



Rhetoric of World Englishes, Writing Instruction Around the World and a Global Outlook for the U.S. Composition Classroom

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Abstract

In this essay, I contend that a major revision in syllabi/curricula, pedagogical approaches and the media of instruction and composition in the existing composition courses is imperative in order to be able to a. adequately respond to challenges and contestations from different corners about “Standard Edited American English-Only” (see Canagarajah; Horner & Trimbur) as the medium of instruction and composition in our writing classes, and b. remain relevant to increasingly diverse body of students. More specifically, I theorize a global composition outlook in this essay, one that encompasses a series of actions and practices, such as pluralizing academic writing; accepting and acknowledging cultural, rhetorical and stylistic variations in all forms of expressions and communications including in our students’ compositions; and treating English varieties of our students (if not their native tongues) in their formal as well as informal writings fairly and equitably, which, I argue, can be the much needed initial steps in taking us towards the direction of making our composition classes and pedagogies more democratic, pragmatic, as well as relevant to our students and the complex world they are already a part of or would be upon their graduation.

Keywords: Global outlook, globalized classroom, transnational composition, nationalistic outlook, paradigm shift, pluralizing academic writing

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Introduction

The rhetoric of World Englishes (WE) and varied writing styles and instructions around the world challenge many of the assumptions underlying the U.S. Composition classroom and pedagogies today. WE scholarship and rhetoric and composition's recent work on the global/transnational composition scenario point toward the plurality of English, writing style and academic writing around the world, which seriously contradict the reification of "standard" English, "academic writing," "English-only" composition, "native" English speakers and a "nationalistic outlook" in the U.S. composition courses and classrooms. There is an apparent disconnect between what is happening outside of and within the U.S. composition classroom, or more precisely, between what the global student body in composition classes needs and what is being offered to them. The student body in the U.S. classroom is increasingly diverse in terms of demographics as well as academic training. Demographically speaking, composition classrooms are composed of diverse domestic as well as international students. The number of international students could look statistically minimal, particularly in undergraduate classes, but it makes very little sense to talk in statistical terms of either domestic or international students and to draw conclusions based on numbers due to the fact that many of our domestic students are as multilingual or as different in terms of writing styles or discourse conventions as are their international counterparts. Many of these domestic students are the children of immigrant parents who speak different languages at home, and many are even schooled outside the U.S., in the birth country of one or both of their parents.

Therefore, composition classrooms have become the "contact zones" of different English varieties (including American English), composition styles and discourse conventions from within the U.S. and from across cultures and nations, but the majority of composition instructors are English monolingual speakers who teach U.S.-centric academic writing and are, therefore, doing injustice to the student body by failing to scaffold their diverse literacy practices as well as preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of the globalized world.

In this essay, therefore, I engage some pertinent issues and debates surrounding the English varieties, diverse writing styles, and various notions of writing being promoted through different methods of writing instruction around the world, which have become integral parts of our classrooms as they enter with our globalized student body in order to advocate for a fundamental shift in the way we perceive and teach writing in the U.S. composition classroom. I contend that a major revision in our syllabi/curricula, pedagogical approaches, and the media of instruction and composition in the existing composition courses is imperative in order to be able to a). adequately respond to challenges and contestations from different corners about "Standard Edited American English-Only" (see Canagarajah; Horner & Trimbur) as the medium of instruction and

composition in our writing classes, and b). remain relevant to an increasingly diverse body of students by scaffolding their diverse literacy practices, including their English varieties and writing styles, and cater to their needs to be prepared to take up the challenges and complexities of the globalized world. I argue and theorize that a global composition outlook—one that encompasses a series of actions and practices like pluralizing academic writing, accepting and acknowledging cultural, rhetorical and stylistic variations in all forms of expression/communication, including in our students' compositions, and treating English variants or varieties (if not the native tongues of our students) fairly and equitably in formal as well as informal writing—can take us toward making our composition classrooms and pedagogies more democratic, pragmatic, and relevant to our students as well as to the complex world they are already a part of or will be upon their graduation.

World Englishes, “standard English,” “native speaker,” and U.S. composition

Scholars from various disciplines and locations are claiming that there is not one standard English, but a variety of Englishes—World/Global Englishes (Braj B. Kachru, Rakesh M. Bhatt, Alastair Pennycook). As these scholars argue, Englishes across spaces are distinct, and authentic, but decontextualized from “Englishness” or “American-ness” as they are adapted to and colored by local cultures. According to Bhatt, different varieties of English around the world represent “diverse sociolinguistic histories, multicultural identities, multiple norms of use and acquisition, and distinct contexts of function, ... most of which are disengaged from the language's early Judeo-Christian tradition” (p. 527). Bhatt claims that these varieties have their own norms, features, and communicative styles and therefore are as authentic as any other “standard” varieties of English. A. Suresh Canagarajah (2003), therefore, argues that we should abandon the distinctions between “native” and “nonnative,” or “standard” and “non standard,” and treat everyone as speakers of “Global English—a multinational language featuring a plural grammatical system with diverse norms and conventions in different communities” (Foreword to *Language Diversity*, p. xiii). Thus, the scholars championing the WE cause argue for the equal treatment of all English varieties and an immediate end to discriminatory practices against and despising attitudes towards some varieties of English. As localized varieties, these Englishes are the languages of higher education, public administration, national and international business, media, publication and literature of different nations and cultures. Like any other “standard” variety, these “varieties of English have their own local histories, literary traditions, pragmatic contexts, and communicative norms” (B. Kachru, “Teaching World Englishes,” p. 359).

However, the issue of which variety of English is “standard,” and what makes one variety standard over many others, is a most contentious and conflicted one. Similarly contentious is the issue of who the native speaker is. These are controversial issues

partly because the criteria specified to determine them are not uniform, but point to a plurality of standards and native speakers. The resultant plurality goes against general notions like “the Queen’s English is the Standard English,” and that British, American or Australian people are the native speakers of English.

The answer to why the “standard”/ “non-standard” distinction matters so much lies in the attitude expressed primarily by “native” speakers of English towards “non-standard” varieties. P. Strevens states that native speakers (NS) “overtly or unconsciously despise the ‘non-native’ varieties” (p. 37), and these NS’ attitudes are in turn perceived by non-native speakers as being “arrogant, imperialist, and insulting” (p. 37). Thus, “standard”/“nonstandard” and “native”/“non-native” dichotomies and the differential attitudes associated with them seem to provoke confrontation and conflict. Back to the issue of attitude, it is not only “native” speakers who despise the “non-standard” varieties; the disturbing fact is that even “non-native” speakers do not have a sense of respect for their English variety/ies. They regard local speech, writing and literature as inferior to their cosmopolitan counterparts. As Henry Kahane (1992) interestingly demonstrates, the issue of standard is the issue of attitude (p. 213). That may be the reason B. Kachru talks of the attitudinal readjustment of non-native speakers in order to give up their feeling that it is a “deficient” model, but they develop their identification with the local model of English (“Models for Non-Native Englishes,” p. 68). Positive attitude and identification of people with their local varieties are crucial for consolidating their (local people) prestige as users of English language. Indicating how Americans’ positive attitude and identification with their dialect ultimately paid off, Kahane declares: “Webster’s ‘standard of our vernacular tongue’ is today’s ‘Network Standard,’” (p. 213) and recommends a similar course of action to the users of World Englishes.

Even Conference on College Composition and Communication’s (CCCC) 1974 resolution denies the myth of a single “standard” English on the ground that “[L]anguage scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity,” and that any attempt to maintain the distinction of standard/nonstandard variety is an “attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another” (extract xv). In the same strain, Nelson also complicates the notion of one standard variety by pointing towards the existence of multiple Standard English varieties, for instance, American English and British English, despite glaring differences between them. Given this precedent, he wonders: “what [then] allows us to continue to distinguish a native (‘right’) variety of English from a non-native (‘wrong’) variety?” (p. 336).

John Trimbur (2008) sees “ideological and political meanings” (144) behind the politics of distinction. Invoking Thomas M. Paikeday’s provocative and self-published *The Native Speaker Is Dead!*, Trimbur foregrounds the idea that there is no coherent definition of the term “native speaker” among professional linguists, but nevertheless the concept has proved discriminatory against non-native English speakers (p. 159). He

also quotes Rajendra Singh to back up his point that there are and can be “standard” Englishes and “native speakers” of English other than British English and American English and their speakers: “as long as I[ndian] E[nglish] and S[ingaporean] E[nglish] can be said to exist [...] those who [. . .] ‘operate them’ operate them exactly as speakers of American English or B[ritish] E[nglish] operate their respective systems, i.e. as native speakers” (as cited in p.159).

So, the whole debate on “standard English” and “the native speaker” proves that many English varieties and their speakers, even though they qualify as ‘standard’ and ‘native,’ are not recognized as such because, as B. Kachru precisely puts it, the standard/non-standard and native/non-native dichotomy “involves issues of attitude, of power and politics, and of history and economics” (“Teaching World Englishes,” p. 357). So, again, the salient point is that the sustenance of “standard”/“non-standard” or “native”/“non-native” dichotomy, either in composition classrooms or elsewhere, has to do with power dynamics and several other attendant issues.

English, imperialism, and composition

English is associated with imperialism, and even today it is viewed as the medium of dominant ideology, hegemony, and neo-colonialism. The fact is that English is now the vehicle of different forms of globalization—economic, cultural, political, and technological, and it has been an instrument of cross-cultural, cross-linguistic and cross-national communication. Since the English language helps make the transnational and global flow of people, products and ideas possible, this language is only partly to be blamed for the lopsided flow between the West and the East—or, the “center” and the “periphery”—and the resultant relationship of inequality or domination between them. Western nations, their politics, and economic policies are to be blamed for the major part. English, therefore, is as much the vehicle of imperialism as it is the medium of transaction at the local, national, transnational and/or global level. No one can say for sure whether the English language used for local transaction is acting as a means of imperialism. A lot depends on the context of the transaction, like the parties involved in and benefitting from the transaction and whether the transaction is fair. It is sometimes the case that a poor indigenous farmer from a poor eastern/peripheral country may be benefitting financially or professionally from using the English language. The issue of whether the English language is linked to imperialism is, thus, a complicated one. One point about the English language is clear, however; English is necessary for what Bhatt calls “linguistic pragmatism” (p. 533); i.e., it has an econocultural function. Alan Davies (1989) also sees the English language serving similar function/s and maintains that English being used internationally is a multifunctional language and has a variety of local models and/or standards. It serves different functions ranging from

political/institutional, business and trade, academic and scientific, media and the arts, and the written exponents and their spoken analogues (p. 456).

So, it becomes evident that English has become an economic and cultural necessity. Its complete resistance or rejection without viable substitute is sure to bring an ecological imbalance (of many kinds), and the many attempts to develop a viable substitute have already proven a failure. Therefore, English is sure to go unrivalled for nobody knows how long, but this affirmation does not mean that the ways English is being used or taught now are justifiable and beyond question. The fact that English is killing many other languages and cultures, that there is discrimination between and among varieties of English, and that there are attitudinal factors involved with varieties of English complicates the logic of economic necessity and makes us think seriously that a lot is at stake and action of some kind is urgent. This particular tension of English should be productive for composition teachers, as it can be interpreted to mean that we can't do away with the English medium of instruction right away, but can grant English varieties, including "standard" ones, their respective places in our curricular artifacts as well as pedagogical practices nonetheless so that our students become familiar or even proficient in multiple varieties of English or composition styles, which are the skills highly desired of any professionals in the 21st century.

Ownership of English and composition

With the diffusion, appropriation, creolization, resistance, and transformation of the English language over time, the question of to whom English belongs, or who the real owner of English is, has become prominent. For example, in "Language, Identity, and the Ownership of English," Bonny Norton (1997) asks a series of questions like: Who owns English internationally? Who does English belong to: to native speakers of English, to speakers of standard English, to White people, or to all of those who speak it, irrespective of their linguistic and sociocultural histories? Though she fails to provide concrete answers to these questions in her essay, the questions themselves complicate the general assumption that irrespective of whoever the speaker of English is, the real owner of English is Britain.

In fact, the ownership issue is much more complicated than generally perceived and is connected with other larger issues of power, identity, knowledge construction, and even economy and politics. Because English is the language of academics, commerce and technology, the English ownership issue is linked to, for instance, who can legitimately print books, publish knowledge, and even write, speak or construct knowledge; and all of these, again, have political, economic, cultural and other implications. So, it becomes the primary duty of composition teachers to communicate the sense of English ownership to each one of our students irrespective of the variety of English they speak, or the style of composition they practice or are trained to follow in

their previous schools. Only with this sense of ownership can they be engaged in genuine composition practices or the production and dissemination of knowledge.

Intelligibility and composition

The liberal attitude towards the English varieties and writing styles that I am advocating for in composition classes might encounter stumbling blocks when it comes to the issue of intelligibility of those varieties or writing styles among students and teachers. Things might seem to be a mess if all English varieties were legitimated and given free play in our classrooms. The issue can be a major concern because different English varieties embody different lexical, syntactic and semantic features as well as local socio-cultural features. These features inform and are reflected in both oral and written acts of our students. Such a phenomenon sometimes may occasion a very funny situation: students and teachers are speaking and writing in English, but don't understand one another at all. This may be the reason why Randolph Quirk (1985) boldly declares that "different dialects of English will become mutually unintelligible" (p. 3) over time. Therefore, he deems it necessary that all English-speaking nations accede to "a form of English that is both understood and respected in every corner of the globe where any knowledge of any variety of English exists" (p. 3). This could be a strong case for teaching our students (in) a single "standard" variety of English. But research involving speakers (native and nonnative) of multiple varieties (both "standard" and "non-standard") of English shows the results that contradict with this seemingly persuasive line of argument.

Larry E. Smith (1992) addresses the question of intelligibility in a field study involving "native" speakers, "ESL" speakers and "EFL" speakers as research participants. He observes them while communicating in both oral and written forms. He also interviews them following up those oral and written acts. His findings show that the issue of intelligibility does not become prominent as long as the speakers of a particular variety of English are within their speech communities, but becomes critical as they move beyond and communicate across varieties. And English speakers from around the world, he contends, are found more and more in the latter situation because of globalization and increasing transnational movement of people. Reflecting on the communication challenges facing the speakers of different varieties of English, Smith writes:

Being a native speaker does not seem to be as important as being fluent in English and familiar with several different national varieties. These results indicate that the increasing number of varieties of English need not increase the problems of understanding across cultures, if users of English develop some familiarity with them. (p. 88)

Smith pairs up unfamiliarity with unintelligibility, and familiarity with intelligibility. “Native” or “non-native” considerations are irrelevant to him. He stresses that for mutual intelligibility both native and non-native speakers must put forth equal effort and have tolerance of each other’s English varieties:

Although native English speakers will need to change their attitudes and assumptions in shifting toward English as an international language, there are some needed changes for non-native speakers. They too must become more tolerant to the many varieties of educated English and learn about the ways other non-native speakers use English. (1981, p. 9)

So, Smith leaves us with an optimistic note. Smith and Rafiqzad Khalilulla (1979) also claim that “most speakers are able to attain mutual intelligibility after only a brief exposure to a pronunciation different from their own” (p. 8). Here, I think, is the crucial space that composition teachers can exploit productively. They can facilitate that “brief exposure,” or even an extensive exposure if they so desire, for students to each other’s English varieties or writing styles through creating an atmosphere of interaction, sharing and collaboration in their classrooms.

In the next section, I briefly discuss the ways that composition around the world differs stylistically or otherwise, and how those variegated styles of composition should become a part of our classroom space so that composition teachers get ahead of the potential or current challenges of teaching a class with a diverse student body.

Composition around the world

The contrastive rhetoricians, in general, argue that since different cultures/spaces have different English varieties and discourse conventions, they also have different stylistic and rhetorical orientations and therefore produce different writings or compositions. Yamuna Kachru (1992), for instance, carries out a comparative study of American and Indian academic writing and finds that “IE [Indian English] rhetorical style is characterized by high involvement as compared to the AE [American English] rhetorical style” (p. 347); i.e. IE rhetorical style has more personal orientation than AE rhetorical style. She also discovers that Indian academic English is a localized variety thoroughly intertwined with local Indian cultures and conventions, markedly different from American English. Indian academic English has a Hindi flavor, which, in turn, has roots in classic Sanskrit language. Therefore, “[T]he rhetorical style of IE...reflects an attempt to create the Sanskritic noetics in English: it expresses the same cultural meaning that the Indian languages do. In this sense, English in India has truly become an Indian language” (p. 347). Y. Kachru (2009) notes that writing conventions “differ across [English] varieties

because all users of English in the Outer and Expanding Circles are bi-/multilingual. The different messages come from cultural values of the communities and conventions of language use, largely based on concepts of polite and appropriate behavior” (“Speaking and Writing in World Englishes” p. 366).

B. Kachru has similar observation in terms of localized English varieties in composition across cultures. English is totally localized in code-mixing and code-switching practices, or in typical uses of language in, for example, obituaries, personal and official correspondence, matrimonial advertisements, and in non-native English literatures across places and cultures including India. In these kinds of culture-specific genres, he notes, “English acquires a new identity, a local habitat, and a name. (“Introduction” *The Other Tongue: English across Cultures*, p. 9-10). On a similar note, Wimal Dissanayake (2008) in “Cultural Studies and Discursive Constructions of World Englishes” cites Salman Rushdie’s comment on linguistic and stylistic choice of WE writers to highlight the fact that some established WE authors like Rushdie himself attempt to deliberately break from the western rhetorical and stylistic conventions:

Language, like much else in the newly independent societies needs to be decolonized, to be made in other images, if those of us who use it from positions outside Anglo-Saxon cultures are to be more than “Uncle Toms.” And it is this endeavor that gives the new literatures of Africa, the Caribbean, and India as much of their present vitality and excitement. (as cited in p. 552)

Dissanayake states that in this globalized world, different English variety writers produce hybrid writing through the interplay of local and global resources. Continuing the same line of argument, he further writes: “If we pause to examine the novels and short stories of younger Indian writers, such as Arundhati Roy and Ardashri Vakil, we perceive this local-global interplay not only in the experiences selected for contextualization, but in the very sensibility that shapes the language that is used to write about them” (p. 557). According to Dissanayake, such a hybridity “manifests itself most vividly in the prose of writers from the Third World who use English as a vehicle of creative communication” (p. 561).

Similarly, Y. Kachru and Larry E. Smith (2008) in *Cultures, Contexts, and World Englishes* foreground the stylistic differences across languages and cultures both in “how the text as a whole is organized (macro structure), and how each element of the text is organized (micro structure)” (p.156). For instance, according to them:

In the Inner Circle academic circles.... It is... important to state one’s thesis explicitly and marshal arguments to support that in a direct manner.... Chinese students are said to be taught to devote the opening paragraph of an essay to statements of universal truth; only after that it is appropriate to broach the topic of

the paperIn the Japanese and Korean traditions, an essay consists of at least one tangentially related to sub-topic “brought up with few overt transition markers” (Hinds, 1987, p. 150).... In Arabic rhetoric, verbal artistry and emotional impact are the primary measures of persuasive power.... Indirection and circumlocutory rhetoric are a part of African discourse strategy....” (p. 156)

Along similar lines, Canagarajah (2002) in *Geopolitics of Academic Writing* discusses the differing textual and publishing/discursive conventions governing academic writing in the West and the rest. He notes that academic writing in the “center” and the “periphery,” or the “West” and the “East,” are characterized by different styles, tones and structures, as are they also governed by different publishing conventions like different protocols for submitting papers, revisions, and proofs. He traces the roots of differences in surface manifestation of these written products to local language varieties, which are tied to differing socio-cultural values and belief systems. He concludes that discourse “[c]onventions are...relative, variable, flexible, and contingent” (p. 85). His major thrust here is that, as the writing conventions are relative and variable, there are and can be various types of writings across cultures, languages, and language variants (of English).

Even the position statement of Conference on College Composition and Communication (2008) recognizes, though theoretically, that “the nature and functions of discourse, audience, and persuasive appeals often differ across linguistic, cultural and educational contexts.”

These differences in writing patterns or styles across individuals and cultures could also be partly accredited to the differences in writing instruction around the world. Since our students come to our classes trained (in previous schools or high schools) to compose in different forms/formats, and as they get differing composition instructions across nations, composition teachers in the U.S. composition classes should be cognizant of the fact that plurality in composition style or even academic writing exists, and that plurality is, in fact, being institutionally/academically supported.

Composition instruction around the world

With regards to schools’ roles in shaping students to compose in a particular style, Alan C. Purves (1988) in *Writing Across Languages and Cultures: Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric* notes: “For the most part...people learn to write in schools or through some sort of instruction.... It is in the schools that students learn to write according to certain conventions, many of which have little to do with the structure of language and more to do with the literary and cultural heritage of the society” (p. 13). To this, Anneli Vahapassi (1988) adds: “a school system has a decisive effect on the development of writing” (p. 59-60). He further maintains, “instruction differences do exist, however, whether the aim is to acquire concepts and new knowledge by writing, or only to repeat or to

demonstrate knowledge” (p. 62). Different functions of writing are emphasized through instruction in different places, according to Vahapassi. For instance, in the Netherlands, Nigeria, and Sweden, writing serves or is demanded to serve informative or referential purposes. In Finland and Hungary, “preuniversity-level examinations in some school systems...contain tasks that are close to the writing tasks intended only to show the students’ knowledge and learning. In Hungary, these tasks require knowledge of language and literature, in Finland that of religion, historical or social issues, or science” (p. 62). In British and Scottish schools, until the high school, writing is done to learn and to inform (p. 63).

To this corpus, Y. Kachru adds the Indian case, where “Composition is taught in schools, and essay writing continues at the college level, but these contain grammatical descriptions, instructions, and illustrations of parsing, a few remarks on organizing narrative, descriptive, argumentative, and personal essays, and a great examples of ‘ideal’ essays” (“Writers in Hindi and English” p. 111). In Germany, according to Melinda Reichelt (2005), “Students in upper-level courses are given writing assignments intended to help them develop a deeper understanding of course materials and to examine authors’ ideas critically and independently” (p. 94). Writing is distributed across the curriculum in Germany, says Reichelt, and “At the German *Gymnasium*, the responsibility for writing instruction (and grading papers) is more equally distributed across the faculty, and students are provided a plethora of opportunities to engage in writing for the various subjects offered by the curriculum” (p. 98-9). Delcambre and Y. Reuter report that in France, writing instruction is a cross-disciplinary venture and the typical writing types taught are “dissertations, text commentaries, theoretical texts, reports written after internships, case studies, abstracts, back-cover texts or genres linked to research (proposing an oral presentation)” (p. 25). In Norway, Olga Dysthe (2009) (says, “virtually all courses now include compulsory student writing assignments and teacher feedback” (p. 31) after The Quality Reform in 2002, which is to say that following European tradition, Norway now has a Writing in the Disciplines program implemented.

In Brazil, however, Antonia Dilmar Araujo (2009) states, “the most preferred and studied school or academic genres are: oral and written narratives, reviews, abstracts, research articles, research reports, interviews, reports, lessons, learning diaries, research projects, dissertations, theses, book introductions, prefaces, autobiographies, course plans, meeting reports, summaries, expository articles for school board, and ceremonial speech” (p. 50). In case of Spain, Jesus-Nicasion Garcia (2009) et al. note:

There is a required daily time for reading, which aims at developing good reading habits in students, but none for writing. Writing is discussed in more detail in specific notes on teaching Castilian language and literature. Here there is an emphasis on writing correctly at letter (handwriting), word (spelling), and text

(order and coherence) levels.... In most schools writing has been a specific focus in the curriculum, but emphasis has tended to be on writing texts in specified genres with teachers tending to provide feedback exclusively on the appropriateness of text structure and correctness of syntax and spelling. Teachers typically do not make reference to or evaluate the strategies that students adopt in producing this text” (p. 72-73). Blanca Yaneth Gonzalez Pinzon notes that common writing assignments in Colombia are “dictations and compositions, along with taking notes of the lecture and written exams. (p. 123)

Thus, there is diversity and variety in writing instruction around the world; some countries and schools teach writing in mother tongues while others teach in English.

Similarly, some emphasize writing in all courses, some others in the English subject, and some countries like the U.S. have separate composition courses. So, the global writing instruction scenario is very complex. In Christiane Donahue’s (2009) words:

Countries have, indeed, traditions of mother tongue university student writing courses, or popular large courses in student support centers, or writing centers, WiD programs, technical and business writing. The absence of an “industry” of first-year composition, Muchiri et al. point out, is not the absence of the study and teaching of higher education writing. (p. 221-222)

The bottom line is that writing in English is done around the world and done differently irrespective of whether it is taught in formal school settings. This particular insight should be instructive to composition teachers who have some preconceived notion of composition instruction that it is about teaching a thesis-driven academic essay or about teaching to write in “standard” English. It should make them think that while imposing one particular way of composing, they are discrediting or contradicting other ways of composing formally or actively practiced by other academic institutions or other composition teachers. In order to avoid that pitfall, we need to develop and implement a broader and comprehensive outlook of composition or composition instruction. In the section below, I attempt to theorize, though in preliminary terms, such an outlook, which I name the global outlook for composition.

Global outlook for the U.S. composition classroom

The extensive literature review of the spoken and written components of World/Global Englishes and composition instruction around the world above indicates that the nationalistic framework is utterly irrelevant for a classroom as globalized as a U.S. composition classroom. I, therefore, argue that we need a much broader outlook—a

global composition outlook—to guide and drive our teaching approaches. The global composition outlook is a liberal and equitable approach to teaching composition. This approach acknowledges that there are diverse English varieties, writing styles, and writing instruction approaches around the world, and that a globalized U.S. composition classroom with a diverse student body is a “contact zone” of all those pluralities. It also recognizes the fact that composition processes and products of “native,” ESL, or EFL writers do vary because they live and grow in different socio-cultural and academic settings, and their processes and products embody and reflect the imprints of those influences. This approach acknowledges and implements the position statement of Conference on College Composition and Communication (2008): “the nature and functions of discourse, audience, and persuasive appeals often differ across linguistic, cultural and educational contexts,” and also endeavors to take into account the complexity of cross-cultural or cross-linguistic composition. It also avoids essentializing ESL or EFL students and is aware that students in a globalized classroom do not always remain within their discourse communities, but often shuttle between and among different discourse communities (Canagarajah).

So, this outlook contends that both domestic American as well as transnational students in the U.S. composition classroom can and should be able to shuttle between and among different writing and speaking styles, as well as English varieties, in order to survive and prosper in this globalized world. Essentializing either group of students could be a serious blunder given the fact that they now are exposed to multiple English varieties, writing styles, and cultural norms due to the rapid cross-border movement of the forces of globalization. Therefore, one thing we composition teachers must understand is that however hard we try to homogenize students’ compositions, our attempt is just a losing battle. Hybridity is the new norm. Even the so-called standard format or model of composition is just one among many other competing formats or models of composition from across cultures and academic traditions. For instance, the thesis-driven essay as reified in the U.S. composition classrooms is just a western model of composition. Therefore, composition teachers need to critically reevaluate the existing monolithic or nationalistic framework of composition and make a paradigm shift to global outlook of composition.

The major call of the global outlook is for all composition teachers to be flexible, and to recognize and validate different-looking writing in composition classes if they are persuasive enough and rhetorically effective. Students’ cultural or linguistic differences should be regarded as valuable resources, as opposed to the current practice of seeing them as hindrances to composition (Canagarajah; Mastuda). In order to make their composition courses/classes relevant and productive for their students, composition teachers must institute their syllabi and conduct their classes with the objectives of fostering and nurturing students’ multiple/diverse composing practices or writing conventions/styles, their English varieties and academic or research traditions which

means, “Standard English will have to be taught as only one of several appropriate varieties” (Clieff, p. 74) of composition. As Horner and Trimbur (2002) suggest, composition teachers should attempt 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. 623). Teaching composition in relation to other languages and English language varieties means pluralizing academic writing and allowing multiple English varieties, and, if at all practicable, the other languages as the media of composition.

To state that in more explicit terms, composition teachers should attempt to pluralize English and academic writing by providing spaces in curricula and classrooms for diverse composing practices, varieties of English, as well as different-looking genres of composition. Their courses and classes should demonstrate their mature understanding about the demise of “the native speaker” and “Standard English.” Unless such an understanding is demonstrated and a conducive environment, where students take the ownership of their English/es, is created, students can never be creative and play with their language varieties in speech or writing. Unless composition teachers create such a classroom atmosphere, their students “might not consider themselves legitimate speakers” (Norton, p. 422) of English, and the consequence would be less than desirable. Transnational/multilingual students, and even domestic American students (for instance, African American, Hispanic, etc.), would not be able to pursue their literate activities confidently enough, which, in turn, affects their learning achievement. So, composition teachers should also be cognizant of the fact that though scholars like Cecil L. Nelson (1992) boldly assert that “[f]or one body to claim ‘ownership’ of English on some basis of historical antecedence is pragmatically unsound thinking...[and that] English belongs to any country which uses it, and may have as wide or as limited a use ...as is felt desirable” (p. 337) and provides an answer to the complicated issue of ownership, the lived reality as of now is that many varieties of English are still not considered “standard,” and their speakers not “authentic speakers” and not as legitimate as their British or American counterparts. These varieties are also looked down upon both by the “native speakers” of “standard” varieties of English as well as by the “non-native” speakers of “non-standard” varieties. If such practice persists in the class, most students in the globalized classroom will remain ghettoized and disserved. Therefore, composition teachers should learn from the rhetoric of World Englishes that there are plural English varieties, which get manifested in both the spoken and written communication genres (including academic writing) of their students. They should also heed the scholarship in writing variation and writing instruction variation around the world. Only by recognizing, legitimizing, fostering and nurturing different English varieties and diverse writing styles of a globalized student body can our composition classroom become the right space to engage in debates of linguistic diversity, plural academic writing, and cross-linguistic and cross-cultural sensitivity. This

global outlook is what composition teachers need to adopt in order to better serve their students as well as the globalized world.

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