

INSTRUCTOR AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT
LANGUAGE VARIETY IN WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

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ABSTRACT

INSTRUCTOR AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT LANGUAGE VARIETY IN WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

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In the ongoing discussion of how to support diversity in higher education, language usage and its variation has been one of the most disputed features of writing pedagogy and instruction. The purpose of this research study was to examine how language variety is viewed, discussed, and responded to by instructors who teach writing intensive courses at an MA-granting university in northern California within disciplines primarily beyond the Humanities. Data was collected through six semi-structured interviews with instructor participants who teach or have taught writing in their respective discipline. The findings suggest that many instructors in other fields are either unaware of students' language varieties in their classrooms or have a superficial awareness of student language diversity and lack the understanding, language, and training to respond to and assess student language variety in their writing assignments. As a result, the author proposes in the concluding chapter that the campus works towards developing faculty training programs or workshops that help to support, educate, and

provide resources for writing instructors with the goal of improving course design, approaches to assessment, and overall teaching practices and ultimately create a more accessible and equitable classroom space for all students.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The way language is treated and used in academic writing does not reflect the way language is actively used in the world. Most educational contexts still stubbornly hold on to the idea of a prescriptive, correct, and frankly exclusive way to write, tossing around terms like “formal,” “academic,” or “professional” as a rationale to enforce considerably narrow standards for language and writing. Paradoxically, if those working in academic contexts look outward to the surrounding communities and social groups, what is becoming increasingly obvious is that language practices are changing, particularly with the way people “do English.” There are many factors and social influences that affect the way people talk and write in the world, most notably “the Internet, among other mass media, as well as the language habits of America’s ever-growing diverse populations” (Young 79). But there seems to be a conflicting relationship between the ways students are told to write stylistically and “do English” in academic spaces, and the ways students actual “do English” in their material lives outside of these spaces.

The surge of research regarding language and writing in academic fields such as Rhetoric and Composition, Literacy Studies, and Linguistics have prompted a shift not only in attitudes towards language diversity, but its place within academia. However, despite the proliferation of scholarship on the ways writing instructors in educational departments like the ones mentioned above create spaces within the classroom that equally support and promote the learning and writing instruction of all students in regard to language diversity, there is a scarcity of research that addresses how writing instructors beyond these fields

approach students' home languages within writing classrooms. The purpose of the qualitative study was to examine how writing instructors across campus understand, view, and respond to student language variety in their assignments and overall course.

During my first semester at Chico State, an MA-granting university in rural Northern California, I took a graduate course titled "Rhetoric for Writing Teachers." It was in this course that I read Vershawn Young's "Should Writers Use They Own Language?" which was the first published text I had ever encountered where the author intentionally employed and combined African American English (AAE) with standard English (SE). In his text, Young referred to this intentional language mixing as "code-meshing," defining it as the, "blend[ing] [of] dialects, international languages, local idioms, chat-room lingo, and the rhetorical styles of various ethnic and cultural groups in both formal and informal speech acts" (114). Young promotes code-meshing arguing that the language and writing practice not only generates more rhetorically effective writing with a focus on excellent communication, but that it will "help reduce prejudice" (117). I was so fascinated by this one language practice and the way it was being advocated for in academic spaces that I chose to further explore and write about it for my seminar project in the course. This process exposed me to the rich scholarship and varying discourses surrounding language and writing as I was introduced to an endless amount of approaches, theories, classroom strategies and practices, and terminology that addressed the writing instruction of multilingual students.

Even though Young's scholarship specifically focuses on making a case for code-meshing for African-American students who speak AAE— "[we] advocate that African American English speakers be allowed to blend African American language styles together with Standard English at school and at work" (1)—there are other scholars and educators

who research and argue for spaces where multilingual students who speak global varieties of English or other languages can practice and develop code-meshing in their writing. Young mentions the expansion of code-meshing to other languages stating “...code-meshing has been discussed and studied in a bilingual context, with Spanish-speaking students,” as well as conveying how in “a recent collection of essays... the concept [code-meshing] is applied variously to Chinese English, White working- and middle-class English, Appalachian English, Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans, online German hip-hop performances, Cajun English, inner-city Black students, Hawaiian English, and more” (8). But it is scholars like Suresh Canagarajah who extensively research and write about accommodating various language varieties in writing classrooms as well as examining students’ code-meshing abilities. For example, Canagarajah reports on one of his students, Buthainah’s code-meshing in which she “mixed Arabic and French in her primarily English essay, in addition to incorporating diverse visual symbols and auditory effects” (403). The ethnographic study examined Buthainah’s purposeful language choices and writing strategies, as well as her conversations with Canagarajah during the drafting process, all of which he details in order to understand her translanguaging practices and “identify teachable pedagogical strategies” (403).

In framing their research arguments, scholars who support practices like code-meshing generally address some of the opposing views and opinions of scholars who are hesitant in opening up spaces for student language variety in the classroom and instead maintain the primacy and demand of standard English as the dialect of academic communication. The primary concern held by this opposing view is that if students are allowed the opportunity and space in the classroom for translanguaging practices like code-

meshing, they will not become proficient in standard English or the written standard dialect of edited American English (EAE). In his article, “Beyond Translingual Writing,” Jerry Won Lee communicates some of the hesitations of scholars who are concerned about multilingual students not learning the standards. He draws on Todd Ruecker’s argument quoting that, “translingual pedagogies ‘may do students a disservice... by possibly delaying students’ attempts to learn standardized language varieties’” (178-79). He also mentions Lisa Delpit and her contestations with allowing student language diversity in the classroom. In her article “The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People’s Children,” Delpit argues that:

To imply to children or adults... that it doesn’t matter how you talk or how you write is to ensure their ultimate failure. I prefer to be honest with my students. Tell them that their language and cultural style is unique and wonderful but that there is a political power game that is also being played, and if they want to be in on that game there are certain games that they too must play. (292)

Delpit does convey that she wishes for change towards diversity and to push “gatekeepers to open their doors to a variety of styles and codes,” but also ultimately argues that as educators, we have a responsibility to teach and provide minority students the “codes of power” (292-93).

Lee delineates these scholars’ points of view not necessarily to counter them, but to reveal the split in positions with supporters of translingual writing being the “idealist position” and then the kinds of arguments made by Ruecker, Delpit and other scholars as being representative of the “pragmatist position.” Lee’s ultimate conclusion on this split is that both the idealist and pragmatist positions “represent well-intentioned desires to promote student learning, and it would thus seem that both can be considered inherently invested in the promotion of their own means to linguistic social justice” (179).

A shared motivation by many language and writing scholars is to raise instructor and educational policymakers' awareness on linguistic diversity and the discourses surrounding language that are circulating in the field. However, there is a need for these discourses and conversations surrounding language diversity, that were galvanized by various CCCC scholars and influential resolutions like *Students' Rights To Their Own Language*, to permeate into other fields beyond Rhetoric and Composition, Linguistics, and Literacy Studies. Scholar-activist and linguist Geneva Smitherman conveys that:

In the *Students' Right* resolution and in the subsequent background document, we sought to accomplish three broad goals: (1) to heighten consciousness of language attitudes; (2) to promote the value of linguistic diversity; and (3) to convey facts and information about language and language variation that would enable instructors to teach their non-traditional students—and ultimately all students—more effectively. (359)

I would maintain that these three goals have been and continue to be actively promoted and continually strived for in our field of English: Rhetoric and Composition. Nevertheless, these goals ought to be extended to the surrounding disciplines across campus, and our fellow instructors and educators within those disciplines. I believe that the third goal that calls for the relaying of information about language variety in order to help instructors teach “non-traditional students—and ultimately all students—more effectively” is particularly essential in order for campus-wide pedagogical transformation. There is still a lot that needs to be understood and learned about language variety in English departments, like the ones here at Chico State, let alone outside these departments. But in order to have these conversations both within and outside of English-related disciplines, we must first assess what instructors already know and understand in regard to linguistic diversity and student language varieties, which is the primary goal of this research study.

Throughout the chapters, I employ the term “multilingual” purposefully and religiously, rather than referring to students—those who are speakers of multiple languages that include dialects or language varieties beyond standard English—as “non-native speakers” or “L₂ learners.” This intentional labelling stems from Staci Perryman-Clark’s argument where she discusses the problem of framing language as deficit and failure. She draws on Canagarajah and his considerations on labeling where, ““there are detrimental consequences for identity deriving from the labels... *nonnative*, *L₂*, or *ESL* [that] identify learners according to a single scale of reference— namely, their relative proficiency in English” (172-73). Perryman-Clark expounds on this notion by warning against biased assumptions of the proficiency of multilingual learners that can form based off of these labels: native English speaker, nonnative English speaker, ESL, L₂, nonstandard-language-variety speaker (173). Another reason I chose to employ the term “multilingual,” as opposed to “bilingual,” is to reference students who may speak more than two languages.

I also use the term “language variety” broadly throughout the text when referring to students’ home languages or the “dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style” (*CCCC Students’ Rights*). In the *Students’ Rights* resolution, there is a section devoted to explicating “language varieties” clarifying definitions surrounding language terms while addressing and deconstructing widespread beliefs and attitudes surrounding language varieties. The section begins by defining “dialect” stating that a “dialect is a variety of a language used by some definable group. Everyone has a personal version of language, an idiolect, which is unique, and closely related groups of idiolects make up dialects” (*CCCC Students’ Rights*). Later on in the text, language varieties are discussed and situated within the context of education and learning. The section makes some

claims around language varieties communicating that, "... colleges emphasize one form of language, the one we called Edited American English (EAE)," and that, "this variety of written English can be loosely termed a dialect, and it has pre-empted a great deal of attention in English classes" (CCCC *Students' Rights*). I argue that these claims still hold true today within most universities, and that EAE has not only "pre-empted a great deal of attention" in English classes, but in most all disciplinary writing contexts and courses across campus. As will later be revealed in the findings, standard English and EAE have become so commonplace and naturalized in most disciplines that instructors don't bother to question their standardness or even name them as a dialect of English.

Ultimately, this thesis works to resurface the many discourses and conversations that surround language diversity, as well as language practices like code-meshing, in order to show why these discourses need to enter other fields and disciplines. The findings of this study suggest a need for some form of professional development, or a training program that educates instructors on language attitudes, discourses, and approaches to writing assessment, pedagogy, and overall course design; one that strives for a fair, inclusive, and sustainable classroom environment for all students.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In understanding the ways in which standard language ideologies and perceptions of student language usage have become historically interrogated and challenged, it is helpful to explore various areas of scholarship that provide insight on discourses surrounding language variety. Many composition and linguistic scholars acknowledge that when it comes to the writing instruction of students with varying linguistic backgrounds, there is no universal, widely agreed upon pedagogy for educators and teachers. In “From Language Experience to Classroom Practice: Affirming Linguistic Diversity in Writing Pedagogy” Kim Lovejoy, Steve Fox, and Katherine Wills relay how:

Teachers of writing and composition continue to struggle with the implications of home and community languages as part of classroom pedagogy, and most composition programs do not have explicit language policies or program initiatives that address linguistic diversity in the classroom. (262)

Consequently, although most writing instructors today would agree that there needs to be a unified acceptance of students’ language varieties in the classroom, there is still a resistance in implementing pedagogies that allow for students to employ their home languages in their writing. In other words, although there has been a significant shift in attitudes and perceptions of student language diversity within the last 30 to 40 years, instructors still continue to grapple with applying new methods or models of writing and literacy instruction that value both the teaching of the standard written dialect—edited American English (EAE)—and the additional language varieties students bring to the classroom.

As effective strategies in regards to teaching academic writing to students with varying linguistic backgrounds has been a subject of controversy and contestation, progress towards pedagogical reform for many classrooms and programs has been a slow process. It is safe to assume that most writing instructors deeply care about enacting teaching practices that make learning accessible to all students, but when it comes to the writing instruction of linguistically diverse populations, there are disparate ways to approach access in literacy education at both the classroom level and programmatic level. In this literature review, I will explore the ways instructors and institutions have discussed access in relation to student language usage identifying the different kinds of language used, and how that language creates a framework for teaching, assessment, and overall instructor and administrative approaches to language variety in the writing classroom.

Difference not Deficiency: Language Rights' Resolutions

Perhaps the most explicit ways language variety discourses have gained measurable momentum in writing-related academic settings are through resolutions by well-known organizations, like that of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Although the 1974 *Students' Rights to Their Own Language* resolution, commonly referred to as "SRTOL," addressed and affirmed language rights of the student—students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style (CCCC *Students' Rights*)—it was written for and aimed at the writing instructor. This intended audience is revealed in the "Explanation of Adoption" that introduces the "position statement on a major problem confronting teachers of composition and communication: how to respond to the

variety in their students' dialects" (CCCC *Students' Rights*). As outlined in the "Introduction" of *Students' Rights to Their Own Language: A Critical Sourcebook*, the adoption of the resolution was partly motivated by that fact that colleges were starting to offer open admissions programs in order to foster equity, and thus altering the linguistic landscape to populations of students in which instructors had never hitherto taught (Perryman-Clark et al. 3). Consequently, the resolution was generated in response to the shifting demographics that resulted in the linguistic diversification of college classrooms giving rise to questions and concerns "about the language habits of students who come from a wide variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds" (Perryman-Clark et al. 1).

The inception and adoption of the resolution is implicative of not only the reality that standard English was and continues to be valued over other dialects and languages, but that the responsibility of maintaining student language rights and reducing language prejudice falls on those within the English profession, particularly writing instructors. This assumption is revealed in the background document in which a dilemma of deciding between conforming to the language values of the uniformed public versus reforming pedagogy to focus on what actual linguistic evidence indicates should be emphasized is identified- "The English profession, then, faces a dilemma: until public attitudes can be changed -- and it is worth remembering that the past teaching in English classes has been largely responsible for those attitudes..." (CCCC *Students' Rights*). I maintain that it is not only public attitudes that need to be changed, but the opinions and beliefs held by other educators both within the English profession and other disciplines across campuses. But the notion that this responsibility of altering attitudes and ideologies that continue to surround language diversity falls on those within English fields still holds true today as conversations that surround

language diversity discourses seem to primarily circulate in scholarship that stem from English disciplines and programs.

Regarding the scholarship surrounding major language policies like that of the *Students' Rights* resolution and the National Language Policy, the work of scholar and linguist Geneva Smitherman has been highly influential. As a member of both the committee who drafted and presented *Students' Rights* and the CCCC Executive Committee who passed the controversial resolution, Smitherman has deep insight into the CCCC's historical role in the struggle for language recognition and rights. In her article "CCCC's Role in the Struggle for Language Rights," Smitherman discusses both the 1974 *Students' Right* resolution and the 1988 National Language Policy providing insight into the "behind the scenes" of the creation of both organizational policies and the reactions to their implementations. She discusses the contestations and negative reactions to *Students' Rights*—including negative reactions from those in language, literacy, and composition studies—and then in contrast, the more positive responses and "developing sociolinguistic sophistication" that followed the National Language Policy revealing the evolving nature of our field concluding that "theorists now recognize the need to address realities relative to students' native language/dialect in the comp-rhetoric context, a posture that has, unfortunately, not always been the case" (369).

In *Language Diversity in the Classroom*, Lovejoy briefly discusses the concerns and confusions of teachers and instructors that followed the adoption of the *Students' Rights* resolution. Although foregrounding issues of linguistic inequality and heightening language awareness, the resolution did not offer practical, pedagogical strategies that teachers could draw upon in order to uphold the values exhibited in the position statement of the document. Lovejoy stated that,

Many teachers interpreted the resolution to mean that they should let their students speak and write any way they want. Many wondered what they were supposed to do, if not teach EAE [edited American English]. Teachers generally understood the need to respect the dialect varieties of their students, but they weren't certain how this policy would affect classroom practice. (Smitherman and Villanueva 92)

Thus, as Smitherman puts, the resolution was “informative in terms of theory,” but inadequate in terms of praxis. Scholarship addressing teaching strategies and explicit pedagogical practices did not immediately follow on the heels of this adopted language policy, due to the “changed national climate of the 1980s,” and instructors both of that time period and today are left wondering what it means to have the right to your own language in the classroom and the pedagogical implications of these rights (Perryman-Clark et al. 6).

Canagarajah also articulates nuanced concerns with the *Students' Rights* resolution and its implications, or lack thereof, for certain multilingual speaker populations today. Canagarajah is concerned first with the extent to which that resolution advocates for language variety in the classroom as well as who gets to be included in this language rights resolution. He says:

The extent of the students' right seems to be letting them use their English at home and in their local communities, and for informal purposes and low-stakes writing needs in the classroom. But shouldn't SRTOL also mean that students have the right to use their vernacular for formal purposes? It appears that SRTOL is interpreted as a policy of tolerance (i.e., permitting nonvalorized codes to survive in less-prestigious contexts), not promotion (i.e., making active use of these vernaculars or developing them for serious purposes). (596)

Canagarajah continues to identify the resolution's limitations by recognizing that *Students' Rights* seems to only apply to speakers of certain language varieties. He relays that although “the statement itself doesn't make the identity of variants covered clear, the supplementary document by the committee reveals that the authors are thinking primarily of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and what they call “Chicano English” (596).

Although it is understood why these language varieties have been granted more attention in language diversity scholarship and resolutions like *Students' Rights*, Canagarajah argues that “as even Anglo American students are compelled to develop proficiency in multiple Englishes in order to shuttle between communities in the postmodern world, we must take a fresh look at the treatment of WE [World Englishes] in SRTOL” (596).

Lastly, in considering ways that negative language ideologies are perpetuated within academia through perceptions of difference, Smitherman argues in “CCCC's Role in the Struggle for Language Rights,” that rejecting language varieties and dialects deemed “nonstandard” is essentially equivalent to “making difference into deficiency all over again” (358). During the time this 1999 article was written and published, Smitherman was keenly aware of the fine line between “difference” and “deficiency” due to persisting negative language ideologies—ideologies that still exist today—as she identified the historical struggle for wider social legitimacy of all languages and dialects. In light of these ideologies and, as conveyed in the background document of *Students' Rights*, the reality that many instructors are still uninformed on the subject of language, “language difference” or “linguistic difference” are phrases that contain conflicting interpretations. A primary argument introduced by Cox and Zawacki in the introduction of the collection *WAC and Second Language Writers: Research Towards Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs and Practices*, and later explicated by Chris Thaiss in the afterword, is the need for reframing faculty perceptions of language difference to value a “difference as resource” model of thinking and teaching as opposed to “difference as deficit” (467). In arguing that differences in English should not only be respected but viewed as a resource, Cox and Zawacki draw upon the work of Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, Jackie Royster, and John

Trimbur in arguing that “‘difference in language’ should not be seen as ‘a barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening’” (20-21).

Translanguaging and Code-Meshing Scholarship

Although the *Students’ Rights* resolution provided not only a rationale in encouraging teachers to “uphold the right of students to their own language,” it also provided the language to discuss these rights and matters surrounding linguistic diversity for those within the English profession. As articulated by Perryman-Clark et al., many instructors in literacy and composition found themselves “longing for specific classroom strategies, activities, and approaches that affirmed students’ rights to their own languages while also affirming a curriculum that has very specific aims” (6). As will be addressed in this section, what was lacking in these documents, but what followed decades later, were pedagogical theories and teaching strategies that explicated ways to create spaces for students to employ their home languages, while developing proficiency in edited American English.

Suresh Canagarajah, Kim Lovejoy, and Vershawn Young are among some of the notable scholars to write about teaching strategies and encouraged language practices for writing classrooms that contain multilingual students. Vershawn Young’s coauthored collection *Other People’s English* describes and advocates code-meshing—the merging or blending of language variations—as an approach to teach writing over code-switching—the separation of language variations due to the situation or context. Young clarifies how code-meshing “as a practice, of course, is not new; it just hasn’t been widely theorized and presented as a way to read, write, speak, and listen to Englishes” (77). The primary focus of

the collection is to promote the merit of code-meshing, specifically in relation to dialects of English like that of African-American English, over commonly used code-switching pedagogies arguing that “racial compromise is what underlies current code-switching pedagogies and has not paid off well when it comes to the education of African-Americans overall” (7). In the collection’s introduction “Are You a Part of the Conversation?” Young communicates a shared motivation as described by linguist David Johnson in *How Myths about Language Affect Education: What Every Teacher Should Know*. This shared motivation is to:

‘expose linguistic ideas that are held by the general public and even some educational policymakers’ because ‘mainstream teachers need to understand language so they can help shape better language policies on a variety of issues: bilingual education, non-standard dialects, accents, Ebonics, language change, slang, and the role of grammar in language education.’ (Young 8)

The final chapter of *Other People’s English* outlines an experimental application of code-meshing within college writing classes in which Lovejoy describes a model of what he terms “self-directed writing” as a tool for teaching code-meshing in writing. Lovejoy’s pedagogy of self-directed writing builds off of James Britton’s theory of “expressive” writing in which writing is not necessarily solely about or for the self, as most people would believe expressive writing to entail, but “denotes the personal language of the writer” (Young 131). Canagarajah also discusses this notion of the “personal language of the writer” in his article in which he argues that students naturally have a desire to be able to use their own vernaculars in the classroom setting. He contends that, “to use a language without any personal engagement, even for temporary utilitarian and pragmatic reasons, is to mimic not speak” (Canagarajah 597). For Lovejoy, this personal engagement with language encourages the development of students’ voices, and self-directed writing becomes a place in which, as

he illustrates, teachers can write with their students as they experiment with code-meshing. Lovejoy stresses the importance of *experimenting* with code-meshing because it “takes the edge off risk, since both teachers and students might feel edgy about code-meshing because of the ingrained standard language ideology” (Young 132).

In his article “Codemeshing in Academic Writing: Identifying Teachable Strategies of Translanguaging” Suresh Canagarajah relays the findings of an ethnographic study that examined the translanguaging practices of a Saudi Arabian student, Buthainah. Canagarajah discusses how translanguaging is a natural occurring phenomenon, defining the practice as “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (401). He differentiates between translanguaging and code-meshing stating that “unlike translanguaging, codemeshing also accommodates the possibility of mixing communicative modes and diverse symbol systems (other than language)” (403). In discussing the strategies of code-meshing, Canagarajah devotes a section to explicitly relay the importance of students’ realization and awareness of translanguaging as a rhetorical choice dependent on the communicative situation at hand, and that the ability “to assess the situation and frame one’s language accordingly is part of a multilingual’s rhetorical awareness and communicative proficiency” (404).

A primary conclusion of the study, and one highly recommended by Canagarajah in the final section of the article, is that we as instructors can learn and develop teaching practices from the strategies that students themselves employ as we learn to understand their translanguaging practices- “it is important that we develop our pedagogies ground up, from the practices we see multilingual students adopting” (415). This in mind, Canagarajah argues

that we must afford safe spaces in our classrooms for students to practice translanguaging in order to develop proficiency in the language practice.

Assessment Practices and Criteria for Multilingual Writing

In many ways, approaches to assessment are more revealing about an instructor's pedagogy than their syllabi and assignments are (Matsuda et al. 327). Considering assessment of multilingual writing and ways instructors can become preoccupied with "linguistic/language interferences," Canagarajah argues that a student's "'deviations' from a language that we see in the usage of multilinguals might be cases of positive transfer rather than negative interference. Therefore, scholars have accepted as natural the deviations from norms or even appreciated their creativity" (413). He later addresses the question of how to distinguish between students' code-meshing from errors or mistakes:

... it appears as if intentionality would help us distinguish between codemeshing and mistakes. Mistakes are unintentional, whereas those that are consciously chosen are codemeshing. However, intentionality is not always the best arbiter of communicative success. Multilinguals can use certain words appropriately and effectively through intuition and social practice (without explicit awareness). (414)

Canagarajah argues both sides of assessing translanguagers/multilinguals writing by highlighting the difficulty of objective assessment. On the one hand, because of the lack of emic perspective of multilinguals' language practices and abilities, instances of writing instructors mistakenly perceiving positive and intentional transfer as a language interference or error have been common. But on the other hand, Canagarajah also warns how "multilingual scholars have sometimes swung to the other extreme of glorifying multilingual student communication, ignoring the possibility of further development of translanguaging proficiency" (413).

Whereas Canagarajah focuses on specific concerns of assessing students' code-meshed practices and writing, in chapter one of *Second-Language Writing in the Composition Classroom: A Critical Sourcebook* where the editors delineate "Guidelines for Writing and Writing-Intensive Courses," the section makes broader claims regarding assessment practices. The chapter contains various sections addressing factors that constitute a writing course from class size to teacher preparation, and in the section on assessment, the editors relay their stances on best assessment practices:

We endorse the idea that best assessment practices use multiple measures. As the *Position Statement on Writing Assessment* states, 'writing ability must be assessed by more than one piece of writing, in more than one genre, written on different occasions, for different audiences, and responded to and evaluated by multiple readers as part of a substantial and sustained writing process.' In addition, we echo the call that 'best assessment practice [that] respect language variety and diversity and [assess] writing on the basis of effectiveness for readers, acknowledging that as purposes vary, criteria will as well. (Matsuda et al. 12)

In a similar fashion, Jerry Won Lee argues for individualizing assessment criteria. In his text, Lee makes a case for "translanguage assessment" which "refers not to the assessment of translanguaging, but rather to the ways in which assessment philosophies can be continually reconstituted in accordance with the principles of translanguaging" (182). Lee posits and explicates three components of translanguaging assessment, with one of them being "individualizing evaluative criteria." In the section that delineates individualizing evaluative criteria, Lee argues that "It is... important that pedagogies be designed for the communicative demands of today's increasingly global era. However, by translanguaging assessment, we recognize the necessary limitations to any universal assessment criterion" (184). Lee eventually concludes that in arguing for individualizing evaluative criteria, "translanguaging assessment is not simply a call to adapt assessment criteria to value

‘translingual’ writing more; it is about de-universalizing assessment criteria so we remember that different kinds of writing have different values for different students” (185).

Just as Lee argues for individualizing evaluative criteria in assessing writing, Valerie Balester discusses the problematic nature of writing rubrics for assessing student writing in her chapter in *Race and Writing Assessment*. She addresses the issue with uncritical rubrics in that they “oversimplify and standardize writing, thus failing a significant segment of our student population, namely, students of color or students whose first language is not always Edited American English” (63). Balester recognizes the value of rubrics in that they are particularly convenient and effective for novice graders. But because of the ways that rubrics standardize and aim for standard English as the sole language variety through attempts to eradicate “slang” or “bad English,” Balester argues for a revising, rather than a rejecting, of rubrics. In positing what she coins the “multicultural rubric,” she identifies some of the distinguishing characteristics of this type of rubric and concludes that “the multicultural rubric takes a rhetorical approach, especially toward error and convention” (74). In viewing rubrics through a multicultural framework, Balester acknowledges rubrics as an imperfect tool for assessing writing, but at the same time, understands they can be improved and have a significant impact on writing instruction, as they are influential texts that shape attitudes and articulate values (74).

Similarly to the way Balester advocates for a multicultural framework for assessing writing, Asao Inoue outlines and argues for approaches to writing assessment through an antiracist framework. In his book *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future*, Inoue theorizes and promotes practices of antiracist writing assessment for college writing classrooms. One of Inoue’s

primary and intended audiences for the book are writing teachers who “wish to cultivate antiracist writing assessments in their writing classrooms” (3). Although Inoue’s focus is on racism, more specifically a structural and institutional kind of racism that is “experienced daily, often in unseen ways, but always felt,” he also conveys that he is writing for teachers who are “looking to understand how to assess fairly the writing of their diverse student populations, which include multilingual populations, working class students, disabled students, etc.” (4). Inoue both theorizes and delineates “an antiracist writing assessment theory for the college writing classroom by theorizing writing assessment as an ecology, a complex system made up of several interconnected elements” (9). Inoue ultimately argues that writing assessment is more vital than pedagogy because “it [assessment] always trumps what you say or what you attempt to do with your students,” and therefore instructors ought to consider how writing assessment will exist and function before thinking about course design (9).

Due to more and more scholars like Canagarajah, Young, and Inoue writing about and promoting teaching practices and assessment approaches that disrupt standard language ideologies and reconstruct academic conventions to embrace language variety, writing instructors are developing increasingly progressive and equitable approaches to teach and respond to students’ home languages and are more aware of the linguistic differences of diverse writers. Although this can be seen as a pedagogical milestone within fields and departments that are concerned with language diversity in education—Linguistics, Rhetoric and Composition, and Literacy Studies—writing instructors outside of these fields are either unaware or have limited understandings of ways to approach, discuss, and respond to language variety in their courses. Raising consciousness about language usage and variety,

and with that, informing writing instructors about why language diversity has been a popular subject and area of contestation in our own field, will help instructors re-conceptualize language and student writing. Although the goal is to inform and educate individual writing instructors about language variety discourses, this is a move that needs to happen at a programmatic level. In other words, how do administrators help writing instructors become more aware of student language variety? This next section will examine how writing programs like Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)— a place where learning outcomes are decided and faculty training takes place—view and approach the linguistic and racial identities that students bring to writing classrooms across the curriculum.

Programmatic Approaches and Writing Across the Curriculum

One of the purposes of this study is to build on the growing body of research that explores diversity in institutional programs by examining the ways language variety is recognized and viewed in writing programs, specifically in relation to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). In the first chapter of *Race and Writing Assessment*, Chris Anson identifies the absence of race and diversity in WAC literature stating that:

Publications spanning three decades of WAC history... give little or no voice to the complexities inherent in addressing the diversity of students in the classrooms and programs where WAC is implemented and how their diverse backgrounds and experiences affect teaching, learning, and assessment. (Inoue and Poe 19)

Equally alarming, he discusses the marginal role race and diversity plays when it comes to faculty development and administrative engagement. In regard to WAC faculty development, the one-time workshop is still a common form of faculty training in which workshop leaders “may be reluctant to complicate their agendas by opening up discussions of race and diversity....” (Inoue and Poe 20). Furthering this argument, Anson argues that administrators

and guest presenters are equally complicit and recounts past experiences of being invited to campuses to lead WAC workshops or consult on administration where “the subject of race or diversity has rarely come up” (Inoue and Poe 21).

Anson outlines some of the reasons WAC programs overlook or avoid attention to race and diversity. One of these reasons begins with the attempt to make WAC “relevant” to certain faculty audiences. The problem here lies with the disciplinary diversity of these audiences. As Anson reveals, when these audiences represent a blend of various disciplines, as is typical with campus-wide workshops, the very multipleness “forces WAC leaders to make more singular their strategies of implementation or generalize them beyond consideration of diverse groups of students” (22). For WAC leaders, this complex reality pushes them to focus on assumed institutional goals like assisting faculty to achieve definable goals such as helping students develop communicative competence that relate to career preparation (22).

Another reason race and diversity is often avoided in conversations of writing and assessment within WAC programs is because of top-down pressure to achieve accredited institutional status. Anson encourages leaders of WAC programs to critique larger-scale—departmental or institutional—assessment illuminating the reality that institutions experience pressure from accreditation agencies that demand accountability. This in turn leads to:

Administrators’ obsession with reaccreditation [that] can blind them to the linguistic and pedagogical complexities of supporting writing, narrowing their agenda to the eradication of surface features of ‘bad English’ and then calling upon the WAC program to fix the problem. (Inoue and Poe 27)

In response to this, Anson proposes that WAC leaders respond by educating administrators and faculty oversight groups of the reality that linguistic fixations represent only one lens for

supporting student writing and to introduce other perspectives—sociocultural, cognitive, developmental—that can reveal inequities in student support (27).

A key takeaway of the chapter is the realization and demand for programmatic and institutional commitment to initiate more effective, long-term faculty development. For Anson, this means building alliances with other programs and areas of educational support like diversity offices and minority student councils. Overall, in considering the work of WAC faculty training and how it engages with subjects of language difference and diversity, Anson concludes that “WAC faculty development and training needs to refocus some of its efforts, seeing issues of writing assessment across the disciplines as understanding and honoring language differences that may change disciplinary discourses and practices from the bottom up (Inoue and Poe 28).

One of the fundamental issues with WAC’s approaches to language usage is instructors’ expectations of students to avoid employing their home language in the classroom. In the forward of the collection *WAC and Second Language Writers*, Jonathan Hall relays:

Multilinguality across the curriculum is not a matter of adapting multilingual students to a monolingual English norm, but rather of helping faculty adapt to the reality that multilingual students are not going to check their other languages at the door; rather, the academy has to open up the door and listen to what is being said in the hallway, and bring that conversation inside, where it can be continued. (12)

This idea of “bringing the conversation inside where it can be continued” is a primary objective of this research study. One of the goals of this study was not only to assess instructor understanding and recognition of student language variety, but to further the conversation surrounding language usage and raise instructor awareness of student language diversity. As will be more explicitly revealed in chapter three, many writing instructors

across the curriculum are either unaware of student linguistic diversity in their courses or view language variation beyond the written standard as errors or improper usage. The latter perspective is not entirely surprising given the nature and expectations of disciplinary-specific writing courses in that writing is performed for and in correspondence to the discipline's standards. This notion is explicated as one of the major principles that underlie WAC work in the introduction of *WAC and Second Language Writers* in that:

Writing is situated, with structural, rhetorical, epistemological, and discursual features varying according to the context of the writing (discipline, profession, activity system). These differences need to be taught and respected (i.e. writing across the curriculum is not writing-as-an-English-major across the curriculum). (Cox and Zawacki 17)

Even though this core principle constitutes part of the framework for understanding the kinds of writing seen across the curriculum, Cox and Zawacki argue for an expansion of this framework by including three new principles understood as sets of “awarenesses and practices,” with one of them being:

Differences in Englishes should be respected. These Englishes include interlanguage (the language a language learner develops while learning a language), World Englishes, dialects of English, and the varieties of English students develop through code-meshing. (17)

This principle is inspired by the position statement of *Students' Rights to Their Own Language* as it calls for the respect of differences in English and dialectic variations (Cox and Zawacki 20). It also acknowledges code-meshing as a language practice that gives rise to and shapes new varieties of English.

Ultimately, what we see the authors arguing in the introduction of this collection, is that WAC programs and professionals ought to be just as concerned with the conversations and attitudes surrounding language diversity and further, the need of improving pedagogical practices in order to reach both monolingual and multilingual learners. In other words, the

responsibility of respecting and upholding linguistic rights, furthering language awareness, and transforming writing pedagogies should not, as previously asserted, fall only on those within English professions and programs. This educational responsibility in mind, it is important to note that when it comes to forming and implementing WAC pedagogy that better meets the needs of linguistically diverse students, the program will have to face the important and necessary task of curriculum redesign. As Hall concludes, “We are still in the relatively early stages of developing WAC-based multilingual-friendly instructional techniques that are suitable for a mixed population of students with a wide variety of linguistic backgrounds in the same classroom” (Cox and Zawacki 11).

Conclusion

Lovejoy discusses the resistance to languages other than edited American English, which can be “felt in classrooms at every educational level” (Smitherman and Villanueva 93). In a counterargument, he contests that if writing ought to be done exclusively in EAE, thus excluding students’ home languages, then students are prevented from using their natural language abilities and therefore hindering the power and magnitude of language in writing. He poses the following question to readers- “what are we doing in the writing and language arts classroom to promote an understanding of language varieties and their uses?” Lovejoy recognizes not only the need of establishing an awareness of the language varieties students bring to the classroom, but further, how these language varieties are being used, particularly within writing. I argue for an extension of this critical question to include another more influential educational context- what are educators doing at both the classroom and programmatic level to promote an understanding of language varieties and their uses? And how are both writing instructors and administrative leaders being made aware of discourses

surrounding language variety and the need to enter these discourses? Ultimately, this research study not only explores and ascertains writing instructors understanding of language variety in their courses, it also opens up spaces for conversations with these instructors on student language diversity in order to raise awareness on the different discourses that address the various approaches to teach writing to multilingual students.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Background

Considering the exploratory nature of this research study, I modeled my interview protocol after Bethany Davila's similarly explorative study in "The Inevitability of 'Standard' English: Discursive Constructions of Standard Language Ideologies." In her study, Davila interviewed various writing instructors' responses to students' writing who self-identified as and represented racial groups that have been typically evaluated based off of language use like that of Spanish and African-American English. During the interviews, Davila gauged the instructors' views of written standardness, identity, and language ideology by asking questions like: what common patterns of the writing that didn't meet their expectations, describe what they found striking about each paper, and describe who they imagine as having written each paper. The primary goal of the interviews was to assess instructor understandings of standard edited American English (SEAE) and whether or not the dialect is viewed as linguistically neutral. Davila's ultimate aim was to illuminate language ideologies surrounding writing pedagogy and join fellow writing scholars in challenging the "rhetorical constructions of SEAE [standard edited American English] as linguistically neutral" (Davila 130).

Data Collection: Instructor Interviews

Likewise, the data for this research was collected through IRB approved interviews with instructors of writing intensive courses, but with the purpose of extending the participant population to writing instructors primarily in fields beyond the Humanities in

order to understand if language variety discourses exist in other disciplines on campus. The interviews consisted of two major parts. During the first part, instructors participated in a think-aloud protocol in which they were asked to read and respond to two samples of students writing that contained language variety. The first sample was an academic essay written by a first-year Latina student who intentionally code-meshes between Spanish and English.¹ The student was given the freedom to code-mesh in the assignment—rather encouraged to do so—and as Kim Brian Lovejoy puts, was able to “write expressively, draw on resources of [her] own language as [she wrote] about ideas that matter to [her]” (Young 132). I use the term “code-mesh” as coined by Vershawn Young to refer to the intentional or unintentional blending of language variations and codes. The second sample was an informal, reflective blog post in which the student employs his home language of African-American English.² The reason I selected these writing samples was because Spanish and African-American English are common languages considered nonstandard in courses on campus. Being a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Chico State’s second largest student ethnic demographic population is Hispanic-Latinx with a total of 5,819 students in 2018 (Chico State Institutional Research “Census Enrollment Graph”). During this portion of the interview, my goal was to understand how instructors respond to and assess student writing that contains language variety. Therefore, I asked questions about initial impressions of the writing samples and the kinds of feedback the instructors would offer the students who wrote the samples. There was also a question about how the genre of the writing samples affected the instructors’ responses so as to gauge if and how instructors’ views of language vary in regards to assignment type and formality.

¹ See APPENDIX A

² See APPENDIX B

In the second part of the interview, I transitioned into asking more general language-related questions. The purpose of this portion of the interview was to assess the instructors' awareness and understanding of student language variety and see if language usage was discussed within assignment descriptions and the overall course. I concluded this part of the interview with brief reflection questions in which I asked instructors about their discipline and how it might orient or influence the way they respond to language variety along with a question about the kinds of writing they would assign in their courses and how they would talk about language usage within those assignments.

I employ the term “language variety” vaguely in referring to the home languages of multilingual students. At the beginning of each interview I explained what I meant by the term so participants were aware of how I was using it in each question. I avoided conveying any details of current writing scholarship or discourses about language variety as the intent of the interview was to discover writing instructors understanding of and authentic responses to language diversity free from any outside influences.

Participants

I contacted the writing instructors via email informing the potential participants of the nature and length of the interviews. All interviews were face-to-face and lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes. Data was recorded using both written notes and audio recording. The participants for this research were by chance three female and three male instructors who apart from one, teach writing intensive courses in fields primarily beyond English: Social Science, Political Science, Business, Journalism, Anthropology, and Engineering. The participant who was not an instructor of a writing intensive course—the Business professor—conveyed that she still assigned a lot of writing in her course. The

instructors' experience teaching a writing intensive course varied with some having taught a writing course for only a few years and others for about 10 to 15 or more years. All participants self-identified as white and were either middle-age or above middle age. Instructors' beliefs or perceptions of language variety in writing were not factored into this study. I attributed the following codenames to the instructor participants (see fig. 1).

Anthropology instructor	Steve
Journalism instructor	Kevin
Political Science instructor	Rachel
Child Development instructor	Karen
Business instructor	Stacy
Engineering instructor	Will

Fig. 1. Codenames given to the instructors.

Data Analysis

After the completion of all six interviews, even though I recorded notes during each interview, I transcribed all the audio recordings onto a document so as to avoid leaving out anything that might be significant. I coded the data looking for themes and places where there were consistencies in reactions to the writing samples. I did not have any particular expectations on what I would discover or anticipate certain responses as my familiarity with writing outside of the English discipline was very limited. I did keep an eye out for the kinds of language employed during each interview that was in reference to language variety or code-meshing in order to gain an understanding of ways people might be talking about language diversity, or if they are even talking about language diversity, in other disciplines.

After coding the data with highlights and accompanying comments, I compiled core categories and themes and summarized them on a separate document. The main themes that seemed to be given the most attention were: responses to the writing samples, understanding of language variety in courses, discipline orientation, and then general approaches and opinions to language variety. This helped me to easily sift through my findings and identify some of the emerging relationships of responses, or lack thereof.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was that all participants were instructors from California State University, Chico. If time permitted, I would have chosen to expand my participant instructor sample through interviews with faculty from other universities, particularly by including instructors from other state schools as well as instructors from private institutions. With private institutions, classroom sizes are usually smaller and student populations are typically—but not always—less diversified. Collecting data outside of Chico State would have most likely enriched my findings considering these differences in context, populations, and institutional standards.

Another limitation was the sample size of research participants. With only six instructor participants total, there were departments and disciplines that were not included resulting in a lack of data that could have added alternative views on other disciplinary conventions and writing contexts. Further, I only interviewed one participant from each included discipline, therefore limiting the representation of disciplinary views and understandings or approaches to language variety.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

In this next chapter, I offer some of the major findings from the six interviews with the instructor participants. I begin with initial responses to the writing samples and identify the kinds of terminology I noticed emerging throughout each interview concerning references to language variety or code-meshing. Following this section, I discuss instructor awareness and understandings of language variety in their courses briefly outlining recognizable trends of instructor responses and the ways they talk about what they notice in relation to student language variety and overall student demographics. In the subsequent section, I detail moments where instructors talk about discipline orientation and how their discipline's writing standards may or may not affect or shape their understanding and responses to student language variety. The last section transitions into examining the participants general feedback to student writing in cases of identified language variety. I also touch on a few conveyed opinions of language variety or writing practices like code-meshing. I conclude the chapter by discussing the implications of the findings building connections to what the field already knows regarding language and writing scholarship.

Reactions to Writing Samples and Terminology Used to Discuss Language

In regards to the reactions and verbal feedback to the provided writing samples during the think-aloud protocol, there was a mixture of positive and negative responses. With

the first writing sample, almost every participant was surprised to see the inclusion of Spanish in the academic essay. Referring to the kinds of writing in her discipline, Rachel, the Political Science instructor, relayed she “[has] never had a student turn in an assignment that has a Spanish word in it.” The concept of code-meshing in a formal piece of writing was a highly foreign idea to almost all the participants. In his interview, Kevin stressed the need for writers to think about audience and whether or not readers are able to access their ideas, which was a reaction that was not necessarily surprising considering his discipline of Journalism. He conveyed that when it comes to approaching instruction and feedback, he would want to have a conversation about audience- “who they were writing to and I think if they could make some rhetorical choices to speak directly to that audience.” Will stated although the piece was easy to read for him, he recommended that the writer include translations via parentheticals for the more complicated Spanish phrases. Karen also mentioned the need for translations conveying that “the amount of Spanish ... is hard for me to follow because I do not speak Spanish very well. I think that that could work in this paper, but I need some like translation to know what is happening here.”

With this trend of responses on translations and reader access to language variation, I feel that the subtle difference between Kevin’s response and Will and Karen’s is that Kevin seemed to emphasize language usage as a rhetorical choice for a specific audience—“make some rhetorical choices to speak directly to that audience”—whereas Will and Karen’s response indicated a view of audience as more general and a presumption of readers as strictly English speakers. This push for translations for non-English speaking audiences reflects one of Gloria Anzaldúa’s arguments on linguistic accommodation. She argues that:

Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate. (39-40)

Building off of Anzaldúa's argument for the freedom to write bilingually, specifically in Spanglish, the responses I found rather interesting to this writing sample were the ones that questioned whether the code-meshed Spanish and English, or Spanglish, was intentional or unintentional. For example, when asked how she would give feedback to the student who wrote the essay, Rachel stated that,

I would want to have a conversation... if they [the author] are not aware of the fact they're integrating two languages — they are doing that almost unconsciously. I would want them to know that this needs to be a choice and not that 'I am writing really fast thinking really fast I write in two languages.' As long as this student knows what they are doing.

In response to the same question, Karen also conveyed that, "I can see that they have some really good ideas here to develop their paper and then I would I ask them about their use of the Spanish. And I am curious to know if it was intentional or that is the way that it just comes out when they write it." These instructors' questioning of intentionality was fascinating to me as it was in many ways, an observation that connects to and validates Young's argument of the naturality of code-meshing:

It's blendin two or mo dialects, languages, or rhetorical forms into one sentence, one utterance, one paper. And not all the time is this blendin intentional, sometime it unintentional. And that's the point. The two dialects sometime naturally, sometime intentionally, co-exist! (114)

At some point during each interview, almost all of the participants fixated on the grammatical errors of the second writing sample as there were various cases of run-on sentences and unfamiliar sentence structures. I anticipated that this would be the reaction from some of the instructors as the writing had a few run-on sentences and word-choice

errors as seen in the following sentence- "I am feeling better than ever also a stronger men more confident and a lot of the work that I do in my classes I still can use a little more help and my classes but most of all I been doing a good overall." Many of the participants acknowledged that they would grade the blog post generously as it was a low-stakes writing assignment. None of the participants really addressed the inclusion of African-American English in the sample, but some addressed the various spelling errors and run-on sentences in talking about the ways that the writing could be "cleaned up." Stacy drew attention to "the lack of conciseness, everything is so flowery and run-on sentences and extended thought..." One of the participants spent quite a bit of time talking about the first writing sample and then when addressing the blog post only stated- "This was conversational... I don't know what to do with that [the blog post]." One participant sort of made a comparison between the two writing samples conveying- "I guess between the two, this paper the more formal writing paper um feels like it has more potential to be cleaned up." In a more supportive approach, Rachel talked about how she would approach feedback by first acknowledging that the student responded correctly to the assignment prompt by doing reflective work and fulfilling the content requirement, and then proceed to relay the importance of code-switching:

I would want to be sure that the student knows the difference between this awesome example of a personal informal blog...I would maybe ask, okay, if you were maybe writing this as a cover letter for a job, how would you change how you said some of these same...how would you write this differently and make sure that the student is getting the benefit of more formal writing and be able to translate this. [I provide the term "code-switch"] Code-switch it, right!

Even without knowing the terminology to refer to it, the relentlessness of and adherence to code-switching can be seen in this claim, particularly with the move from low-stakes to high-stakes writing situations. Young questions this relentlessness and what essentially drives code-switching in educational circles. He concludes that many teachers

have good intentions when it comes to code-switching by maintaining that “African-Americans must be bicultural and bidialectal to thrive in the ‘White and Black worlds’ of America” (67). But, Young counters this perspective of code-switching arguing that it cannot persist “if racism erodes and if what counts as acceptable academic literacies and professional prose change” (67).

Karen also drew attention to the blog being written in a low-stakes writing context. She discussed how when it comes to low-stakes writing assignments, she does not correct for grammar but focuses on content. She conveyed that with the blog post,

It would take me longer to read it, to make sure they hit all these points, as far as content I would try to give them the credit there but I would make some suggestions or sort of comment about their sentence structure and [how] the number of run-ons makes it hard to follow what they are trying to say.

Throughout each interview, I noticed that the participants each employed different phrases and terminology in talking about language variety and code-meshing. A few of the participants were very hesitant in attempts to talk about code-meshing or cases in which they made note of language variety inclusion in the writing samples. For example, Kevin was unsure of how to address the code-meshing in the one writing sample he read and assessed.³ In responding to the writing sample, he relayed the vitality of thinking about audience “in terms of how much of this sort of *back and forth* do they would want to use.” Later when responding to more general questions on language variety, Kevin revisited the topic of rhetorical context and audience questioning “how imperative is it that they [readers] understand this or are you trying to make a larger point by including some of this *hybrid*... I don’t know what to say.” Towards the end of the interview, Kevin questioned whether it was

³In Kevin’s interview, he only read and responded to the first writing sample with the code-meshed Spanish and English.

derogatory to say “Spanglish” in referring to “some sentences begin[ing] in English and end[ing] in Spanish.”

Rachel also employed the term “Spanglish” in recalling how she has seen powerful writing by multilingual authors. Earlier in responding to the writing samples, she used the term “mixed language” as well as “mixing Spanish into the English sentences.” Also, in her observations of the first writing sample, Karen talks about the “amount of Spanish that is integrated” and how the “switching back and forth” was hard for her to follow. This lack of terminology and language when addressing code-meshing discloses a general unfamiliarity with the language practice, even though as revealed later, many of the participants discuss how they have come across code-meshing in other authors’ work.

Understanding of Language Variety in Student Writing

Regarding awareness or understanding of language variety in student writing and overall courses, most of the instructors acknowledged in their interview—with the exception of one to two—moments where they have come across student language variety in writing assignments. Beginning with the exception, Steve disclosed that even though he has been teaching for over 15 years, it is still hard to identify when student writing is shaped by language variety. He communicated that:

... it is difficult for me to detect when a student’s writing is shaped by some nonstandard linguistic convention, such as trying to switch between a home language like Spanish or Hmong and what we generally consider standard academic English... or when it is just a matter of a lack of practice on their part regarding writing.

With the frame of considering “linguistic conventions” as errors, Steve discussed struggles as an instructor in differentiating between errors that stem from “lack of practice in writing” versus what Steve termed as “linguistic interferences,” a phrase employed in anthropology

that refers to instances in which one's home language interferes with the ability to operate in another language.

Concerning the various languages or dialects identified in student writing and overall courses, many of the participants discussed the kinds of language variety they have encountered during their time teaching. For example, even though Steve mentioned the difficulty in distinguishing between linguistic interferences or lack of practice, he also talked about the kinds of languages and dialect he knows he either has or has not come across. He discussed how some of the Spanish speaking students use phrases or terms in ways that can be considered nonstandard. After providing an example, he briefly concluded that when it comes to other languages, he does not know enough about Hmong and has "not seen Black Vernacular English showing up in writing very much at all," but has seen "it show up in oral communication in the classroom."

Like Steve, Rachel also communicated that she has not had many African-American students in her courses and has not really seen or been able to identify African-American English in student writing. Rather, Rachel talked about the high population of Spanish-speaking students in her courses and the few instances where she identified variations from standard English in their writing. Although she has not seen "actual Spanish words in people's writing," Rachel conveyed that she can tell when English is not a student's first language- "I can sometimes see that English isn't their first language... just from awkward usage in writing. I do see some of that. I wouldn't say that I see a ton of that." She mentioned the differences in error between native speakers of English and non-native- "I haven't seen a difference in the overall quality of writing based on whether English is the primary language... it's just that the kind of errors are different."

Building off of this last response, a trend I noticed across interviews is how many of the instructors felt the need to mention the student demographics in their courses. Both Stacy and Will briefly mentioned the higher populations of international students that are in their writing courses with Stacy relaying that she has quite a few non-native English speakers in her MBA course. Will roughly broke down the student populations in his current writing course- “I have about 10% Middle Eastern and 10% culturally Hispanic folks and typically 5% or less from China and 5% or less from India.” After this, both Stacy and Will did not talk about language variety or whether they have identified it in student writing. Their primary focus and overall response to the question was discussing the varying English language skills of international students, a topic Will focused on quite a bit during his interview.

During her interview, Karen revealed that she does come across language variety in her courses, and can now recognize different varieties and patterns “given the student’s background.” She expounded on this idea by briefly recounting the different kinds of language variety she encounters in student writing:

I notice that more Hmong students struggle with singular and plural, I think that sometimes African-American students... and not just African-American, white students too [use] a lot of colloquial statements. It is not formal writing; it is just conversational and with the Spanish speaking students I notice verb tense a lot.

It seemed that Karen’s “recognition of student language variety” was simply a correlation with presumed grammar struggles based off of the “student’s background.” As will be explicated later, throughout interviews, there emerged this conflation of language variety with grammar issues that for about half of the instructor participants, was perceived as an inseparable and natural association. In many cases, instructors sought to justify this preoccupation with grammar in response to both the writing samples and the general

language variety question by drawing on their fields' accepted writing conventions and the familiar features of writing that are standard in their discipline, which I will reveal further in the following section.

Discipline Orientation

A common thread that emerged regarding discipline orientation and how disciplinary conventions shape views and approaches to language variety is that four out of the six participants relayed that the writing style expected in their disciplines is more technical, formulaic, and for disciplines like engineering, “almost bulletized in form.” In some of the interviews, instructors disclosed that conformity to these disciplinary standards is what causes them to “be a stickler for the grammatical stuff,” or why the “passive language is very very dangerous,” or even why they “don’t care for first-person writing.” In most of the instructor’s courses, writing is a component that helps students learn and understand content. Therefore, language usage or variety is not a focus, and for some, rarely even thought about or reflected on because the goal is for students to understand the course material or specific disciplinary concepts, which is what many of the instructors prioritize when it comes to assessment and evaluation of writing assignments.

For example, in her interview Rachel talked about the conventions of legal writing:

..it is about memorizing vocabulary. It is all about the words. Law is... particular about the way to use words. It is not really like in English where you are expressing something and there are different ways to express it. With law, it is like code; you have to have the right pieces.

Further, Rachel explained that because of these disciplinary writing conventions, students have to “learn formulas more so than flowery or different types of language.” Essentially,

these responses can point to principles previously identified in WAC scholarship on disciplinary writing contexts in that, “Writing is situated, with structural, rhetorical, epistemological, and discursal features varying according to the context of the writing (discipline, profession, activity system)” (Cox and Zawacki 17). Many of the instructors discussed how writing standards in their discipline— Business, Political Science, Engineering—is different than the writing standards and conventions in English courses, with assumptions of the writing style that constitutes English disciplines- flowery language, expressive, etc. Returning to Stacy’s initial response to the writing samples, she prefaced her feedback by pointing out . . .

Well since I am in a different type of writing genre, it sticks out to me the lack of conciseness; everything is so flowery and run-on sentences and extended thought. Like in Business writing, I emphasize conciseness and short sentences. That was an issue I saw in both.

I felt that this response illuminated a popular assumption about writing conventions in the English field in that the language usage and style is more lengthy and expressive, and thus is viewed as a discipline, perhaps the only discipline, that could allow for language diversity or experimental writing like code-meshing.

In most of the interviews, focusing on the writing conventions of their disciplines resulted in the instructors avoiding the part of the question about language variety altogether- “How does your discipline orient the way you think about and respond to language?” Half of the participants responded to this question by solely talking about the kinds of writing they do or would assign, or simply expounding on the standard writing style of their field. Some of the participants avoided addressing language variety almost entirely during their interview even though most all of the questions were directly asking about language variety- “What is your understanding of language variety within your course?” The participants who generally

avoided discussing student language usage seemed to instead, conflate “language variety” with “grammar,” something I will further discuss in the implications section of this chapter. When I asked Stacy the question on the kinds of terminology she uses—I also added, “or might use”—in talking about language variety, she responded with, “I mean the only thing I can think of is saying things like proper grammar which I know it subjective but that is one thing is grammar usage that is a recurring theme.”

Although more implicitly, Karen also ventured into focusing more on grammar and sentence structure while touching on language variety during her interview. In response to the question on how language usage is discussed in assignment descriptions, she conveyed that, “I think I am deliberate over if it is a low-stakes or high-stakes writing assignment, the low-stakes I am okay with the colloquial statements and I am okay with... I am not correcting for grammar; I am looking for content.” This in mind, at the end of her interview, Karen did clarify the different connotations she associates with the concept “language variety.” She conveyed that “When you say language variety, I think of different things. I think of dialect like your native language and the dialect you are familiar with, but I also think of the variety of sentence structure, different styles...” I found this intentional differentiation interesting because although “dialect” and “sentence structures” can be seen as separate concepts, the idea of “dialect” and “different styles” are not typically thought of as “different things” but rather are viewed as strands that are related and connected- “the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style” (*CCCC Students’ Rights*).

Even though many of the participants stressed that they tend not to focus on grammar when grading in low-stakes writing contexts, most of them communicated that they

do evaluate grammar and mechanics when assessing the more “formal writing assignments.” In considering the topic of assessment, many of the participants mentioned their use of rubrics when grading writing assignments. Four out of the six instructors stated that they use rubrics when assessing formal writing assignments. Will broke down the different criteria contained in his rubrics- “introduction..., depths of the analysis, evidence, conclusions, organization, clarity and mechanics....and mechanics is where it gets into sentence structure, word choice, etc.” When I asked Stacy if language usage was discussed in assignment descriptions, she conveyed, “I have rubrics with grammar and language usage listed on them at the graduate level.” For some of the participants who use rubrics for grading, “language usage” delineated in descriptions of grading criteria seemed only to extend to references of grammar and clarity. This reality reiterates the potential problematic nature of rubrics, as argued by Balester, in being a tool for assessment and the ways they enforce standardization by focusing on deviance from “the standard,” a detriment particularly for writers who employ multiple language varieties.

Although touched on earlier, one of the participant’s responses to the question on discipline orientation was considerably cognizant of audience and situation. Being a Journalism instructor, Kevin’s understanding and approach to language variety always seemed to be framed within the context of audience and genre rather than grammar or clarity. Regarding the question on discipline orientation, Kevin responded by saying,

what I am trying to do is... you’re a voice for people you’re interested in being a voice for. [In] thinking about audience, your language or vernacular or whatever you want to use should connect with the audience. Some of our students write for a newsletter for ... thinking about audience in that way and representing their views.

He concluded his response by saying “We want to see voice, personality, authenticity. Within reason.” I found this to be a more mindful response in thinking about

language variety as Kevin essentially implied that students ought to make purposeful language choices that rely on an awareness of audience. This focus on audience Kevin articulated connects to Canagarajah's scholarship on translanguaging in which he discusses "the importance of students' realization and awareness of translanguaging as a rhetorical choice dependent on the communicative situation at hand" (404).

Overall Language Variety Approaches and Opinions

A prominent theme across interviews was participants disclosure of the fact that they rarely mention or discuss language variety in their courses and assignment descriptions. When asking Steve whether or not he talks about language variety in assignment descriptions, he replied with, "Not much, and I would say that my ideas about that are evolving a little bit here in my second life as a teacher." In response to the same question, Kevin relayed that, "I don't know [if] I have specific language in my syllabus or in my prompts that address this [language usage]. I don't over focus because I personally don't think too much about it." Likewise, in framing her response on the kinds of terminology she uses or would use to talk about language variety, Rachel revealed, "I haven't really talked about ever, I am only a year in, it hasn't really come up."

In overall responses to language variety and opinions surrounding language practices like code-meshing, Rachel seemed to produce the most responses as she thought through multilingual writing. In answering the question on how she would respond to student work that contains language variety, Rachel stated that:

I would want the student to be aware of the places where dialect has crept it because it is not necessarily a bad thing, like I said this could in some world be a very powerful method to use. I have seen powerful writing by authors that does this in an amazing

way... both with like Spanglish and with like African-American you know dialect kind of thing.

Another point Rachel drew on in response to this question centered around the idea of knowing when to break traditional rules or stray from the language standard. In thinking through code-meshing and language diversity inclusion, Rachel compared it to art instruction:

In art instruction you have to know all the rules, all the formal rules in order to break them in an effective way so as long as students know ‘this [code-meshing] is actually breaking a traditional norm’ then they can use it effectively. But they need to know where they are varying from the standard... and the standard is a classic standard until that is completely gone and it is not.

This assertion of knowing the rules in order to stray from or break them brings to mind some of Young’s arguments in advocating for code-meshing. In response to scholars’ claims who argue how people are able to code-mesh only because they knew the rules before they broke them, and have “paid their dues” Young conveys, “Victor Villanueva, a Puerto Rican scholar of American studies, as well as language and literacy, point to ‘writers of color who have been using the blended form [code-meshing] from the get-go’... As he put it, ‘The blended form is our dues.’ They don’t have to learn the rules to write right first; the blended form or code meshing is written right” (116).

On a different line of thought, Rachel followed by also acknowledging how today, there are many different powerful ways to write. She communicated this comparison of how writing and voice is used and perceived differently today from when she was younger. Rachel discusses that what seems different about education now as compared to when she was younger is that,

There is actually an acknowledgment that there is some real power in these different voices, but just finding the right context to express it and hone it right. I am thinking about some of the amazing African-American writers that I have read over the years;

what was powerful was the voice. If they would have tried to hone it into the standard English, it would have been destroyed.

Rachel uses the term “voice” in discussing the powerful writing of African-American writers, and if connecting to what she was talking about right before this quote, I think it is safe to assume that her usage of the term “voice” denotes or refers to “language variety” or even “code-meshing.” This is the second instance where Rachel refers to intentional language usage as “powerful,” as she earlier talks about how the first writing sample included Spanish, “feels very powerful to me to make her point.”

A couple of the other participants were somewhat optimistic and open to the idea of code-meshing. Returning to the first sample, three of the participants felt that the writing was more powerful because of the inclusion of the student’s home language. The first participant was Rachel, whose optimistic response is revealed above. Concerning the inclusion of Spanish, Will disclosed that he “like[d] the approach” and that “that would be my feedback that I love it, that she included her language and her idiom...” In thinking about code-meshing beyond the writing sample, Kevin discussed other texts where authors code-mesh Spanish and English conveying that with the majority of writing genres, “I feel like there could be opportunities for that [code-meshing], that would make the piece more authentic. Look how easily I can navigate languages between two sentences....” The identified connections between language and power, authenticity, and skillful navigation points to the many scholars like Vershawn Young, Geneva Smitherman, Gloria Anzaldúa, and others who have demonstrated the effectiveness, potency, and ultimately success of code-meshing in their writing. Essentially, reading actual scholars and authors work and seeing the ways they successfully code-mesh helps to show how this language practice is becoming more and more normal in academic and scholarly spaces. Further, when reading

authors who are translanguaging or code-meshing in their work, people can become open to the idea of it, like Rachel, Will and Kevin, and start to develop more positive, open-minded attitudes and approaches to language variety.

Implications

Even though there were a variety of responses to the interview questions surrounding language usage, most of the participants' responses implied an understanding or opinion of students' home languages as an obstacle in being able to effectively write in standard English, opinions that were commonly justified by their disciplines' standards of writing. The surprising reactions from the participants when reading the writing samples that contained Spanish and African-American English indicted an unfamiliarity with language variety in writing revealing a probable reality that in many writing courses here at Chico State, multilingual students are expected to "check their other languages at the door" (Hall 12). This is an implicit expectation seen in many of the writing courses and for most of the instructor participants, these interviews were the first time they had ever really thought through and discussed student language variety.

Four of the participants focused on the grammatical structures and overall clarity of the writing samples, even though most of them later stressed that they tend not to focus on grammar when grading most of their assigned writing. This focus seemed to suggest a conflation of language variety with grammar. In other words, when there were instances of identified language variety, it almost immediately implied that there would be issues with grammar, or that the language variation was a grammatical error. That said, not all of the participants focused solely on grammar issues or conflated language variety with grammar,

but the ones who did would do it almost unconsciously as if language variety and grammar issues was a natural pairing. I was not all that surprised with this assumed pairing as scholarship surrounding language and writing has revealed tendencies to view and approach multilingual and minority speakers as being students who commonly struggle with grammar. This conflation of language variety with grammar issues reveals a need for instructor training not only with the goal to increase understanding of language varieties but to improve approaches and methods of multilingual writing assessment.

The instructors' attention to grammar and clarity also suggested an unfamiliarity with the form and syntax of Spanish and African-American English—due to places where they thought the student's language variety were instances of grammatical mistakes (“I feel like stuff be overwhelming”)—as well as an adherence to a monolingual ideology where standard English is the dialect that assumes clarity and correctness. The fact that only one of the participants even mentioned standard English— or as he put, “standard academic English” — as a widely accepted language standard implies its unquestioned superiority as the only allowed yet unnamed dialect of English in writing classrooms. This finding denotes an “innate sense of language,” which points to one of Davila's implications of the findings in her study where she argues that:

Constructing SEAE [standard edited American English] as unmarked and unnamed creates the perception of this dialect as not only normal (or common and defined by sameness) but also natural. When a language variety is perceived to be natural, it is often also perceived to be so common and accepted, so inevitable that it is no longer recognized as a variety of language and simply becomes an unmarked, unnamed, and unmodified language associated with notions of correctness and functioning in the service of ideas or meaning. (136)

This view of standard English as natural and inevitable seems to be an expected and undisputed view held by most of the writing instructors in the study. The conception of

standard English as “associated with notions of correctness and functioning in the service of ideas or meaning” therefore leaves very little room, if any, for other modes of expression or languages in the classroom reiterating again the notion that students are expected to “check their languages at the door.” Davila suggests that one way of reworking and resisting this widely, unquestioned perception of standard English as natural and normal is by simply labeling it as a dialect. She concludes that, “... we must insist that SEAE be labeled as standard and recognized as a dialect—as opposed to, for instance, simply being English or language. Acknowledging SEAE as a dialect—that is, as language that is cultural and not linguistically neutral—challenges the perception of SEAE as natural and normal...” (143).

It seems that along with an unfamiliarity of overall language variety, instructors associate instances of multilinguals’ “awkward usage in writing” or “issues with syntax” to be unintentional errors, further revealing an unawareness of code-meshing considering that the language practice is not only a blending of vocabulary and diction, but also of syntax and structure. But even as code-meshing is a typically purposeful blending of both form and diction, many instructors lack the ability and educational training to distinguish between when a student is code-meshing and when there are actual instances of error or mistake. This complication brings to mind Canagarajah’s ethnographic study of his student, Buthainah, and her code-meshing process and the dialogical and collaborative pedagogical approach he adopts with her. In discussing the effectiveness of this collaborative pedagogical approach, Canagarajah conveys the improvement of Buthainah’s code-meshing and overall writing:

The... approach I adopted in this course can spur Buthainah on in her chosen trajectory of communicative and intellectual development. My queries on Buthainah’s drafts and the feedback of her peers help question her choices. The strategy helps her to assess the effectiveness of her codemeshing and decide which instances are mistakes and which are choices she will retain. She can develop greater intentionality for items she had used intuitively or spontaneously. She may be able to assess different levels of rhetorical and

communicative effectiveness. More importantly, she may develop a metacognitive awareness of her codemeshing practices. (415)

Through this dialogical approach to code-meshing, Canagarajah was able to better identify actual mistakes or errors and distinguish them from intentional language choices in Buthainah's writing. Of course, this collaborative and emic approach to Buthainah's code-meshing process required multiple one-on-one meetings and ultimately time, which are not typical affordances of most writing courses, if any. That in mind, the continued campus-wide unawareness and misunderstandings of language practices like code-meshing and with that, not knowing how to approach teaching these language practices, reveals the need for some form of professional development, a recommendation I elaborate in the following, final chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE

DIRECTIONS

The findings of this study reveal a need for an expansion of disciplinary knowledge across campus on conversations surrounding student language diversity. However, this expansion should not solely involve raising awareness on language diversity discourses but also include professional development for writing instructors on campus. Instructors ought to be aware of and prepared for teaching the increasingly diverse student populations that enroll in their courses and recognize the linguistic variations students bring to their writing. Because students must take four writing courses in order to graduate, the campus should consider,

Offer[ing] faculty development in [writing that contains language variety] that should include information about [multilingual] writing development, information about [multilingual] populations [here] at the institution, approaches for designing writing assignments that are culturally inclusive, and approaches for assessing writing that are ethical in relation to [multilingual] writing. (Matsuda et al. 14)

In relation to the second point of these different components for faculty development, that calls for “information about [multilingual] populations [here] at the institution,” the university should avoid generalizations of teaching multilingual writing and situate instructor training to understand and meet the local needs of local students. Considering and situating course design in relation to our local student populations is an institutional and programmatic approach Mya Poe proposes in her research on race and writing. She concludes that “by reframing race as one situated within the specific contexts in

which we teach writing, we can move to specific strategies for teaching writing across the curriculum that is attuned to the identities of the students at our institutions” (Poe 95).

Regarding professional development, I argue that what is needed to benefit and support instructors’ approaches to student language variety and transform writing pedagogies are opportunities like instructor workshops or educator training programs. This notion of educating instructors and providing them with tools or models to better approach and assess student language variety is not new and echoes the implications of many scholars’ research studies. For example, in Amy Vetter’s case study that examined how a high school teacher leveraged AAL (African American Language) in her classroom to utilize her students’ languages “as a tool to influence, shape, and persuade membership in the classroom,” she concluded that what is required in order to educate teachers on language variety are “teacher education programs with coursework on the history of nonstandard languages and with internships in which preservice teachers work with mentors who are knowledgeable about how to leverage nonstandard English in a literacy classroom” (201). Vetter also builds off of Godley et al’s. (2006) ideas for professional development on language and dialectal diversity in conveying three recommended areas of focus- “anticipating and overcoming resistance to dialect diversity; addressing issues of language, identity, and power; and emphasizing practical, pedagogical applications of research on language variation” (201-02). Vetter’s primary goal with these workshops was to help educators become aware of “the value of various dialects [and languages]” and how to leverage them as an asset in the classroom, which would be a useful resource and classroom approach for instructors across institutions.

As mentioned earlier, this suggested professional development ought to include practical teaching strategies and approaches on how to evaluate and assess student language

variety in writing assignments. Considering Inoue's arguments on how writing assessment is more important than pedagogy as it "trumps what you say or what you attempt to do with your students," then perhaps this is the exact place to start with faculty training across campus- educating writing instructors on what constitutes fair, sustainable, and ultimately antiracist writing assessment for students.

Of course, with all these ideas on what should compose faculty development programs like training on writing assessment approaches and pedagogical applications, we cannot ignore the reality that many writing instructors across campus have been teaching writing for many years in their respective disciplines, and may not be open to the idea of participating in training programs or workshops where they are being asked to reform their set approaches to teaching and assessing writing. This reality could be solved by embedding required training programs or workshops for newly hired faculty that educates instructors across disciplines—whether teaching writing intensive courses yet or not—on language ideologies and approaches in order to make visible the implicit language biases and misconceptions of language variety during the early stages of instructors' professional careers. The program or workshops would also include instructor training surrounding approaches to course design, assessment, and the teaching of code-meshing pedagogies and overall writing instruction for multilingual students.

Although there has been an ample amount of scholarship that explores teaching models and various pedagogical approaches to the writing instruction of multilingual students, much of this scholarship is situated in contexts of second-language writing classrooms or general language arts courses within English departments. And even with all this surrounding scholarship on productive and practical teaching approaches for increasing

diverse student populations, many of the writing instructors in our English department are either unaware of these approaches or struggle with implementing them in their courses. Echoing Hall's realizations, we are still in the very early stages of transforming course design, assessment, and pedagogy in our own writing courses within the English department, let alone at the programmatic level and across disciplines on campus.

Overall, this study demonstrated the need for programmatic and institutional commitment to initiate more long-term and early-on faculty development. Of course, educators and program leaders are almost always limited with the constraints of time and money when it comes to instigating lasting and effective faculty development. The lack of funding and time has been a prevailing topic of concern for administrators and program leaders, and very real impediments when even considering the need for developing and initiating faculty training for multilingual writing instruction.

Even with these constraints that would limit ideal forms of faculty development like long-term educational and training programs, there still exists an obligation to inform and educate instructors who are unaware of student language varieties and the scholarship that addresses language diversity discourses. Conversations need to be held with administrators, program leaders, and writing instructors on the language ideologies that still circulate within the university, which hopefully leads to some form of partnering up in order to discuss creative ways to both educate and provide resources for writing instructors working with multilingual students. Ideally, these conversations will galvanize and extend beyond the academy to our neighboring communities challenging societal perceptions and ideologies that surround certain stigmatized languages. But the responsibility of initiating these conversations falls on those who are aware of the research, discourses, and debates

around language diversity and are invested in creating accessible and inclusive academic spaces. This is a responsibility that seems to be held only by those within the English profession—as we are the ones who are particularly involved in these discourses—but hopefully becomes a responsibility held by all instructors within the university. By considering ways in which we as educators can shift our social responsibility and involvement with language variation within the university, and doing the same for the communities around us by actively attempting to promote language ideologies of inclusiveness and equality, we will not only “bridge the university and community,” but also help in adopting a pedagogy that caters to all languages and all voices, whether deemed mainstream or marginalized.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions:

Background: what led you to teach a writing intensive course at Chico State? How long have been teaching this course?

1. (Institutional context) How long have you been teaching writing?
2. How do you self-identify in terms of race?
3. How do you self-identify in terms of gender?
4. What is your age?

Responding to student writing samples that contain language variety:

1. What initial impressions do you have of these students' writing?
2. What kinds of feedback would you offer the students who wrote these essays? How would you talk to the students about the things you marked?
3. How does the genre of the writing samples affect your response?

Language related questions:

1. Overall, how do you respond to student work that contains different dialects or language varieties?
2. How do you generally evaluate student work that contains different dialects or language varieties?
3. What is your understanding of language variety within your course? How frequently do you come across it in your course?
4. How is language usage discussed in assignment descriptions of the course?
5. What kinds of terminology do you use for talking about language variety in your course?

Reflection:

1. Tell me about your discipline. How does your discipline orient the way you think about and respond to language?
2. Tell me about writing that you would assign? How do you talk about language within your assignments?

APPENDIX B

Writing Sample #1

Our Immigration Story

“The nation's immigrant population (legal and illegal) hit a record 43.7 million in July 2016.” I live in a community where the majority are either residents, U.S. citizens, or undocumented. In my entire life I have met so many great people who came here for a better life and have worked hard for it. I was interested in researching about this because this has been basically my life. My parents came here when my older two sisters were teenagers and how hard was that? It was the hardest decision ever. Sabes porque? Well first let me start by telling you that they left their familia, amigos, su cultura, basically they sacrificed their life to be here. Like many of you may know, the U.S no es un lugar muy, “mi casa es tu casa.” You will walk into this country afraid that they will not accept you because you are not white enough. Trying to learn their “lenguaje” is not easy. People make fun you, all the time. The way you pronounce a word or sentence and to be more specific with a “thick ass accent.” Also the comments that will never stop, “you do not belong here, go back to your country.” My family and so many other people have gone through all this porque solo quieren una vida mejor for themselves and their children. Yes, I was born here in the U.S. and I do have an accent you know why? I never stopped speaking spanish, I would speak it everyday, every minute, every second, every day of my 19 years of living here in the U.S. porque es mi primer lenguaje and it is the closest thing I have here that reminds me of who I am. Una Latina orgullosa that even when times get tough nosotros siempre para adelante, echandole ganas todos los dias. I believe that in order to stay strong here in the U.S. we have to embrace who we really are by telling our stories, como fue que llegamos aqui because our stories here matter regardless if we are undocumented or immigrants.

I found information about digital platforms that helps people share stories, ted talks, and even youtube videos. I watched this video on youtube about this mother who was aggressively pulled away in front of her daughters by ICE agents. I read comments and they were just the worse. I read comments that said, “Hmm. All I saw was a criminal being arrested and possible resisting.” Another said, “17 year old crying for Mommy Mommy broke the law she has to go back to her country of origin.” And all this goes back with immigrants are not criminals, they came here for a better life. How is that committing a crime? Yes, coming here illegally is committing a crime but if it wasn’t for the 43.7 million immigrants living here in the U.S. I don’t think this country would be standing right now. I believe that they have done so much for this country and for them to be treated like es injusto. Porque la gente le tiene que ser la vida imposible a ellos? Why can’t they just live here without watching their backs every time they go out? They are not hurting anyone in fact they are helping by working the hard labor jobs that many white people would never work for. It’s just sad that since the Trump Administration deportation statistics have increased so much.

I looked into the digital platform, Define American which helps immigrants share stories about their experiences here in America. One in particular caught my attention. The story that I saw was how people started using the hashtag, #ImAlreadyHome in order to share their own immigration story. I found one that really stood out to me the most. “My parents left their careers, families, native tongues for labor in the US. THEY'VE BEEN making America great #yourewelcome #ImAlreadyHome.” (Alma) This is so powerful because it is true, many people who came here sacrificed everything in order to have a life here. America es su hogar and they want nothing but to live here. Sharing a story by using hashtags is

amazing because it leaves a message that can change someone's life into the better or makes them feel like they're not alone. Our stories that we tell are so powerful because when we are the one telling it, we have control over them and the message that we are sending. I believe every story out there has so much meaning because every story has something unique that makes it, *your story*. Letting the world know about who we are and what we have done to be here is very important. What amazes me is that there are so many digital platforms that allows you to share stories with whoever you want. All kinds of stories matter. Talking about all stories matter I saw this video about a story of a young high school student, Karen Rodriguez, who is a daughter of an immigrant father. She talked about how it's unfair that he is being sent back when all he has done in this country is work hard to provide for his children. She also said, "people that are here working hard trying to establish something for their family and have a clean criminal record, I don't understand why they have to leave." (Rodriguez) I agree so much with what she said. Like I mentioned earlier not every immigrant out there is a criminal, yes there are immigrants who have committed crimes but we can't say ALL immigrants are criminals because that is not true. That is what they need more than ever. To be honest this video has inspired me to keep getting more into immigration. It is really sad how hard working people who just want a better life for themselves and for their children are being punished like this. I get that they came here illegally and that many people will argue that it is a crime but why bother sending them back when they are already here. They just want a better life like everyone else. Is that a crime?

A Ted Talk that I found interesting, "Immigrant Voices Make democracy stronger" by Sayu Bhojwani which talked about how every immigrant's voice matters because having diversity among our country's leaders is what our country needs in order to make a

democracy stronger. She was an immigrant who became a U.S. citizen by working hard. I agree with what she said about the American door. She said, “the door of America would open wide if you had the right name, the right skin color, the right networks, but could just slam in your face if you had the wrong religion, the wrong immigration status, the wrong skin color.” (Bhojwani) This is something that immigrants face in a daily basis and it’s heartbreaking. We are not seen for who we are but for what we are.

It is amazing how easy it is to share your story to the world. I have learned that immigrants are so much more than just immigrants when they speak out because every story that they tell has a powerful message. They came here to work hard and that is what they are doing so why complicate their lives? It is sad how many immigrants’ lives have been destroyed and even families have been destroyed because of deportation. Digital Platforms like the ones I have mentioned have helped individuals to express themselves and let others know that they are worth so much more than just who they are seen as. Our voice matters.

APPENDIX C

Writing Sample #2

Blog #5

What challenged me this week was getting all my work done on summer break because I just wanted to just have a break all to myself and not worry about no work at all just wanted to chill because I feel like stuff be like overwhelming sometimes so I was trying not think about no work but I really have work to do so yeah just turning in my work on time. I feel like I did a better time at managing my time doing midterm week because that's the week that it can get to people and make them feel some type of stress or irritated and I pass all my classes with a good grades. Most of all I am just happy that I am doing better. One new thing I learned this week is how to do citations and class and the website to go to because at first my sources did not make a lot of since or was wrong so my English teacher direct me to easybib and that helped me alot. I am feeling better than ever also a stronger men more confident and a lot of the work that I do in my classes I still can use a little more help and my classes but most of all I been doing a good overall. I been getting tutoring taking advantage of it and getting help. Another thing I did this break that we had was just talk to some of my far distant relatives because I do not talk to them alot and they be trying to get an contact with me so I try my best to talk them as long as I can talk to them. But what I need to start back working out again I been lazy alot lately.