In/variability in Research Methods/Methodologies of Trans/national Compositionists

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Abstract

This essay is an investigation into the research methods and methodologies of a community of scholars who theorize, study and publish about the global/transnational forces as they inform or are informed by the discipline of rhetoric and composition. The study finds that despite differences in the positionality of two groups of scholars—“scholars in the US” (Canagarajah, Matsuda, Pandey), and “scholars from the US” (Horner and Trimbur, Hesford and Schell, Schaub, and Himley), their research methods and methodologies do not show considerable variations; instead, overlaps and reciprocities in agendas, and research approaches characterize their scholarship. The essay then discusses the potential factors triggering these unanticipated results, such as publication protocols of Western publication outlets, or the scholars’ stylistic accommodations to the expectations of Western readers.

Keywords: Research location, multiliteracies, transnationalize, gatekeeping practice, hybrid styles, double vision

This paper investigates the research methods and methodologies of a community of scholars who theorize, study and publish about the global/transnational forces as they inform or are informed by the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Following the economic, cultural and political waves of globalization hitting the entire world, many scholars/researchers in rhetoric and composition have been inquiring about and publishing scholarship in global/transnational, cross-cultural and cross-linguistic crosscurrents increasingly informing the discipline. Most of these scholars hold the assumption that the discipline of rhetoric and composition has been US-centric, essentially nationalistic in its curricula, pedagogical approaches, and, most importantly, in the medium of instruction since its inception. They are almost unanimous in their

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assertion that the discipline has fallen behind in recognizing and responding to a number of shifts, developments, and changes brought about by the forces of globalization, for instance, manifested concretely in its increasingly globalized classroom with a diverse student body.

Some of these scholars argue that existing composition classrooms and curricula are imagined around monolingual Standard English as the medium of instruction and white American students as the norm, while, in reality, the student body now is increasingly multilingual and the classroom is a globalized space consisting of plural nationalities, languages, races and cultures. They therefore deem changes in teaching approaches, curricula and medium of instruction imperative to adequately address the changed landscape of composition on time. Theoretically, they argue that this diverse body of students brings multiple writing styles and literacy traditions to the classroom, and that this multiplicity gets reflected in their different understanding of concepts like plagiarism, as well as in the organization and tone they use in their formal and informal compositions.

Cumulatively, this group of scholars calls for administrative, academic, structural and pedagogical changes and adjustments to address, incorporate or at least acknowledge the changed composition scenario in the interest of much needed transitions: from Edited Academic English to World Englishes; from English Only to multilingual/translingual composition pedagogies; from a nationalistic framework to a global/transnational framework of composition; from writing as a tool of expression to writing as a tool of resistance (in oppressive composition classrooms–especially for students from minority groups–as well as against forces of oppressive globalization); and from singular literacy based on print to multiple literacies as the means and ends of the composition curriculum. In a nutshell, these scholars advocate for implementation of inclusive composition pedagogy, the pluralization of academic writing, and treatment of transnational or cross-cultural differences as resources for and in the composition classroom.

These calls are made by scholars from different locations and with different academic and literacy backgrounds. Given the scope of this paper, it is not possible to include and discuss the calls and claims of every researcher/scholar in the field. I, therefore, focus on what, when, where and how the following two groups of scholars make calls to transnationalize, globalize or pluralize the composition classroom:

Group 1:

• Suresh Canagarajah, who approaches this issue in his textbook *Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, and in his journal articles such as “The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued” from *College Composition and Communication*, and “Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling between Languages: Learning from Multilingual Writers” from *College English*
• Iswari Pandey, who more directly addresses this issue in his chapter in *Digital Writing Research*: “Researching (With) the Postnational “Other,” and *Computer and Composition* article, “Digital Narrative Across Digital Divide”

• Paul K. Matsuda, who wrote about the subject in his *College English* article, “The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition.”

The first group of scholars/researchers—Canagarajah, Pandey, and Matsuda—are diasporic scholars, and thus are transnational scholars/researchers by origin. Currently professors in the US institutions, they are immigrant scholars: Canagarajah hails from Sri Lanka, Pandey from Nepal, and Matsuda from Japan. They therefore possess what Homi K. Bhabha calls “double vision,” and can easily shuttle between multiple languages and writing styles as multilingual writers. Their research location, therefore, is unique: they are both the insiders and outsiders of the US-centric discipline of composition. I would call them “composition researchers in the US.”

Group 2:
• Bruce Horner and John Trimbur, who take up the issue of “Standard” English as the medium of instruction in their *College Composition and Communication* article, “English Only and U.S. College Composition”;

• Margaret Himley, who recounts an attempt to re-imagine college composition curriculum in her *WPA* article, “Writing Programs and Pedagogies in a Globalized Landscape”;

• Mark Schaub, who lays out ways to internationalize composition classroom in his *Pedagogy* article, “Beyond These Shores: An Argument for Internationalizing Composition”;

• Wendy S. Hesford and Eileen E. Schell, who dwell on transnationality as it relates to the discipline of rhetoric and composition in their *College English* article, “Introduction: Configurations of Transnationality: Locating Feminist Rhetorics.”

The second group includes scholars who are nationals of the US but are researching the transnational, global, and cross-cultural forces in composition. They all are native English speakers but share interests in responding to the global in their classrooms or in their institutions. So, the second group of scholars/researchers has a different research location. They are insiders to the US-centric discipline of composition but realize the need to expand its boundary and make the discipline more inclusive in terms of plurality, multiplicity and diversity. The researchers in this group are transnational by their research interests. I would call them “composition researchers from the US.”

My study is guided by these research questions:

a. What are the issues/agendas raised by these researchers/scholars?

b. What are the research methods/methodologies deployed?
c. Is there any correlation between researchers’ locations and issues raised or research methods and methodologies adopted?

To explore these questions, I want to begin with the first group of scholars: Canagarajah, Pandey, and Matsuda. Canagarajah, now a canonical figure in ESL/World Englishes scholarship, rhetoric and composition, and socio-linguistics in the US, starts his scholarly journey from the University of Jafna, Sri Lanka. His journey to his current standing is fraught with ordeals. As a scholar from the East, he has had to make compromises by constantly negotiating and adapting his writing style and expression to fit Western publication parameters to get published and recognized by/in the West. A *Geopolitics of Academic Writing* in many ways is an account of the epiphany he had during his rigorous scholarly process of getting published in and legitimized by the West.

In *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*, Canagarajah (2002) critiques the Western academic journals’ insularity to Western scholars, knowledge and/or scholarship. According to him, the non-Western scholars are usually rejected by Western journals for their deviant discourse conventions, awkward constructions or personal styles. Canagarajah calls this Western gesture towards non-Western scholarship a “gatekeeping practice” and connects it with larger issues like the West’s hegemony over and domination of the East in knowledge construction, production and distribution, as well as long-standing economic, social, cultural and/or political inequalities between the “center” (West) and “periphery” (East). His critique of Western publishing conventions, gatekeeping practices and tendency to marginalize the “periphery” scholars and their knowledge/scholarship is grounded on his own experience as a Third-world scholar struggling to get published and recognized by the “center.” He meticulously recounts how he managed to negotiate differing discourse conventions between his own (periphery’s) and the West’s (center’s), and to get access into Western media and thus published in/by the “center.” In the text, he encourages his fellow scholars from the “periphery” to implement similar coping strategies to get access to knowledge making processes in the “center,” partly because of his conviction that “it is a necessary evil that periphery scholars should use center publications even to resist their domination” (*Geopolitics*, p. 12).

In the era of globalization, Canagarajah views the academic journals (primarily at the “center”) as “contact zones” where different discourse conventions from both “center” and “periphery” encounter and grapple with one another. But he is dismayed to find that unlike in other “contact zones,” grappling in the academic “contact zones” is far from fair, as the publishers in the center have systems in place that are antagonistic to periphery differences. He tracks economic, political and other vested interests behind the center’s imposition of arbitrary publishing requirements such as excluding, disciplining, appropriating or exploiting periphery scholarship. He terms all these
practices the instances of the center’s academic imperialism or domination, and deems some kinds of actions or interactions between scholars in the center and periphery, at the least, urgent in order to take stock of the existing discrimination. Such an interaction could be mutually beneficial, argues Canagarajah, as periphery scholars can benefit largely from critical engagement with center knowledge, and the center too can be inclusive of global knowledge with insights or critiques from the periphery.

In a nutshell, as Canagarajah himself puts it:

academic writing holds a central place in the process of constructing, disseminating, and legitimating knowledge; however, for discursive and material reasons, Third World scholars experience exclusion from academic publishing and communication; therefore the knowledge of Third World communities is marginalized or appropriated by the West, while knowledge of Western communities is legitimated and reproduced; and as part of this process, academic writing/publishing plays a role in the material and ideological hegemony of the West. (p. 6)

Clearly, Canagarajah is talking about stylistic differences or differing discourse conventions in the global periphery and the center. Since the global center adheres to detached, neutral/impersonal and linear style, as opposed to the periphery’s more personal, circular, and narrative style, Canagarajah deems a kind of negotiation imperative on the part of periphery scholars to be accepted in the center. Such a negotiation would result in what he calls “hybrid textuality,” which is his own composing style: “The periodic narrative sections, the self-reflective commentary, and the unabashed personal voice are interspersed with documented detached analysis to achieve a hybrid textuality in this book” (Geopolitics, p. 30). So, he is “indirectly demonstrating to periphery scholars ways they can negotiate the dominant conventions in their favor” (p. 31).

Since the whole text is about the geopolitics of academic writing, it implicitly is also talking about disparities in the research methods/methodologies across spaces. Stylistic and methodological variations are real, as they are shaped by the conventions of knowledge creation and generation, which, to a great extent, are specific to cultures and spaces. Canagarajah’s research methods/methodologies in Geopolitics are also hybrid as a result of his deliberate mix of periphery and center research conventions partly because he possesses what Homi K. Bhabha terms a “double vision,” as he claims: “my membership in the academic communities of the center and the periphery has oriented [me] to the differences in literacy practices of both circles and provided a peculiar ‘double vision’ that informs the discussion in this book” (p.11). As declared, the hybridity is apparent throughout his text. Speaking from his methodological viewpoint, he begins his book with the problem statement: “The appropriation of Third World knowledge by Western academic institutions...Western hegemony of knowledge” (p. 5-6). He then outlines his project and states his focus in the text: “I focus in this book on a
type of academic writing called the research article (RA) (p. 32).” He then declares his framework:

while I use information from many disciplines to suggest the general relevance of my argument, I will conduct a close analysis of the journals in the family of fields I know best. These are the fields generally related to applied linguistic science, such as ELT, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and written communication. (p. 47-8)

Since his targeted audiences are both from “center” and “periphery,” Canagarajah, “in order to show the relevance of…[his] argument [also] for all academic communities in the periphery,” explores “in-depth information on the publishing practices of Asian, African, and Latin American scholars” (p. 48). He draws a lot of information about these scholars from published literature, while also trying to ground his studies in his native community, Sri Lanka. Trying to strike a balance, he looks at both the vernacular interaction of his place and “bilingual modes to examine how scholars there shape their English literature” (p. 48). His primary method, in his own words, is:

a close analysis of texts and events in the practice of periphery knowledge construction with ethnographic sensitivity to the perspectives of local communities. As a sociolinguist, my interest is in a fine-grained analysis of language and discourse as they structure academic communication and interaction…. [I] also explore the macrosocial instantiations of geopolitical inequalities in concrete academic settings in order to complement the macrosocial critiques of center/ periphery relations. (p. 49)

Canagarajah thus uses a number of research methods/methodologies in this text: ethnographic study of periphery writers at work, library research of discourse and rhetorical analysis of the journal articles published in the “center” and “periphery,” and contrastive rhetoric while comparing academic writings in the East and the West. In that sense, his research process is hybrid: a mix of Western and Eastern research methodologies. He is at times anecdotal, very personal and emotional, while other times very analytic and critical. To be precise, his text is an epitome of the composition scholarship he is advocating for in the academy in the West and a model for non-Western scholars/researchers aspiring to be published in the West.

Canagarajah’s advocacy for and discussion of plural academic writings/conventions across spaces and cultures in Geopolitics persists in his CCC (2006) article, “The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued,” too, where he formally makes a call for pluralizing academic writing and medium of instruction in the discipline of rhetoric and composition. While doing so, he critiques the monolingualist assumptions in composition classrooms and identifies textual and pedagogical spaces for English varieties, i.e. World Englishes in academic writing. He treats the US composition classroom as a meeting point of World Englishes and presents “code-meshing” as a strategy for merging local varieties with Standard Written
English in a move toward gradually pluralizing academic writing and developing multilingual competence for transnational relationships (p. 589).

Unlike his book, this article is essayistic in form and based mostly on textual criticism. He invokes the scholars of his own discourse community and reviews their arguments as a way to build up his own argument. His cited authors include: Bruce Horner and John Trimbur, Canagarajah (himself), Alastair Pennycook, David Crystal, Min-Zhan Lu, Peter Elbow and Geneva Smitherman. In addition, he cites some secondary data on native English speakers, English as Second Language speakers and English as Foreign Language speakers. He also refers to an ethnographic study of a Chinese American student conducted by Eva Lam about the student’s frustration over negative identities given to him for his “broken English.” Canagarajah’s essay is, therefore, a good example of an act of theorizing substantiated by instantiations of its concrete manifestations in different settings, including the classroom.

Canagarajah (2006) continues his advocacy for plurality of style, form and medium in the composition classroom also in another essay, “Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling between Languages: Learning from Multilingual Writers” published in *College English* the same year, which is a testimony of his genuine attempt at larger structural or conceptual shifts in rhetoric and composition. His focus in this essay is on the multilingual student body in the US composition classroom and the variety of writing styles this body brings to the classroom. His major claim is that, as a multilingual classroom/student body is the norm in the US classroom, not a deviance, so is their multilingualism a resource for the composition classroom and not a deficit. He, therefore, appeals to writing teachers not to treat these students’ “textual difference[s] as an unconscious error” (p. 591), rather to consider any of their stylistic variation/s as a “strategic and creative choice…[deliberately made] to attain his or her rhetorical objectives” (p. 591). Canagarajah believes that composition teachers have a lot to learn from the multilingual writers, particularly from their ability to shuttle between languages and use multiple writing forms/styles depending on rhetorical situation/context and/or audience. For him, this strategy is what is required of all writers in the globalized world.

Canagarajah invokes the scholars associated with “broader movements in psycholinguistics and second language acquisitions… [who] realize that a bilingual person’s competence is not simply the sum of two discrete monolingual competences added together; instead bilingual competence integrates knowledge of two languages and is thus qualitatively different from monolingual competence” (“Shuttling…”, p. 591). In order to verify this claim, Canagarajah observes a multilingual writer (a senior Srilankan professor, K. Sivatamby) writing in the same genre (Research Article) in two different languages (Tamil, L1 and English, L2) in three different rhetorical contexts: a research article in L1 for local publication, in L2 for local publication and in L2 for foreign publication (“Shuttling…”, p. 591). He compares and contrasts primarily the introduction and conclusion sections of those articles for their linguistic, stylistic and rhetorical
differences and similarities. Most of the time, Canagarajah performs discourse analysis of those articles focusing particularly on the rhetorical moves Sivatamby makes across papers. He does not cite much of the scholarship/literature because his area is new and there is not much scholarship, as such, to draw from. The reason may also be the fact that he himself is the authority in the field. He is the one consistently pursuing his scholarship with the aim of pluralizing academic writing.

Pandey, an up-and-coming cross-cultural literacy scholar, and Canagarajah share a lot of commonalities. Both are immigrant scholars in the US institutions. Both take globalization, transnationalism, cultural ecology, materiality and multilingualism as their analytic frameworks and claim a “double vision.” Pandey’s (2007) chapter, “Researching (With) the Postnational “Other”” in Digital Writing Research, reflects his interest and investment in transnationalism, globalization, as well as literacy issues, and concern with research ethics and methodologies. As a self-reflexive ethnographer, Pandey explores “the limits and possibilities of researching digital literacy practices through the lens of a postnational perspective” (p.107). Building on the theoretical framework of postnationality and postnational literacy practices occasioned by the transnational movement of people, capital and cultures, he further explores and illustrates the complexities—excitement and challenges—involved in researching with postnational subjects and their digital literacy practices.

Pandey defines the postnational subject as someone whose “nationalities are present in passports, languages, and so on, but those signs also converge, conflict, and evolve into new signs as newer markers in terms of location, ethnicity, citizenship, screen names, and the like replace older ones from previous locations” (“Researching (With) Postnational ‘Other,’” p. 109). He reports the findings of his ethnographic study of the digital literacy narratives of two postnational subjects.

As does he in his own digital literacy narrative elsewhere, he tracks ideological underpinnings in digital literacy practices of postnational subjects. He also speaks about “sites where different forms of oppression are reproduced: sexism, racism, colonialism, and homophobia” (Cynthia Selfe and Richard Selfe as cited in Pandey p.113). He finds digital space/s highly contested, as they are fraught with competing set of ideologies vying for manipulation and exploitation of postnational subjects.

Though Pandey’s major aim here is to explore gamers’ literacy development in a cultural context, his self-reflexivity towards the end is very revealing and insightful. Spotlighting his research experience with the postnational subjects, the moments of conflicts of interests between him and his research participants, despite their supposed common ground and his misreading of hybridized cultural and linguistic signs produced in them by the postnational condition/s, he confesses that researching postnational participants in digital environments is fraught with risks and challenges. Such stakes and challenges lie, among others, in attracting research participants, understanding and interpreting their responses and representing them in the final research report. He gains
a lot of insights from this research experience, such as the need for creating reciprocal and collaborative research relationships between the researcher and his/her research participants; being more aware of the possibility of conflicts of interests and objectives between and among them, despite the shared identity; defining explicitly one’s location as a researcher and understanding the participant-researchers’ relationship based on a clear understanding and interrogation of location, all of which, he deems, are instrumental to “ethical inquiry in digital writing research” (p. 124). Similarly, he realizes that the issues of inequity, positionality or cultural/national situatedness of the researcher and research participants are equally important to understanding the postnational “Other” better. Thus, for Pandey, constant interrogation and understanding of the location/positionality of the researcher is the most prominent ethical issue while researching the postnational “Other.”

Though Pandey’s chapter is on the ethical issues involved with his research methodology, he employs some distinct research methods to collect information necessary to produce this chapter. About his methodology, Pandey himself says: “I first explore postnationality to situate a study I conducted and use the study to explore and illustrate some of the complexities involved with digital writing research and postnatal subjects” (“Researching (With) Postnational ‘Other,’” p. 107). Clearly, his methodology consists of postnationality as the analytic framework, which he uses to reflect on an ethnographic study he conducted a few years ago, and, towards the end, he proposes ethics for conducting research with postnational participants.

Another methodological component in this chapter is that he begins and ends his essay with Gayatri Spivak’s statements on the postnational/postcolonial “Other.” In addition, in the first section he cites ethnographers and qualitative researchers like Ellen Cushman, Gesa Kirsch, and Peter Mortensen while discussing their research methods and responsibilities, but while discussing postnational subject/condition, he resorts to a completely different community of scholars: postcolonial/subaltern scholars like Partha Chatterjee, Homi K. Bhabha, and Arjun Appadurai. From them, he draws insights about hybridity, double vision and cultural disjuncture. Similarly, while talking about the potentiality of researcher-participants’ interest conflicts, he refers to Katrina Powell and Pamela Takayoshi. Finally, he projects himself as an ethical researcher by presenting self-reflection: “understanding the participant-researcher relationship based on a clear understanding and interrogation of location is necessary to ethical inquiry in digital writing research” (“Researching (With) Postnational ‘Other,’”” p. 124).

Pandey’s chapter does not relate directly to the composition classroom, but because research is a crucial component of composition and also because students in today’s globalized composition classroom are postnational citizens with complexities like Pandey’s research participants, his self-reflection and realization could be revealing to many composition teachers and researchers.
Pandey’s (2006) essay, “Literate Lives Across the Digital Divide,” though has some classroom references. Like in his book chapter, the issues of transnationalism, globalization, and literacy practices surface in this literacy narrative, too. In this piece, he primarily describes “the contexts and consequences of print and digital literacies in a globalizing world” (Pandey, p. 246). Combining personal and contextual details, he demonstrates how cultural, linguistic, and political milieus shape and are shaped by literate practices in the digital environment, and also complicates the issue of digital access supposedly conditioned by wealth and social status and such by bringing in the questions of state polity and the larger politics of a society.

Narrating his transition from print literacy to digital occasioned by his transnational move to the US from Nepal, Pandey shows how the politics of a place and computer use “undercut the prevailing myths about computer and the Internet as neutral and world-wide medium” (p. 253). He does not see an electronic medium like the Internet as neutral, but rather as imbricated in many layers of socio-cultural, economic, and similar aspects of local and global politics, thereby making digital literacy a product of one’s “cultural ecology.” In the same vein, he problematizes the general assumption that there exists a causal relationship between illiteracy and poverty by citing the possibility of an individual agency of overcoming context-specific limitations, such as poverty. While he challenges such generalizations, he, at the same time, also cautions how generalizations based on individual cases may run the risk of being hasty. An attempt to deconstruct the grand narratives about the digital divide is also apparent in the essay, as he claims, “the simultaneity of multiple layers of contexts in any individual literacy act renders problematic the grand narratives about the digital divide” (p. 253-4). His critique of the digital divide is about the wholesale division of the world into two blocks, between those who have access to digital literacy and those who do not. Such a division, he believes, overlooks the political economy responsible for this divide and offers “no room for the complexities involved in crossing the border and the ways one shapes the other, virtually spreading one’s life (like mine) across the divide” (p. 254).

The essay concludes with the note that digital literacy, as traditional literacy, is deeply connected with a host of other economic forces and multiple contexts of culture, politics, and location and, therefore, understanding those forces and contexts is crucial to understanding and appreciating individual literacy practices of students and writers.

His major research method is writing a literacy narrative, which is to say that he is relying heavily on his memory and experience for information about his past literacy practices. In addition to memory and experience, he has also consulted the UNESCO and Nepal Population Report for demographic statistics and literacy rates in different time periods in the past. For information about the history of the computer in Nepal, he resorts to Binod Bhattarai, whose text contains information about who first brought/introduced computers to Nepal and when. For digital literacy data, however, he turns to the United Nation’s website. While talking about numbers of PC and internet
users in 2000, he brings in Sanjaya Dhakal and looks at Deborah Brandt, Gail Hawisher, and Cynthia Selfe while talking about ideologies and cultural ecologies responsible for digital literacy. Through a literacy narrative and textual criticism, he makes his final argument that “like traditional literacy or its technology, digital literacy is deeply tied to economic forces and multiple contexts of culture, politics and location” (p. 256).

Paul Matsuda (2006) raises similar issues about transnational, ESL students/writers in his College English article, “The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition.” He critiques the policy of unidirectional monolingualism, citing that it accounts for the relative lack of attention to multilingualism in composition scholarship. He asserts that the dominant discourse of the US college composition has not only accepted English Only as an ideal but has also assumed the native English speaker as the student norm in the classroom. Dubbing such an assumption as mistaken, Matsuda, like Canagarajah, stresses that “all composition teachers need to reimagine the composition classroom as the multilingual space that it is, where the presence of language differences is the default” (p. 649). Though Matsuda still calls transnational students ESL students, both he and Canagarajah call on the rhetoric and composition community to accept the fact that multiplicity in terms of nationalities, languages, cultures and writing styles is the norm in composition classrooms in the US these days.

Matsuda’s research process is not much different from that of Canagarajah and Pandey. He begins his article by invoking Bruce Horner and John Trimbur’s essay “English Only and U.S. College Composition,” published in 2002 (see below for discussion), and continues his discussion on the monolingualist assumption in the US College composition with Susan Miller and Bob Connor’s claim about English composition as gatekeeper and discriminatory against other language users. Like Pandey, Matsuda also draws insights from disparate discourse communities or communities of scholars depending on the issues at hand. So, his methodology involves an interdisciplinary approach. For instance, when he talks about the native speaker norm, he cites Patrick Hartwell’s “Grammar, Grammars and the Teaching of Grammar,” where Hartwell argues against grammar instruction in the writing class. While discussing the number of foreign students in the US, he turns to Open Doors 2004, which reports data on international student enrollment in the US colleges and universities. In addition, he draws from a host of scholars who talk about the demographic and linguistic diversity in the US in order to substantiate his claim about demographic diversity of students in the US composition classroom. He examines the formative years of college composition, primarily before the 1960s, while tracing the institutionalization of the privileged variety of English as the medium of instruction—which, according to him, started at Harvard in 1874 with its introduction of the entrance exam as one of the criteria for the selection of prospective students. For this historical
tracing, Matsuda does a rigorous literature review of historical research on composition, an exploration of the historical work of David Russell, Bob Connor and others.

The composition researchers in the US (Group A) successfully bring to the fore the issues related primarily to transnational writers/students in the US composition classroom. Their calls and voices are being heard and even responded to through actions at some institutions whereas changes are underway at many others. These scholars from the “periphery” have worked hard and long to draw the “center’s” attention to their agendas, but the rewards are no less encouraging. They have been recognized and their calls acknowledged to a great extent. It is not only their compelling arguments, but also their hybrid styles and negotiated research methods and methodologies that ensured their access to Western publications and journals, and enabled them to achieve those results.

It is not only immigrant composition scholars who are calling for the transnationalization or pluralization of composition pedagogies. Even scholars who are the nationals of the US and native speakers of English are advocating for plurality and multiplicity (of writing styles, languages etc.) in the US composition classroom. Voices being heard from this group of scholars are similar to the scholars in the first group, despite their different research/discourse locations. For instance, Bruce Horner and John Trimbur published an award winning article, “English Only and U.S. College Composition,” in 2002 around the contentious issue of the English Only writing classroom in the US. They contend that the US composition classroom is imagined around “unidirectional and monolingual acquisition of literate competence” (p. 594). Like Canagarajah, they also indicate the need of multilingual and polyliterate writing orientation in the postmodern globalized composition classroom. With this call at the center, they “outline the shifts in curriculum, policy, and research that will promote such a broadened pedagogical orientation in the future” (p. 594). They also note that the need of the hour is to “develop an internationalist perspective capable of understanding the study and teaching of written English in relation to other languages and to the dynamics of globalization” (p. 624).

The research methods/methodologies employed by Horner and Trimbur in this article are equally interesting. They do historical tracing of how and when English language replaced classical languages, and monolingual policy substituted the bilingual one. They draw heavily from archival sources, particularly in the initial section of the article where they cite a number of scholars engaging the historical institutionalization of English as the medium of writing instruction. They also look at many historical reports and documents related to the abolition of Classical Greek and Latin from the curriculum and incorporation of English at Harvard and Yale. It is apparent that Horner and Trimbur depend mostly on secondary sources. For instance, at one point, they say:

[Franklin] Carter and the others we have cited (themselves mostly professors of the modern languages rather than of English) help us to see is that a
unidirectional monolingual language policy that gives primacy of place to English in the modern is warranted as inevitable, not because English was the only living language available in North America but because the use of spoken and written English forms what Benedict Anderson calls an "imagined community" and a sense of nationhood. (p. 606)

This paragraph shows that they turn to other scholars/historians to get required information to build up their agenda/s. As such, they draw extensively from scholarship for and against English Only policy throughout the article.

Margaret Himley (2003) is another domestic scholar with transnational research interests who, in her WPA journal article, “Writing Programs and Pedagogies in a Globalized Landscape” reports the curricular changes Syracuse University’s Writing Program made to address the needs of a globalized classroom. About the adjustments made, she says:

as writing teachers and as a discipline, we have shifted our thinking and our tropes—from a domestic classroom, focused on the creative moment of the student composing process, to a globalized classroom, engaged in multimedia and multimodal textual production, distribution, and consumption. (p. 49)

This curricular and pedagogical shift could be viewed as a response to Horner and Trimbur’s call to develop an internationalist perspective in the study and teaching of English writing. Taking into account the transnational/global forces informing the discipline and the classroom, the SU Writing Program updated its classroom structure, curriculum and pedagogical approaches. She thinks that all the writing programs across the country need to make similar changes because “[A]s we would no longer plan a course without considering questions of gender and race, we need to consider questions of globalization” (p. 61), too. This shows how indispensable she thinks the consideration of globalization to be in the writing classroom.

Himley’s article is mostly a report of the curricular and pedagogical changes made in response to pressures from different directions. She presents and discusses how, when and from where those pressures were felt. According to her, the sources of pressures were: “New composition theories, university and college committees, mostly anecdotal student complaints (though serious ones), learning outcomes, major institutional reevaluation and redefinition” (p. 53). She received data and information required for her article from those sources of pressure themselves. As such, she quotes some administrative/academic documents, email exchanges between Rebecca Moore Howard and the vice-chancellor about the course of action required for addressing the changing scenario in the classroom. As a proof of changes made, she also cites Anne Fitzsimmons’ WRT 205 syllabus for new TAs. Similarly, she invokes some scholars loosely associated with globalization like Saskia Sassen, Sara Ahmed in the initial section of the article, while in the later sections she periodically refers to the SU Writing Program webpage as well as SU writing teachers’ course objectives. At one point she
even produces the then Vice Chancellor Deborah A. Freund’s *Academic Plan 2001*, which contained proposed four signature experiences of SU students as an instance of how writing courses were being critiqued from different quarters even from within the school.

Himley also, like other scholars discussed above, turns to different communities of scholars for ideas and information at different stages/phases of composing, depending on the issues at hand or the direction the article is taking. For instance, she cites John Trimbur while talking about textual economy and the New London Group while talking about the forces of globalization and the attendant altered writing scenario. Similarly, she draws from scholars of digital writing like David Harvey and Carmen Luke when talking about the web and its potentialities.

So, her research methodologies include mostly textual/discourse analysis of texts, contexts, artifacts, course materials and academic/administrative documents reflective of the forces of globalization and its consequent manifestation in the changed writing curriculum, classroom and pedagogies in the SU Writing Program.

Mark Schaub (2003), like Himley, and Horner and Trimbur, is a domestic American scholar, but one who emphasizes his international experience in his scholarship. Educated in the US, he worked as a writing instructor and directed the writing program at American University in Cairo for few years. He therefore comes from a slightly different location as a researcher. This difference is reflected in his call to internationalize US-centric composition programs. He makes a call for regular exchange of students, curricula, pedagogies and scholarship between the US and the rest of the world as:

argu[ing] that as professionals we should investigate ways to internationalize the discipline of composition by expanding our conception of the field, by making efforts to internationalize our academic conferences, and by developing opportunities for writing-related faculty and student programs or exchanges overseas. As writing instructors, moreover, we should investigate ways to internationalize our composition courses and programs, such as expanding writing assignments to encompass international interests and themes and revising syllabi to reflect a more global perspective. (p. 86)

He maintains that composition scholars/researchers are focused mostly on an American context and are not aware of college writing overseas. Neither is the rest of the world aware of what, for instance, Conference on College Composition and Communication is or what composition courses in the US are. So, for Schaub, there is a huge gap between the US composition community and the rest of the world caused primarily by lack of communication/exchange between them. As stated above, to bridge this gap, Schaub stresses the need for mutual exchanges of ideas, insights, pedagogical techniques and even courses between the US and the rest of the world, as well as thinking of composition more globally. Such an exchange, he thinks, could be mutually
beneficial because “[W]e do have a lot of knowledge about writing instruction that could benefit the rest of the world. However, we may have even more to learn about it from those outside this country” (p. 91). Schaub suggests acknowledging the hegemony of English, becoming better acquainted with overseas research and perspectives and making conferences in the United States more inviting to overseas participants as ways to expand the horizons of the field of composition beyond North America.

Schaub’s research methods combine personal narrative, textual criticism and discourse analysis. He draws a lot from his own experience as a writing instructor and director of the writing program at American University in Cairo. Besides that, he also cites number of scholars. For instance, he cites Mary Muchiri et al.’s 1995 article “Importing Composition: Teaching and Researching Academic Writing Beyond North America,” where they claim that composition is a peculiarly American discipline. He brings up Tony Silva and Vivien Zelman while talking about ESL issues, and Matsuda and Ulla Connor while discussing contrastive rhetoric. He even mentions electronic surveys he conducted while in Cairo to collect information about Writing Programs beyond North America and his finding that there are almost two dozens WPAs in Spain, China, Malaysia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Wendy S. Hesford and Eileen E. Schell (2008), in their introduction to special issue of College English on feminist rhetorics and transnationalism make a similar call to Schaub’s, but on different terms. They call for transnationalization of the discipline of composition and feminist rhetorics, arguing that the discipline of rhetoric and composition is US-centric and built around the narratives of nation, nationalism, and citizenship, and that the field would:

benefit from a more critical engagement with its use of transgeographical concepts (displacement, transculuration, translocality), transnational constructs such as Paul Gilroy’s “Black Atlantic” (Sandars 812), and transnational ethnic configurations (African, African-American, West Indian people; Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Latino/Latin American people; Native American and indigenous people; Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander people), and consideration of the epistemological and historical ties between disciplinary formations and U.S. imperialism. (p. 463)

Their call in this special issue is for expanding and opening the discipline’s hitherto closed borders to transnational phenomena and experiences, insights, and knowledge systems and discourses, thereby extending/expanding the range and scope of “Composition Studies...constructed, indeed disciplined, as a sovereign state” (p. 464) in general, and the feminist rhetorics in particular. Their move is towards incorporating in the curriculum of US-based composition programs the ideas and theories about “how composition instruction is taught and engaged across the globe” (p. 464).

Critiquing the scholars who declare the death of nation-states, and aligning themselves “with those who account for the global reach of nationalist discourses and,
more specifically, the power of U.S. policy, media, and military" (p. 463), Hesford and Schell project transnational feminism as an interdisciplinary analytic that recognizes globalization's lopsidedness and the powerful role of nation-states in the present phase of globalization.

Because theirs is an introduction to a journal issue, their research method is mostly an inquiry into the areas of journal's focus: transnational feminism. For the necessary information and data, they look at the scholarship across disciplines ranging from women studies, postcolonial studies, rhetoric and composition, globalization and cultural studies. As such, they begin their essay with discussion of Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderland* as a trope for hybrid identities and a descriptor of genre bending and polyvocality (p. 461), projecting Anzaldúa as a transnational figure in composition studies and feminist rhetorics. They then turn to literature/scholarship in rhetoric and composition that discusses the ways the field ironically canonizes and claims Anzaldua. They refer to Andrea Lunsford, Min-Zhan Lu, and Debra Castillo, among others, who talk of irony in the field of Rhetoric and Composition: tokenizing figures, romanticizing hybrid identities and making the most local of all the most translational. In the same vein, they cite Mary Louise Pratt while talking about the contact zones and transculturation, and the distortion of their (Pratt and Anzaldua’s) works because of the decontextualized use of key concepts in the discipline of composition. They also refer to scholars like Deepika Bahri, Mark Schaub, Margaret Higgonet, Ong, Schell, Canagarajah and a couple of others to illuminate the concept of transnationality and rhetoric and composition as a purely US-centric discipline mostly unaware of the phenomena of composition around the world. And while proposing transnational rhetoric as a better alternative to comparative rhetoric, contrastive rhetoric and intercultural communication, they scrutinize the merits and limitations of these areas of inquiry. They derive the necessary insights and information from the scholars associated with all three areas of inquiry in this process.

From this methodological analysis of a small corpus of scholarship on the global/transnational issues in the discipline of rhetoric and composition, it becomes clear that the majority of calls and initiatives from various quarters are being made for globalizing or pluralizing academic writing and making composition curricula more inclusive of writing styles, literacy traditions and language varieties from around the world. Depending on the location of the researchers, there are differences in the issues raised. The insider/outsider position seems to have made the difference. The composition researchers in the US (Group 1) claim to have ‘double vision’ and advocate for the inclusive pedagogy, classroom and curricula. They also demand the recognition and legitimation of differences that transnational students bring into the composition classroom. In a way, Group 1 seems to be the pressure group of scholars for changes in policies and provisions, while Group 2 seems to be the one that feels the pressure and realizes the need for updates in the program or its constituent parts. It is scholars
from Group 1 (following suit with the ESL scholars) who first made the calls. This could be claimed given the fact that few scholars from Group 1 (e.g. Canagarajah and Matsuda) are cited by scholars from both the groups and, more importantly, their scholarship in transnational issues predates everyone else’s in the groups.

Methodologically, too, there seems to be difference between these two groups of scholars. The composition researchers in the US (Canagarajah and Pandey in particular) use hybrid research methods/methodologies. They have combined ethnography, personal anecdotes/narratives with discourse analysis and criticism. They have, in Canagarajah’s terms, “negotiated” their styles, forms and methods strategically. The case is not so with the Group 2 researchers, however. They have used the “established” methods in the field like textual criticism and rhetorical/discourse analysis. Mark Schaub is the only one in Group B, who uses narrative along side discourse analysis and electronic surveys as research methods/methodologies. There could be a reason behind that: his exposure to Eastern tradition of writing while working in Cairo.

Surprisingly, the difference between the groups, both in terms of issues raised and methods used, is not so vast despite their different research locations. I wonder why that could have been the case. There could be a few possible underlying reasons. First, both groups of scholars are working in the US universities now and my research corpus consists of articles and books published in the US-based journals and publications. The usual gatekeeping practices might have been successful in preventing them from embracing vastly different methods and methodologies. Publication requirements could have dictated the content, form and style of both the groups. Second, the issues and methods as they are could be the researchers’ deliberate choices. They might have taken into account their rhetorical situation, particularly the audience factor. Since their primary audience is Western, forms, content and methods could have been chosen to cater to audience needs and expectations. Another possibility could be that both the groups negotiated their styles, forms and contents. After all, both the groups are attempting to transcend their traditional borders of nation-states, disciplines and/or discourse communities. They are going transnational/global. Yes, they are!

The transnational/global forces in the composition classroom are a growing research area in the field. Initiated by scholars in the US, the area is expanding. A number of researchers from the US are already in the area and the incoming rate is on the rise. At a time when virtually everything is globally connected, rhetoric and composition as a field cannot remain pristine or unaffected by the influx of global flows. To ignore those forces in the composition classroom would be to do injustice to both domestic and international students because the graduates the field produces would be the ones juggling the forces of globalization no matter where they go. Therefore, the survival and thriving of the field depends on how inclusive and receptive or generative of
global forces it can be. Therefore, more research and exploration into the global in rhetoric and composition is urgent. Therein lies both exigency and adventure.

References