, TESOL, and bilingual studies. They have taken on the new realizations and reconfigured their disciplinary constructs from within their fields, without fear of losing their disciplinary identity. In fact, they consider translingualism as enriching the work they do rather than hampering them. Unfortunately, the comments in the Open Letter about refusing to engage with feedback from journal reviewers outside SLW, and in Ruecker on refusing to discuss translingual scholarship, betray an isolationist and protectionist approach. There is growing realization that the disciplinary boundaries are a hangover from modernity, designed for ideological control—i.e., "disciplining" the thinking of scholars (Leitch 2000). In late modernity, scholars are moving beyond their disciplinary boundaries to share theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical paradigms. There is now an understanding that it is not theoretical orientations that define each discipline as unique, but the pragmatic choices of focus (such as the slice of natural or social life under study or the issues being addressed) (Davidson and Goldberg 2004). From this perspective, what distinguishes scholars in writing studies may not be their philosophical orientations towards language and literacy, but a practical division of labor. While we all share a translingual orientation, L1 compositionists may focus on sensitizing native speaker students to diversity; SLW scholars on helping multilingual students negotiate the dominant norms; bilingual scholars on developing English competence while preserving

heritage languages; and TESOL on integrating writing within its broader focus on developing all communicative skills in an additional language. As we work toward bringing all these students into the same classroom (see Jordan 2012 for an example), we can develop integrated pedagogies for learners in distinct courses meanwhile.

Of course, in the long run, we cannot predict what translingualism may mean for all our fields. There are debates on the future of humanities in general and English in particular, with scholars proposing fluid ways in which transdisciplinary relations may be drawn (Jay 2001; Leitch 2000). In the short run, however, SLW scholars could engage with recent linguistic advances to enrich their research and teaching along the pedagogical example I have given above.

6. Theorizing difference in the translingual orientation

We do have to address the underlying concern of SLW scholars that translingualism might become a new form of hegemony, suppressing diversity. Ironically, in treating diversity as the norm, the translingual orientation might level all differences and occlude identities. Nelson Flores (2013) and Ryuko Kubota (2014) have recently argued that translingualism might play into the hands of neoliberal ideologies which encourage hybrid identities as superficially constructed for marketing purposes. Scott Lyons (2009) sees a danger for his Native American community who may lose their heritage language in the process of codemeshing. I will devote this section to clarify how translingualism enables us to develop a more complex orientation to language and proficiency differences.

We need to realize that ethnic identities and heritage languages are already translingual. They have emerged out of language/cultural contact and mixing. However, what gives a unique identity to the mix of communicative practices, to become labeled "Chinese," "Spanish," or "Tamil," is language ideology. It is the community's definition of what constitutes its identity that makes it appropriate diverse linguistic and cultural resources for its self-fashioning. Here I am using *ideology* as not false consciousness, but enabling social interpretations and practices, in the post-Marxian sense. An example from the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora should clarify this point. Many of the Sri Lankan youth in Canada are more proficient in English than in Tamil, and they mix English heavily when they communicate with their elders. The elders consider such

practice as leading to the heritage language being corrupted and their ethnic identity lost. However, the youth claim that their mixing of English is actually an appropriation into Tamil and indexes their ethnic identity. They argue that Tamil language and identity are changing in the context of diaspora, and they are able to index their language and ethnic affiliation through the new mix of codes. It is their ideology of language and culture as hybrid, changing, and situationally constructed that explains their position. I point out to community elders that their understanding of ethnic identity and heritage language is also ideological. What they consider "pure Tamil" contains many mixings from Sanskrit and other ancient languages that they are not conscious of. Their language ideology enabled them to appropriate these mixings to construct a separate language and identity for themselves, the same way their children are doing in a new time and place with a new mix of codes (see Canagarajah 2013c for this orientation).

People do enjoy and claim different language identities despite the reality of contact. If we give up the binary labels I discussed in the opening, this doesn't mean that we lump all students together. Language identities will be layered and complex, leading to new classifications. We do have many suggestions on how student identities might be re-imagined for pedagogical purposes. For example, Ben Rampton (1990) has argued that we take into account at least three constructs: i.e., heritage, affiliation, and expertise. Let me illustrate again from my Sri Lankan diaspora community in Canada. Many Sri Lankan youth claim greater *expertise* in English than Tamil, though their *heritage* language is Tamil, as they would readily acknowledge in schools. Yet, their *affiliation* is largely with the Afro-Canadian youth in their neighborhoods. Under this influence, Tamil youth adopt several varieties of Black/Afro-Canadian English and demonstrate an affinity for hip hop culture as part of their identity. School teachers who consider the Tamil youth incompetent in academic English make a mistake when they attribute their "deficiency" to their ESL status. These youth might be considered native speakers of English, except that they bring affiliations that make them value certain non-academic English varieties. Accommodating these layered identities to shape our instruction would require reconfiguring pedagogical classifications (an example of which I give in the next section).

Furthermore, translingualism doesn't mean that there are no proficiency differences in languages. I hold that all of us have the basic *competence* for translingual communication though we might not have equal *proficiency* in all languages. Consider my experience with Anglo-

American students in my writing classes (see Canagarajah 2013b). Though they are initially slow to interpret the codemeshing of multilingual students or don't feel confident in using diverse codes in their own essays, they develop their translingual proficiency during the semester-long course. They find resources to reexamine the monolingual ideologies they come with, and transition to a translingual orientation (see Jordan for similar findings in an experimental course where L1 and L2 students were brought together for peer review). As they read the experiences of multilingual peers and engage with their literacy narratives, they rediscover their own heritage identities and languages (such as French, German, and Italian). Some realize that their study abroad or teaching abroad experiences have provided them proficiency in other languages and draw from them to interpret others' essays or codemesh in their own. They are able to transition so well because they bring strategies of engaging with multilingual and multimodal literacies from social media sites and other contact zones. In this sense, they bring with them a *competence* for translingual literacies, whose *proficiency* for specific contexts they need to develop through classroom practice. This orientation will move us from attributing deficiency to learners (whether native or nonnative) based on cognitive, biological, or social attributes, and treat language proficiency as a pragmatic endeavor of developing their already-available translingual competence for specific genres, activities, and purposes in a situated manner.

7. Way forward

How do we adopt translingual orientation to make policy-level changes in writing instruction? Scholars have pointed to the difficulties in implementing translingualism at the macro-level when monolingual ideologies are dominant (see Kubota 2014; Tardy 2011). In fact, much of the scholarship on translingual writing has emerged from classrooms where the teachers themselves initiated changes. How do translingual scholars go beyond their own classrooms for changes that impact a wider group of teachers and students? Taking up a high-stakes policy proposal under national discussion, I demonstrate how practitioners in a specific state have adopted the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) for their own purposes in alignment with their translingual orientation. The objective is not to prop up CCSS, a controversial initiative that may not be around for too long, but to demonstrate the agency of practitioners who devise creative ways of reconfiguring policies for their purposes.

CCSS doesn't make a distinction between native and nonnative students in formulating its standards. It is egalitarian in holding both groups to the same standards and treating all students as having the competence to attain them. However, CCSS does include an addendum titled "Application of Common Core State Standards for English Language Learners" to clarify its position towards nonnative students. It adopts an enlightened orientation in acknowledging the special resources ELLs [English Language Learners] bring with them for academic and communicative success: "Many ELLs have first language and literacy knowledge and skills that boost their acquisition of language and literacy in a second language; additionally, they bring an array of talents and cultural practices and perspectives that enrich our schools and society" (1). In this manner, it acknowledges the productive relationship between languages for literacy development. The addendum goes on to make special provisions for ELLs to achieve the same standards as native students: "However, these students may require additional time, appropriate instructional support, and aligned assessments as they acquire both English language proficiency and content area knowledge" (1). Though these provisions should be appreciated, they assume that these students don't have the capacity to master multiple languages and knowledge traditions simultaneously. More importantly, CCSS is using the resources of ELLs to transition them to its own (English-based) standards rather than developing them at the same time. In other words, L1 resources are exploited to meet the L2 standards (for a critique on this point, see Flores and Schissel 2014). To refer to the acquisition models introduced earlier, CCSS is *additive* but not *translingual*.

Furthermore, CCSS overlooks the possibility that its standards will be realized differently by multilingual students. It adopts a one-size-fits-all approach. Consider, for example, the second principle that guides the formulation of CCSS: "The Common Core emphasizes using evidence from texts to present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information. Rather than asking students questions they can answer solely from their prior knowledge and experience, the standards call for students to answer questions that depend on their having read the texts with care." Even if students limited themselves to a close reading within the narrow bounds of the text, their interpretation will be influenced (enriched?) by their prior knowledge and experience. It is difficult to cut off that knowledge from any reading. Such influences will motivate multilingual students to come up with slightly different interpretations. Even "evidence" will be different in relation to what matters in different communities. What is *ad hominem* argument in

the classical rhetorical tradition is valid evidence for traditional oral communities who hold that the ethos, sincerity, and credibility of the presenters should be considered in assessing their position. If presenters make arguments that deviate from their practice (i.e., if they don't walk their talk), their case loses credibility. Furthermore, the rhetorical features expected in presenting "evidence" can be problematic. Careful analysis, good defense, and clarity can also differ for communities. Note how my Tamil readers criticized me for being too controlled and explicit in my writing. They considered indirection as "clear" for them.

Though CCSS treats its standards in a monolithic way, it repeatedly reminds us that it is leaving the means to achieve them to local teachers and schools. This gives some leeway for diversity and agency. In fact, any policy document is a discursive construct that is open to interpretation and enactment. Language policy scholars have studied how teachers enact policy documents to their advantage (see Hornberger and Johnson 2007). Similarly, CCSS is being redefined by certain states in relation to their pedagogical priorities, an exemplary case being New York.

The document titled the "New York State Bilingual Common Core Initiative" (NYSBCCI) introduces translingual orientation as its theoretical premise. It adopts the term "dynamic bilingualism" to distinguish it from traditional forms of bilingualism that treat languages in an additive relationship. In accordance with this orientation, it adopts new constructs to discuss students and proficiency levels. Having previously adopted levels such as *beginning, intermediate, advanced,* and *proficient*, it now uses five levels of proficiency: *entering, emerging, transitioning, expanding,* and *commanding*. Is there a difference? The previous stages largely evoke cognitive and evaluative categories, while the latter adopt temporal and, thus, pragmatic categories to classify students according to their exposure to languages. Furthermore, the previous terminology posits the state of "proficient" as an end point of learning. As discussed earlier, it is difficult to define the threshold for perfect proficiency in any language. The present participle in the new labels is a reminder that proficiency is ongoing.

Similarly, in place of constructs such as nonnative, ESL, and L2, which adopt a single scale and enumerative orientation to classify one's English, NYSBCCI adopts the term "new language" in its core pedagogical focus: "New Language Arts Progressions." It explains: "Using *new* as opposed to *second* language [. . .] acknowledges the many students in New York State

who have competency in more than two languages." The second pedagogical focus, aimed to develop parallel proficiency in what was traditionally considered the heritage or native language of the student, is titled "Home Language Arts Progressions." NYSBCCI explains: 'This change is aligned with recent developments in language education that finds the term "native" speaker to be a concept no longer applicable to our increasingly globalized world. . . . [T]he shift in terminology allows for a message that home and school can and must be integrated in ways that allow students to see them as complementary spheres as opposed to separate spheres in their lives.'

Beyond changing labels, NYSBCCI also envisions a bold pedagogy that integrates the resources of home and school in learning English, treating "bilingualism both as a point of departure for language instruction and as goal for all language learners." This is a radical approach to English literacy instruction. While CCSS treats bilingualism as a point of departure for transitioning to English, NYSBCCI goes further to also treat it as a goal for learning. In other words, it posits that the best way to learn English is by simultaneously developing proficiency in the home language of the students. It perceives languages as complementary rather than interfering, and developing a higher order and hybrid translingual proficiency without failing to meet the "standards" of CCSS. This is a paradox, but well-motivated by translingualism, which acknowledges the multidirectional and ever continuing influences of language resources in one's communicative capacity.

It is for this reason that NYSBCCI considers its two pedagogical foci of New Language Arts Progressions and Home Language Arts Progressions as inter-connected. It explains: "These tools are designed primarily to meet the needs of English Language Learners; however, to support a broader goal of bilingualism for all students, these resources can also be used as a guide for planning instruction for students who are learning a foreign language or who are developing their home languages." In integrating the different languages, NYSBCCI proposes similar tools and progression to multilingual students learning English, home languages (such as Spanish or Chinese), or foreign languages (such as Spanish for a Chinese student). The same is true of native students who might be learning their forgotten heritage languages (Italian) or foreign languages (Chinese). Thus this proposal takes pedagogy beyond the native/nonnative divide.

NYSBCCI goes on to deconstruct certain other myths and biases in language teaching. Should students first master the basics of English grammar before they engage with subject specific instruction? The policy clarifies: "When provided appropriate scaffolding, language learners can start developing language for academic purposes at the same time that they are developing basic communication skills in their new language." Here NYSBCCI is treating cognitive and knowledge processes as transcending grammatical proficiency. In fact, the policy makers see both content and grammar as facilitating each other in learning. This approach adopts a practice-based orientation in opposition to the traditional product-oriented view of teaching grammar separately from (and before) content. Similarly, should students learn to use English in basic conversational interactions before they can start writing? Does orality precede literacy? NYSBCCI states: "A curriculum for these students must include all four components of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) . . . . [It] emphasizes that students who are new to a language do not need to first develop oral language before being exposed to written language." Here again it promotes an integrated curriculum that doesn't treat writing as a higher skill separated from others, but drawing from all modes of communication.

NYSBCCI provides detailed modules for teachers from elementary school to grades 11 and 12 on how to meet the standards of CCSI. I will illustrate the features of this pedagogy from the writing modules in New Language Arts Progression (i.e., ESL students) for grades 11-12. Each module integrates all four skills, starting with the receptive, followed by activities in productive skills. This integration encourages students to understand how other language skills shape writing. The reading, listening, and speaking activities enable students to gather information and clarify ideas for the writing exercise. Furthermore, diverse visual resources (matrix, graphic organizers, charts) and technological media are incorporated into the invention and planning processes. Also, each module makes all students in a grade level focus on the same reading or writing activity, with different scaffolding provided according to their proficiency levels. NYSBCCI doesn't treat less proficient students as deficient, providing them unchallenging materials. Each module provides illustrations of the linguistic demands for exercises and illustrative texts with questions and activities to meet CCSI goals. It is refreshing to see readings such as Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue," which would make students comfortable with diversity, while exploring the biases against ethnic varieties.

The second writing module, for example, focuses on writing informative/explanatory texts. The objective is to train students to convey ideas and information clearly "through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content" as specified in the common core anchor standard. In the listening-centered activity, the students listen to an informative text to gather and organize points for the writing task. The scaffold for entering and emerging level students is pre-taught words and phrases to organize the information on a writing organizer web. Transitioning students organize the information on partially completed writing organizers, while expanding and commanding level students work independently, without such scaffolding. Furthermore, listening to texts and identifying information are done in peer work or teacher-led small groups by entering students; without the teacher's help by emerging students; and in whole class discussions by expanding and commanding students. Similarly, while entering and emerging students are allowed to interact in their home languages, transitioning students are allowed to use their home language only occasionally, and expanding and commanding students are expected to work only in English. Such differences in scaffolding are consistent across skills and modules.

Before getting to writing, the reading-centered activity focuses on developing topics for writing, including gathering definitions, details and quotations. The speaking-centered activity focuses on explaining complex ideas clearly, with domain-specific vocabulary and phrases. Scaffolds are also provided for the writing tasks. The entering students complete cloze paragraphs. Emerging and transitioning students write two or more paragraphs with the aid of a word bank. Expanding students write a complete essay, using teacher-provided models for assistance. Commanding level students write the essay independently with domain-specific vocabulary and effective transitional phrases.

What is radical is that even in the writing-centered activity, the entering, emerging, and transitioning level students are allowed to work in their home languages. However, while the modules allow the home language to mediate their development of English, the target is eventually Standard English. In this sense, translingual practice is permitted as a scaffolding device, not as a practice that is manifested in written products. Also, while the new language and home language proficiencies are developed simultaneity, they are kept separate. Though NYSBCCI features these limitations, I adopt the pragmatic view that scholars have to articulate

how translingualism can meet policy-specific needs, norms, and agendas. NYSBCCI is an attempt to reconfigure CCSS from within and show the relevance of translingualism to meeting (in fact, exceeding) currently dominant literacy standards.

8. Conclusion

To understand NYSBCCI's bold pedagogy, we must take into account its broader vision: "When used together, New Language Arts Progressions and the Home Language Arts Progressions provide a roadmap to develop bilingual Common Core skills for all students—skills that are necessary for our increasingly global society." NYSBCCI provides students the language resources needed for global citizenship. There is an implicit criticism here that CCSS is constructed in terms of national priorities and nation-state ideologies. It is its transnational vision that explains NYSBCCI's commitment to develop translingual competence. Hence also the need to go beyond monolithic standards and acknowledge that these standards can be realized differently in different communities.

To reiterate the paradox that informs the pedagogical vision of NYSBCCI, it is possible for a translingual orientation of shuttling between languages to develop proficiency in Standard English. In moving between different semiotic systems, we develop a keen sensitivity to the norms of each. For those influenced by monolingual ideologies, this form of shuttling might sound confusing, difficult, or irrelevant for mastering Standard English. However, this is everyday practice for those from multilingual communities. As students engage with translingual pedagogies, they develop a progressive awareness of what is considered privileged English in comparison with the other norms they bring with them. To conclude with a personal testimony as a former ESL student, every time I speak or write in Tamil or Sri Lankan English, I also reflect on how Standard English might encode those expressions, as I continue to learn English and incorporate it into my language repertoire well beyond my school days.

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[i] I am referring to "L2 writing" as a pedagogical activity in the title. The article problematizes the separation of L2 in writing practice.

[ii] Though I consider terms like native and nonnative problematic, I continue to use them in this article (and without quotation marks) as the distinction needs to be examined closely before we use new terms (which I also introduce at the end of the article). The same applies to the term Standard English.

[iii] Matsuda makes this point in a brief commentary on one of my classroom-based empirical studies (see Canagarajah 2013b). Taking textual examples from a student's writing, Matsuda focuses on the mixing of Arabic and visuals in her English essay to charge that I am engaging in a form of "linguistic tourism" (2014: 482) designed to titillate readers. Matsuda fails to understand that the study was conducted precisely to move the discussion beyond *product* to *strategies*, this argument framing the study, with the article structured according to the reading/writing strategies employed by students to negotiate their texts. In other words, Matsuda hones in on features of the written product to extricate them from the discussion of strategies they are supposed to illustrate. Furthermore, while there are thirteen other students (including native speakers) who demonstrate subtle forms of voice, Matsuda considers only one Arabic student to make his argument, ignoring the less sensational resources and strategies of all students. More importantly, distracted by the textual features of this student, he completely misses the redefinition of literacy, taxonomy of negotiation strategies, and dialogical pedagogy the study focuses on developing.

[iv] The authors give 4 references at the end of the letter as clarifying the differences. However, the publications discuss only the limitations of translingualism (i.e., that it doesn't have a pedagogy and that it is a fashion) and do not compare L2 writing with translingualism.