University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Unequal and Unjust:

Monolingualism in Multilingual Classrooms

Sarah Whichello and Kylee Kinnaird

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Professor Thiede

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Introduction

The modern Western world claims to be a place of innovation, evolution, and promise; yet society clings to a hierarchy of power and class which stifles progress and oppresses citizens. This hierarchy is deeply intertwined with language and the use of English, which is now the global language of business, giving linguistic power to those who dictate the laws of Standard English use. Though Western civilization is a melange of cultures and languages, linguistic diversity is vilified, and those in power seek its eradication. Monolingualism, the practice of using only one language (Standard English), excludes non-preferred language users and cements the control of ruling white elites. Monolingualism works in conjunction with racism and classism to create a standard of English use that diverse language individuals struggle to meet. The elite linguistic class make it nearly impossible for non-native speakers, or speakers of a non-preferred English variety, to ascend to the social status of privileged native speakers. This is done through the implementation of oppressive pedagogical systems in K-12 and higher education. In America specifically, acceptable literacy has one voice: Standard English. Rather than embracing

linguistic diversity, American academic institutions work to homogenize students and extinguish language variety. Diverse students are "othered" in the oppressive and long-standing social hierarchy of language. Conclusively, the valued perpetuation of Standard English ideals work to maintain cycles of marginalization and oppression in communities that do not adhere to these expectations.

Literacy Sponsors

In recent decades, literacy has become a highly sought after form of social currency. More than ever, people are using language to provide for themselves and indicate their position within society. However, in the United States, the acquisition of literacy is an unequal system based on the availability of literacy resources. In Deborah Brandt's article "Sponsors of Literacy" she defines the role of literacy sponsors, which are "powerful figures" who are "usually richer, more knowledgeable, and more entrenched than the sponsored; "[sponsors] lend their resources or credibility" to the sponsored which in turn affects literacy acquisition (335). In essence, sponsors "deliver the ideological freight that must be borne for access to what they have:" the power of appropriated English use (Brandt 335). Sponsors of Standard English literacy, such as parents, teachers, institutions, and universities, define acceptable writing. Brandt posits that the effect of sponsors can be a harmless "sharing between adults and youths" in a community, or a more malignant "euphemized [coercion]" found in "schools and workplaces"(335). Those who sponsor literacy are often working towards self-serving goals which align with the ideologies of Standard English practice. In the 20th-century, literacy sponsorship is a commercial enterprise as "the abilities to read and write" have become "widely exploitable resources," making literacy sponsors the brokers of Standard English proficiency (Brandt 335).

Literacy is developed through life experience. Those with privileged literacies are often of "high socioeconomic, majority-race status" and have a breadth of language acquisition resources (Brandt 337). The disparity found between "academic performance" in minority and majority race individuals is founded in "unequal conditions of literacy sponsorship" (Brandt 337). According to Daniel R. Boisvert, wealthy parents are aware of literacy value and thus "start reading to their children often before they are even born" and utilizing "toys, apps, and electronic games" to improve speaking and writing skills (185). When parents are unable to provide access to literacy tools "language-starved children fall further behind" in comparison to language-nourished children (Manuscript 185).

To gain a better understanding of how sponsorship disparity affects the lives of specific individuals, Brandt interviewed both a majority race subject, Raymond Branch, and a minority race subject, Dora Lopez. While both Branch and Lopez knew how to speak English they pursued bilingual literacy. Lopez sought to read and write in Spanish while Branch sought to master the written language of computer software. While Branch is a white, upper-class male, Lopez is a lower-class Mexican woman from an immigrant family. Though both Branch and Lopez were born in the same year and end up in the same geographical area, a college town in the midwest, their acquisition of literacy is quite different. Branch was born to an educated, upper-class family; his father was a college professor and his mother was a real estate executive. As a child, Branch's family was financially able to provide him with access to technology, where he improved his English and computer software literacy through screen time and typing. Branch's expensive primary school education, gave him access to "a mainframe computer at Stanford University" which allowed him to interact with what he termed "'real users'" of

computer software programing (Brandt 336). Branch's literacy in both English and computer software was fostered in the academic environment of his father's workplace. His access to computers and supportive sponsors, his mother, father, and academic institutions, ensured his proficent literacy acquisition. Branch graduated from a four-year university and became a "successful freelance writer of software" as a consequence of language nourishment and privileged sponsors (Brandt 337).

Lopez's journey to literacy was more arduously won. As an adolescent, she taught herself how to read and write in Spanish, "something that neither her brother, or U.S.-born cousins knew how to do" (Brandt 338). This was difficult for Lopez as her access to literature and technology was limited. Her family was of a low socio-economic status and could not afford to significantly invest in her Spanish literacy. Though Lopez briefly attended the same university as Branch, at the time of her interview she had "transferred from the university to a technical college" and was "working for a cleaning company...as a translator," where she wrote short lists in Spanish for the owner (Brandt 338). Brandt points out that Branch was given access to a powerful and privileged form of literacy, which allowed him to reap socio-economic benefits sooner than Lopez; "Lopez's biliterate skills developed and paid off much farther down the economic-reward ladder" (Brandt 338). The purpose of showcasing opposing literacy journeys is to indicate how "different access routes" and "different degrees of sponsoring power" affect the acquisition of literacy for people of varying social statuses. Literacy "potential" is completely dependent on those who sponsor it, making literacy acquisition an incredibly diverse, unequal social system (Brandt 339).

Literacy has recently become more valuable in society due to the actions of powerful sponsors who are "engaged in [the] ceaseless process of positioning, and repositioning, seizing and relinquishing control over meanings and materials of literacy" as it assists in their participation in "economic and political competition" (Brandt 339). According to Brandt, the United States has seen a rise in literacy standards since the 1950s due to a "demand for literacy achievement" and "competitions between institutions" (339). The written literacy standard has transitioned from "basic" to "complex and interpretive" where writers are now "dependent on their literacy skills for earning a living" (Brandt 340). With literacy "stakes" being raised, the process of writing instruction has become of utmost importance to large literacy sponsors, such as universities (Brandt 339). Composition teachers are positioned as "conflicted brokers between literacy's buyers (institutions) and sellers (students)" (Brandt 348). Brandt believes that at their best, teachers "show the sellers how to beware [of the buyers] and make sure these exchanges will be a little fairer" (348). However, teachers are "neither rich nor powerful enough to sponsor literacy on [their] own terms," meaning that they often, even if they do not desire to, perpetuate the ideologies of the buyer (Brandt 348).

Monolingualism in the United States

In the United States, literacy buyers, such as academic institutions, define the standard of acceptable literacy as unidirectional monolingualism which "makes moving students toward the dominant variety of English" the preferred form of composition instruction (Matsuda 81). According to Paul Kai Matsuda, imposing the ideologies and practices of Standard English brings about the "relative lack of attention to multilingualism" in university composition courses (81). Monolingualism, as it pertains to literacy, is "an ideological paradigm that restricts and

actively works against language difference in multifaceted ways" by assigning value to "bodies typically attached to the dominant variety" and degrading the value of "people who speak non-standard forms of 'English' or languages other than 'English'" (Watson and Shapiro). Missy Watson and Rachel Shapiro define monolingualism as an "ideology of many violences at the micro- and macro-levels" (Watson and Shapiro). The unidirectional ideologies of monolingualism "can lead (and has historically led) to a silencing and even eradication of languages" as well as the oppression of speakers of non-preferred language varieties (Watson and Shapiro).

Monolingualism originated from the "project of colonization" where one language, Standard English, was forced upon the colonized to create "insiderness and, hence, outsiderness" based on an individual's ability to speak, and later write, like the colonizer. Those who cannot, or struggle to adhere to the linguistic standard are othered and undergo processes of subordination and indoctrination. Minority individuals are "falsely promised full initiation through assimilation," yet face continued "othering" as they are marked as either English Language Learner (ELL), Non-Native Speaker (NNS), or English Second Language (ESL) students (Watson and Shapiro). Language proficiency for diverse students does not secure their entry into linguistically elite society; "language in and of itself provides no guarantee of socio-economic advancement, operating instead in contingent relation to a host of other factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, and age" (Watson and Shapiro). ELL, ESL, and NNS students are stigmatized for their perceived illiteracy and "marked as lesser citizens—less patriotic, less literate, and less legitimate" (Watson and Shapiro). This places a significant burden on the diverse language student to conform; linguistically diverse students have been known to take

drastic measures such as “surgically [altering] their tongue structures in hopes of “sounding” more fluent in English” (Watson and Shapiro). Such students simply want to be valued and desired in a culture that assigns capital to literacy and Standard English use.

The micro-implications of monolingualism on diverse students can be seen in the increased material and physical costs associated with language learning. ELL, ESL, and NNS individuals must face “increased time and cost constraints…increased tuition dollars spent on non-credit bearing courses for so-called basic writers or ELLs; tutoring services or required attendance at [a] language institute” (Watson and Shapiro). Non-Standard English users must also navigate a system that is not designed to assist them, a system that marks “their languages as deficient, their differences as error and incompetence” (Watson and Shapiro). Macro-implications of monolinguist ideology are directly related to the oppression and exclusion of people of color. Imposing the acquisition of Standard English reinforces the ideologies of racism and classism; “English monolingualism as a colonizing force has...worked to suppress languages and their associated cultural identities” and promote the position of the privileged white elite (Watson and Shapiro). Standard English and the practice of monolingualism has become so entrenched into our society that we have begun not to notice the ways in which it stamps out diversity, especially in academia. The oppressive nature of monolingualism manifests in the beginning stages of education for ELL, ESL, and NNS students and often goes unrecognized due to the acceptance of Standard English as the ideal. Waston and Shapiro assert that academic leaders “struggle to detach from the powers of standard language ideology, so deeply ingrained within [their] discipline and professional identities,” meaning that to be recognized as a legitimate Western academic one must be a proficient user of the preferred variety of English.

K-12 Education

Debates centering around the perpetuation of monolingualism within K-12 classrooms forge deep divides within both the academic and public spheres in America. Guadalupe Valdés' "Between Support and Marginalisation: The Development of Academic Language in Linguistic Minority Children" and Robert Pritchard's "Monolingual Teachers in Multilingual Settings: Changing Attitudes and Practices" will help contextualize the passionate deliberations surrounding the pedagogy of non-Standard English students within the K-12 classroom. These conversations are important as K-12 classes are designed to prepare students for their future either in higher education or the workforce. Experiences in K-12 education can inspire or inhibit students from moving forward in academia, and ESL learners should be afforded the opportunity to continue their education if desired.

Dialogues regarding the teaching of multilingual classrooms are greatly influenced by standard language ideologies. Many of those concerned about "maintaining and protecting the status of English as the language of education" are greatly persuaded by their political leanings and American identities (Valdés 105). A standard of English is primarily perpetuated and defended by those who greatly associate their position as functioning members of American society with their native English language. "Hegemonic voices" urge public classroom curricula to revolve around a standard of monolingualism that "maintain[s] the position of the powerful who already speak the privileged variety of the language" (Valdés 106). The "patriotic citizens whose parents or grandparents did not maintain their immigrant languages" fear the United States will lose Standard English to the increasing number of non-English speakers within the American educational system. These citizens assert "Americans are being made to feel like

strangers in their own land" (Valdés 107). Vigorously defending the propagation of Standard English is unethical and works to undermine the position of diverse English speakers in American society.

Those who challenge the previous standpoints acknowledge the multifaceted struggles of those who do not speak English as a first language. Their needs tend to be ignored or mocked by the privileged members of American society who wish to maintain an education system that continually prioritizes the privileged. Efforts to reform K-12 education for ESL learners have been made, and the bilingual classroom has been instituted in many states. There are still many debates and questions surrounding the best format for these classrooms that will later be detailed. The number of English language learners in the public education system increases yearly, yet "only a fraction of those students are in bilingual or ESL classrooms" (Pritchard 194). Most ESL learners "receive most, if not all, of their instruction from mainstream classroom teachers, many whom have limited training in the learning needs" of these students (Pritchard 194). Mainstream English education not only devalues the learning needs of ESL students but participates in othering students who do not inherently adhere to the standards of academic English. The purpose of the education system, in theory, is to prepare *all* students to succeed in either higher education, the workforce, or both. The insistence upon a monolinguistic teaching approach does not satisfy these expectations.

Bilingual education classrooms in public schools are meant to help ESL students excel within their own academic journeys; these classroom structures focus on "non-English background, immigrant students who enter American schools" (Valdés 111). Many of these classes aim to teach the "structure of English" while others have "become increasingly

committed to content-based approaches to language teaching and to describing the kinds of English language proficiencies needed to succeed academically" (Valdés 111). The "bilingual education profession" is a step in the right direction as this is "the only group…concerned with the development of academic language in both English and the first language of arriving immigrant students" (Valdés 111). With this said, there are many issues that prevent these students from excelling at the level of native language speakers. Valdés insists bilingual elementary school teachers often ignore "the extensive work that has been carried out on literacy as a social and cultural practice" and choose to only "embrace a technocratic notion of literacy and emphasize the development of decontextualized sills" (115). It is important to note that bilingual education is a positive addition to public education and "there are a number of researchers who do work on both literacy and the education of linguistic minority children at the elementary school level" (Valdés 115). These researchers are vital in the creation of academic spheres that accomidate for multilingual learners. The advancements within bilingual elementary education seem promising, but these progressions do not necessarily translate into middle and high school courses.

Students who are placed into specific ESL courses rather than within the mainstream classroom face different, but equally problematic, challenges that hinder them as learners. Valdés asserts elementary schools primarily focus on "the number of years that it takes students to acquire the kind of language needed to achieve in school" (117) in order to reclassify learners as "fluent English speakers" (118). This reclassification seems to serve as a celebration for the education system as they believe they have thoroughly transitioned the student into an English speaker of the prefered variety. This does not, however, mean these students are prepared for

their future academic endeavors. Researchers are concerned with "the limited academic opportunities available to middle school and high school ELL students" (Valdés 118). Though these ESL classrooms are meant to attend to the needs of ELLs, they tend to other them in ways that classify the students as academic outsiders. These learners are "locked into ESL ghettos" where they experience "sheltered subject matter…within which content is taught by adapting the English language and the mode of presentation in order to make the subject matter more accessible to language learners" (Valdés 118). Students are often grouped together into their ESL classrooms throughout their entire high school experience. They are singled out and grouped together as outcasts and the topics discussed in their classrooms are not as multifaceted or relevant as the discussions tend to be in courses geared to native English speakers. This approach is problematic as ESL students are devalued and are not offered the resources of deeper intellect that most native English speaking students are immersed within.

While ESL courses for ELL students are not exactly viable options, mainstream English courses also fall short of satisfactorily preparing them for higher education. Many English teachers "insist…second language learners have not yet developed the kind of English that they need in order to do well" and they "worry about the errors ELL students make in written English…their ability to read the texts they assign…and…about their ability to engage in discussions about literature at the level that they require" (Valdés 119). Valdés believes the blame should not fall entirely onto mainstream English teachers but on the lack of communication between ESL practitioners and mainstream English teachers. She continues on to say "ESL practitioners will continue to define the objective of their instruction on their own terms and continue to blame mainstream teachers for rejecting the students that they have carefully

prepared to be mainstreamed" (119-120). ELL students are left to navigate the inconsistent and bewildering expectations of both ESL and mainstream English courses without the assistance of their instructors.

Students who are able to fight past the complexities of being an ELL student through their K-12 classes and pursue higher education continue to face adversity. They will "once again enter the ESL ghetto at the community college level where they will be placed into a long sequence of even more ESL classes all of which are a prerequisite for entry into the credit-bearing composition course for basic writers" (Valdés 120). These courses come with their own issues that will be discussed later in this paper. Minority students face a variety of barriers that manifest within the beginning stages of education and continue on into college courses. Ultimately, the lack of communication among and between professional fields regarding ESL learning hampers the success of these students. Expanding the definition of academic and Standard English language would greatly benefit the overall experiences of these students in a variety of ways.

The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity

In first-year composition courses at universities, diverse students are neglected due not only to the tenets of monolingualism but to what Paul Kai Matsuda defines as the "myth of linguistic homogeneity." Matsuda asserts that composition teachers have created an image for the ideal student population based on "generalizations" and "continual encounters with the dominant student population" (639). Though Matsuda believes that assigning an image for a student population is not inherently negative he states that: "an image of students becomes problematic when it inaccurately represents the actual student population in the classroom to the extent that it

inhibits the teacher's ability to recognize and address the presence of differences" (639). This means that instructors are overlooking diverse language students in the classroom due to the dominant, and often inaccurate image they have assigned to their students. Just as students of color become invisible when whiteness is preferred so do ELL, ESL, and NNS students when monolingualism is preferred (639). Unfortunately, diverse language students are, in many cases, doubly oppressed as people of color and non-traditional writers. Matsuda posits that one of the more ubiquitous generalizations made by instructors is that "students in English studies…are by default native speakers of a privileged variety of English from the United States" (639). This is an erroneous assumption as it is simply not true. While universities seek out diverse students in enrollment the same students are often abandoned and ostracized in the context of literacy once they begin their education.

College composition courses often claim that their goal is to "create better writers," or in other words create writers that are proficient in the use of Standard English. Definitions of "writing well" include "English that is unmarked in the eyes of teachers who are custodians of privileged varieties of English or, in more socially situated pedagogies, of an audience of native English speakers who would judge the writer's credibility or even intelligence on the basis of grammaticality" (Matsuda 640). Grammar, rather than more serious language issues, are often overlooked by instructors. Due to the "myth of linguistic homogeneity," first-year writing instructors will often become overwhelmed when they realize that the student population is not as proficient in Standard English as they once believed (Matsuda 640). These instructors may tell their students to "'proofread more carefully' or to 'go to the writing center'" rather than directly addressing linguistic diversity; "those who are not native speakers of dominant varieties of

English are thus being held accountable for what is not being taught" (Matsuda 640). The outdated and bias pedagogy of these instructors fails the diverse student population present in modern academic settings. When Matsuda published his article in 2006 "there were 572,509 international students in U.S. colleges, most of whom came from countries where English is not the dominant language" (Matsuda 640). The 2019 report from the Institute of International Education, *Open Doors*, indicated 1,095,229 total international students enrolled in American universities. With an ever-growing population of international, and thus linguistically diverse, students enrolled in first-year composition courses at American universities, it is vital that the lack of diversity in literacy pedagogy be addressed.

The "myth of linguistic homogeneity" is perpetuated by the practice of linguistic containment which begins in K-12 education and continues into higher education. According to Matsuda, "the first-year composition course has been a site of linguistic containment, quarantining from the rest of higher education students who have not yet been socialized into the dominant linguistic practices" (641). Thus, institutions seek to eradicate linguistic diversity by "[ignoring] language issues, attributing difficulties to individual students' inadequate academic preparation" or in cases where the language issues are severe, recommending students "to the writing center, where [they] encounter peer tutors who are even less likely to be prepared to work with language differences than are composition teachers" (Matsuda 642). In either case, instructors are electing to blame and punish diverse language students for language issues that stem from a lack of effective pedagogy. Matsuda believes that instructor neglect stems from composition professors' lack of knowledge in "how to teach the dominant variety of English to students who come from different language backgrounds" and thus "the vast majority of U.S.

college composition programs remain unprepared for second-language writers" (637). According to Watson and Shapiro, in the monolinguist classroom under the guise of linguistic homogeneity, "international students may be represented at best as rare and different, or worse, as illegitimate outsiders who haven't yet earned a seat in mainstream composition." This view is harmful as it perpetuates a negative image for the diverse language student which can affect their identity as a writer and an academic. The underserved population of non-Standard English writers then become ostracized members in a community that should seek to celebrate diversity rather than condemn and repress it.

Case Studies

Students who fall into the ESL category often undergo many years of rigorous training to help them prepare for the college composition courses that perpetuate Standard academic English. Ilona Leki and Joan Carson's article *"Completely Different Worlds": EAP and the Writing Experiences of ESL Students in University Courses* argue ESL courses ultimately do not "promote linguistic and intellectual growth" or adequately prepare students for the intricate expectations of EAP composition courses (39). Leki and Carson wished to further explore how these course structures impacted ESL learning and instituted a case study that would delve into the personal perspectives of three different ESL students. The case study ultimately displays the complexity of their academic journeys and exposes many issues regarding the overall impacts of ESL courses. These courses are meant to sufficiently prepare students for composition courses yet often leave ESL individuals feeling underprepared, overwhelmed, and disappointed.

The study by Leki and Carson is carefully divided into three categories which all work to access the challenges specifically posed by common ESL assignments. Their analysis is based on

a 1994 study where respondents were asked to list the writing assignments required within their ESL courses. Leki and Carson's study proposed three categories of writing assignments based on this list. The first category prompted students to write from their own personal experiences; they were told to draw from their backgrounds and personal knowledge. The second category was more extensive as it required writers to respond to a source text, yet the students did not have to explain or demonstrate comprehension of the said source text. The third and final category urged writers to respond to a source text while demonstrating their understanding. Interviews were conducted after the students completed the writing assignments to evaluate their thoughts and feelings regarding the writing process. The ultimate goal of these interviews was to take "an initial step in the direction of eventually learning more about how ESL writers make the transition between ESL writing classes and other academic courses" (Leki and Carson 43).

The students reported several struggles when completing the assignments for the first category of writing prompts. While writing without a source text is not a common practice within academic courses, placement exams, and certain English classes often delegate these types of assignments to evaluate the English proficiency of the students. With this said, this genre of writing is vital to the success of ESL students. This is problematic when considering the multilayered complexities the students struggled through when attempting to complete the assignments. Firstly, students reported time constraints to be their greatest disadvantage. The students "repeatedly said that time limits prevented them from finding ideas they felt satisfied with and accessing appropriate vocabulary to express those ideas" (Leki and Carson 49). One student reported the essays she wrote "didn't reflect…whole ideas. [She] must select the simple sentence, the simple ideas,…there is a time limit, so [she] must write hurry, think hurry" (Leki

and Carson 49). The pressure to access personal narratives and transform them into essays that reflect the standards of academic English caused students to feel overwhelmed and discontented with their results. The second issue students reported was a lack of familiarity with the topic. Other than time constraints, "the crucial variables for writing without a text as support were the familiarity with the topic and, related to the time issue, the degree to which the writers were likely to have been thinking about the topic recently or to have it in the forefront of their minds" (Leki and Carson 49). Generally, students felt they could not appropriately organize their thoughts and ideas in a coherent manner under the constraints of time, topic familiarity, and ultimate lack of familiarity with the English language.

The second category, writing from a source text without demonstrating knowledge of the content, prompted students to report both advantages and disadvantages. While students appreciated having a source text as a model, they also "perceived the availability of a source text as creating additional burdens" (Leki and Carson 51). Some students often felt they understood the source text but feared plagiarism of the content, structures, or ideas. They wanted to actively engage with the source to display their knowledge, but worried they would seem unoriginal. Students also complained that the source texts proposed too many ideas that they could not address sufficiently. Battling anxiety while trying to adhere to Standard English prevents students from maximizing their potential.

Other students felt that non-text responsible writing was closely intertwined with the types of assignments required in their ESL writing courses. These students "perceived the topics they were asked to address in their writing classes as arbitrary, arbitrarily chosen, unimportant, requiring minimal intellectual engagement, and varyingly interesting depending on the interests

of said students" (Leki and Carson 53). Rather than being concerned with learning new or valuable information, the students focused on assimilating to the values of Standard English formalities. One student said, "My principal objective in my English class is my grammar, not the idea" (Leki and Carson 53). Though these points were considered advantageous in the eyes of the students upon completing the assignments, this type of engagement does not harvest the skills ultimately required for composition courses, graduate courses, or courses in other disciplines. The lack of attention given to mastering and analyzing content is injurious to the future successes of these students; the constant focus on a standard of English pushes instructors to prioritize grammar or rhetoric over the mastery of content comprehension.

The last category, demonstrating comprehension of a source text, mimicked assignments that are generally required in later academic courses, especially within graduate studies. Content was of particular importance to these students, therefore the previous ESL courses did not adequately prepare them for what was to be expected later on. Leki and Carson contend the "reports highlight one of the principal distinctions between writing for ESL writing classes and writing for content courses. In writing classes, content must be clear but can never be wrong. What you write, in a sense, does not matter, but how you write matters a great deal" (56). Emphasis on rhetorical devices and grammar seemed to take precedence over the ability to display thorough comprehension.

Students reported inconsistencies with the ways they were expected to perform within their writing courses versus writing for other disciplines. Other courses, specifically those that were science-based, valued content over grammatical and rhetorical accuracy. The discrepancies between writing courses and other university courses cause significant confusion within ESL

students as they strive to assimilate to the standards of academic English while also attempting to master the standards of their chosen major. Leki and Carson pose a question: “Should writing courses address more directly the writing tasks that confront students across the disciplines in the university” (62)? The transferability of the skills obtained within writing courses comes into question as the personal struggles of these students are analyzed. Expectations and emphasis within college writing courses do not coincide with the expectations of writing for other disciplines. Is the constant need to perpetuate standards of academic English within composition courses to blame for the concerns that arise within students who wish to further their higher education? Based upon the information gathered, course requirements and structures need to be reevaluated for the benefit of ESL students in America.

Solutions

It is clear that the eradication of the oppressive standard language perpetuation within classrooms is an urgent need. Multilingual classrooms can not and will not benefit from monolingual pedagogy. Communication in and across disciplines is necessary to uplift the students who are constantly oppressed and othered by the linguistic discrimination that saturates public and higher education. Missy Watson and Rachael Shaprio suggest many solutions that could be utilized to resolve the deeply ingrained preferential structures of writing courses.

Watson and Shaprio ultimately advocate for all “composition scholars...to engage more explicitly in combating a holistic monolingualism.” Firstly, the ideologies surrounding monolinguistic defenders must be debunked. The idea that “non-standard language practices are deficient and inappropriate for public, academic, and official purposes” is discriminatory and dangerous. Respect and celebration for diverse languages is necessary for any progress to be

made. To combat standard language ideology within the classroom, instructors must “invite and honor language difference in [their] classroom, encouraging code-meshed texts that feature a fuller range of students’ linguistic repertoires” (Waston and Shaprio). They also believe instructors should not only acknowledge linguistic diversity but strive to gain knowledge on how to uplift diverse language students. Watson and Shapiro posit that students should be encouraged to “engage their own and others’ language varieties” to demonstrate the acceptable fluidity of language. Further solutions are proposed in Shondel J. Nero’s “Discourse Tensions, Englishes, and the Composition Classroom” that support the celebration of linguistic diversity in classroom settings. Nero suggests instructors of English should have thorough training in language diversity “including the history, spread, and use of Englishes and related creoles around the world” (154). Inviting students to write in their own vernacular when appropriate and using “organizational style, grammar, and mechanics” that are unique to their vernacular can also support multilingual celebration.

It is vital that the American education system be revisited and restructured to end the historical and continued perpetuation of Standard English ideals that are harmful to all who are not inherently privileged. Those who teach writing in the modern world are faced with the choice to continue this damaging system or attempt to repair the harmful standards so frequently forced onto students in America. The linguistic diversity in Western society and academia must be addressed rather than suppressed as diverse students will continue to be a part of the education system and subsequently have a right to indivdualistic language expression.

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